

Dreaming Side by Side

Genesis 37:6, “So he said to them, ‘Please hear this dream which I have dreamed.’”

Introduction: When Jacob’s son, Joseph, was just seventeen years old, we read about him gathering all of “his brothers” around him and sharing with his brothers a literal dream he had from God. He says to them, “Please hear this dream which I have dreamed” (Genesis 37:6). Now, his brothers would have none of it. They hated him for his lofty goals and his high-minded dreams. It did not matter. Verse 9 says, “then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, ‘Look, I have dreamed another dream.’” His father “rebuked him” (37:10). His brothers “envied him” (37:11). People do not always accept a “dreamer.” But, God’s man—Joseph—wasn’t content with just fitting in and conforming to the crowd. He wasn’t just going to be a status quo brother. He wore that multi-colored coat with gusto. Perhaps it was a symbol of his willingness to stand out amongst the crowd—a symbol of the dream. His brothers may have hated him but God was pleased with him. Though his brothers tried to kill the dream, God made sure it survived. Though Joseph had to face years of trials before the dream was ever realized when it is fulfilled he tells his brothers, “... it was not you who sent me here, but God...” (Genesis 45:8). When God gives His people a dream He is able to make it successful. But, how much easier would it have been on Joseph if his brothers would have just been on board from the start? In other words, how many times do we learn the hard way that God’s way would it have been best from the beginning?

Today, I’m here in a new town, at a new church, because I’ve got a dream for the Laurel Canyon Church. And, I’d like for you to hear it because these dreams cannot be realized by myself alone. It takes each of us working side by side, strengthened by God’s power and might, together to achieve and accomplish these goals. Here is my dream for the Laurel Canyon Church.

I. A Unified Church

- A. Just before the death of Jesus, He spoke of the importance of unity among the believers (John 17:20-21).
- B. Problems and issues may arise, but let’s address them God’s way (Matthew 18:15-17).
- B. The church at Philippi was urged to be “standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).

II. A Sacrificial Church

- A. A church that is like Jesus must be filled with people who are willing to crucify and sacrifice themselves, like Jesus, for the sake of others (1 John 3:16-17).
 - 1. When newcomers need attention, we are willing to sacrifice ourselves to “be hospitable without grumbling” (1 Peter 4:9).
 - 2. When lost sheep need turning back, we are willing to sacrifice our time to “save a sinner from the error of his way” (James 5:19-20).

3. When the widows need some help and attention, we are willing to practice “*pure and undefiled religion*” and sacrifice ourselves to see to their needs (James 1:26-27).
 4. When a sick or new mom needs a meal, we are willing to sacrifice our time and money to give her an extra push of encouragement (Philippians 2:3-5; Romans 12:13).
 5. When the church has roles which need filled, we are willing to sacrifice our time to make sure the church can meet its needs quickly and efficiently (Ephesians 4:15-16).
- B. The church at Jerusalem was a sacrificial church and they grew extensively (Acts 4:34-35).

III. An Evangelistic Church

- A. The early church received the most complimentary accusation possible: “*you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine...*” (Acts 5:28). What an awesome insult!
1. God cannot “give the increase” if his people do not “sow the seed” (Luke 8:11).
 2. It is our “Great Commission” not to just be disciples but to “make disciples” (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus never said just “be disciples” but “make” them!
 3. The only way men can be saved is if the gospel is preached to them (Romans 10:13-15) and that will take men and women speaking up about it!
- B. The most successful churches are churches who make opportunities to speak out about the faith (Acts 19:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:8).

IV. A Daring Church

- A. We hear the slogan: “dare to be different.” Well, if you really want to be different—be a Christian who is “*not conformed to this world, but transformed...*” (Romans 12:2).
- B. A church whose membership acts like the world, talks like the world and dresses like the world will not help change people to live as God would have them to live. You will bring in sinners and they will stay sinners if we do not dare to change ourselves and demand of them what God truly demands of us (Titus 2:11-14)!
- C. Too many churches are like sinking ships. The more they allow water to seep into the boat, the closer the boat comes to sinking. We, like ships, are in the world, but “not of the world” (John 17:16) just as a ship is in the water, but not of the water!

Conclusion: If you take the first four letters of these four words—Unified, Sacrificial, Evangelistic, Daring—you will find the word USED. If OUR dream is going to become a reality, you’ve got to be willing and available to be USED by God. Are you ready to be useful for God? It all starts with cleansing yourself from sin! 2 Timothy 2:21, “*Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.*” We can’t be “*useful for the Master*” until we get cleansed, washed and make the decision to start anew. This “*newness of life*” starts with baptism (Romans 6:3-6).