

Jan 16, 2022. MLK Sunday

What Do You Dream of?

Pr. Steve

In the name of God, Abba Imma, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

What do you dream of? What do you dream for? The Bible is filled with dreamers: Jacob, that stairway to heaven; Joseph advising the pharaoh; prophets and kings. Joseph, baby Jesus' daddy, was a great dreamer. He found the way for the Holy Family through his dreams.

What do we dream of? What do we dream for? On Pentecost, at the very birth of the church, there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that the young people had visions, and the old people dreamed dreams. Where are we going? It comes through our dreams.

This photographic exhibit [in the Sanctuary] is quite marvelous. I hope you get to spend time with these during or after the service. It's called 'I Dream'.

I dream that my baby brother gets to grow up.

I dream that my grandchildren survive.

I dream my neighbors find employment.

I dream I get to dance before God.

Some of these dreams are so elemental, aren't they? Some are vast. What do we dream of?

"I have a dream," said Martin Luther King. "God has a dream," wrote Bishop Tutu, in this book (God Has A Dream). We studied it years ago; it's probably time to bring it back again. And Jesus is the fulfilling of God's dream, for us and with us.

There was a wedding in Cana, and it went terribly wrong. *They ran out of wine*. Can you imagine anything worse than that? It was just an embarrassment. Can you imagine being the mother of the bride, just... And then, suddenly, cosmic surprise--an abundance of wine, 20, 30 gallons, six of these [stone water jugs], overflowing. Celebration. Joy. Just what people want--a true ferment of love. And this is how Jesus begins his ministry.

Won't it be marvelous, when the day comes when people hear the word Christian and they go, 'Oh, ferment of love. I've heard about you people--all that loving going on, all that celebrating of life.' Right? Isn't that where we're going? Isn't that what we need?

Martin Luther King understood that love. He wrote a sermon called '*Loving Our Enemies*', which was composed in prison. Context shares a lot, doesn't it? These are just a couple points from that.

He said, *"I am certain that Jesus understood the difficulty of loving others, just for the record. And he certainly understood loving enemies. The Christian ethic is not designed for the weak and the cowardly; it is for the strong and the courageous. Because in our century, upheaval after upheaval has reminded us that modern people are traveling along a road called Hate."* (This was back in the 1960s.) We are traveling on a journey that will bring us to destruction and damnation. Far from being the pious injunction of a utopian dreamer, the command to love one's enemy is an absolute necessity for our survival. Jesus is not an impractical idealist. He is a practical realist. As the poet, W.H Auden said, *"We must love one another, or die."* James Baldwin, poet, prophet for our time, said that the heart of the crisis of racism, the very heart of the crisis is this huge contradiction: *"Americans love democracy and freedom, but we cannot see the humanity of people of color. We can't see it in our history: 400 years of slavery, 12 generations of slavery, 70 years of Jim Crow, 70 years of lynching, and a reign of terror, mass incarceration, and we don't see it. We can't see it. And, at our worst, we refuse to see it. It's baffling, baffling."* Baldwin said, *"White people have become like a butterfly in an insect collection. They are pinned down--with open wings--but they can't fly."*

Both of these men faced shattering disappointments. Ten years after Baldwin's letter to his nephew, he said, *"We can't save white people. We can't help them. They don't want it, and they will have to figure out for themselves how they will become free of racism."*

Martin Luther King said in 1968, *"My dream has become a nightmare."* King said, *"What we need is a coalition of conscience, but I'm not sure if we have that many consciences left. Too many people have gone to sleep. There are some left, but what we are struggling for is the soul of the nation, for black and white people together. The soul of the nation is at stake, and we have to work together, black and white, a creative minority, ready to do battle for the sacred. But I honestly confess, I go through moments of disappointment. when I have to recognize that there aren't enough white people in this country who are willing to cherish democratic principles over privilege. I'm grateful to God that there are some left. Jesus understands people who don't want to face truth, that we more often are willing to exercise violence than face the truth of who we are."*

Jesus learned that first hand that the most dangerous people are the people of good will who remain silent. On the night before his assassination, Jesus prepared a meal of bread and wine, a meal that would be a ferment of love.

Fellow dreamers, what shall we dream of together?

First, let's eat. And then we'll talk.

Amen.

The peace, which surpasses all human understanding, keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.