

“Visions and Dreams” – Acts 2.1-8, 11-21 - Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs

Do you have a dream? Or do you just take it one day at a time and plod along? Is your dream yours, or God’s dream for you and for others? Last year I preached a sermon series developed by the Rev. Mike Slaughter entitled *Dare to Dream*. Mike believed that we all should have big God-sized dreams. He also encouraged us to get rid of our Big Buts! Those things that we claim as the reasons why we cannot possibly do what God is asking when we say, “Yeah, BUT...”. Today we hear the apostle Peter remind the people of God’s dream to the prophet Joel who lived 500-600 years earlier, “*this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.’*” (Acts 2:16-17)

Peter and presumably the others discovered by the power of the Holy Spirit that they had the power to do something other than sit around on their big butts in fear and wait for something else to happen. They began to speak and to share their faith and their stories. They began to speak to strangers about their faith. They even began to speak to strangers in strange languages. The strange thing is that though we know how it sounded to the people from those other countries and languages who had come to Jerusalem, we do not hear a summary of what they were actually saying. What message were they trying to convey? I speculate from the quote of the prophet Joel that Peter seems to use to explain it, that they were sharing the Good News and the dream of what Jesus envisioned as a preferable future – the Kingdom of God - on earth as it is in heaven, as we just prayed again this morning. I pray that it comes upon this church, and that we begin to live it and model it for all the people around us.

Jesus dreamed this dream would come true. He told the disciples to stay in the city until he sent them the power of the Holy Spirit. I do not think that the disciples had any idea what the power would be like or what they would be able to do with it. But once they discovered their voice and ability, they began to spread the Good News throughout the known world and even the unknown world in unknown languages.

Next month we will celebrate with our youth and young adults and their families who dreamed of graduating from high school or college. One of those graduates will be Nikki Stine. Do you know she was in the very first preschool class when Hope Preschool opened here! Did any of you who were around here then and dreamed of building this addition on to the old stone chapel, dream of a day when these preschoolers would grow up? And look around as we baptize some of the preschoolers this year. What dreams do we have for them as they grow in their faith through the lessons and Chapel times with the pastor that will help give them a foundation of faith for their future? Pray for the children and their families as they dream God’s dreams and live into those dreams. Next Sunday on Memorial Day weekend we pause and remember some who had dreams of peace and the end of war. Some gave their all and died in the pursuit of that dream. We are living their dream! But let me ask you - Are you living your dream? Not that we are ever “there” but that we are living the journey on the way “there.”

If you think about it:

Moses never got to the Promised Land.

The prophet Isaiah never saw the birth of the Messiah he envisioned.

The prophet Joel never saw the Day of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit coming on the apostles.

The apostle Paul never carried the Good News of Jesus around the Mediterranean to Spain.

The apostle John never got to enter the New Jerusalem he saw in his revelation.

Abraham Lincoln never saw the end of the Civil War.

John F. Kennedy never saw a man walk on the moon.

Martin Luther King, Jr. never saw the end of segregation and full civil rights.

But they all had a dream and helped us to move closer to living the dream. Some still dream of a better tomorrow beyond the difficulties of today. What do you see and what are you willing to do to help bring about that day (even if it may not happen in your lifetime!) This small band of uneducated disciples caught God's dream and power to change the world to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. We are still dreaming their dream and living that dream to spread the Good News and to Change the World. God's will be done... Alleluia and Amen.

Upon Disciples

Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs 5/10/24

Upon disciples,
Both the young and the old,
The Holy Spirit of God came.
Both visions and dreams,
Revealed God's Kingdom.
Nothing would ever be the same.

Today let us dream,
The dreams God has for us.
Then let us strive to do God's will.
Like those disciples,
May we be faithful,
And thus, God's will, we will fulfill.