

**Introduction:**

- Last week: Lengthen Your Life - Live Big from Ps 39:5 and Hebrews 11.
  - All lived short lives, all heard from God, all acted on what they heard, They had no idea they were great.
- I want to begin this new year talking about dreams.
  - God loves dreams! God is dreamer! Think of all He created. Think of all He is still creating through people who dream. Think about how dreamers are changing the world, their world, your world.
  - What is your dream? What dreams has God given for your life? Your family? Your church? Do you have a dream? I have dreams...
  - In Gen 37:5, 9, We find a dreamer who is often the subject of sermons. It says of Joseph, *One night Joseph had a dream...vs. 9 soon Joseph had another dream...*
- Dreamers affect the world. Dreamers are always tested. Dreamers make a way for others.

**I. Dreamers Are Empowered to Change**

- A. Every time God wanted to change something in the earth He has given a man a dream.
1. Joseph is the subject of our sermon today, but his father, Jacob, was also a dreamer. He saw a ladder from heaven. Gen 28. Noah was a dreamer...he built a boat based on what God has shared with him. Abraham was a dreamer, in Heb 11:10 we find him searching for a city whose builder and maker is God. Moses dreamed about freedom for Israel and living in the Promised Land. Joshua and Caleb dreamed of occupying that Land. They saw its fruit, they dreamed of living there for over 40 years as they wandered the wilderness. The Bible is full of people who lived with dreams and changed the world.
  2. Lincoln dreamed of a united America free from slavery. Martin Luther is famous for his speech "I have a dream..." and that dream though tested, inspired a nation. Kennedy dreamed of a man on the moon. Regan dreamed of world free from communism. Steve Jobs dreamed of an intuitive computer. The world needs dreamers!
  3. Again, what is your dream? for family? future? church?
- B. Dreamers always affect the world because they see the future as it can be. Dreamers by their very nature are empowered by God to bring change. A glimpse at dreamers. Dreams give us life, strength, purpose and hope.
1. Dreamers are creative by nature. Martin Luther the Reformer: Printing press...printed Bibles, reformed theology of Catholic Church
    - a) Dreamers are seers not lookers.
    - b) Creativity is the nature of God. God is creative so why shouldn't we expect as creatures made in his image to also be creative.
  2. Dreamers challenge the status quo because their dreams require us to change or leave the comforts of what has been. Ie. I remember when we bought our first Macintosh (8 mhz CPU speed, 128k Dram, 64k ROM) Ie. I remember when the internet came out and people thought it was the anti-Christ.
  3. Dreamers are not victims of fear. They are bold and dare the dreaded. Fear, worry, tension, anxiety are products of inability to see the operations in the supernatural world.
  4. Dreamers are risk takers and adventurers. They are ready to sacrifice the known for the unknown. In the words of Jim Eliot "a man is no fool to give up that which he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot loose". This makes people uncomfortable.

5. Dreamers are non conformists. They are “rebels” to the status quo. They are always dissatisfied with what they have done for God and would like to do much more to the Glory of His name. Thus dreamers are bitter enemies of complacency.
6. Dreamers are idealist. They are always pursuing what ought to be as opposed to what is. They look for a better and more beautiful situation than what is presenting existing.
  - a) Dreamers are men and women of influence, dominion and (not of domination). They rule and reign. They are thermostats and not thermometers. Their environment is subject to them and not they to their environment.
  - b) Dreamers do not leave their destinies to be decided by chances or accidents.
- C. Dreamers do not always know the extent or impact of their dreams.
  1. Joseph just saw his brothers and father and mother bowing down to him. There was nothing about a famine in his dream. Joseph just saw himself standing over his family as they bowed to him. There was nothing about years in prison for a crime he did not commit.
  2. Joseph’s dream took him to Egypt where he became the most powerful man in the world beside Pharaoh. That was not in the dream. He saved hundreds of thousands of lives! That was not in the dream.

## II. Dreamer Are Always Tested

- A. Before building the future God must build the man.
  1. This is a priority for God and it is a priority for the man who is to be used by God to change the world. God must make the man before he makes the ministry or the whole thing will self destruct. The man will sabotage his own future. God must become the foundation of every aspect of your life otherwise when you reach the ‘Palace’ you will forget who put your there.
  2. Joseph was already disliked/despised because of the favor that was being shown to him. His father loved him but his brothers hated him. 37:5,8 Favor most often brings dislike. Can you stand that the test of being disliked by your bothers and sister around you when favor is being show to you? 37:18 *they made plans to kill him!*
  3. Joseph proudly shared his dream. Pride is a killer of dreams and dreamers because they being to think that they deserve or are entitled to. If you are going to have favor please walk in humility! It was really Joseph’s pride that got him thrown into the pit...and also his brother’s jealousy. Don’t ever forget that God’s favor on your life also pulls out jealousy in others lives who need growing up.
  4. Dreamers must realize that God is more interested in you as “His man” than He is in you as “his minister.”
- B. Dreamers must stand three big tests: time, temptation and trials.
  1. What you do in the pits of life determine how long you will stay in the pits. Ie. Or whether you will take another lap around the mountain.
  2. Joseph’s life was filled with pits.
    - a) Sold by his brothers! Joseph was misunderstood and mistreated. Partially because of his own pride and partially because of his brothers immaturity. Because he was misunderstood he was mistreated and sold into slavery.
    - b) The time delay begins. “Will I ever see my family again? God, what about the dream?”
    - c) He keeps the dream alive, continues to walk with integrity. He serves Potiphar so well he is put in charge of the whole house. Totally trusted=integrity, no anger issues.
  3. He is tempted when Potiphar’s wife tries to seduce him. 39:6-ff.
    - a) Potiphar’s wife saw that he was handsome and well built and soon began to look at him lustfully.

- b) vs 9 “*How could I do such a wicked thing?*” He was true to his master, himself and God. He saw the situation as evil/wicked. She put pressure on him day after day vs. 10. She tried to wear him down. She grabbed him and he ran from her leaving his coat behind. Dreamers have to learn to run away from temptation.
  - c) For his integrity he is falsely accused, and thrown into prison. Dreamers can expect to be falsely accused even when they are living right. The time delay of the dream is further enforced. He did right only to suffer wrong. Happens to almost all dreamers.
  - d) He has favor, he is handsome, he is well built, he is smart... I am kinda disliking Joseph myself.
4. He helps the cup bearer get out prison but the cup bearer forgets him. More time delay. Injustice. He does not get bitter, he gets better. It was 13 years from the first pit to Pharaohs position. 7 more as point man in Egypt. At least two more before his brothers arrive. 22 years time delay.
- a) Joseph doesn't give up he grows up under the pressure.
  - b) Joseph keeps his integrity in all things. Defeat is not an excuse for depravity! It is a challenge for diligence and perseverance.
  - c) He doesn't gripe he grows. He doesn't list his disappointments he outlasts them.
  - d) He doesn't quit on God he depends on him more. One phrase you see throughout Joseph's story is that the “*The Lord was with him.*” (39:2,3,21,23)
5. Lessons Joseph is learning along the way.
- a) Teamwork
    - (1) How to work for others.
    - (2) How to work with others. Hardened criminals and jailers.
  - b) He is learning to work with authority.
    - (1) He was using his authority for others.
    - (2) He used it with integrity.
  - c) Dreams take trust to come true.
    - (1) He had to learn to trust God when things did not look like the dream would come to pass.
    - (2) His trust in God kept stability in his life.

### III. Dreamers Make a Way for Others

- A. Dreamers make way for others. Look at how God used Joseph as he was making the man. Joseph was learning to serve another man's dream all along the way until it was time for his dream to be served!
1. He served his father. Checking on his brothers.
  2. He served Potiphar and he prospers because of Josephs presence.
  3. He served the cup bearer and the cup bearer gets reinstated.
  4. He serves Pharaoh and Pharaoh gets his dream interpreted.
  5. He serves Egypt and saves a nation!
- B. The Dreamer makes his way into the palace. Lesson: When you reach the palace don't forget who put you there. We see God here:
1. His brothers finally show up to buy food to keep from starving. Joseph serves them.
  2. Later they discover it is Joseph and they are afraid.
    - a) “[While] *you intended to harm me, . . . God intended it for good*” Gen 50:20.
    - b) This statement serves as a motto of Joseph's life. Joseph knew that God sent him to Egypt and would take care of him.
  3. We see God is Joseph's heart.

- a) The willingness to forgive is necessary. "“So then,” Joseph said to his brothers, “*don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.' And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them*” Gen 50:21.
- b) People are going to let you down. After all, they're only human. And without the willingness to forgive, dreams can become nightmares.

**Conclusion:**

- The devil hates these three things:
  - Dreamer with a dream from God.
  - Dreamer with a plan to pursue the dream.
  - Dreamer with a plan and integrity actively building it.
- What is your dream? What dreams has God given for your life? Your family? Your church? Do you have a dream?
- Dreams are contagious! They inspire others to dream too!