



Kingdom of Dreams

Entering into a Kingdom of Dreams

*Our Lives Captured by New Kingdom Dreams
for the Glory of God*

On August 28th, 1963 Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a speech that will long be remembered in American history. When he spoke to a nation about the racial injustice and prejudice that infected the nation he did not simply present an idea, suggest some propositions, or say that he had a few sentences to share. No, he came to America and declared to all: “I have a dream.”

Our culture has always been one of dreams. We are known throughout the world as a place of equal opportunity and equal standing under the law. A place where the normal guy who is willing to work a job can make a living and even become wealthy. And so it has been called, the American Dream. In a culture of dreams, we need to stop and ask some questions about our own dreams. What drives them? Where am I trying to go? What are God’s desires for this world, and how can his dreams, his will, become my own?

Over the next few months we will be looking at what it means to live our lives motivated by Kingdom Dreams. We will be looking at several areas of our lives to see what dreams our culture may have in those areas and what dreams God would have for us. There is much at stake in what fuels our dreams; our own joy and our usefulness for the Kingdom of God hang in the balance. God’s plans for us are wonderful, filled with both blessing and suffering and the road ahead may need us to dream a few new dreams.

What Dreams May Come

The word “dream” can mean several things to us, so we’ll begin with a quick definition

A Few Dictionary Definitions of Dream

- A series of thoughts, images, or emotions occurring during sleep or an experience of waking life having the characteristics of a dream
- Something notable for its beauty, excellence, or enjoyable quality (the new car is a dream to operate)
- A strongly desired goal or purpose (a dream of becoming president)

Merriam-Webster, Inc. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. 10th ed. Springfield, Mass., U.S.A.: Merriam-Webster, 1996, c1993.

For our discussion we will primarily use the third definition of dream—a strong desired goal or purpose.

I'd Buy that For a Dollar

There is a trillion dollar advertising industry in our country that in some way wants to offer the hip, cool, with it, to die for, right lifestyle, how to build it up, chuck it down, be happy, way of life for us all. Everywhere there are dreams for sale in America.

To give the group an idea of the figure of a **trillion dollars**, it is equivalent to the entire Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Canada or Mexico. Or the GDP of Hungary, New Zealand, Colombia, Pakistan, Chile, Philippines, Algeria, Egypt, and Romania **combined**. — *Source: World Bank*

Let's ask ourselves a some questions:

What are some of the values of our culture?

Money, success, freedom, wild sex without responsibility or marriage, competition and winning, family, individualism and personal autonomy, image, entertainment, pride for position and power...Let the group talk here, there is a lot which could be said.

What would you say are some Kingdom values?

Kingdom values are represented well in the ten commandments (Exodus 20) and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Worship, Community, Growth, Service, Generosity...God's Renown and Glory, People who need Jesus, Self-control, humility, faithfulness, obedience, sacrificial love, justice, the people of God/the church.

Do you see any commonalities? Any Conflicts?

What are some dangers to our spiritual life because we live in a land of plenty?

When we have money, insurance, all the food we need, clothing as well as many, many other things, there are many risks to our walk of faith. We may become prayerless and self reliant, make an idol out of comfort and security that we cannot follow God in his mission, have no free time to dedicate to serving others, and in American Christian culture we may get so caught up with religious activity that we have no time to get to know non Christians and share the gospel with them.

Value Now, Greater Value Later

Ecclesiastes contains reflections of an old man, the "Preacher," as he considers the question of meaning in life. He looks back and sees the futility ("vanity") of chasing after even the good things this life can offer, including wisdom, work, pleasure, and wealth. Even if such things are satisfying for a time, death is certain to end this satisfaction. In fact, God's judgment on Adam for his sin (Gen. 3:17-19) echoes throughout the book (especially 12:7). Yet the person who lives in the fear of the Lord can enjoy God's good gifts. Young people, especially, should remember their Creator while they still have their whole lives before them (12:1). Traditionally interpreters of Ecclesiastes have identified the "Preacher," who is also called "the son of David, king in Jerusalem" (1:1), as Solomon (tenth century B.C.).

Introduction to Ecclesiastes—*Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001)

Read Ecclesiastes 12:1-8

The writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us to remember our creator in the days of our youth before the days of evil come and we find no pleasure in them. The bottom line is that life can be spent on dreams that have no true and lasting value. Life can be lived day after day on things that bring no joy in your latter years nor anything valuable to the life to come. There is a better way. Here is the way Ecclesiastes ends:

¹³The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Question: Have you seen anyone in there latter years who has found life empty and purposeless?

Living life before God, for his purposes, is a life of promise — all else is a vanity, a striving after the wind...



Looking to the Horizon...

Over the next few months we will look at Kingdom Dreams in the following areas of life:

- ⇒ Our Understanding of the Gospel and Relationship to God
- ⇒ Not Slogging Through the Tedious Motions of Dead Religion
- ⇒ The Great Gift of Sex
- ⇒ Living Successful Lives
- ⇒ Heaven—It is not a Pipe Dream
- ⇒ Your Life—You Only Have One—What Will be Your Dreams?

“Dreams are tawdry when compared with the leading of God, and not worthy of the aura of wonder we usually surround them with. God only doeth wonders. He does nothing else. His hand can work nothing less. Praise to the Guiding God of Israel, the Great Shepherd of the wayward sheep. When he directs a path, no way can seem bleak, no instance dull”

Jim Elliot, quoted in Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty; the Life & Testament of Jim Elliot* (New York,: Harper, 1958), 178

No life will be wasted, no job menial, no person worthless, and no darkness too dim for those who desire a Kingdom of Dreams. Butcher, baker and candlestick maker, along with garbage man, investment banker, musician and salespeople alike can all find LIFE in His Kingdom.

Yet we must have His dreams...

Parting Shots

During our time away we want to encourage one another to continue to engage with the Lord. So we are including some additional mouthfuls to keep you chewing in your own devotional life.

Suggested Reading

After each study we will suggest additional scripture, an article and perhaps a book that would be helpful in the area of discussion.

Scripture Memory

Each study will include Scripture to put into our hearts and minds together in community. Psalm 37 teaches:

³⁰ The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. ³¹ The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip.

God uses his Word to transform us and establish us; let's treasure it in our hearts.

The Intersection of Truth and Life

At Fellowship we ask “So What?” so that we act upon what we are taught in the Lord. Each week we will wrestle with the intersection of God's truth with our lives and how we might respond? We will provide questions here to provoke some thought, and we ask you to linger in prayer over each of the dreams we discuss. Here is a question for this week:

Am I willing to allow God to examine my dreams and realign my heart where necessary to point me towards Kingdom dreams? Nobody will want to say “No” but are you willing to say “Yes”?