

Holy Trinity - 5/30/10 – Gen. 12:1-3; Rev. 21:1-7; Luke 4:14-21 – God’s Dream

The Bible opens and closes with pictures of God’s dream. The first is that of the creation. Everything seems to support and depend on the other, and works together harmoniously; everything is created by God and depends on God. The last picture is that of a new creation, a new heaven and a new earth, where the creation is restored to its original intent, where suffering, pain and death are no more, where God’s presence gives rise to a harmonious way of living, where love of God, neighbor and creation is a natural way of life. Like most of our dreams, God’s dream doesn’t unfold exactly the way we envisioned it happening. Between the opening and closing chapters there are twists and turns. Yet the vision remains and the journey continues. God never gives up; God is patient and persistent. Between Genesis and Revelation, God moves steadfastly toward this vision of humankind being so filled with God’s presence that people experience God’s love, mercy and grace in their relationships with each other. It’s this vision, this dream, this longing for God’s Shalom or peace that God has placed in our hearts. It’s at the heart of all that Jesus does. It’s the driving force of the Spirit.

Dreams have a way of engaging our passion. Despite the odds and the hardships, we persist in our quest. The dream seems to carry us forward with a power of its own. In the midst of the Civil Rights struggle, Martin Luther King, Jr. stirred this nation with his “I Have A Dream” speech. It was a dream that grew out of God’s dream: “a dream that one day this nation would rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal. .. that ‘his’ four little children would one day live in a nation where they would not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” For many, this is a dream to which we continue to give ourselves: One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Pentecost reminds us that God never gives up on his dream. God unleashes the power of the Holy Spirit upon those who are followers of Jesus, who embrace Jesus’ dream of God’s coming kingdom where all are welcome, have something to offer, and bear God’s dream to the world. “I will bless you so that you might be a blessing.” These words were first spoken by God to Abraham. They continue to echo down through the centuries and into our lives. God blesses our lives in order that through us God might bless others. Our mission is to share what we have received from God and invite people to come and experience God’s mercy, generosity and grace. This dream is what drove Jesus. Through us God draws people into the embrace of his love. Through our words and actions God’s desire for the healing and restoration of humankind is made real and God’s Shalom is extended.

Think for a moment about how God has blessed you, individually, and through this community. How has God’s grace, forgiveness, love, and mercy given you hope, encouragement, and the capacity to deal with disappointment, failure, and hardship? How has this community enriched and blessed your life? How is that leading you to share that blessing with others? Is it by giving yourself to care for others as others have cared for you? Is it providing food for homebound or homeless people as others have provided food for you? What are we passionate about – what gives us energy, fires us up, and gives purpose and value to our lives? How are we bringing God’s kingdom – God’s dream - to those with whom we live, work, and serve?

That’s the underlying vision of our church – to serve God’s purpose and bring God’s kingdom to bear in our congregation, families, Greensboro, and the world; to end homelessness and hunger, become a healthy, thriving spiritual community, make worship a way of life, and form faith in adults who will then mentor our children as we pass on the faith. Is that your dream for our church? Does that stir your heart and elicit your participation? Is this something to which you can give yourself with passion? The story is told about 6-year-old Johnny who wanted to try out for a part in the school play. His mother knew that he’d set his heart on it, but she feared he would not be chosen. On the day the parts were assigned, Johnny, back from school, rushed into his mother’s arms bursting with pride and excitement. “Mother – guess what! I got the best part! I’ve been chosen to clap and cheer.” The part isn’t what his mother had envisioned. From her perspective it wasn’t even a good part. But for Johnny, it was great. The play wasn’t about him. Rather, he was a part of it. He had a role to play, something to offer, and he was thrilled beyond measure. His whole heart was in it and he was filled with joy.

God's dream is the play in which you and I have a role. That dream doesn't always unfold as we imagine nor is our part always what we expect. There are unexpected twists and turns along the way. Rather than let these divert or distract us, we must keep our eyes on God's dream. Each of us is privileged to have a part in it; each of us is blessed by God; each has a role to play and something to offer. Imagine that: you and I have a role to play in helping God's dream come true.