

“Dreamers”

Sermon - Gregor Henderson

Wesley Uniting Church, 7 August 2011

Genesis 37: 1-4,12-28 Matthew 14:22-33

“Here comes this dreamer” they said, “come, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits”. So plotted Joseph’s 11 older brothers, and Joseph was lucky to survive. Being a dreamer can indeed be dangerous. “I have a dream” said Martin Luther King, and not long afterwards he was assassinated.

Mind you, Joseph rather brought his fate upon himself, through his dreaming. For at a mere 17 years old, he told his brothers of his dream that they would end up all bowing down to him, he the youngest and therefore the least of all the brothers. He also told them he had dreamed of the sun and the moon and 11 stars bowing down to him. Joseph not only dreamed but he was bold enough or silly enough to tell his family of these less than humble dreams.

But of course Joseph’s dreams did come true. In the following chapters, down in Egypt, Joseph demonstrates his gift of interpreting dreams, and is rewarded with high office. Years later his brothers do come and bow down to Joseph, by now the governor of the land, and soon after Joseph is reunited with his aged father Jacob. Joseph was not only a dreamer but also a very capable leader and organiser.

Peter was something of a dreamer too. Remember how on the mount of transfiguration Peter wanted to build three tents, one for each of Moses, Elijah and Jesus, an impulsive dream. Remember how when Jesus washed his disciples’ feet, Peter complained but on hearing Jesus’ explanation again overreacted by wanting his hands and his head washed as well. And in today’s reading it’s Peter of course, who dreams that he too can walk on water. He ventures out to join with Jesus, only to sink as he realises what he’s actually doing and his faith wavers. Yet Peter, this impulsive overreacting dreamer, goes on to become one of the two or three most influential church leaders, establishing the Christian faith as far away as Rome, as history and tradition tell us. He too turns out to be a very capable leader and organiser as well as a man of dreams and visions.

Perhaps the greatest dreamer of all was Jesus. He not only thinks he can walk on water but actually does it. His dreams were huge. Jesus dreamed of people who would be willing to tune into God’s love and God’s guidance for their lives. Jesus dreamed of people who were not “ye of little faith” but people whose faith is enough to move mountains, to walk on water, to contribute to God’s will for a better more peaceful more loving world. Jesus dreamed of people who would be willing to share what they have with others, as we were reminded by Jan Huggett last Sunday, as Jesus blessed and broke the bread and the people joined in sharing their food - such that over 10,000 men, women and children were fed. Jesus dreamed of people who would follow him on a journey of self-giving service to others, living in intimate relationship with God and inspired by God to give of themselves all the time for the sake of others. Jesus dreamed of a society where the poor received good news, where captives were released, where the blind came to see and where the oppressed were liberated – and where all lived in harmony, in peace, in justice, together.

Jesus paid the price for his dreams too. Such goodness and God-ness is too confronting. We human beings are too self-centred to stick to those sorts of dreams for long. We human beings don’t want to sacrifice what power or prestige or possessions we might be called to share or forego. We human beings don’t want to lose what we regard as our rights, even if it

means someone else suffers for our privilege. We human beings react rather like Joseph's brothers – dreamers are a danger to our normal human life.

Friends, we need dreamers. We need people, leaders, who can call us to God's way of self-giving love. We need people, leaders, who can lift our sights and inspire us to follow the way of Jesus. We need people, leaders, who can stir us to work for a more caring, more just world. We need God's dreamers. Are you one of them?

To the glory of God. Amen.