

# Christ is our Dream

(preached 1/22/23)

Please turn to *Deuteronomy 10:9 & Psalm 16:5*

**PURSUE MY DREAMS.** About 10 years ago I decided it was time for me to really pursue my dreams. I remember thinking to myself that I was in my early 40's, not getting any younger, and it was time to stop putting off all the great things I believed God had in store for me! I decided that I was meant for more than just working and paying bills, but prospering financially which would enable me to do things like travel and give generously. No doubt I would be called upon to preach on a national and even worldwide scale, affecting millions! It was time for the whole "soar on wings like eagles" (*Isaiah 40:31*) thing to finally start happening in my life. No one or nothing was going to hold me back or tell me I couldn't! There was no doubt God would back all this and launch me into space.

**READING BOOKS, ETC.** Thus I started by reading books written by successful people: self-made millionaires, rags to riches people, etc. I bought their CD's and DVD's and watched them. I traveled to where some of them were speaking and listened to their teachings. Some were secular and others were Christian, but all assured me that if I have enough faith, positivity, and ambition I would get there. The secular ones assured me that "the universe" would back all my dreams, and the Christian ones said that God would.

**DREAM BOARD.** One of the things most of them said to do was create a dream board, which was a bulletin board where you cut out visual images of the things you want and post it somewhere that you'll see it every day. They recommended you take the time to look at all the things on your board and visualize yourself having all of them, as if they were real already.

**MY DREAM BOARD.** So I did. On my dream board were vacations to exotic locations, a picture of me preaching from a pulpit to thousands of people, gold coins, lots of cash, a fancy car, and other things. Again, I was sure God was the One Who'd put all these goals in my mind and that He fully intended for me to have them. Just for good measure I quoted Scriptures and prayed the prayer of Jabez.

**STILL SMALL VOICE.** Despite all this passion and hope, there was always a few verses of Scripture that Someone was quoting in the recesses of my mind. I say "recesses" because I was trying to fill my mind full of having lots of money and preaching at arenas filled with people.

**GOD DIVIDES LAND.** There was a story from the Old Testament that kept casting doubts on my big dreams, and here it is: when God delivered the Hebrew people out of slavery and they finally arrived at the Promised Land, there were 13 different Tribes who all needed to have their portion of said land flowing in milk and honey. In other words, they didn't just go wherever when they got there, God subdivided the property and broke it up into 12 different parts. He told the Tribe of Judah to go here, the Tribe of Reuben to go there, etc.

***Each parcel of land had its own advantages and disadvantages.*** One parcel was right next to the water, but had very little game to be hunted. Another parcel had lots of game but no water. Therefore even though each tribe had some land they could call their own, they would still need to cooperate together under God for everything to work.

THE LEVITES. If I did the quick math, you may have noticed I said there were 13 tribes but that the Lord only subdivided the PM into 12 parcels...what about the 13<sup>th</sup> Tribe that we know as the Levites, who were chosen by God to be the Priests? All the other tribes got their inheritance from Father God, what about them? Here was theirs:

#### **Deuteronomy 10:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers. **The LORD is his inheritance**, as the LORD your God said to him.)

PORTION & INHERITANCE. Let's break that verse down: the word "portion" means part or allotment, and "inheritance" translates to possession. In other words, the Levites get no land nor any of the benefits that come with land ownership. They have nothing physical to call their own.

BORN NOT MADE. A Levite wasn't made, they were born. In other words, a young Hebrew child didn't say to himself "someday I want to be a Priest of God!" He didn't enter into seminary or Bible College, get a degree, then get ordained. If you were in the Tribe of Levi and were male, you were a Priest—it was your calling and destiny, decided by God Himself.

***A Levite boy grew up knowing it was his present and future.*** He knew that he'd never own land, have lots of money, multiple chariots in the garage, a big house next to a lake, or a side-by-side to bomb around in.

His inheritance from God was God.

**The Lord was his dream.**

***Back to my story:*** I had a vision board that was posted on my wall at home and I stared at it every day. I tried to visualize having lots of money and preaching in front of thousands. I imagined writing a Christian book that sold a million copies, and long lines of adoring fans waiting for me to sign it at Barnes and Noble. "Dream big!" all the successful people said. "Don't allow others to limit you! Don't limit yourself! Don't let society tell you what you can or can't be!" they said.

“GOD PUT YOUR DREAMS THERE!” The Christian ones quoted the Bible and added “With God all things are possible! If you have a big dream in your heart, chances are it was God Who put it there!!!”

RAGS TO RICHES TESTIMONY. They would go on to tell their own rags-to-riches story. I remember attending a live seminar with one of these guys who claimed he was homeless and living in a cardboard box in NYC when he got hold of a copy of classic success book: “Think and Grow Rich” by Napoleon Hill, not to be confused with Dynamite.

WITHIN 2 YEARS... He claimed that within 2 years of reading that book he was making a 6 figure salary, within 5 years a 7 figure one, and now was a public speaker who charge a 5 figure sum per hour and travelled the world. Sounded like a plan to me!!!

SMALL CHURCH TO MEGA. I listened to Christian preachers who told similar stories: took over a dying church in a dilapidated building that were 15 strong, and turned it into a megachurch in under 10 years. Then they retired from the megachurch and now traveled the world preaching for thousands of dollars each time. Again: sounded like a destiny I wanted!!!

**I prayed for these things, hard.** I begged and pleaded with God for this to be me. I searched out prophetic people, asking them to lay hands on me and declare this destiny over me in Jesus’ Name.

BUT.... The whole time that was happening, a still small voice within me was saying “*Scott, I am your dream. I am your portion and your inheritance.*”

MC QUESTIONS. A few questions and answer out loud please:

- 1) Who or what voice within me was telling me that I would be famous and wealthy, that of God or of my own desires?
- 2) What voice was convincing me that God approved of my dreams and would make them all come true: God or my own desires?
- 3) What voice was telling me that He was my dream?

**Are these 2 goals mutually exclusive?** Not necessarily, but remember that we can’t serve two masters, because we’ll love the one and hate the other. We either put God first or something else. The first OC command is “no other gods before Me” and the first NC command is to “love God will all.”

**No matter which covenant you’re under, God means for our relationship with Him to be our dream.**

*The realization I needed to arrive at was that I did NOT see Jesus as my dream, but these other things.*

HE CAN DO ALL THINGS. Was and is Christ able to make me rich? Yep. How about filling arenas full of tens of thousands so I can preach to them? Sure thing. He can do all these things and more.

DO FOR ME. My problem is that I was only approaching God to ask what He could do for me, but I had little interest in approaching God for Him.

BACK WHEN HE WAS MY FIRST LOVE. That wasn't always the case...and the Lord reminded me of my younger days when He was my First Love. I was Saved in 1997, but around the year 2000 is when I really started going after Him. I was pursuing Him. I wanted to know Him. I truly wanted to be closer to the Lord, in my heart and not just my mind. I wanted to be in love with Him as others said they were. I wanted to experience Him and just spend time with Him.

**I set Him as my goal**, I really did. I waited until late at night and laid down on my living room floor. I laid there because it was uncomfortable, and if I stayed in bed I would fall asleep. I laid there on the floor and plead with the Lord to Baptize me with the Holy Spirit, and I did it for hours. I wasn't doing it to get the Gifts of the Spirit whether speaking in tongues or whatever. I wasn't doing it to lay hands on the sick so they would be healed or to cast out demons. I just wanted Jesus.

**For 3 nights I laid there pleading** with Him for hours and decided I would do it every night until He finally responded. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> night He did and it was the most wonderful, joy filled thing that's ever happened to me.

**I'd never been so in love**, never felt so close to someone, ever. He became my best friend! We talked all the time and I mean that. I literally felt His presence in me all the time. I became friendly and likeable, and I loved everyone...everyone. Even those who'd done me wrong, or just rubbed me the wrong way, I adored. Nothing anyone could say or do offended me. And I wasn't sinning hardly at all, but was walking holy and uprightly in my life. It was wonderful and beautiful.

HOW? Did that happen because I'm super spiritual? Nope. Because I read my Bible? Nada. Because I went on a long fast or spoke in tongues for days? No.

It happened because Jesus was my dream.

***It happened because He was my portion and my inheritance.*** I didn't need land, milk, honey, money, exotic vacations, and arenas full of devoted followers. All I needed was Jesus. All I wanted was Him and that desire inspired me to put Him first and act upon it.

I LOVED EVERYONE! Because He filled me with His Spirit my marriage was amazing, my relationships with family and friends tight, and I even loved strangers and people I considered enemies. Pursuing Christ alone empowered me to fulfill the 2 greatest commandments Jesus shared with us: 1) to love God with all of us, and 2) to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus said all of the Law was fulfilled in those two commands.

10 YEARS LATER.... Yet a little over a decade after that amazing experience, here I am ignoring my relationship with God and only going after what He could give me. I'd replaced my dream of Jesus with that of success, money, fame, and admiration. I was constantly confused and disappointed as to why He wasn't making these things happen for me, and even accused Him of being a promise breaker (even though He never promised me any of those things).

This was happened despite the fact I'd read Jesus' warning to the Church at Ephesus in Revelation 2:

**Revelation 2:4-5 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> "But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

<sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first."

THE FIRST WORKS. Jesus was the first love of the Christians at Ephesus and He's telling them they've lost sight of it and left Him to go after other things. "The first works" weren't necessarily giving or evangelism, but perhaps all the things they did as a result of being close to Christ.

COULDN'T STOP! When I was filled with the Holy Spirit, I couldn't stop myself from sharing the Gospel, being generous, and serving. I showed up to church early for worship PRACTICE, even though I wasn't part of the team, just so I could worship the Lord longer. Those were my "first works" that I did not to be a good Christian, but out of the overflow of the Spirit inside of me!

**But eventually I left my first love and began to go after other things.** Despite having experienced the goodness and love of God in a powerful way, I still went after all the typical things honestly believing it would fulfill me. I called these things my dream.

**Maybe that's our problem saints? We've left God to go after the things of this world.**

SINS? Is being rich a sin? No. Is fame sinful? Doesn't have to be. Is wanting to go on vacation bad? Nope. How about owning a nice car or home? Not a sin. Is wanting a nice boat to go fishing bad? No.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA. God uses everyone and empowers them to fulfill His will. The reason Jesus was placed in a tomb is because God allowed Joseph of Arimathea to be rich, so he could afford and own one...only the rich owned tombs in ancient Israel. Upon death, everyone else was thrown into "Gehenna" which was a fiery pit outside of Jerusalem which represents eternity in Hell. To make sure His Son would fulfill prophecy and be resurrected, Father God enriched Joseph financially and then drew him to Salvation, for just that purpose. Being rich isn't a sin.

- Yet going after riches instead of Jesus is. We can't go after both.
- Following fame vs. the Good Shepherd is. We can't follow Him and something else.
- Desiring the praise of others vs. the love of Christ is to fall away from our First Love, Who is the Lord. We either praise God or desire praise from people, but we can't do both.

PRIEST. Jesus and the Apostles revealed an amazing thing: everyone who receives Christ as Savior becomes a New Covenant Priest. The writer of Hebrews expounds upon this at length, explaining that the calling and position of the NC priest is similar but superior to that of the OC Levite.

**And just as God was the dream and inheritance of the Levites, so He is with us, His NC Priests.**

*We're all Priests now*, but are we acting like we're one of the other tribes? Desiring and competing for portions of this world? I know I have in the past, and the Lord wants me to make Him my dream.

**Psalm 16:4-9 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten *after* another *god*; Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, Nor take up their names on my lips.

<sup>5</sup> **O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup;** You maintain my lot.

<sup>6</sup> The lines have fallen to me in pleasant *places*; Yes, I have a good inheritance.

<sup>7</sup> I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.

<sup>8</sup> **I have set the LORD always before me;** Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.

**Verse 4:** when our desires for things come before God its similar to chasing other gods and look at the result: sorrows are many for us when we walk that path.

**Verse 5:** let God be our dream. Let Jesus be our goal and what we go after.

**Verse 8:** just as I once set a vision board in front of to stare at every day, let us set Christ before us. Let's gaze at Him every day, and envision being with Him.

**Verse 9** is the result of living this way: we're glad, full of joy, and having rest instead of stress.

### **Psalm 73:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and **my portion forever.**

NOT JUST AFTER. Let's not read Psalm 73 the wrong way. It's not telling us that God is our portion/dream only after we fail ourselves, but that He IS our strength and our portion all the time through success or failure.

### **Psalm 142:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> I cry to you, O LORD; I say, "You are my refuge, **my portion in the land of the living.**"

WE'RE STILL HERE. The resurrection hasn't happened yet, and we're still here breathing...therefore we're still in the land of the living. To use the classic cliches, what does God have in store for us? What has He destined for my life and yours?

**Him. He is in store for us. He is our destiny.**

GO TO HEAVEN. We often talk about being Saved so that when we pass we'll go to Heaven. ***The only reason Heaven is so wonderful is because Christ is there.*** He is what makes it great and He created it.

**While I am looking forward to Heaven, what I really want is to be with Jesus. As long as I'm with Him, I'll be in Heaven.**

PETER. I end today with a good word from the Apostle Peter. While Pete urges to look forward to our coming resurrection, look at his focus:

### **1 Peter 1:3-9 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

<sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

<sup>5</sup> who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in

the last time.

<sup>6</sup> In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

<sup>7</sup> so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at **the revelation of Jesus Christ**.

<sup>8</sup> Though you have not seen **him**, you love **him**. Though you do not now see **him**, you believe in **him and rejoice with joy** that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

<sup>9</sup> obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

In other words, **our greatest reward in this life and the next is Jesus.**

- Our spirits ascend to Heaven so we can be with Jesus.
- We're going to be resurrected from the dead so we can spend time with Jesus forever.
- Our resurrection is being guarded in heaven to guarantee our living with Christ.
- Everything that Christ has` done, is doing, and will do is so that we can live together.

*Can we do a goal reset today?*

Can we shift our dreams to point at something—or someone—else?

What if we change all of that to just becoming closer to our Lord and Savior?

**To getting to know Him more and wanting more of Him?**