

Dreams to Sheaves

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2 Father/son Outdoor Adventure.
- B. Next week starting book of **Daniel**.
- C. Slide3 Wed Night Fam Fun night: (all church family). Street Tacos. *Worship.Devotional.Dessert*.
 1. Jim Bethke, aka the bug man.
- D. Slide4,5 2 memorials this week:
 1. **Estella** (interpreter, Wed night Feeding Ministry) **this Sat 25th. here at 10:30am.**
 2. **Justin Zamora 10:30am Wed.** Wife Ivy & 2 boys under 5, 5 months pregnant.

II. Slide6 **Intro:** *Dreams to Sheaves*

- A. Slide7 Background of Psalm 126:
 1. Pilgrimage to Jerusalem, at feast times, included the singing of **Psalm 120-134**, the songs of Ascent, the songs of **going up**. Here, the reminder of when they were **slaves** to now being **Free** [Psalm 126, is the 7th of 15 songs of Ascents]

III. Slide8 **BONDAGE TO FREEDOM (1,2a)**

- A. It begins with a scene of nearly delirious **joy**, seen from Israel's past when people released from their Assyrian or Babylonian captivity & their return to Zion.
- B. (1b) **We were like those who dream** (pinch me). **Or** NIV **We were like men restored to health.**
- C. What captivity has God freed you from? **Or**, What captivity do you need Him to free you from?

IV. Slide9 **GOD'S INTERVENTION (2b,3)**

- A. Lk.6:21b **Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh.**
- B. *The lord has done great things* is the **theme** of many people who have experienced *God's grace*.
 1. **Samuel** preached about it(1Sam.12:24). **David** thanked the Lord for it (2 Sam.7:21,23). **Mary** sang about it (Lk.1:49). **The healed demoniac** told everybody about it (Lk.8:39)

- C. What are the effects of God's intervention in **your** life? What has God done for **you**? Has He ever answered a **prayer**? Ever see Him work in a situation that was indisputably Him?
- D. (Spurgeon) Some Christians are sadly prone to look on the *dark side* of everything, and to dwell more upon what they have *gone through* than upon what God has done for them. Ask for their impression of the Christian life, and they will describe their *continual conflicts, their deep afflictions, their sad adversities, and the sinfulness of their hearts*, yet with scarcely any allusion to the mercy and help which God has vouchsafed them. But a Christian whose soul is in a **healthy state**, will come forward joyously, and say, "I will speak, not about myself, but to *the honor of my God*."¹
1. The deeper our **troubles**, the louder our **thanks** to God, who has led us through **all**, and preserved us **until now**. *He hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.*

V. Slide10 **DRY PLACES TO TORRENTIAL RAINS (4)**

- A. The 2nd half of this Psalm jumps to the age in which the songs were written, the time of difficult, unrewarding **labor** and even **weeping**. *This stanza describes these hard times.*
1. *Let's remind ourselves* we follow **The One** who was stretched out onto a Roman cross, & invited His **disciples** to do the same thing. **Then** told them if they wanted to **save** their life they would have to **lose** them, & *most did*. **He** calls **us** to pick **ours** up & do the same. [**He** didn't promise a Rose garden, right?]
- B. (4a) Bring back the rest who haven't returned yet. *Complete the work You started God.*
- C. Slide11 (4b) **South/Negev** - picture Israel like a mini California. [green/North, desert in South, valley/middle, on West coast Pacific/Med]
1. Slide12a-c **Streams** - no rain during dry season in South. **Then** torrents come flooding in during rain season.
 2. **Then** the **Wadi's** those deeply cut *seasonal stream beds* become dangerous flood areas. [over the years traveling to this area along the Dead Sea they've had to change where the **road** goes because it's been **washed out** from this very occurrence]
- D. Your difficult **labor** & **tears**, particularly your **tears**, are noticed by God himself.

¹ Spurgeon, Morning & Evening, Ps.126, June 9.

1. Ps.68:9 You, O God, sent a plentiful **rain**, Whereby You confirmed Your inheritance, When it was **weary**.

E. Dry seasons: Most often we don't *feel* devotions...*but*, you're *not necessarily supposed to?*

1. It's not about *feeling* your devotions or prayer, etc.

2. Slide13 eg. When a horse is getting **shod** (shoed). The blacksmith pounds & drives **nails** into its hoof w/his hammer. The horse **doesn't feel** a thing, as its **hoof** is similar to our toe nail, except larger/thicker. **But** now that the shoes are on & the horse is on the road, if he hits *rough terrain, broken glass, rocks, bumps or boulders*, he won't **feel** there effect. **That's what our devotions & prayers do...**

a) They **strengthen, protect, &** give us *spiritual stability* (sure footedness).

Ps.18:36 *You enlarged my path under me, So my feet did not slip.*

b) Eph.6:14,15 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

VI. Slide14 DREAMS TO SHEAVES (5,6)

A. Gal.6:7 NLT Don't be misled - you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. [either a *bumper* crop or a *bummer* crop]

B. (5) As in husbandry the sower may cast his seed in a dry & parched soil w/desponding fears, so those **shall reap abundant fruit** who toil in tears with the prayer of faith.

C. It's **death** to the seed *before* it can give *life*.

1. Jn.12:24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and **dies**, it remains alone. **But** its death will produce many new kernels - a plentiful harvest of new lives.

2. **One rice plant** with its off-shoots, grown from one kernel of rice, has a yield of 1000-3000 kernels of rice.

3. Some seeds only open w/**extreme heat/fire** (pine species, pop's its seed & shoots it out 20-30' when it hits the right temperature)

D. **Farming** is full of *heartbreak*, and all its joys are *hard-won & long-awaited*.

1. **But** the Owner of our garden promises us **a sure harvest**.

2. God one day **will** overrule *evil for good, suffering w/blessing*.

E. Today, maybe *all that you have left* is 1 naked kernel of *faith*. A small grain, but grain nonetheless. A **grain** Satan can't touch, *oh* he can touch the **chaff** that he asks for...*but* not the **Grain**. The grain belongs to the Lord & He will bring it into His granaries.

1. **Slide15a Cashew Story** - When we were down in the most southern part of **India** at GAF's Seminary KP's son Danny was giving Greg & I a tour of the property. As we were walking he happened to point out *a huge Cashew Tree*. And started to explain **the process of getting a Cashew** (Intriguing, so I researched a little bit)

2. When the nut is **Picked** it must be **1st Cracked Opened** properly (If it's not, the **toxic resin** will get on the cashew nut, making it *inedible*).

3. *It then* is Roasted which removes the **1st shell**. The **Black Oil** is removed (the toxic resin *also found in poison oak/ivy*).

4. It is **Roasted again** thus removing the **2nd shell**. *Finally* the Nut is Free.

a) *What a perfect picture of our Salvation & Sanctification*: We're Picked (chosen by God). Cracked Open (our hearts *scored open* before God with a surgeons care). Roasted (through trials of life). The Black Oil is drained from our life (aka *sin*) & then we're Re-Roasted (in life's toughest trials). *Then finally*, the Nut is Free.

(1) *In the process you become a smaller man/women now that that old husk* is off you. *In the process you become broken & bare* before Him.

F. **Slide15b** (6) This *promise repeated* implies there is *no end of weeping here*, *as there* shall be *no end of joy hereafter*. So, find comfort in the principle/promise of *sowing & reaping*.

1. Is 35:10 *And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

G. *We are all today sowing tears*: Maybe over an *Absalom son* or a *prodigal daughter*. Maybe tears over our *failures & mistakes*, or weeping over *disappointed hopes*.

1. But each tear is a *seed-germ* dropped into God's keeping. *He carefully collects our tears for His bottle. He does not forget*. He stands a vigil guarding our buried seed...a guarantor of its harvest.

2. **Saints**, if you've had *a habitually hard life*...full of *tears & heartache*...*listen carefully*...*you shall doubtless come again with rejoicing*.

- H. Slide16 *Bringing in the Sheaves*, the famous Hymn by **Knowles Shaw** got its inspiration from vs.6.
1. Sheaves are a bundle of grain, stalks laid lengthwise & tied together after reaping.
- I. Eugene Peterson summarized Psalm 126. *The song does not give us... Joy as a package or as a formula, but there are some things it does do. It shows up the tinniness of this world's joy and affirms the solidity of God's joy. It reminds us of the accelerating costs and diminishing returns of those who pursue pleasure as a path toward joy... It repeats the promises of a God who **accompanies** his wandering, weeping children until they arrive home, exuberant, "bringing in the sheaves".*
1. Whatever is happening in **your life** can you say, *we are glad, I am glad*. Can you remember one day we'll come into His presence...*Bringing in our sheaves*.
- J. Wait, maybe He did promise us a lush Rose Garden...just some *thorns* along the way :)