

Be A Dreamer!
Genesis 37:5-11

A little girl attended a wedding ceremony for the first time in her life. During the ceremony, she whispered a question into her mother's ear. "Mom, how come the bride must wear a white dress?" Her mother answered, "That's because the color white means happiness, and today is the happiest day of the bride's entire life." The little girl thought for a minute, then asked again. "Mom, then how come the groom is wearing all black?"

The mother couldn't answer her little daughter's question.

Everyone knows that happiness does not depend on one's color of clothing. Who is the happiest person? Today, I would like to introduce the happiest person. He confesses that the Lord was with him under any circumstances and he was always happy because he had big dreams in any situation. This person is Joseph.

Among those who appear in the Bible, perhaps the one who had the greatest of dreams was Joseph. In fact, Joseph had a tremendous dream and gave the greatest effort to realize the dream. In the end, he ended up fulfilling it.

This morning, I would like to share with you three lessons through the story of Joseph and his dreams.

1. When possible, dream as big as possible.

The difference between those with a dream and those without is like night and day. Those who live day by day and those who live with a dream will end up in different levels in life. Let's compare Joseph and his siblings. According to today's bible scripture, Joseph had a dream and his dream was splendid, in fact, it bordered on a pipe dream. According to scripture, Joseph dreamed two major dreams. In verse 7, Joseph had a dream that when his older brothers and he went out to the field to bind sheaves, Joseph's sheaves stood upright and his brother's sheaves stood all around Joseph's sheaves and bowed. Needless to say, this dream predicted that Joseph would eventually preside over his brothers.

In verse 9, Joseph also dreamt that the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed to him. The sun was his father, the moon his mother, and the eleven stars his eleven siblings. This dream predicted that there would be a day in which all his family would bow to him.

To his family members, this would have seemed ridiculous. Upon hearing these dreams, Joseph's older brothers harbored an even greater hatred towards Joseph deep in their hearts. Scripture mentions three times in verses 5, 8, and 11 that the older brothers envied Joseph. But according to verses 10 and 11, Joseph's father Jacob rebukes him for the extremeness of his dream but kept the matter in his heart. He knew that this dream was not nonsense.

But unlike Joseph, his older brothers had no dreams for the future. They were dissatisfied towards their father for his obvious preference for Joseph, the youngest of the siblings. Other than dislike and jealousy towards Joseph, they had no vision at all. What happened in the end? Joseph's dream of his brothers bowing to him became reality. Whenever we can, dream big. Even though that dream may seem extremely lavish, a pipe dream is better than no dream at all.

Tom Monaghan, the founder of Domino's Pizza chain, was an orphan from the countryside of Michigan. When he was a teenager, he had a big dream. His dream was to become the owner of the Detroit Tigers, a Major League Baseball team. After dropping out of college in 1960, he opened a small pizza shop. His business grew from a single \$500 store in Ypsilanti, Michigan. He was the chairman of the world's largest pizza chain whose revenue exceeds 2 billion dollars a year. Today, there is over 4,100 Domino's Pizza stores in the US with about 130,000 workers employed by the chain. Of course, Tom Monaghan also became the owner of the Detroit Tigers making his childhood dream a reality. In 1983, he bought the team for \$53 million. His dream finally came true.

Dear God's people! Let us dream as big as possible and have a boundless dream like Joseph even though we may have difficult situations amidst the coronavirus pandemic today!

2. Do not give up in the face of any difficulties.

In order to realize his dreams, Joseph went through some hard times. He was a victim to his brother's hatred and envy. He was also sold to Egypt as a slave. After he was sold to Egypt, Joseph became a servant to Potiphar, the captain of the guards of the Pharaoh. For a while, things seemed good for Joseph, as his master showed him favor. It was then that the wife of General Potiphar tempted him. Joseph's prize for resisting this temptation was prison.

Although the Bible does not list them all, Joseph probably experienced countless tribulations in the foreign land of Egypt, but nowhere in the Bible does it say that Joseph despaired when he ran into difficulties. On the other hand, whenever he faced obstacles, he calmly relied on God. He was ultimately able to turn all his suffering and crisis into an opportunity of blessing and success.

According to Genesis 39: 2, when he became a servant to Potiphar, **"The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man."** Furthermore, in Genesis 39: 23, although he was imprisoned, **"the Lord was with him; whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper."**

He never gave up in the face of difficulties. Rather, he turned those obstacles into chances at success. The more a spring is compressed, the greater the reflex. We, as Christians, must be like a spring. The greater the tribulations that lie ahead, the greater our ability to overcome must be in order to turn them into greater chances at success and blessings.

I once read about how a silversmith who refines silver. "I must sit with my eyes steadily fixed on the furnace; for if the time necessary for refining exceeds in the slightest

degree, the silver will be injured. I never take my eye off the silver in the furnace. If I take it out too early, it won't be purified. If I leave it too late, it will be injured. When the silver is in the fire, I focus. I don't let anything distract me. I watch that silver, carefully waiting for the right moment to take it out."

Someone who heard about this method asked the silversmith. "Then when is it the right time to take out the silver from the furnace?" The silversmith replied, "I know the silver is pure when I can see the reflection of my face in there."

From this silversmith we learn an important lesson. When faced with tribulation or crisis, we yell out to God to get us out of danger and suffering. But strangely, most of the time God does not rescue us right away. That is because God is a great silversmith.

As we toil in the furnace called suffering, God is watching us. But God is not some rescue worker whose duty is to pull us out of that furnace right away. Rather, what God does is make us refined and pure. Just as the silversmith aims to get rid of all impurities in the silver, God has the utmost interest in purifying us.

Therefore, as we fall into the furnace called suffering, God does not pull us out right away; nor does He leave us in there too long. At just the right time, when God's face can be reflected on us and we have been purified like pure gold and silver, He will save us!

As we dream, several waves of difficult tribulations will come our way. But do not worry. God who refines us to become His pure silver, will pull us out at the right moment!

Dear God's people! Be patient, and as we dream always remember that tribulations are blessings in disguise, paving the way for a greater blessing from God. When faced with obstacles, never give up. Quietly persevere by sweating and exerting all our efforts until your dreams are realized. Then the moment of God will arrive, and our dreams will be fulfilled.

3. Do our best remembering that God will realize our dreams.

Joseph was great because he did not just sit there and dream like a daydreamer. In order to realize his dreams, he worked very hard. He was honest and diligent, sweating blood and tears. He was so diligent as the servant to Potiphar that Potiphar trusted him one hundred percent. According to Genesis 39: 6, with the exception of food that he ate, Potiphar left all other matters of the household to Joseph. Because of Joseph alone, the entire household of Potiphar received God's blessings.

Even in prison, Joseph was known for his diligence. He was so diligent and loyal that the guards of the prison trusted Joseph enough to have Joseph take care of all administrative matters in the prison. After he was released from prison, Joseph gained the trust and confidence of the Pharaoh. Joseph was given the position of prime minister, the second highest-ranking man besides the Pharaoh in Egypt. The Pharaoh cherished him so much that this affection is beautifully described in Genesis 41: 38-44.

Do you want your dreams to be realized? Then give your best effort and believe that God will make your dreams come true. If we lie under an apple tree and wait for one to fall, then we will never eat an apple. We must climb the tree and pick one. Dreams must

never end up as mere dreams. Dreams must become a reality that depends on how much effort we put forth.

When I was attending seminary in Korea, I had a pipe dream. It was to study in Germany. The German government offers free tuition in college or graduate school, so I wanted to go there and further my studies. In fact, at that time, going to a foreign country was difficult for me as I had no money to study abroad, but I did not give up. I kept praying and studied hard. One day, the professor who I was assisting at the time as a teaching assistant offered me an opportunity to go to an American seminary for my studies. Fortunately, the seminary offered me a full scholarship. I was so happy. Although I wanted to go to Germany for my studies, God led me to the United States and gave me the opportunity to study here. Now, I am ministering at an American church even though my English is not perfect. God fulfilled my vague dream. Proverbs says in 16:1 **“The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.”**

Proverbs 16:9 also states **“In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.”**

I'm sure if we have a dream and we pray and keep going on, it will be true someday because only God, not our efforts or abilities, will determine that dream. Amen

Loving God,

Thank you for determining a dream for our home, our church and our future after listening to Your words. We want to have big dreams if possible. Help us try to do our best not to give up amid difficulties and hardships in our lives during the covid-19.

Above all, remind us not to forget to do our best and remember that God will help us realize our dreams when we keep praying to Him. May our dreams include extending Your mission in our home, church and community.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.