

Is Your Dream Wild Enough?

Series: Kingdom Come

Revelation 21: 1-6

What's your dream? In the opening to the Academy-award winning motion picture *Crash*, the narrator's voice booms out, "welcome to Hollywood where everyone has a dream. What's your dream?" **Do you have dream? What's your dream?**

There's lots of talk these days about dreams – lots of interest in dreams. You hear it on American Idol where young people have dreams of fame and fortune. There are tons of television commercials inviting us to dream about what situations we want to find ourselves – usually rich, adored, and secure. Quite often, these invitations to consider your dream are followed by advice to talk to an investment advisor. The suggestion is that there might not be enough money to secure your dream. You'd better be sure to keep yours! There's not enough to go around so you'd better work to keep what's yours. Again, this sounds very reasonable.

Now, it seems reasonable and prudent – it is reasonable and prudent to plan well – but the not-so-subtle message behind these messages is that the basis of life is a fundamental scarcity. The fear of reaching retirement age without adequate resources or options can lead any of us to react with anxiety. I get hooked very easily by this anxiety. I fear not having enough in my old age, being helpless, dependent, stuck, and ashamed. There's probably no good reason for me to feel that way, but sometimes I do anyway.

Our sense of security has become a commodity, available for a price. Yet, is that true? What is the basis of true security? Who is more secure, a wealthy person always craving more or a relatively poor person whose life feels rich and full with relationship and meaning? Who experiences more abundance? I can't help but think of all those lottery winners whose lives have ended up broken and miserable.

Maybe our dreams need to be less about getting more, and more about the source of real abundance? May our dreams need to be a little wilder?

What about those wild dreams? The Bible encourages us to dream dreams that are quite different from those of our culture – not dreams of fame or fortunes. Those kinds of dreams only make us more invested in our consumer society. You and I live in a culture increasing based on acquiring and selling, treating everything as a commodity – including experiences and relationships.

The Bible talks about a different direction of dreaming – also a different degree of dreaming. These are actually big dreams and wild dreams. One example of wild dreaming is Abraham. He dreamed of descendents as many as stars in the sky or grains of sand on the beach, even though his wife and he were childless and growing old. In Genesis 18, this couple learned the road to their dream would begin with having a child in their old age.

Sarah and her husband [Abraham] had had plenty of hard knocks in their time and there were plenty more of them still to come, but at that moment when the angel told them they'd better start dipping into their old age pensions for cash to build a nursery, the reason they laughed was that it suddenly dawned on them that the wildest dreams they'd ever had hadn't been half wild enough. (Buechner *Peculiar Treasures*)

Moses was another example of wild dreams. An alternative to Pharaoh's kingdom had never even been imagined, much less a kingdom of Yahweh, a kingdom of abundance and justice. But the vision he had at the burning bush sparked that dream for Moses.

Do you have a wild dream -- one that seems less appropriate or not realistic? Do you see a vision for the future of humanity? Do you have a wild dream for this congregation or for your own life?

There are many visions in the biblical book called *Revelation*. Today's text represents a wild dream for people who have been living scared: meeting in crypts and worshiping in the dark. This wild dream sees a "new heaven and earth". Jerusalem is God's bride, the Eternal living intimately with us and all people, all nations, living as one. There is no more pain, sorrow, or even death. All things are made new.

Now that's a pretty wild dream, but is it good news? Do you really want this extreme newness? It's pretty inconvenient when you're already comfortable in your life. Honestly, I suspect that most of us really just want to rearrange the furniture a little of our present lives. It can be quite an event just to get even some new accessories! I once had a friend who was a pastoral counselor. He told me that no one ever crossed the door of his office because they wanted to grow in their lives. They came because something in their lives was hurting and they wanted it to stop. When the pain stopped, most of them stopped coming to him. A few, however, stayed around and grew. But we like to keep it familiar and comfortable – not so new and different.

The Biblical promise of new creation is about as radical as anything can be. It is not about familiar and comfortable. It's about new and challenging. When in your life are you open to new and challenging? Most of us are open when we are fed up with or tired of the familiar, or in sufficiently uncomfortable with things as they are. It's really amazing how much we can put up with and how much chronic pain we can endure before we get open to the radically new. But when the pain of sameness, grief, or despair becomes acute, we are willing to make some changes at least to stop the pain or ease the burden. Sometimes we even stick with the new enough to change fundamental behaviors and, maybe, maybe find a new dream or new life in an existing one.

Today is a day of celebration at Crossroads Church. We remember the beginning of this congregation, born out of church split, born in grief that was felt as anger by many. Some of you present today suffered the loss of a church home or the dream of a church family that meant so much. That loss led to grief in the form of anger. Loss led to displacement and an acute level of pain. That pain led to change that became Crossroads. This congregation has spent the past eight years unpacking that change.

Grief is a healing process. It's not a magic wand to make painful experiences disappear, but a journey of transformation. This congregation has been moving through a grief process and is embracing the healing, a new life, represented, in a very tangible way, by this building, this neighborhood, and the many new members and new friends who are now sharing the journey with us.

We are discovering new dreams and wild dreams that have been forged in great pain and loss, and nurtured by great love and the Spirit of God. Today represents the recognition of a new future for Crossroads built on, but not tied to, our past. If the Bible is any measure, the nature and scope of God's action in our lives is often unexpected. People in the Bible frequently seemed surprised, even puzzled, by what Jesus was doing – what God was doing.

When we tune into what the Gospels really meant by the Kingdom of God, it becomes clear that it is so much more than we ever dreamed: more exciting, more threatening, more scary, and more encompassing. Our wildest dreams are not half wild enough. That is the ride we're on.

I have a wild dream or two concerning Crossroads Church. I suspect some of you do too. In the early 13th century, a young man heard a call from God: "Rebuild my Church." So he prepared to take up his tools and literally rebuild buildings. Then, it began to dawn on Francis of Assisi that God's dream for him was much wilder and more encompassing than he ever imagined.

I see for Crossroads a similar work with the Church of the 21st century. This Church needs to find her identity, rediscover her message, and hear God's call for this time in history. If you share that dream, we will need to work together to set goals and make plans to live the reality of God's new creation. In doing so, we will be proving again to this generation that our wildest dreams are not half wild enough.

(prayer)

You are a God who awes and astonishes us.

You are a God who selects a

dysfunctional family to carry your future

You are a God who dwells with barren women

Who become mothers in Israel.

You are a God who makes promises with no

evidence at hand or in sight.

You are a God powerful in purpose,

hidden in performance,

faithful over time.

And we are among those drawn into the orbit of
your life;

a life teeming with impossibilities

so hard to trust,

so impossible to explain,

so precious to treasure.

Give us this day the freedom to be amazed

and to trust your way among us,

even when the world seems closed

to all futures.

We praise you, future-creating God. Amen.

--Walter Brueggemann, 9/13/02