

East Hartford
31 Ord 2013

Alice L. O'Donovan
Is 65:17-25, Psa 98, Lk 21:5-19

“Dream the Dream of God”

How important are our dreams and goals? Important enough that when I searched phrase, “follow your dreams” via Google, there were thousands of hits. Here are 5 good ones.

“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.”

Henry David Thoreau

“Do all you can to make your dreams come true.”

Joel Osteen

“The best way to make your dreams come true is to wake up.”

Paul Valery

“You have to dream before your dreams can come true.”

Abdul Kalam http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/your_dreams.html#ahLB3G3DAg8kDtfg.99

“Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly.” - Langston Hughes

Dreams are important to us, just as dreams were important to the faithful a long while ago. Think about the dreams that “made it” into the scriptures. Remember how Jacob dreamed of a ladder - we sing about Jacob’s ladder. Remember how angels appeared in dreams, not only to Jacob but to Joseph (of the coat of many colors), and to Joseph, the carpenter who took Mary to be his espoused wife, but had no marital relations with her until the child was born, who later was warned in a dream to head for Egypt? Remember all those biblical dreams?

Dreams can be nightmares, and dreams can be well, dreams; some of which are messages from God. And. Dreams can be visions, goals of who we are becoming, visions of what should be. The prophet Isaiah, actually 3rd Isaiah, tells us of God’s dream, God’s vision of a new heaven and a new earth when *“former things shall not be remembered.”*

Hear some key elements of God's dream - *no more the sound of weeping or the cry of distress be heard. One who dies at a hundred shall be considered a youth.*

They will reap the benefits of their labor. They shall build houses and inhabit them - they shall long enjoy the work of their hands. And more.

There will be an utter transformation of life.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together. The lion shall eat straw like the ox. But the serpent—it's food shall be dust - tough life for snakes. Oh well.

They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain. They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain.

What a lovely summary of God's dream of the new creation.

Now, I could go - and on and on, I suppose about the content of God's vision but that is not the direction for this day.

Today, I want to place before us, this invitation.

I hear the Spirit inviting us to something very different. I hear the Spirit inviting us to take up dreaming with God; to dream the dream of God. I hear the Spirit inviting us to so see the world and to so hear the cries of creation that we dream the dreams of God. I hear the Spirit inviting us to so hear the cries of people that we actually begin to dream the dreams of God.

How might we do this? How might we hear the cries of creation, and the cries of God's people so deeply that we dream the dreams of God?

Listen. Begin with the ones closest to us. The friend, the spouse, the parent, the child, the colleague. Be quiet and listen. Listen for the heart and soul that lies beneath the words and the noise. Listen not to reply. Listen for the voice of God that lives within this person that you

love, this person with whom you share so much time. Listen not to reply, rather, listen to Love.

Listen. Let us listen to our own hearts. Remember these words, “Be still and know that I am God.” One of the gems from scripture that artists capture on plaques or signs or posters. I have such a plaque in my office. We listen best when we are still. “Be still and know that I am God.”

Now you might well ask, “Which is more important, where should I begin, listening to my own heart, or listening to others?” If we step out with our left foot, the right will follow. If we step out with the right, the left will follow. So as we listen to our own hearts let us listen for others and when we listen to hear the heart of another, let us listen to God within our very selves.

Let us listen as well to the world around us. Let us listen to the cries of the suffering - in the Philippines and in the neighborhood, for those cries reach the heart of God, and those cries awaken the dream of God. We hear that process in the very words we heard this morning. What is the holy mountain of God. This planet is a holy mountain of God. Who are God’s people? All the people are God’s people. “I will delight in my people. They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.”

Do not the cries of suffering of the planet, the cries of suffering of people awaken the dream of God? Yes. And when we so listen, when we so hear the suffering of the planet and its people, we too, enter and dream the dream of God.

For example, was it not the cries of those suffering with polio that awakened the dream of God in Salk and in Sabin? It has ever been thus.

Now, I am new among you, and so far as I know -there is no research physician in our midst. That does not matter. We all have the ear to hear, the eye to see, so that we all have the soul and the heart to reach out, to care, to help, to bring the dream of God alive.

Now I can talk all I want about dreaming the dream of God, but a part of me protests, “but God, what about my hopes and dreams?” And I rant and rave and mumble and complain, and do it very well, actually. I protest until I run out of energy or breath, whichever comes first. Then when I finally shut up, and become quiet enough that God can get a silent word in edgewise, I hear, “Alice. Are not your best dreams really my dreams? Do you not dream of goodness for your people, and for all people? Do you not dream of healing for the earth? Isn’t that why you do what you do, why you love photography so people will see the beauty of the earth?”

Friends, I believe our best dreams are God’s dreams singing within our hearts and minds and spirits. I believe our best dreams are God’s dreams calling us, inviting us, pleading with us to do all we can to bring those holy dreams into new and deeper reality so that, that time will come when we shall not hurt or destroy on all of God’s holy mountain.