

Shattered Dreams

Re-Routing Joy—part 1

April 21, 2019

Route to Joy #1: Death of lesser dreams

When we were young we had dreams of how life would play out. Then, real life hit. Some of our dreams were shattered, and with them, our hopes for joy. But shattered dreams are God's natural resources toward a different kind of unexpected joy!

Definition #1 of joy: Certainty. The certainty of the promise of greater dreams.

This week we'll look at a case study of two brothers who experienced shattered dreams. Their names are James and John.

DAY 1: The call to discipleship

Matthew 4:19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹ Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

1. Jesus began His ministry by calling twelve men to be His disciples. Included in this group are two brothers, James and John.
2. The call to follow Jesus is the call to be a disciple, a follow Him.
3. A disciple is a learner, both from the teacher's teachings and His way of life.

The cost of discipleship:

Luke 14:26 (RSV) "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

²⁷ Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

³³ So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

4. The call to discipleship is not the same as "signing your name on the dotted line" to join a movement. It comes with a cost. Jesus gives us three. Jot down what you think He means by each one.

Luke 14:26—

Luke 14:27—

Luke 14:33—

5. God's greatest dream for us is to become like Jesus. What strikes you from today's devotions?

DAY 2: The birth of lesser dreams

1. James and John had spent three years following Jesus. They had watched Him perform miracles over nature and over illness. They had heard Him teaching in parables. They had seen how He loved broken people and how He related to those who hated Him. They were “all in.”

2. On His way to Jerusalem for the last time, Jesus told the disciples what was going to happen to Him.

Mark 10:33 "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴ who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."

3. Somehow, some way, the message James and John just heard was “overwritten” by a message emanating out of their own desires, “needs,” and dreams.

*Mark 10:35 **Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."***

³⁶ *"What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.*

³⁷ *They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."*

³⁸ *"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"*

4. The greatest dream James and John could imagine for their lives was to be at the top echelon of this Jesus movement. They imagined themselves as what we might call the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, cabinet level positions in the kingdom of Jesus.

5. What strikes you about their request in v. 37?

6. What strikes you about Jesus' response to their request in v. 38?

7. All of us as fallen human beings dream lesser dreams than the dreams God has for us. This is the history of our fallen human nature. (Lesser dreams may not be the same as evil dreams).

8. We then attach “highest priority” ratings to our dreams. We can even, like James and John, assume that our dreams are the same as God's dreams for us.

9. What strikes you about today's devotions?

DAY 3: The ignition of lesser dreams:

1. Today, we look at what Christians call “Palm Sunday,” or the triumphal entry of Jesus.

Mark 11:7 When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it.

⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" ¹⁰ "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!" ¹¹ Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

2. The crowds of adoring people come rushing out of Jerusalem to greet who they believe will be the conquering king.

3. The imagery is rich in Old Testament history.

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

4. Every Jew would have been familiar with this Messianic prophesy. The conquering king rides into the city on a donkey, just like Zechariah prophesied!

5. If they read only the next verse in Zechariah, jot down what they would assume was the meaning of the coming Messiah...

Zechariah 9:10 I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

6. Every Jewish person assumed that when the Messiah came, He would overthrow the political ruling class. In this case it would be the hated Roman government, and usher in a new era of Judaism.

7. They failed to understand the central message of the Old Testament. A Messiah would come, not to save the people from political oppression, but from the spiritual oppression of sin! They should have read the next verse in Zechariah!

Zechariah 9:11 As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.

8. Now, back to James and John. Remember their dreams of greatness? What do you think happened in them, and to their dreams during the electric response of the crowds to Jesus?

DAY 4: The death of dreams

1. The unthinkable, the impossible happens to Jesus. He is arrested by the authorities, interrogated, whipped, and sentenced to die by the most gruesome method ever invented for capital punishment—crucifixion, a long and painful, excruciating death.

2. At the last moment Pontius Pilate gives the people the choice of either freeing Jesus or Barabbas, an insurrectionist and a murderer. If you had been James and John, what hopes would you have had that Jesus would be released by the wicked Roman government?

3. Incredibly, the people shout out the name, “Barabbas! Barabbas! Give us Barabbas!”

4. The soldiers take Jesus to the hill called “Golgotha,” meaning the place of the skull. Jesus’ wrists are hammered into the cross piece, and his ankles are hammered into the center post. The cross is then lifted and dropped into the hole.

5. The crucifixion begins.

6. The scripture records several people who were there as witnesses.

*John 19:25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and **the disciple whom he loved** (this was John’s way of referencing himself in this gospel) standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," ²⁷ and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.*

7. Meanwhile, virtually every person who is witnessing the crucifixion of Jesus is mocking Him.

Matthew 27:41 In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴² "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.

⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

⁴⁴ In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

Matthew 27:45 From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land.

⁴⁶ About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

8. Imagine yourself as John, hearing these words from Jesus. What would you have thought?

Matthew 27:50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

9. This is what we call shattered dreams. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 5: The birth of greater dreams

1. After His death, Jesus is taken down from the cross, dressed for burial, and taken to a tomb belonging to Joseph of Aramathea.
2. The tomb is sealed and guarded by sixteen Roman soldiers as a “protection” from the belief that the disciple might steal the body and claim a resurrection.
3. Meanwhile, the disciples are hiding out, in fear that they would be next—arrested, flogged, crucified.
4. Consider all that they believed they had lost:
 - a. The death of their dreams,
 - b. The death of the most important person in their life,
 - c. The death of their beloved mentor,
 - d. The death of the One who had trained them, included them, given them their first real tastes of ministry and significance, and
 - e. The death of the one who loved them like no else could.

5. On the third day Mary Magdelene runs to the house with incredible news. “He’s alive!”

John 20:3 So Peter and the other disciple (John) started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen.

⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

John 20:19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

6. Out of death comes resurrection. Out of shattered dreams come new dreams. Out of lesser dreams come the most important dreams!

7. The **joy** that is birthed out of shattered dreams is the **certainty** that **God’s dreams for us will come to fruition.** It may not happen in this life, but it certainly will be fully in the next one!

Romans 8:28 (RSV) We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

8. What strikes you about this kind of joy?