

GOD DREAMS: Jesus' Dreams For Us

January 16, 2022

Overarching Theme: 2022 – *The Year of the Lord's Favor* (Luke 4:19)

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. *The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.*

Core Point:

As the world awakens from almost 2 years of pandemic stupor, the words of Jesus proclaiming "the year of the Lord's favor" is a dream whose time has come. This passage from Luke 4 harkens back to the 'year of jubilee' of Leviticus 25 and Isaiah 61, a year of a fresh start, a clean slate and reset for everyone who can dream God's dream.

Reflect on this Scripture: Acts 1:1-8; 2:14-18

1 In the first book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning **2** until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. **3** After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. **4** While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." **6** So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" **7** He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. **15** Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. **16** No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 'In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

*¹⁸ Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.*

This Week: Acts 1:1-8; 2: 14-18

Luke reminds us in the opening verses of Acts (his second book) that the Risen Christ met with his apostles post-Easter for 40 days, speaking about the *Kingdom of God* – God’s Dream. He then ordered them not to leave the city but to pause and wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, the empowering of the Holy Spirit to declare God’s expansive kingdom dream. Characteristically, the apostles still seem to be focused on their provincial agenda (their script) - “*Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?*” (1:6 NRSV). Jesus reminds them that these matters are up to God, and not for their concern. Instead they are called to wait for divine empowerment so that they can bear witness to God’s dream not only in Israel, but beyond – even in Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

After this 10 day pause for prayer, on the day of Pentecost divine empowerment occurs in a dramatic way. As apostle Peter quotes the words of prophet Joel, God’s Spirit is poured out upon the community’s entire membership in order to prophesy, see visions, and dream dreams of the Kingdom of God (Acts 2:17-18).

-Adapted from New Interpreters Commentary, Vol X, p. 46; 69

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. Why do you think the risen Christ spent his last 40 days on earth speaking to his apostles about the Kingdom of God (God’s dream)? Toward the end of these 40 days, why do you think his apostles were still asking about the kingdom of Israel (verse 6)?
2. Why would the Risen Christ order his apostles to stay in Jerusalem after his ascension and wait for Holy Spirit empowerment? How did this 10 day pause or period of waiting help them to set aside their scripts and open them to a new work of the Holy Spirit?
3. Do you think it that this 10 day ‘pause’ for prayer (Acts 1:14 tells us they were “constantly in prayer”) would have been challenging? Why or why not? If you were in their position, what about that pause would have been most challenging for you?
4. The result of this prayerful pause is that the Apostles were able to set aside their personal agendas/scripts and tap into Jesus’ dream through the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, leading to a miraculous birthday for the church. How can we incorporate these practices into our daily lives – pausing for prayer, setting aside our agendas, and tapping into Jesus’ dream?

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC
2. Set a specific time each day this week for a "Prayer Pause," consciously setting aside your agenda and seeking to tap into Jesus' dreams for you and for our community of faith.
3. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Acts 2:17
*¹⁷ 'In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.*