

GOD DREAMS: Corinth – Finding Our Voice

February 13, 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 18: 1-11 *After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ² There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, ³ and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers. ⁴ Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks. ⁵ When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus. ⁶ When they opposed and reviled him, in protest he shook the dust from his clothes and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” ⁷ Then he left the synagogue and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God; his house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, the official of the synagogue, became a believer in the Lord, together with all his household; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul became believers and were baptized. ⁹ One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people.” ¹¹ He stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.*

This Week: Acts 18:1-11

After many in Corinth responded to the gospel message proclaimed by Paul, including Crispus, official of the synagogue (v. 8), Paul may have thought that his season in Corinth was coming to a close. In his past missionary endeavors, as soon as a community of Jesus-followers was established, Paul moved on. In addition, local opposition may have put him in harm's way if he lingered in Corinth. But God had an ongoing dream for Corinth and for Paul.

In this context of escalating tensions Jesus communicates to Paul through another nighttime vision. The Lord does not say to Paul "do not be afraid" because he would intervene to end Paul's mission and inaugurate more peaceful days. Rather, he promises physical protection so that Paul may continue to speak and grow the church in Corinth. Jesus' comment that "there are many in this city who are my people" (18:10) again is prophetic of future conversions not only from among the Jews (= Sosthenes, 18:17), who are the people of God but also from among the Gentiles as the continuing fulfillment of Amos's prophecy that God would call out "a people" from the Gentiles. Drawing strength from the Lord's exhortation, Paul stays on in Corinth for "a year and six months," during which he continues his God dream of "teaching the word of God among them". As he gives voice to this dream, many people are touched and transformed by the good news.

-Adapted from New Interpreters Commentary, Vol X, p. 255

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. Given the fact that the Lord begins his visionary message to Paul with the words "*Do not be afraid*," what do you think Paul was afraid of?
2. What fears tend to get in the way of people giving voice to and living out their God-given dreams? Can you think of a time that you were afraid of taking a step of faith? How did it turn out?
3. Jesus challenges Paul to move beyond fear and give voice to his God given dream. Why is it important to verbalize our dream to others? In the video, what happened when Jaxon spoke up on behalf of others in need? How can we speak up on behalf of others in need today?
4. If there were many people that God longed to reach in Corinth through Paul's dream (v.10), what would have been the impact of him moving on and not staying in Corinth? What might be the impact of you sitting on your dream in your 'Corinth'?

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC
2. Take a risk and talk to someone (a life group member, a friend, a pastor) about some of your **God dreams**.
3. Read and reflect through your **God Dreams** journal (beginning on page 24). What will you write on your 'star'?
4. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: **Acts 18:9-11**⁹ *One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people."* ¹¹ *He stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.*