

# “Sowing Dreams”

Matthew 13:3-9

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This week, we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. a passionate dreamer who refused to accept injustice, refused to wait, refused to be silenced. Martin was a Godly dreamer who helped all of us journey closer to the Promised Land. Martin sowed his dream, and his dream took root flourished and transformed us, transformed our country and transformed the world into a more loving place for all people.

Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." As a church we are called to passionately dream and live into our dreams. We are called to encourage Godly dreamers who are partnering with God in bringing heaven to earth.

God is always inspiring passionate dreamers to transform the world into a more loving and joyful place. Sarah and Abraham dreamed of blessing all people with God's blessings. Miriam and Moses led people out of slavery into the freedom of the Promised land. Martin Luther King Jr. enabled us to take several steps away from discrimination, segregation, and oppression. We still have more steps to go for all people to be loved, free, joyful and appreciated.

Martin said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Martin defined an unjust law as any law that degrades human personality. A just law uplifts human personality." God's grace washes away all that degrades and redeems every person. Jesus comes to uplift us, to nourish us, to make us whole, complete, to fill us with love, joy, peace and abundant life. For each of us as individuals and as a worldwide family, this transformation is slow. We continually need to be cleansed by God's grace and given a new beginning. Our journey to the Promised Land is full of wandering and backtracking and we will get to the Promised Land. The apostle Paul declares, 2 Corinthians 5:17, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" In our new beginnings, we are able to dream of a fully realized Promised Land and take a few steps toward the Promised Land. And we falter, then God renews us over and over and over again. We are called to keep dreaming, keep journeying to an eternal time where all are loved, rejoice and are free.

Martin said, "We are called to play the good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day the whole Jericho road must be transformed so that men and women will not be beaten and robbed as they make their journey through life. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it understands that an edifice that produces beggars needs restructuring." Often scripture warns of corporate sin. If one person suffers, all suffer. If one person is hungry, or homeless, or a refugee, or oppressed, or without health care, or unemployed, or robbed, or hurt, or sick then we all have sinned for God calls us to be a harmonious loving family. Martin said, "Evil is not driven out, but crowded out, through the expulsive power of something good. The greatest tragedy is the appalling silence of good people. Most people are thermometers that register the temperature of majority opinion, not thermostats that transform the temperature of society. Any religion which professes to be concerned with the souls of people and is not concerned with the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them, is a dry-as-dust religion. A social movement that only moves people is merely a revolt. A movement that changes both people and institutions is a revolution."

God is calling us to be passionate dreamers who transform the world into a peaceful, joyful loving family. Listen for God speaking to you through excerpts from Martin's *I have a dream* speech. "We are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. Even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. This is our hope. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.

With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of siblinghood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

Reflecting on Dr. King's speech, Jim Wallis observed a critical element that is intentionally omitted. It's the phrase, "I have a complaint." Jim says. "There was much to complain about for black Americans, and there is much to complain about today for many in this nation. But King taught us that our complaints or critiques, or even our dissent, will never be the foundation of social movements that change the world -- but dreams always will. Just saying what is wrong will never be enough to change the world. You have to lift up a vision of what is right."

God is inviting us to dream big, grand, utopia dreams, to proclaim these dreams and to live into these dreams. God is inviting us to dream like Jesus, Sarah, Abraham, Miriam, Moses and Martin Luther King Jr. We are called to dream of peace, love and joy for all people, to dream of us all be united, caring for each other, affirming each other, celebrating each other, rejoicing together. We are invited to dream of the Promised Land where God's grace has transformed all.

Today we need more dreamers. We don't need complainers. There are plenty of those already. There's a whole culture of complaint that threatens to drown us all in its bitter swill. A culture of complaint is a quick and dirty way to build false, fearful, hateful community. A sense of unity built on complaint has no staying power. Complaints build negativity, lies and division. Complaints fuel a vicious spiral as those complained against grow defensive, lurching counter complaints causing mistrust, fear and hatred to grow. We don't need more complainers to point out how bad things are. We need dreamers who focus on how good things can be. Dreamers who help us take another step into love. Dreamers who refuse cynical speech, refuse hate, refuse fear and paint a life of joyful love for all.

There are many inspiring truths, sermons and insights from the parable of the sower. Please put them aside for inspiration for another time. For the moment frame the sower as a person who is a dreamer who is sowing dreams, seeds of love, joy and justice, sowing seeds of affirmation of one's gifts and talents.

**Matthew 13:3-9 NLT "Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. As she scattered them across her field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died. Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."**

All of us at times will be the sower and the four soils. Sometimes we are hurting, grieving, sick, afraid or hateful, so we become hardhearted like the footpath. We ignore dreams. Thankful no one stays in this state. God's grace renews us. Howard Thurman describes the seasons of fleeting dreams. "The dream in the heart is the outlet. It is one with the living water welling up from the very springs of God, nourishing and sustaining all of life. Where there is no dream, the life becomes a swamp, a dreary dead place and, deep within, a person's heart begins to rot. The dream need not be some great and overwhelming plan; it need not be a dramatic picture of what might or must be someday; it need not be a concrete outpouring of a world-shaking possibility of sure fulfillment. ... The dream is the quiet persistence in the heart that enables a person to ride out the storms of ... churning experiences. ... It is the ever-recurring melody in the midst of broken harmony and harsh discords of human conflict. It is the touch of significance which highlights the ordinary experience, the common event. The dream is no outward thing. It does not take its rise from the environment in which one moves or functions. It lives in the inward parts, it is deep within, where the issues of life and death are ultimately determined. Keep alive the dream; for as long as you have a dream in your heart, you cannot lose the significance of living." Lamentations declares. Lamentations 3:22-23 "Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed, for God's compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is God's faithfulness." The psalmist sings. Psalm 51:10 "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me." God makes every moment a new beginning. God is constantly sowing dreams.

Sometimes we are like the shallow soil. We glimpse the glory of a dream yet lack the passion to live into the dream. Sometimes we are like the soil in the thorns. We embrace the dream with passion, then the negativity of others, the complainers, distract us.

Sometimes we are the fertile soil. We embrace the dream with passion. We actively live into the dream. We pass on dreams to others who pass them on to others and the dreams exponentially grow. Together we journey closer to the Promised Land.

All positive dreams enable everyone to journey closer to a world of joyful love. I grew up in a small church with loving people who shared passionate dreams. In high school Pastor Robert planted a seed, a dream, for me to tell others about God's grace as a pastor. It took over a decade for that seed to sprout.

God is constantly sowing pure dreams in everyone. God invites you to sow dreams for others. Often a few kind, caring, loving words sets one off on a grand journey that abundantly bless numerous people. God invites you to dream and live into your dreams. Amen