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October 21, 2007

"Vuja De: It's déjà vu all over again: 'Live Into Your Dreams'"

Rev. Jim Wood

We are looking this fall at the aspects of the Christian life as we live it and how we see God's presence in the midst of all different things, in those moments of great triumph but also in those moments of pain and suffering. How is it that we find Him and know Him? We are working through 1st and 2nd Timothy in the New Testament, but before we turn to our passage in 1st Timothy, let's look at a passage in the prophet Amos. It's in the 5th chapter beginning at the 18th verse. The prophet Amos is one that has increasingly had great influence on the church, on the body, particularly in the last 40 to 50 years. You'll hear one verse why in a few moments and it will make sense to us.

Amos was a prophet in the 8th century B. C. His word generally most scholars believe came around 750 B. C. He was a southern boy sent to the north. He was from the Kingdom of Judah and this was when the kingdoms were divided, and he was called to go to Israel, the northern kingdom. He was a working guy. He came from either a shepherd family or from a family that plucked figs; basically what they did was pruned fig trees. He had a call from God that he tried to resist. He tried not to go, but God would not release him, so he journeys from his kingdom to the northern kingdom. He goes up and he begins to prophesy upon a people that were really not even his, so you imagine the dilemma that he has and the difficulty that he has, and yet he speaks to them in powerful ways. It's very hard for us as we read the prophets I think to grasp them. The reason being that as the prophets go, whether it be the major prophets or Amos who's one of the minor prophets, when you read them so much of it appears to be *fait accompli*, or this is what has already been willed for you. You will read today what God is saying will happen to the people. They will be spread out; they will be sent out beyond even Damascus because of their sins, because of the way they have been living. As we read them also we realize throughout them there is still an opportunity for the people to turn, for the people to repent, and that is really the call of the prophet, to hold people accountable for their lives.

What Amos is doing for the northern kingdom is extremely significant, because the northern kingdom at this point is a kingdom of great worshippers. They've got worship down pat. They do sacrifices better than anybody. They've got the prayers. They've got everything just figured out. The only problem with that is they have increasingly lost the sense of what it is to care for their own, to care for the poor, to care for the needy. The idea of justice and righteousness is being lost and all the while they are continuing in this amazing worship and focus on God. They are increasingly getting excited about what is known as the Day of the Lord. In this context in the Old Testament, the Day of the Lord is that day when God comes and just smites all of their enemies, just does them in, and they become totally victorious as a people. They are understandably just excited about that. They are promised about the Day of the Lord. They hear

about, so they are just getting ready for the Day of the Lord when all of their enemies are just going to be vanquished. They're done in.

Amos speaks to them though and says, "Whoa, watch out. The Day of the Lord is not just about destroying your enemies. The Day of the Lord is about God's justice and righteousness that will affect your enemies, but if you are not careful it's going to affect you too." That's the context. You'll hear in it a line that is at the heart of I would say one of the two or three most significant speeches in the last hundred or two hundred years, and you'll know it when you hear it.

Listen for the word of our Lord.

Old Testament Reading – Amos 5:18-27

Alas for you who desire the day of the LORD! Why do you want the day of the LORD? It is darkness, not light;

as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake.

Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.

Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream.

Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?

You shall take up Sakkuth your king, and Kaiwan your star-god, your images, which you made for yourselves;

therefore I will take you into exile beyond Damascus, says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.

Now in the New Testament in Paul's first letter to Timothy, the 6th chapter, beginning at the 11th verse. The 11th verse to the 21st verse are really commendable I think almost as much as the passages that we think and reflect and pray upon almost daily, the 23rd Psalm, the Lord's Prayer,

and other parts of scripture. Paul is speaking to, writing to his mentee, the one he is mentoring, Timothy. Timothy, as you know if you've been with us for a while, is in Ephesus as this letter is being written to him. Ephesus is an incredibly debauchorous city. It's economy, everything is based upon the worship of a fertility goddess and all that is accompanied with that, yet the Christian church is starting to find its foothold in that community. Now at the latter part of this letter, Paul is speaking as he ends the letter to Timothy, a word of encouragement which is powerful but also still advising him, still letting him know what it is for which he should watch. What I find particularly interesting in this passage as you listen to it is that Timothy is receiving this from Paul and you would think that Paul as Paul knows Ephesus, that Paul with all that is going on out there with the sexual immorality with all of the issues that play out in all of that worship and all of the pagan understandings, you would think that Paul as he gives his final instructions or as he gives his final advice would focus on that, but that's not what you hear him focus on today. You hear him focus on money. I find that intriguing.

Listen for the word of our Lord.

New Testament Reading – 1Timothy 6:11-21

But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness.

Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you

to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share,

thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the profane chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge;

by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith. Grace be with you.

I am very much a sucker for great big adventure stories. Actually it's not so much the big adventure stories that I'm drawn to, but it's those who have big goals that then become big adventures, incredible adventures. I look at my bookcase and I see the types of books that I read and so very often they are accounts of people who dreamed big dreams and who lived into those dreams, whether it be in the sports world, or whether it be in the outdoor world, or whether it be in the political world, or the world of missions, or different areas where people were able to not only dream big dreams, but to live into those dreams. The truth is it's really not hard to find people who dream big dreams; in fact, I think almost every one of us does. In fact, in all honesty, I have never talked to anyone that I had an extended conversation with, that at some point in that conversation if I hadn't asked it came around, "What is your big dream, the big dream for your life? What is it that you really want to do that will make a difference? What is it that you want to do that will impact the world?" I don't think I've talked to anyone who said, "I have no idea." I think every person has had some sense, this dream that they have, of their particular role, what their particular impact might be in the world. Dreaming big dreams is not a hard thing. You can only go to kindergarten to find that out. It's not hard. But, what about the rare people who have the ability to live into those dreams, to not only have them, but literally start to live into them. That's the kind of person that amazes me and intrigues me.

When I look at the history of our family in scripture, I'm moved by the people who live into their dreams, who not only have these dreams but live into them. I'm moved by a mother who loves her son so much that she knows that the only way that he might be saved is to make a little basket and place him in a river where other children of his faith are being killed. That mother and her daughter faithfully, faithfully living into the dream that all would be well for him, their present for him. I'm moved by a young woman whose husband dies, she has no children, she has nothing left, and she decides to go with her mother-in-law to a foreign land and a foreign people. The mother-in-law continually saying to her, "No, no, no. Go back. Don't come. Don't come." Yet, she is dreaming the whole time she is taking each step of what might come and to have that be one of the very ancestors of Jesus Christ.

I'm moved by a little boy who stands in courage when everyone else runs in fear, who's so small he can't even wear the king's armor, and yet he stands up against a giant beyond imagination for the people. He stands up and he fights not with sword and not with military armor, but he brings what he has – his little slingshot and five smooth stones. He becomes a hero not because of that moment, but because really for us as the people of God how he lived into that dream for the rest of his life. I'm moved by a man who is a persecutor of people of faith, so guilty that he thinks himself even a murderer, and as he encounters a dream of God in his life how it changes everything that he is and he lives each day growing into that dream. Those are the people of faith, those are the people who impact us, the people who not only have the big dreams, but the people who in some way it seems almost mysterious have found the ability to live into it.

The passage from Amos today has within it a line that has become incredibly famous in the United States. In fact, I read a poll about 15 years ago that asked where that line came from, and I think 80% of the people thought that Martin Luther King, Jr. himself made up that line, "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream." Martin Luther

King, Jr. got it from scripture. It's a passage that has become famous because it has become a dream that not only one man but a dream that an entire nation has been given the privilege of having the opportunity to living into.

A presentation featuring excerpts from the "I have a Dream" speech of Martin Luther King, Jr.¹ was shown:

"We shall overcome. We shall overcome. We shall overcome some day. Oh, here in my heart, I do believe we shall overcome someday"

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

As we walk we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back.

There are those who ask the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We will never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unthinkable horrors of police brutality. We will not be satisfied as long as the Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and the Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

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.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

These are dreams that changed the world, and they are dreams that don't come overnight, but they come over time. They build over time and they come to fruition over time and the key for us as the Body of Christ is continually to seek to live into this dream and so many others, where we as the Body of Christ embody what is truth and grace and love and justice and righteousness. We are moved by these dreams. We have them, but, why is it that they are so rarely ever accomplished? I think the answer is so simple that we don't want to hear it. I don't think the answer will make for a long book. I think it would be a chapter at most, maybe even one page. I don't think we as the people, particularly people in America, really want short answers. I think we want to be able to read a long book about it. I think we want to read a number of books about it. How can I do it? What should I do? What are all the techniques? I think we in America are tinged by the sin of believing that unless you're intelligent enough or unless you have some special place in society or unless you're born into the right family or unless you are placed in that strategic environment that nothing can really happen. Other than that we are just people who are out there. Yet, the answer is so simple.

We can word it in a variety of different ways. We can say it's "moving forward" or "sticking with it," but the ultimate answer is simply discipline. People who live into their dreams, nations who live into their dreams, people of God who live into their dreams are not always the smartest people; in fact I would say that usually they are not. They are not the people who are the most gifted, in fact I would say usually they are not, but they are always the people who are the most disciplined. The people who seek to live into something day by day. Not seeking just to have it like that, but to grow into it, to live into it, to live out daily just a life of discipline.

I'm in the midst of a book called *Forever on the Mountain* by James Tabor². I love these kinds of books. It's an account of a hiking expedition in 1967 climbing Mt. McKinley in Alaska; we call it Denali now. It is the highest peak in North America. 20,320 feet and it is bitterly cold there. In 1967 sort of at the beginning when just a few people were starting to hike it, there was an expedition of twelve people who went up and they encountered a horrible storm and seven of those twelve died. This is just kind of an account of what as best they know happened in the midst of that. As I was reading it I was struck by a couple of things that just are pretty interesting to me. When you are at 20,320 feet and you are as far north as Denali is, as Mt. McKinley is, you are that point taking in about 30% of the oxygen that you would if you were at sea level. Just imagine hiking incredible inclines and holding your breath for 40 seconds out of every minute while you are doing it. Steve Story and I did Mt. Kilimanjaro. It's on the equator and it's only 19,340 feet. The thing that is so interesting about it is as you start to hike that you start to realize that the altitude really does have an effect on you, and it's not just a physical effect, it starts to affect your mind. The thing that is so really incredible about it is that you start to lose your judgment, a good sense of judgment. But the thing that's kind of interesting is that while you're

up there you're you don't know you're losing your judgment so you think you've got good judgment even though you don't. I don't know if that makes any sense to you. So you're up there and you think you're making good decision but you're really not. The key for these people who go up and hike these great heights, particularly things like Everest, Denali, and K2 is that they know, they are trained, it is almost literally beaten into them that when you are up there you do this. You do what you're told to do while you're at sea level. You plan, you think through it, and you don't think for yourself too much up there because you're going to mess yourself up when you do. The higher your altitude the more disoriented you are going to be and the more you are going to start to think that you're able to make better decisions for yourself than all of the people that have done this kind of thing. I don't know about you, but that image really works well for me in a lot of ways. The higher you move up in an organization, the higher you move up in school, the higher you move up in your job, the higher you move up in your family, the more you start to think you're in control – the higher the altitude, the more disorienting it can be, and yet the great mystery is I don't think I'm disoriented and so I am making decisions, I'm saying things, I'm talking about things that just aren't good for me and they're not good for the people that I'm around.

So, what do you do? For them it's clear. You just do what you're taught to do; you do what you do over and over and over. You plan it out. You map it out. You know how you're supposed to be. You know how you're supposed to act. When you're at sea level, when you've got that full thought, that's when you do it and the rest of that trip is a trip of discipline, a trip of doing what you know to do and just doing it and doing it and doing it. When you do that, as it is for so many hikers, you accomplish these amazing life dreams. If you start to think for yourself and you start to vary and you start to move away and you start to think you've got a better answer, then you start to lose it and you can become so distracted that it can literally lead to your destruction.

That's what Amos is going to tell the people in the north. He's telling them, "Your distractions have literally led to your destruction and God is saying to you now, 'Don't ask for the day of the Lord. Don't think it's going to be what you think it is because it's going to be a day of justice and righteousness, yes, but it's going to be a day of righteousness and justice for everybody and you've got to be asking questions about yourself.'" Have you become so blessed, have you become so good at worship, have you become so centered on what you think is a relationship with God that you've gotten altitude sickness and you've lost the real truth, you've lost what is right? You're no longer at ground level, you're no longer at sea level - has that happened to you as Amos would say to the people? It's very clear that God says, "Yes, that's exactly what's happened. You've become great worshippers. You've become great people who have this dream of the day of the Lord and you're living for it and you're gathering together and you're celebrating about it. You're great at your sacrifices and you're great at your offerings and you're great at all of that, but you're not caring for the poor. You're not caring for the needy. You're not living a life of justice and righteousness. You're just calling upon God."

When that happens, as we start to think and we start to pray and we start to move in our relationship with God, as that altitude sickness starts to affect us we can find ourselves in very, very bad trouble, even to the point of death and that's what Amos wants to say to the people. He says to them, "No, it's not about your sacrifices. I hate, I despise." That's language that God is using for the people that He loves. "I will not accept. I will not listen. But let justice flow like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream." The context for that is that the streams in the north are known mostly as *wadi*. They are little creek beds and they only have water a couple of months a year and other than that they are always dry. What God is telling the people is "I want you not just to be righteous and just some times. I don't want you just to go out and say we

did our thing for the poor today, or we did this last month, or we've got this little ministry thing that we're doing caring for a few people. Instead, I want it to be like an everflowing stream. I don't want it to ever dry up. I want it to be there just constantly, let justice flow like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream. That's the dream that I have for you as the people of God. That's the dream that I have and the way you keep the water flowing is by continually putting something in, by living that kind of life." That's what Amos is telling the people and that's what Paul is telling Timothy as well as he's giving him this encouragement. He says to him at the end, "Fight the good fight."

I know military images can be dangerous when we think about the faith, but I tell you they're also true because it is a battle. It's a battle and Paul says to Timothy, this little person that he has raised up to start to grow into a great man, "Fight the good fight. Make the good confession. The same confession he says that Jesus Christ made when He was before Pontius Pilate, a confession of truth, a confession that was willing to offer His life for others. Live that kind of life Timothy. Live out that. Live into your dream, and the way you do it, Timothy, is not by starting something brand new and stepping out and saying 'I've got this huge thing and it's just going to have to happen,' it's by taking the dream that God has already placed in your life and it's by just working toward it step by step by step by step."

Somebody gave me a book the other day. I was a little bit offended at it. It's a book called *50 to 70* (laughter), and it's actually pretty interesting but it's a book that talks about the fact that you can really be as fit at 70 as you are at 50 if you read the book and follow the instructions of the book. It's actually a good book but I can tell you in two sentences what it says. It says watch what you eat and exercise an hour a day. Get your cardio up for an hour a day. If you do that and nothing creeps in like some weird illness or cancer, you will be as fit or more fit at 70 than you will be at 50. It's a lengthy book but I just told you what it says. It just took them that long to be able to say it. Here's the thing. It's just about doing it. I start to realize that for my own self for my own fitness. I'm at that stage in life right now where if I get out of it for a while, even for a week or two, I start to notice it and it's so much harder to get back into it. For me, the discipline is just critical, and the discipline is just day by day. Day by day.

It's the same thing about accomplishing our dreams. You see I believe we do have dreams. I believe God places those dreams upon us. I believe everyone here if we went through some kind of an exercise, a simple exercise, would be able to say, "This is the difference that I feel like I would like to make in the world. This is what I would like to have my life worth." Well, do it. Just get up and do it. It's as simple as that and yet it is as rare as that. It's just getting up. I believe that if you and I sat down in the morning and if we held out our mission statement for our own life - I hope you have one. If you don't, you really need to do that. What's the mission statement, the purpose of your life - and we simply said, "What is my day going to be that is going to live into this" I believe it would transform your life. The thing that is not going to sell a lot of books about it is it's not going to transform it the first day or the second day or the third day or the fourth day or the 300th or the 500th or the 1000th day. It's going to transform it underneath it all. It's going to say that I have something worth living for. I have something worth being disciplined for.

That's what this speech by Martin Luther King does for me. It moves me every time I hear it. It moves me because it speaks about something that he was willing to live and die for. Something that he was willing to live and die for and yet he lived it out in simple ways as the days went on. Most days were not great glorious speech days in DC, but just living it out day by day. As I look at this challenge, and Joel did such a great job in putting this together for us, it's not even too

subtle in it. It's asking the question "What about us as the Body of Christ? As people come to our church are we a place where a black child and white child can not only play together, but can worship together and can grow in Christ as brothers together? Is that who we are? If it's not in it's fullness of expression, then how do we become it.?" I would say we become it by holding it up and by just moving forward one step at a time to accomplish it. That's what Paul is saying to Timothy, "Timothy, fight the good fight. Make the good confession. Just take one step at a time." I find it intriguing at the end after he's given him this great encouragement – that's how I would end it. I would just end it with a "Rah." Give him the Knute Rockne speech and just send him out – but he doesn't do that. He says, "And, watch out for this. Watch out for wealth. Watch out for money."

All of the stuff going on in Ephesus, I mean it's like if they did a movie about Ephesus at the time it would just be horrible. It's amazing the kind of immorality that is taking place there. I would think that Paul would focus on that but he doesn't, he focuses on money. Why? I think because first of all Paul realizes that that's something that's always going to be tempting Timothy as the church starts to grow, as the church starts to draw different people, as the people starts to have some money, it's going to be tempting for him to start to measure things by that. The other is I think that Paul realizes, just as our world really needs to recognize, is that money really is the most personal measurement of life for us, even more than our sexuality.

I don't know if everybody knows Howard Stern, he's the shock jock, like the most disgusting guy on radio ever in the history of radio. He would be proud to be known as that. He's been fined I think more than a million dollars by the FCC for obscene things that he said on radio. He had a TV show for a while that was just as disgusting. In 1994 he decided he was going to run for governor of New York and so he kind of put together a campaign, was going to do it on the radio, and was going to run for governor of New York, until he found that in order to actually run he had to submit all of his personal financial statements and he refused to do it. He refused to do it saying that was something that was too personal for anyone else to ever know anything about. This is the guy who for years has talked about his own stuff, his trash, junk about his life, in intimate detail about his sex life and all of that stuff on the radio, but he says that how much money I have is too personal for anyone to know. That's not just Howard Stern, that's life.

I've told some of you this before. I had a group in my first church. We were a very small group that got together before worship and Sunday School on Sunday mornings and we really grew close together. We had an amazing bond - there were about six of us – an amazing bond. We really started sharing our lives. We started sharing about what was going on our lives, we began going into great intimate details about things, and I thought we were growing so close together that I made a suggestion. I said, "You know I think what would be the next step for us because he want to be so close and want to share everything, I think next week we ought to bring our tax returns and we just share with each other our tax returns. Just for ourselves, just so that we have that kind of intimacy among ourselves, we know how to pray for each other, and so on." This is true. That group had met for years. It never met again ever. That was part of my stupidity, but it also speaks to me about the power that wealth does have over us. Let's be clear about it, too, it's not just the wealthy like the billionaires. Bread for the World³ says if you have a coin thing where you collect your spare coins on your dresser and if you don't go into it in a month to buy either food or to pay essential bills, you are richer than 92% of the people on the face of the earth. You are in the richest 8%. 92 is an A in most every school. We look at this and we think, "You know I'm not wealthy, this is not talking about me, this is not it," but Paul knows that it is. It's about the distractions that can lead to destruction. That's why if you are a member of the church and you got a mailing from us for our stewardship drive, it could have come yesterday or will

come the first of the week, we simply are trying to move a challenge about a giving covenant. A giving covenant is something that's very, very simple. It's just something that we put together to say how do we keep our priorities and discipline ourselves daily. It simply says, "I will see nothing as mine. I will do my work to my best ability. I'll be generous with all that I have. I'll give Christ the first part of what I receive. I will save a portion of the next part. I will be careful with any debt I incur. I will see nothing as mine." An opportunity just to discipline ourselves in an incredibly significant part of our lives. We also put together a magnet, it's a refrigerator magnet. The letter will tell you why I did that. This is something that has been huge for our family.

Not too many years ago one of the boys asked how much money we gave to the church, and I was shocked a little bit that they asked. In all honesty, I really didn't want to tell them. For whatever reason, I didn't want to tell them – that's kind of like my business, Sheryl's business, our business. Rather than do that, I thought about it, Sheryl and I talked about it, prayed about it. We give our tithe monthly. Instead of not telling them we started taking our check, we write it a month in advance, and we put it on the refrigerator, and every time we open the refrigerator what we give as our offering, our tithe to the church is there. Our additional offerings are not, there are other things we do, but it's there. It's a simple little thing but it has been one of the most important spiritual things in our lives, in my life in particular, just to see it there and to know that daily, not just the stroking of a check, it's a reminder of the kind of discipline to which I know I'm called in my own life and our family's called in our life. This is the way we accomplish big dreams. We live into them, we discipline ourselves, and take steps day by day. We know what the pitfalls are. We know what the temptations of life are. Each of us today knows what our temptations are. We know whether we value wealth too much. We know whether money is a stumbling block for us or not. That's something that you know. You know that if your wealth, or what you have, or what you don't have, or what you think you should have is keeping you from fighting for something, that it's no longer a blessing in your life. If it's something that you are using to guard or to guard yourself, it's no longer a blessing in your life. Instead it is something to be used for the Kingdom, for moving forward in life.

Two of our sons are at an age of transition right now. Ross is getting out of college and Adam is getting out of high school this year and both of them have been thinking about this coming summer and big plans that they have for that time of transition. The big plans don't include me. There are plans for travel and going off with friends and all kinds of things like that, and because they don't include me and Sheryl that means that they finally realized that they're going to have to come up with some money to be able to do it (laughter). Now that they've been thinking about it they might include Sheryl and me as time goes on (laughter). This is the thing that I so appreciate about it, and I really mean this. At this point in life I really think they've got the right view. They're out there making what they need to make in order to accomplish something with what they're making. I start to think about my life and my life is so much about protecting what I have, guarding what I have, taking care of what I have, closing myself off, and I'm not just talking about money. I'm just talking about what life is, it's so much guarding and protecting. When instead we are supposed to have what we have and use it so that we can accomplish. That's how people accomplish great things. That's how people live into their dreams and that's why it so excites me about what happens so much in the Body of Christ here.

That's why it excites me about the impact in small day by day disciplined living that it makes for people. It excites me that we have a Young Single, a young woman, in our congregation who has such a heart for people in Park Place that not only does she volunteer her time, and not only is she involved in ministry, but she has made a conscious decision to live there. It so excites me that we

have a Young Single in our congregation who is so moved by the cause of justice and righteousness that as a young attorney he's praying through whether it's a season in his life at this point to be able to take time off and be able to go and perhaps clerk for the Rwanda genocide trials. It so moves me that we have a couple that are about two years away from retirement who are going to Kenya in a few weeks because they are praying over whether that is a mission field to which God is calling them in retirement. It so excites me that we have another couple who are well into retirement who are going to Africa in a couple of weeks because they have been so moved by the life of a little girl that they've never even met. Her mother was raped and murdered and they are praying through how they might have an impact on the life of this little baby. It so moves me that when people in our midst are wrestling with illness, cancer or with progressive diseases, how many people gather together and pray, how many people gather in homes and pray, how many people gather together and offer and lift up prayers. Those are things that happen not in great, huge movements, but they happen by day to day discipline of living out our lives, living out our lives, living out our lives just day by day and they grow into amazing accomplishments when they are focused on the dream.

Here's the thing for you. What dream do you have today that you want to make a difference? What difference is your life going to make in this world? I think you already know. I think there is something in there that is already speaking to you about what that is. Now, here's the thing. What are you going to do today and tomorrow and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday and Saturday? What are you going to do? Just one thing each day. Just one thing each day to live into it. If you do it, if you do it, you can accomplish anything for the Kingdom.

Amen.

Sermon Dictionary Notes:

¹ Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered the speech entitled "I Have a Dream" on August 28, 1963 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. The full text of the speech is available at: <http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html>

² James Tabor has written for numerous publications including *TIME*, *U.S. News*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Smithsonian*. He was the writer and on-camera host of the PBS series *The Great Outdoors*. His book *Forever on the Mountain* chronicled an expedition to climb Mt. McKinley led by Joe Wilcox in July 1967.

³ Bread for the World - a nationwide Christian movement that seeks justice for the world's hungry people by lobbying the nation's decision makers.