

## ***Revolution 2***

### ***Revolutionary Community Acts 2:14-21***

***May 9***

Introduction: Happy Moms Day! Have you noticed God has made all moms unique? My grandmother Miller was a very prim and proper English woman. Grandma Mac was all fun and games! So in my experience All Moms are different. I recently read of A mother who was notorious for her lead foot. A Georgia State Trooper pulled her over for speeding as she raced through the state on the way to her home in Florida. This mom was Hoping to get off with a warning, the mother tried to appear shocked when the officer walked up to her car. "I have never been stopped like this before," she said to the officer. "What do they usually do, ma'am," he asked, "shoot the tires out?"

One of the things I am most thankful about the mothers in my life is they inflated the tires on my dreams. When most of life and most people in life would have gladly shoot out the tires on my dreams! We all know this is true about mothers. . . There child starts playing the guitar, and they are certain he will be the next Elvis Presley. Coaches on every little league, team knows it is impossible to tell little Johnny's mom, he has no athletic ability and no he probably will not be the next Albert Pujols! Mom's as a whole work very hard at nurturing their children's Dream.

The setting for the movie Dead Poet's Society is a proper New England prep school steeped in tradition and discipline. Into this rather stiff environment comes a new English instructor played by Robin Williams. He has an unorthodox method of teaching. He stands on his desk at times to make a point. He electrifies his students. He has them reading poetry as they practice soccer so that they will see the connection between the two. He prods them to think for themselves, to get in touch with their feelings, to **dream** their own **dreams**.

At first, the students are resistant. Everything seems too crazy. Gradually, however, they respond to their teacher's enthusiasm for poetry and life. Soon it becomes apparent that the boys are hungry and

thirsty -- not for food and drink because most of them come from affluent homes. They are hungry and thirsty for love, for acceptance and for someone to take seriously their personal **dreams**.

How seriously do we take our own **dreams**? Are we conscious that we have what Alan McGlashan calls "the **dreamer** within"? Could it be possible that God is trying to speak to us through our **dreams**?

Did you know the only one, who encourages us more to dream than mom-is God the Father! One of God's favorite ways of speaking to us, is through the use of dreams. Dream or dreams is used almost 100 times in the Bible. God even more so than our own mother, dreams the very best for us!

God according to Acts 2:16-18 In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will **dream dreams**. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was released throughout the entire world—to men, women, slaves, Jews, Gentiles. Now everyone can receive the Spirit. This was a revolutionary thought for first-century Jews. How would we know this has come, Peter says the young and old will dream. Two of the sign post that a new promise-covenant of grace and faith has come is the giving of dreams.

One example of this is Florence Nightingale who was born in 1820 in Florence, Italy. When Florence was sixteen years old her life was changed. God gave her a dream and told her that she had a task that He wanted her to do. That task was to be a nurse, nurse in her time were nothing more than cleaners. But cleaners of the worst sort! She lived her God given dream and by the end of her life, sanitary boards were being established around the world. If God had not given this young Christian woman a dream, the medical field might still not see the connection between cleanliness and infections. The dream started in Acts 2 has revolutionized the world forever. There are three steps to nurture the God given dreams in our life's.

## *Identify your Dream*

The first task is to identify your **dream**. What specifically is God calling you to do? You can be sure that starting out following a **dream** will not be an easy undertaking. The prophet Joel promised ancient Israel that one day "your old men shall **dream dreams**, and your young men shall see visions (2:28)."

The context for these words was an agricultural crisis. The land had been plagued recently with a swarm of locusts that devastated the crops. Food was scarce. The people were terrified. One day the prophet arrived on the scene to announce that "the day of the Lord" was at hand. This expression signified that God was about to take decisive action in Israel's history.

Joel's prophecy instilled dreams of hope for the future. He calls upon his people to rejoice because he has received the promise from God that soon "abundant rain" will come. No longer will they have to contend with "the hopper, the destroyer and the cutter." They will have food to satisfy themselves. Never again will they be put to shame. Their prayers have been answered.

Centuries later, Peter, on the Day of Pentecost appropriates Joel's prophecy of **dreams** and visions as the text for the first Christian sermon. The prophet's words were fulfilled as God's Spirit like tongues of fire and the rush of a mighty wind came upon the early disciples gathered in Jerusalem. The followers of Jesus who had cowered secretly in fear since their Lord's death, some 50 days previously, now were energized with power, joy and expectation. In short the spirit of God put air in the tires of their dreams.

The **dreamer** within them nudged them out of their comfortable and familiar surroundings in Jerusalem to spread the good news about Jesus throughout Judea, even to the once despised Samaritans, and eventually into the gentile world, in fact to the ends of the earth. What a **dream**! It was such a dream, that literally revolutionized the world!

The best news of all is that the same **dreamer** is at work within your own life. God is trying to speak to you. He want to bring back to life the bold dreams that once captivated you? But how can you identify Your God given Dream from Satan's delusions of grandeur?

In my day, growing up in the United States, all kids my age watched a particular cartoon. The celebrity on this particular cartoon was a sailor guy named Popeye the sailor man. Do any of you remember his girlfriend's name? Olive Oyl. I'm impressed. I'm very impressed. She was something, wasn't she? She made men whistle and dogs bark. Nevertheless, sometimes in some of these episodes, someone would threaten the wellbeing of Olive Oyl. Popeye would be easygoing about it until the point when it started to look ominous. Then, when it started to look like something terrible was going to happen to his beloved Olive Oyl, Popeye would feel his blood pressure rise and his pulse would race. It was then he would say a phrase that was embedded in the language of almost everyone my age in the United States growing up watching this show. He would get to that point where he would say, "That's all I can stand. I can't stand no more!" Then he would open up a can of what vegetable? That's right, spinach, and he would eat it in one big gulp and it would turn his forearms into weapons and then he would crush the opposition and he would save Olive Oyl from distress. At the end he would say, "I'm strong to the finish 'cause I eat my spinach. I'm Popeye the sailor man!" I'm very impressed with the intellectual rigor of the home crowd. That's famous line: "That's all I can stand; I can't stand no more!"

Today's Scripture Peter couldn't stand seeing fellow Hebrews, not getting who Jesus is! He just couldn't stand it. So at 9 in the morning he preached a sermon that revolutionized the world and birthed the church! Now I ask you a question that I'm dead serious about it. What can't you stand? What, when you see it in this world, wrecks you? What, when you see it on television, when you see it in the community, when you see it in the inner city, when you see it at school, when you see it around a church, when you see it in business, what is it that you can't stand that affects you perhaps more than it does anybody else and it affects you deeply? Did it ever occur to you that your holy discontent might be precisely the kind of discontent that caused Peter to dream of all men knowing Jesus and being blessed by a new covenant-that allows all to dream? Think of King David. King David used to bring food to his brothers while his brothers were on the battlefield. There was a giant named Goliath who was trash talking God day in and day out; trash talking

the holy God. It didn't bother David's brothers, but it wrecked David. David said, "How can you stand this? He's blaspheming our great God!" Then one day he said, "That's all I can stand. I can't stand no more." And he gets a slingshot and he runs full speed. He's going to go at the enemy. He doesn't even know how it's going to come out, but that's all he could stand. He couldn't stand anymore.

I look back at my own life. I grew up outside church and when I visited church I couldn't stand it and could not understand it. Then I became a Christian at twenty one and started going to church in a tiny town of Overton NE. But honestly I hated the church, my first board meeting we argued about whether to wall paper or panel. I'm not saying they weren't great people, but we were this ingrown little group of people who wanted to sing our hymns, and stay close to each other. There were people far from God whose lives were falling apart and we were arguing about issues of interior decorating! The argument started because some were convinced more people would come to church if we redecorated. Yet, we never lifted a finger to reach the lost of Overton! We were the quintessential comfortable, convenience-oriented casual Christians who met to meet, who then took seven days off and met to meet again. It did something terrible in me. I knew I could not invite my unchurched family and expect them to connect. That was a seed that caused me to start dreaming of a church family in small town, that my unchurched family could find Christ!

At 21, I did not know what I wanted to do, I just wanted to be able to wear blue jeans and a t shirt every day of my life and go fishing! I was afraid to pray in public, did not like the thought of a minister's job-I thought they were all nerds and geeks. But God kept nurturing this dream of a small town church loving Jesus and people enough to reach the lost-until I unwillingly became a minister!

May I ask you again? What can't you stand? What is it, when you see it, it hurts you more than it hurts your spouse or your kids? You lay awake nights and think more about it than other people do. What is it? Is it racism, is it homelessness, is it abused children, is it extreme poverty, is it AIDS, is it immoral business practices, is it businesses that operate unethically and treat their customers poorly? Is it the

sick that don't receive care? Is it under challenged young people who are drifting further and further from God? Is it a dysfunctional church? What is it? It's very important that you figure this out because it could very well be that what wrecks you is supposed to lead you to that Popeye moment where heaven and earth are fused together in a firestorm of frustration that is ignited in you by the powers of Heaven so you'll move forward in ways that will Revolutionize the world. I believe this firestorm, births God sized Dreams.

### ***Hold on to Your Dream***

Have you ever had a dream, and wished Siggie Freud was your friend to explain; what the heck was that all about? Last night I had the strangest dream where I was walking, and every time I would stop and look at something, I would inadvertently step on a Duck! They would start quacking and wait for me to pick them up. As I picked them up I could see why I missed them they were perfectly camouflaged to blend in with the rocks or grass.

I am no dream analyst-but as I prayerfully thought on this it was apparent to me maybe what this weird dream sequence was all about! I have some car problems, maybe it is a quacker reminder that God is going to help me learn some new skills and a deeper trust in his provision! I spent the evening before the dream in a meeting with about 15 brothers and sisters who could not agree on a doctrinal issue, In my human mind it was not a honking good time! But God seems to keep saying to me I am not a Quack:And we know that God causes everything to work together <sup>[m]</sup> for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. Romans 8:28

The problem with God given dreams is they are often camouflaged in painful trials. We often not only do not hold on to them-we in fact trample them trying to get away-because we mistake painful problems as mistake, while God sees them as bridges to the future! And most God dreams do not wake us up from our stupor with quacking ducks! May you step on a few ducks today my friend-but please pick them up and nurture them until, God Gives them flight!

Consider, some scripture Joseph dreamed of his brothers bowing done to him, in order for the

dream to come true it required him to overcome betrayal by his brothers, false accusations, years of prison and a painful reunion. Some dreams are harder to hold on to than others.

Daniel dreamed of a kingdom that would overtake the world and endure forever with the Son of God sitting on the throne! It required him going into exile and never seeing his homeland!

The God given dream of preaching Jesus in Jerusalem, Samarian and the whole world would cause Stephen and all the apostles their life. It would literally turn the world upside down!

Here are some simple steps to take:

### ***1. Keep your Dream in God's Hands***

In his book The Dream Giver, Bruce Wilkinson stresses the importance of giving your dream to God. "If you don't surrender your dream, you will be placing it higher on your priority list than God. You will go forward from this moment with a break in your relationship with your Dream Giver. Your dream will become an idol. But your dream – no matter how big – will make a tiny god. Your dream is meant to be about more than itself or you. A God-given dream brings you together with what God wants to do in His world *through you*. You are meant to be a river of blessing, not a puddle drying in the sun."

In the Apostles we see in chapter two-through the book of acts and the rest of the New Testament-their lives were filled with obstacles, delays and discouragement –they over came it all by giving it all to God!

**2. Keep your focus on the God who gave you the dream.** Keep praying for the result you've dreamed of. The word "dreamer" and "visionary" are often used in a derogative way to describe people who are not in touch with the way things are. Everyone is under a subtle pressure to conform to a limited consensual reality. For most people, it is easy to follow the path of least resistance and just work on surviving and dealing with the demands placed on you. However, our passion, and our dreams, and our vision, is who we are, and when we refuse to give them the space to expand in our minds and hearts, something dies inside us. The most important thing you can do is to keep your dream alive.

When it comes to your God-given dream, remember that *God* has planted it in your

heart. You might be thinking that it's overwhelming, that you can't accomplish it. Keep your focus on the God who believes in you. Because God loves to take "little" people and accomplish great things with them. Little people like Gideon, the runt of the litter, of the weakest family of the smallest tribe of Israel. Little people like Moses the stutterer. Little people like David the shepherd. Little people like Peter the fisherman. Little people like you and me. Every year Mothers days is a reminder of this, because behind every great person who had their dreams Come true their was a mother who believed in their dreams as much as God Believed in them. Than you moms for never shooting out the air in our dreams!

### ***3. Keep Your Focus on What Matters***

Everyday life is hard on dreams ... Life is now ... bills are now ... a crisis is now ...reality demand your attention now! Life says you will have time to dream is later. In this test tube It is easy to lose sight of what matters ... to sacrifice the best for the sake of the good or the urgent.

One scriptures lasting value is the recording of the children of God who's dreams came true and some who did not come true. One of the best chapters on how God works through the dreams of his children is Hebrews 11 the faith chapter! Listen to verse 13: ***All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.***

Fully expand on your given dream. Write it out in detail. You can make a list of what you want. You can write out your ideal scene. Or you can collect pictures and paste them up on a board. But always focus on God's Glory and not your own! But to keep your focus-write it down and read it daily!

### ***Live Your Dream***

A single mom was taking her son to the ball game. New to the sport she was full of questions. One of the hitters got up and bowed his head and crossed himself before entering into the batter box. Mom elbowed her son, asking what does this mean? Absolutely nothing unless he can hit a curve ball! One of the things that separate Humans from other animals is our ability to dream and make them into reality. What separates dreamers from doers is the details. It's

little things done over time that make big things!

*In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"*

*"Yes, Lord," he answered.*

*<sup>11</sup>The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. <sup>12</sup>In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." Acts 9:10-12*

This God given dream would have come to nothing-if Ananias had not obeyed and acted by placing one foot in front of another to the house of Judas on straight street!

*At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. <sup>2</sup>He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. <sup>3</sup>One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"*

*<sup>4</sup>Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.*

*The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. <sup>5</sup>Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. <sup>6</sup>He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.*

*<sup>9</sup>About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. <sup>10</sup>He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. <sup>11</sup>He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. <sup>12</sup>It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. <sup>13</sup>Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."*

*<sup>14</sup>"Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."*

*<sup>15</sup>The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."*

*<sup>16</sup>This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.*

*<sup>17</sup>While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. <sup>18</sup>They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.*

*<sup>19</sup>While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three<sup>[a]</sup> men are looking for you. <sup>20</sup>So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."*

These two revolutionary dreams brought the gentiles into the kingdom of God. We would not be here if Cornelius had not sent servants to search for Peter. And it would have not been

completed if Peter had not obey the Spirit! God given Dreams-Mother inspired dreams are just castles in the clouds unless we put a foundation in reality under them by acting now! What might your life look like if you were to behave as if God is working to fulfill your dream? What part might you need to play? If you dream of raising Godly children, your part might be to become the spiritual leader that God is calling you to be in your family. Are you modeling Christlikeness in front of them? Do they see you spending time in the Word and in prayer? If you dream to be at the center of a ministry that reaches our community, you might need to start with small acts of service. If your dream is for your small group to be a meaningful, growing part of the body of Christ, maybe you need to start by opening up and sharing your struggles and what God is teaching you through them. If your dream is to see Elbert Christian church grow, you need to share Jesus with someone – maybe use the invite cards in the back and invite them to church or to your small group. God sometimes intervenes miraculously, but usually He asks little, ordinary people like us to take a step of faith to accomplish the dreams He has given us. Would you not agree that mothers, are a confirmation of this!

So, what are your dreams? What's it going to take to see them come true? I'll invite you to spend some time prayerfully reflecting about that and asking God to show you next steps. During our song of decision it would be a good idea to come down front and use the time to pray about your dream! Write your dream down. Have you surrendered your dream to God? Or has the dream become an idol for you? Are you willing to step away from your dream if stepping away will accomplish God's plan for you? Are you totally focused on God? And are you working toward accomplishment of the dream? Today is the day to Trust God with Your Dreams.

*In the last days, God says,*  
*I will pour out my Spirit on all people.*  
*Your sons and daughters will prophesy,*  
*your young men will see visions,*

*your old men will dream dreams. Acts 2:17*

*Conclusion:* At the end of the film “Pretty Woman,” the Cinderella figure, played by Julia Roberts’ realizes her dream. Her prince charming drives up in a stretched limo, waving a bouquet of flowers in the air and calling out her name, “Vivian” Vivian!” After they drive off together, a tall black man saunters across the street calling out, “Hollywood! Hollywood, the land of dreams. Everyone comes here with a dream! What’s Your Dream?”

Hollywood is a land of dreams. So is living for Christ. Loving Jesus is the first step of living the dream! Each of us came here with a dream. Maybe we still remember it. What’s your dream? Jesus Dreams of a relationship with you-will you come up front as we stand to sing-and express your love for him? Will come up and pray about your God given dream? Will you come up front and Pray for your Mother if she does not know Jesus? Come!