



Saint John United Methodist Church
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Message for Dec. 29, 2024
“Anticipating the Messiah: Dreams of Divine Purpose”
Speaker: Rev. Dr. Iosmar Alvarez
Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25; Matthew 2:13-15; Matthew 2:19-23

Introduction:

Beloved congregation, today we delve into the fascinating and oft-misunderstood topic of dreams as a means through which God communicates with us. Throughout Scripture, dreams have revealed divine messages and guided God's people.

We will explore the significance of dreams as a mode of communication used by God in the Bible. We will delve into the five dreams mentioned in Matthew 1 and 2 and draw applications for our lives today.

In Matthew chapters 1 and 2, we observe five pivotal dreams that shaped Christ's early life and deeply connect to Israel's prophetic heritage. These dreams remind us that God still speaks to us today, guiding us with purpose in our lives.

Main Point 1: The First Dream

– Assurance of God’s Plan (Matthew 1:20-21)

1. The Angel's Dream to Joseph (Matthew 1:20-21)

- Discuss how the angel's dream confirmed God's plan for Joseph to take Mary as his wife.
- Explain the importance of obedience and trust in God's guidance.

In this first dream, an angel appears to Joseph, assuring him of Mary’s divine conception: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20).

This dream reassures Joseph about Mary’s integrity and God’s will for the Messiah's birth. It connects to the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel," reaffirming that God is with us, fulfilling His promises.

Application:



We must learn to seek God's assurance in times of uncertainty and trust in His divine plan, just as Joseph did.

Main Point 2: The Second Dream

– Protection from Harm (Matthew 2:13-15)

2. The Dream of the Magi (Matthew 2:12)

- Explore the dream that warned the Magi not to return to King Herod.
- Emphasize the significance of being attentive to God's warnings and promptings in our lives.

3. Joseph's Dream to Flee to Egypt (Matthew 2:13)

- Reflect on how Joseph's dream protected Jesus from Herod's wrath.
- Encourage believers to be open to God's leading, even if it means stepping out of their comfort zones.

The **third dream** comes to Joseph after the visit of the Magi, warning him to flee to Egypt to protect Jesus from King Herod's wrath: "Get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt" (Matthew 2:13). This instruction aligns with Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt I called my son," illustrating God's directive to safeguard Jesus and fulfill prophecy.

Application:

In our lives, we too may receive divine guidance that protects us from harm. We must remain vigilant and attentive to God's warnings, ready to act in obedience.

Main Point 3: The Third and Fourth Dreams

– Guidance for Future Steps (Matthew 2:19-23)

4. The Angel's Dream to Return to Israel (Matthew 2:19-20)

- Discuss how the angel's dream directed Joseph to return to Israel after Herod's death.
- Highlight the importance of being sensitive to God's timing and acting promptly on His instructions.

In the third dream, after Herod's death, an angel tells Joseph to return to Israel: "Arise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel" (Matthew 2:19).

5. The Warning Dream to Joseph to Go to Galilee (Matthew 2:22)

- Examine how the dream guided Joseph to settle in Nazareth.



- Encourage listeners to seek God's guidance in every aspect of their lives.

However, after yet another dream warning him about Archelaus, Joseph is led to settle in Nazareth (Matthew 2:22), fulfilling the prophecy, "He will be called a Nazorean." This dual set of dreams demonstrates God's continued guidance, outlining Joseph's steps as he navigates uncertainty.

Application:

We are reminded that as we walk through life's unpredictable pathways, we must be open to God's direction through prayer and discernment, trusting that He will lead us where we need to go.

Summary Application for Today:

- Emphasize the importance of prayer and seeking God's guidance through dreams and other means of communication.
- Encourage believers to be open and receptive to God's voice, even in unexpected ways.
- Challenge listeners to trust in God's plans and purposes, even when they may not fully understand them.
- Remind the congregation of the power of obedience and faith in following God's direction for their lives.

Quote from a Church Father:

Saint Augustine once said, "God's grace is given to us to perfect our nature and lead us to its end; by means of dreams, He enriched the world with the promise of our Savior."

This quote captures the divine purpose behind the dreams related to Jesus' birth, emphasizing how God used them to fulfill His plan for salvation.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the dreams in Matthew chapters 1 and 2 showcase God's purposeful communication, grounded in His prophecies and promises. They remind us that God is ever-present, speaking into our lives through various means, not only in dreams but also through His Word, prayer, and the counsel of fellow believers.

Dreams play a significant role in God's divine plan, as seen in the five dreams mentioned in Matthews 1 and 2. Let us be attentive and responsive to God's guidance, seeking His



direction and wisdom in all aspects of our lives. Just as God used dreams to guide and protect His people in the past, He continues to speak to us today if we are willing to listen and obey. May we surrender our dreams and aspirations to Him, trusting in His perfect will for our lives. Let us remain attentive and willing to hear God's voice, allowing His messages to guide us in fulfilling His will.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for revealing Your will through dreams and for the guidance You provide through Your Word. Help us remain vigilant and open to your messages. May we trust in Your divine plan and respond in obedience to Your calling. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Benediction:

May the Lord bless you and keep you; may His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. As you go forth this week, may you remain open to His voice, trusting that He speaks to you and guides you through every dream, vision, and whisper of His Spirit. Amen.