

i dream of reconnect... reliant

Reconnect – September 13, 2009

Series/Morning Intro:

- Welcome to Reconnect Barrhaven, where we want to be a church that loves God, helps people and builds community
- This morning is the official beginning of fall here at Reconnect, and so we begin a new series: “i dream of reconnect...”
- But you might wonder – is this the right time for talking about dreams?
- Fall is supposed to be when we get down to business – summer is over, holidays are done, no more long walks or daydreams or lazy days
- But without the right dreams, we won’t do the right things – so we need to start at the beginning – with dreams, with impressions, with a direction that the heart sets
- The author of the book The Little Prince, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, said this:

If you want to build a ship, don't herd people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.

- Because everything starts with a dream, somewhere, from someone
- So this morning, we look at one of our dreams – a value we aspire to live out – “reliant”

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Jesus asked,

“How can I describe the Kingdom of God?

What story should I use to illustrate it?

It is like a tiny mustard seed.

**Though this is one of the smallest of seeds,
it grows to become one of the largest of plants,
with long branches where birds can come and find shelter.”**

Mark 4:30-32, NLT

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Text: Mark 4:30-32; Acts 2:17-18

Key Thought: To be reliant on God is to work alongside Him, bringing dreams to life.

Jesus asked, "How can I describe the Kingdom of God? What story should I use to illustrate it? It is like a tiny mustard seed. Though this is one of the smallest of seeds, it grows to become one of the largest of plants, with long branches where birds can come and find shelter." Mark 4:30-32, NLT

Pre-Intro: Enterprise intro [Star Trek video]

Intro: The dream of flight, and other recurring dreams

- I love that intro – it was for Star Trek: Enterprise, which was the last of the series on TV, just a few years ago
- But it inspires, and it's meant to – this idea that people have always dreamed of what was beyond their grasp – what lies out beyond what you can see? Beyond the oceans, beyond the sky, beyond the stars
- I was driving on Fallowfield yesterday, towards Prince of Wales, and saw a jet stream in the deep blue sky
- If you live in Barrhaven, you know jets, because you can't get away from them – they're landing all day and all evening long, right over your house
- But to see a jet stream in the sky – can you imagine that even just when my grandfather was born, there was no such thing as powered flight?
- And the sky we take for granted in 2009 – well, if we'd seen it in 1939, we'd have thought the world was coming to an end – there would have been panic in the streets – it's only been about 65 years since jet propulsion was invented!
- All because of dreams that people had, just like you and me, when they looked up in the sky
- Dreams – there are the ones that keep coming back – recurring dreams - the ones we can't get away from, both good and bad, whether we are awake or asleep
- They are the things we can't shake, the things that won't even let us escape through sleep or idleness, no matter how much we try to quiet their voices – it doesn't matter what we do
- **Q: What are yours? (elements of dreams)**

Dreams – they're a human thing

- Maybe androids dream, maybe dogs and cats and birds dream, but we seem to do it best – Wikipedia says that we spend an average of about 6 years of our lives dreaming (about two hours a night)
- But the funny thing about us is we don't only dream at night – we also dream during the day – we imagine, envision, wish, hope, dream, regret – all of this forward and reverse thinking
- One of the stops on the Saturday errands run yesterday was Future Shop – but what was funny is the kids kept calling it "The Future Shop"
- And it made me think – how great would it be if there was a store like that? Where you could go and choose your future? Almost as good as a big screen TV...

- But our dreams are our personal version of “The Future Shop” – because without dreams, nothing would ever change on any great scale for the better – without this picture of what the future could be like if some changes were made
- Dreams – the big ones, the kind we just can’t see happening, but they still hang around anyway – the ones that defy logic, that embody some kind of forlorn hope, that refuse to die – as Aristotle once wrote, “Hope is a waking dream”
- What do we do with those?

Jesus the dreamer

- Turn to the life of Jesus for inspiration, because He had dreams too – that He would never fully see during His time on earth, but that He would set in motion, and they centered around what He called “the kingdom of God” (le royaume de Dieu)
- It was always on his mind – he was always talking about it, always teaching about it – it was his dream, his vision, his reason for getting out of bed in the morning
- And he liked to tell stories about it – about what it was like – parables, stories with a twist, to get people thinking and engaging about it – this morning’s section of the Bible is one of those stories

Read Text: Mark 4:30-32

Jesus asked, “How can I describe the Kingdom of God? What story should I use to illustrate it?”

- “The Kingdom of God” – the umbrella term for God’s will being completely accomplished and done day by day on earth – the transformation of human hearts to a new way of thinking, a new way of acting, of loving God and loving each other, where greed and misery and rage and jealousy and all the other negatives that have such weight in our everyday lives have no place
- The place where God rules
- We’re not used to “Kingdom talk” in our world today – the world has left the monarch style of rule behind – technically yes, we still have a queen, and our constitutional head of state is the Governor-General, but it’s ceremonial – it’s not like we’re a part of the British Empire anymore, except when we’re in the Commonwealth games
- But this idea of a ruler having power over our lives, being able to affect us without us having placed them there first – Jesus teaches again and again that there is a place for everyone in God’s Kingdom, no matter who you or I are, or where we’ve come from – but that this place is reserved for us by God’s grace and mercy, not because we make it on our own or deserve to be there
- That’s a bit of a contradiction when we come at this from the dream angle, isn’t it? Because all the motivational speakers say that you have to accomplish your dreams – you have to make them happen, because if you don’t, no-one else will – but more on that later

It is like a tiny mustard seed. Though this is one of the smallest of seeds, it grows to become one of the largest of plants, with long branches where birds can come and find shelter.”

- Jesus says that the Kingdom of God – the rule of God, the place where God makes everything perfect and there is no place for evil – is like a tiny mustard seed and what happens to it

- First thing He says about the Kingdom: **Kingdom = small**
- Which would be the first twist if you were hearing Him say this, back then in his own time and culture
- How can Almighty God – ruler of the universe, the only true God, the Creator, be like a tiny mustard seed?
- **[hand out mustard seeds here]**
- These are courtesy of my son’s collecting project last year – and if you want to get more for yourself, they’re on sale at the Bulk Barn just down the road
- The mustard seed isn’t THE smallest seed – there are others that are smaller – but it was known in Jesus’ day as being the tiny one – a metaphor for something small
- But the kingdom of God, the influence of God, only starts out small – because it is also known for growth: **Kingdom = growth**
- **[video running in the background loop]** Today with all of the science we have, we can “explain” germination – and yet, it’s still miraculous, how plants can come from small seeds – how little babies grow – it happens all around us every day, and we’re unconscious of it – until we actually consider it, and then we get a fresh sense of wonder
- I never get tired of **time lapse photography** – probably because I don’t like being patient, and I want to see everything for myself – but real life is more of a waiting game, and the same with God’s Kingdom – it grows and goes, but “under the radar” until one day you notice and there it is
- Wild black mustard in Palestine can grow to be 10 feet high – becoming a wild thicket where all kinds of wildlife and birds can find shelter
- And that’s the last part: **Kingdom = inclusion**
- This idea of the birds being able to come and find shelter – that’s an idea that you see in the later parts of the first section of the Bible, that we call the Old Testament
- It’s the Bible Jesus read – and at different points, especially as the world got smaller, as empire after empire rolled through the land of Palestine and the nation of Israel, God promised that one day, all of the nations would find their place, together, with God
- And the metaphor used there is a cedar tree – cedar being majestic, being royal – being kingdom-like
- We think of cedar as something nice to do a deck in, but in ancient times, it was the wood to use when money was no object – tall cedars, used for palaces, for ships, for religious rituals – growing to over 130 feet high in Lebanon – still their symbol, on their national flag
- But Jesus, as he so often does, turns that on its side again – because the Kingdom He announces is not what people think it’s going to be – it’s not God swooping in as a military conqueror, or turning the world upside down in an instant
- Instead, it won’t be what’s expected – it’s not a cedar, it’s a mustard tree – different, and yet still a place where the nations can find their place – because the Kingdom of God for Jesus is wide open – you don’t have to have a specific background, or nationality, or ethnicity, or worldview – you just have to embrace God in your life through his Son, Jesus

- The kingdom is like a weed, that spreads – like dandelions that you just can't get rid of – like weeds that go down so deep and spread all over your lawn - Kingdom is like a weed that you can't pull – it just keeps growing and growing and overgrowing and overtaking everything else, pushing everything else out of the way, changing what it can't move
- Kingdom = small, kingdom = growth, kingdom = inclusion

So Jesus had dreams – and so do we – so what?

- To rely on Him means to link up those dreams – what can we do to make those dreams come to life?
- The more we move Him to the centre, the more He puts those dreams in us, and they become part of us, like magnets – they pull us to Him, and we're miserable unless we're moving towards Him
- But sometimes He has to empty us out, first – take out our own dreams, of wealth or glory or fame or power or satisfaction or whatever – to make room for His
- His dreams are what we would dream, if our noses weren't to the ground, if our sorrows weren't so easily seen, if we could just look... up
- But when He puts them in your heart, in your mind, everything changes
- How can you make a difference? What can you do? What could be different?
- And it's not that you have to a "dreamer-type" – these God-ideas come in various ways
- I'm not a dreamer – but I do get ticked off – and when I get ticked off, when there's something that's just NOT RIGHT, that triggers something in me, and I start to think, start to... dream
- What are your dreams? Where do they come from? Beyond yourself? Things that you can't accomplish on your own... these are God's dreams (not ones that end in a stadium with you on stage)

Key Thought:

To be reliant on God is to work alongside Him, bringing dreams to life.

"In the last days, God said, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.

Your sons and daughters will speak God's words, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. In those days I will pour out my Spirit upon all my servants, men and women alike, and they will speak God's words."

Peter, quoting the OT prophet Joel, in Acts 2:17-18, NLT

Conclusion: Reconnect dreams

- Vision statement – we want to be a church that loves God, helps people and builds community
- Dream starts with small beginnings – Zech 4
- Tell the story of Reconnect – dreams that came – conclusion?

Response:

- what are your dreams? What is one God-given dream that you have? (have them write it down?)