

From The Pastors Study Dreamer?

As I said in my sermon, at some point almost everyone has dreams of what their future might be, we have some great desire to accomplish something, to be the best, leaving a mark in history. When I was younger I dreamed of driving cars in what would now be NASCAR and according to my wife, who has ridden on motorcycles, in cars, and trucks for forty-six years, I could have been successful.

There have been other dreams in my life, most have fallen to the wayside, some have crumbled like ashes But I never stopped dreaming because I felt somehow, sometime, somewhere a big dream will be fulfilled, I haven't given up. I have been trying to fulfill a dream for a long time, but I am learning it isn't a dream for me.

I guess for a long time it *was* my dream for me, and perhaps that is why it never came to fruition. I have told the congregation I spent a long time sitting in the Sanctuary talking to God but I never mentioned the vision that gave me the dream, I have told no one about it because I feared, unlike Joseph, to talk about it. I had all but forgotten, never forgot the vision but the dream I haven't thought about until this sermon.

In the sermon I spoke of a vision of seeing a hundred people in this Sanctuary and I saw myself as being in the pulpit, that I would be the one who sees the growth. I think that is called pride, not the good kind. I was waiting for the day I could stand in the pulpit and announce *my* success. Perhaps pride is exactly why the church has very much remained stagnant. I believe God showed me something that is the future of GPC.

Preparing for this sermon I was led to something I wasn't looking for: **Ecclesiastes 5:7 (ESV)**
⁷ For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity; but God is the one you must fear.

That scared me, is that the issue, is it my own vanity that is preventing growth? I think of discussions with the prior pastor as he showed me plans for the expansion of GPC and the decrease in attendance that was occurring that began a few months later. Was it his vanity, which I inherited that has been leading me to lack of growth.

Not only have I failed in carrying out the dream I may well be responsible for the decline in attendance, and that breaks my heart. At 73 I know my time is limited so it looks like I am here to maintain until the time comes that I will eventually be replaced by someone who will take GPC to new heights, who will fulfill the dream. But the dream needs to become the vision of the congregation.

Allow me to explain about the dream becoming the vision of the congregation. If my dream of growth of the congregation is from God, and I am firm in the belief it is, that is just the beginning. Next the dream becomes a vision but not the pastor's vision, it must be the vision of the congregation, the entire congregation, every single person who worships at GPC; not just the session, or the praise team, membership or the staff.

If the vision lies only with me, it is bound for failure. My job is to take my dream, turn it into a vision, but it can't stop there. If the vision remains mine I become the orchestrator, the congregation simply follow instructions, if something happens to me the vision goes with me; it dies.

My job, to share my vision with the congregation. Now, the most important part, the congregation decides whether they want to adopt the vision and determine steps necessary to develop the steps necessary to turn the vision into reality. And that is what I am asking every worshipper with GPC to make this vision their own and in unity come together in a unified front. If the congregation determines not to adopt the vision, that is okay because it requires action and prayers of every single person.

If the congregation adopts the vision, action has got to begin immediately. Soon people will be returning to churches and GPC must be ready to begin bringing people into our church, to teach and preach those seeking a place to worship or seeing God and a relationship with Him. GPC must be the place people come to and to share with others. All of this to the glory of God, not to build our egos, not to grow our numbers or fill our coffers. ***TO GOD'S GLORY!***