

The Hard Work of Living Your Dream GFC – 1/26/20

We are in a sermon series called Start the Year Off Right.

This will be the last sermon in this series.

Next Sunday will be Football Sunday and after that we will have our Vision Sunday and preach a series called 20/20 Vision – Seeing God's Plan for Your Life.

In that series we will talk about God's plan for your faith, your family, your finances, your work – every area of your life.

I've been praying about what to preach on today to close out this series. As you know – this week our country celebrated Martin Luther King Day.

If there is anyone who is known for a dream, it's Dr. King.

His most famous speech is the I Have a Dream speech.

In that speech he laid out his vision for an American where:

All people are treated equally.

All people are judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin.

The children of former slaves and the children of former slave owners are able to sit down at the table of brotherhood.

Dr. King didn't just have a dream - he did the hard work of accomplishing his dream.

He imparted vision everywhere he went.

He broke the vision down into attainable goals.

He had a strategic plan to accomplish those goals.

And he recruited people and organized them into teams to accomplish the vision.

As I thought and prayed about that, I felt led to preach a sermon called The Hard Work of Living Your Dream.

Most people do not have a dream or vision for their future.

In fact, I ask you: What's your vision? What's your dream for your future?

If you don't know – the first step is to get one!

I'll be talking more about that in our series on vision – but I remind you that Proverbs 29:18 says:

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

This is serious!

Without a dream you will not have the strength to try anything.

Without a dream you will not have the courage to overcome opposition.

Without a dream you will never accomplish anything.

When I talk about dreams today, I'm talking about dreams from God.

Any dream that is not from God is nothing but a self-made fantasy!

It's a made up, make-believe, imaginary future.

The problem is that people with a fantasy view of life get easily disappointed, so they give up on their dream and sometimes give up on God.

As a result, they usually accomplish very little.

Proverbs 12:11 says:

A hard worker has plenty of food, but a person who chases fantasies has no sense.

Other versions call fantasies unrealistic dreams, empty dreams or daydreams.

So, there are different kinds of dreams:

A day-dream is just a distraction from your current work.

A pie-in-the-sky dream is just a wild idea with no basis in reality.

A vicarious dream is a dream that is lived through other people.

A fantasy is a misbelief that a certain career, accomplishment, position, title, or level of income will happen automatically to make you happy.

But a dream from God will be based in reality, even though it will stretch you.

There's a difference between a dream from God and a fantasy.

I looked up the word fantasy and it means "a creation in the mind that is disconnected from reality."

A fantasy exists in the mind only!

One of the hallmarks of a fantasy is that it glorifies self.

A dream will glorify God – but a fantasy glorifies self!

For instance, we had a dream from God to start a church.

But, it's easy to turn a dream into a fantasy that we are going to have the biggest church ever in the history of the world!

Whenever we turn a dream into a fantasy – we usually end up disappointed and wanting to quit.

The enemy uses a fantasy view of life to kill the real dream from God.

For instance, people with a fantasy view of marriage go from relationship to relationship waiting for Prince Charming to show up!

They think if a marriage is from God, it should not require any work.

Nonsense – as we’ve learned in our Love and Respect Class –

1 Corinthians 7:28 says:

Those who marry will face many troubles in this life.

So if you expect a trouble-free marriage to magically appear, it won’t!

If you expect a trouble-free life to magically appear, it won’t!

I think way too many people think that their dream will just automatically happen one day appear.

There’s nothing they can do to make it happen, except maybe pray.

They think that if it’s God’s will it will just happen.

NO IT WON’T!

I want to make this very clear:

1- Living Your Dream Requires Prayer

I’m not going to preach on prayer today because I just preached a whole sermon on it.

Let me just say that a vision begins and ends with prayer.

Living your dream requires a life of prayer.

Everything about your dream must be bathed in prayer.

If you are trying to accomplish something apart from prayer and faith in God – that is a dead work that will not result in life or blessing.

But living your dream requires more than prayer and faith.

Remember – James 2:17 says: Faith without works is dead.

So, let’s look at some of those works.

2- Living Your Dream Requires A Plan

The message of Prov. 12:11 is that living your dream takes hard work!

Part of that hard work is getting the vision down on paper.

Part of that work is breaking the vision down into attainable goals.

Part of that work is having a strategic plan to meet your goals.

A dream without goals is a daydream.

Dr. King held strategy and planning sessions before, during and after every major civil rights initiative.

He said, “When evil men plot, good men must plan. When evil men burn and bomb, good men must build and bind.”

Almost all successful people have clear goals. Goals are great. But you will still not advance without a plan of action. To live your dream, you must plan your work and work your plan. A dream without a plan is a fantasy. Don't sleepwalk your way through life! Get a dream from God and a plan from God.

Some Christians even have the misconception that setting goals and making plans is wrong. They think they should just trust God. Well – you should trust God – but do you know that the Bible tells us to plan? Some people misunderstand Bible verses like Proverbs 16:9 which says: In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps. They take this verse to mean that you can make plans, but God will just override them, so what's the point?

That's not what this verse means. The Living Bible tells us what it means: We should make plans - counting on God to direct us. Making plans and trusting God are not mutually exclusive. We should make plans and trust God.

After all, God is the original planner. In fact, God has even made plans for your good! Jeremiah 29:11 says: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” God has plans to prosper you. God's plans should give you hope for your future! Your future will be good! Your future will be prosperous! You have God's Word on in – so plan on it!

Listen to this promise from Proverbs 16:3 Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed. What has God called you to do? What is His vision for your life?

What are your **goals** that will help you reach that vision?

If you **don't know**, you're probably not living your dream.

Living your dream requires praying to God and receiving a plan from God.

3- Living Your Dream Requires Hard Work

A dream without **work accomplishes nothing.**

Remember – no one will be remembered for what they planned to do!

They will be remembered for what they actually did!

And the greatest amount of work is **working on yourself!**

I learned the **Law of the Lid** from John Maxwell a long time ago and I know the **biggest barrier** to living my dream is me!

I've got to work on me and that requires going to God for help, going to others for counsel, going to conferences or seminars for knowledge.

I've learned that I must continue to learn because what got me here won't necessarily get me where I need to go!

And **what got you here** won't necessarily get you where you need to go!

The moment you stop learning is the moment you **stop growing.**

The good news is we can all **learn and grow.**

So you need to get to work.

The problem is that way too many people are just plain lazy.

The Bible is **very hard** on lazy people.

Proverbs 18:9 - **A lazy person is as bad as someone who destroys things.**

God **hates laziness** because **God loves work** and He **loves us.**

After all, **work is the way** God provides for us and our families.

And work is required to accomplish your dream!

I've seen so many people say they wish they had the life that a successful person has.

But they are not willing to put in the hard work that the successful person put it to get the rewards of their hard work!

Don't expect the reward without the work!

I saw it in **business** all the time – people who would say to me, **"Pay me more** and I'll show you what I can really do."

I told them – "You've **got it backwards** – show me what you can do and I just might pay you more!"

Too many people want **things to change** – they just don't want to change.

People who want their marriages to improve – so they want their spouse to change!

No – we need to start with ourselves first.

We need to do the hard work so we can live our dream!

4- Living Your Dream Requires Waiting

Waiting is a part of life, it always has been and it always will be.

However, God promises that we won't have to wait forever.

Galatians 6:9 tells us:

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

This is telling us to not to give up.

Too many times we want to stop... but it's in our faithfulness that God is able to bless us.

Just think about that.

What if you did give up? What does that get you? Probably nothing.

The only sure way to fail is to give up.

But your due season will come... If you don't give up.

Anytime we set a goal there will be obstacles to overcome and there will be a time of waiting.

That's why Habakkuk 2:3 says:

The vision is yet for an appointed time; at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it.

Anything you want to accomplish will probably take longer than you think it will!

Most people quit too soon - before their vision becomes a reality.

We must understand that any accomplishment takes perseverance.

Perseverance literally means "through the severe."

Accomplishing something big means there will be difficulties... you will have: delays, detours and discouragement.

Perseverance continues no matter how hard it is.

Whatever race God has marked for you will take perseverance to run.

It's true with all successful people.

- **Thomas Edison made thousands of trials before getting the electric light bulb to operate.**
- **Henry Ford went bankrupt five times before he became successful.**

- **Abraham Lincoln** failed in business twice and was defeated for public office 8 times before he was elected president.
- 27 publishers rejected Dr. Seuss' first book.

So what makes us give up so easily?

**We receive one or two rejections and we quit. "That's it. I'm done."
But those who live their dream have perseverance.**

**Some of the greatest missionaries of history devotedly spread God's Word and yet had to wait long periods before seeing any fruit:
William Carey labored 7 years in Burma before the first Hindu convert was brought to Christ.**

In western Africa, it took 14 years before one person was saved.

These people did not quit.

They had a word from God and the resolve to persevere.

Moses was 80 years old when God called him to deliver Israel.

He waited 80 long years for God's timing.

God could have made David king the moment he was anointed.

Instead, David waited 20 years to be made king over all of Israel.

God could have freed Joseph from prison soon after he was imprisoned.

Instead, he waited at least 2 years before he was set free.

God could have given Abraham the son He promised him when he was still young.

Instead, He made him wait until he was 100 years old.

Jesus could have healed Lazarus when he was still alive.

Instead, He waited 3 days after Lazarus was dead and then He raised him from his grave.

God could have answered these prayers much quicker, but He didn't.

He made them wait instead.

And He often makes us wait too.

If God is making you wait, there is a very good reason for it.

If He's telling you "no" maybe He has something better for you.

If He's not giving you victory today, maybe it's because you will have a greater testimony tomorrow.

Waiting is probably the hardest part of living your dream.

5- Living Your Dream Requires Warfare

Nehemiah had a vision from God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and when he started rebuilding, **enemies** came against him.

When **we are** working on our dream, the enemy will try to **stop us**, too.

When **enemies came against** Jerusalem, Nehemiah said in Neh. 4:14 **Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.**

Verse 17 says:

They did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other.

We too have an **awesome God** – but we must build our dream by **working** with one hand and **warring** with the other.

If you build anything great, it takes **work and warfare.**

It takes work and warfare to **build a family or a church.**

It will take **work and warfare** to live your dream!

1 Timothy 1:18 says:

This charge I commit to you... according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.

Other translation say that prophetic words from God help us, equip us, strengthen us and inspire us!

The bottom line is that we must do spiritual warfare over our prophetic words in order to see them come to pass.

Just because you have a word from God does not mean it will automatically happen.

You have to war over it. Why?

The enemy knows when we receive God's word by faith – it will reap a harvest that will hurt his kingdom.

So, he tries to steal our word through confusion and misunderstanding.

He tries to get us to give up because of the troubles we face.

He uses fear and worry to try to steal our dream.

Many of you have received a word from God and you're afraid of stepping out in faith.

After all – what if you really did not hear from God?

What if you try and fail? What if – what if – what if –

The **enemy wants to steal** your prophetic promises.

When a dream from God is birthed in you, the demonic realm is aroused. Don't be afraid; God will be faithful to deliver you out of the enemy's hand. He will confirm His word. But you must fight.

You must fight with the word of God – the sword of the Spirit – but you must also fight with the prophetic word God has given you.

When you get a word from God, get ready to fight the good fight of faith. One of the ways we do that is by **praying the Word of God. In Jeremiah 1:12, God says, **I am watching over My word to perform it.****

This happened to Mary when the angel told her about the birth of Jesus. The angel said in Luke 1:37 **Nothing is impossible with God. If you look up the word “nothing” in the original Greek it is “no rhema.” No spoken word from God.**

In fact, the American Standard version translates this:

No word from God shall be void of power.

This promise is not that we can just make up something on our own and believe it and God has to do it.

This is saying that when God speaks – that word has power.

And no person, no circumstance, or no devil in Hell can stop that word from God from coming to pass!

Our part is to believe and pray and do the hard work of planning, waiting and warring.

So, when the **devil tells you that you will **never** live your dream – you war with the word God gave you and the written word of God.**

You tell Satan: with man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible!

You might be against me, circumstances might be against me, people might be against me, but if God is for me, who can really be against me! Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world!

Greater is he who gave me a dream than he who wants to steal it!

I have a dream from God – a plan from God – a word from God – and no matter what happens I will persevere – I will fight the good fight of faith – and having done all I will stand and keep on standing in Jesus name because I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!