

April 2003: When a Dream Dies

by Aaron Greenway

Try to imagine yourself transported back in time to the year 33 A.D. in Palestine. The Romans were in full control over the region as well as most of the known world at that time. The Roman control was getting a little annoying and the Jews dared not do anything to stir up trouble lest Rome put them on trial and severely punish them. You had also heard the reports for almost three years of a prophet of sorts going around healing, preaching, and even raising people from the dead. Your son is blind and this could be your only chance to see him healed. This Jesus, this healer, seems to be above all the Roman mess. Could He be the answer to our prayers?

Now, imagine yourself being one of the twelve disciples. You heard the things that Jesus taught. You saw His miracles. You saw His compassion. He was not full of judgment and condemnation, but of love. How could the God of the Hebrew Scriptures be this one healing blind eyes and unstopping deaf ears. And yet, so many misunderstood Him, even His closest friends. After recognizing that Jesus was the Son of God, Peter then rebuked Jesus over His statement of going to the cross, “Far be it from You, Lord, this shall not happen to You.” The dream for the people of Palestine, for the disciples, was to be unchained from Roman rule, to have utopian society. They saw all the prophecies of a conquering Messiah, but ignored the part in-between. Probably the biggest misunderstanding of Jesus today is that He is not what one would expect of God in human flesh and He certainly wasn’t in the eyes and minds of a Greek-based society where their gods were vindictive and cruel.

I am convinced that God is calling us to nail our dreams to the cross, because God calls us to love Him more than the dream, to adore Him over the object.

I ask myself, *Is my dream to be a missionary an idol?* Can a God-given dream and vision become a stumbling block?

Yes! Because when the dream dies, that is the only way that it can be resurrected. God wants the things we hold on to so adamantly to crumble so that He can take the broken pieces and make an even greater masterpiece out of it.

When I read about the death and resurrection of Christ, one of things that sticks out to me is that Jesus blew away all the preconceptions and proved one simple truth, that sometimes a dream has to die in order for there to be a resurrection. What do I mean by this? Well, let me ask this question, “How many of us have dreams?” or “goals?” If we have not lost all hope in life, we probably have some kind of dream.

I remember my last year of college (Univ. of Northern Iowa), knowing that I would not be in Iowa for too much longer. And so, I decided I was going to move to Nashville and seek after a recording contract. I met with the important people and started looking around for a place to live. My dad even loaned me his car. To say the least, I had a bad experience and on top of that, all the doors went shut. I had a car accident just two weeks before I was supposed to move and there didn't seem to be any money. My grandmother spoke to me very seriously and asked, “Aaron, are you sure God has not closed the doors for you?” It was true. I was therefore stuck doing concerts and working at Arby's for two more years. I still knew that God was leading me away, but at that time, it didn't seem to be His timing. I had to wait. And not only that, I had to give up the dream. Two years later, God began to speak to me, doors started flying open, money started showing up in my account without any transaction, and all of my closest counselors were telling me the same thing.... “It is time for you to go.” I sent in my application to Dallas Theological Seminary and the application went sailing through. It was time for me to go!

How can a God who gives a blessing to someone ask that someone to give the dream back? This happened to Abraham. This happened to Job. And this happened to the disciples. Because they did not understand what was actually happening, their world was shattered when Jesus hung on the cross. How many of us have seen our dreams get nailed to a cross before our eyes? This is the most devastating thing. As I write this, American troops have been captured, killed and wounded in Iraq. To be a parent under those conditions has to be very difficult. It can be a son, a daughter, money, a husband, a wife, a girlfriend, a boyfriend, a thing. I am convinced that God is calling us to nail our dreams to the cross, because God calls us to love Him more than the dream, to adore Him over the object. I ask myself, *Is my dream to be a missionary an idol?* Can a God-given dream and vision become a stumbling block? Yes! Because when the dream dies,

that is the only way that it can be resurrected. God wants the things we hold on to so adamantly to crumble so that He can take the broken pieces and make an even greater masterpiece out of it. The only way to the resurrection is through the cross. When we realize that He must be the center of all we do, whether we work at Arby's or whether we are missionaries on a field, that is when He can make the dream we have inside our hearts turn into something much greater than we had ever hoped for. This is only for one purpose, that no one will ever question where the dream came from and Who made it grow.

How many of us are holding onto dreams, holding onto money, to things, to ministries? This is probably one of the hardest things to do in a Christian's life, to walk away from something that we love so much, knowing that Jesus is more worthy of that love than anyone or anything. And yet, if we don't, we will lose it anyway. Our hope must be totally fixed in Him. If it is anywhere else, it will crumble. We will become anxious, fearful, and our dream will be nothing more than a vice for our own personal agendas. If a dream has become your god, get out the matches, get out the gasoline and light the flame and if God wants to resurrect it, He will. If God could raise Lazarus and if God can raise Himself from an utterly hopeless situation, He can resurrect any dream you lay at His feet. That is where the hope and the joy come from, the image of the empty tomb.

“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matthew 16:25).

“[We are] always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh” (2 Corinthians 4:10-11).