

Want Your Dreams to Come True? Don't Oversleep

There is a huge emphasis in both Old and New Testaments on being alert at critical spiritual moments. Paying attention to teachers, judges, prophets and of course, to God, is critical. There are many examples in both testaments of stupidity, neglect, and foolishness, all of which are not recommended. Rash speaking and conniving are roundly condemned.

There's the story of Jephthah, a warrior in Israel in the book of Judges, who promises God that if God will give him victory over his enemies, he will offer as a burnt sacrifice whoever comes out of his door to meet him on his return. Who comes out but his daughter. She asks for two months to grieve her lost life and then she submits to her father's rash promise. While we gasp at the absurdity and barbarity of such a promise, we would do well to reflect on promises we may have made that did not turn out well.

When the prophet Elijah in 2 Kings is about to leave the earth, his apprentice, Elisha, will not let him out of sight. *Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit."* ¹⁰*He responded, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not."* ¹¹*As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven.* ¹²*Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.*

We are standing here in the tradition of spiritual power being passed from teacher to student, father to son. Think of Isaac intending to give his final blessing, his legacy, to Esau but giving it to the trickster Jacob. When Esau comes in, Isaac has nothing to give him. The energy is gone.

Isaiah 28:23 Listen, and hear my voice; **pay attention**, and hear my speech.

Isaiah 49:1 Listen to me, O coastlands, **pay attention**, you peoples from far away! The LORD called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me.

Jeremiah 7:26 ...yet **they did not listen to me**, or pay attention, but they stiffened their necks. They did worse than their ancestors did.

Mark 4:24 And Jesus said to them, "**Pay attention** to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you.

And Luke's version of the same teaching...

Luke 8:18 Consider carefully how you hear; for to those who have, more will be given; and from those who do not have, even what they seem to have will be taken away."

Just prior to today's text in Luke 12, Jesus has described the lilies of the field, how they do not labor but are just being beautiful. Our text begins with the assurance of God's faithfulness and the advice to invest in what makes the soul grow. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Jesus compares his disciples to servants who should stay awake watching for the bridegroom's return. The teacher is coaching his students not to turn aside when their rebbe may drop a gem in some interaction at any moment. If you and I are watching for God's presence intentionally, in everyday circumstances, we will see that presence. If we are busy, tired or distracted, we'll miss it.

If you want your dreams to come true, don't oversleep. In fact, it is of the first importance that you get enough sleep. Dragging through your day makes it impossible to catch the Spirit when it whispers nearby. You need to get sleep. You need to prepare your body to be awake by eating well. You need to put into your head that which will nourish you. Take a vacation from the news for a week. You can do it. Hmmm, too much? How about a day off? You may even sleep better.

As we approach this holy meal, we re-presence Christ. We have the opportunity of creating for ourselves a holy moment, being open to the countenance of a being who loves beyond the grave. You do have to be awake and willing to receive, willing to be a little out of control in the whole thing.

Just say "Yea, Lord, even so come; I am here." And God will do the rest.

AMEN