

## Never Wish Upon a Star

Acts 12:18-24

July 24<sup>th</sup> 2016

Peter Hiett

### Worship song

"Be Thou My Vision"

### Prayer

We ask that you would be our vision. That's certainly what I ask now, as we preach. That you would be our vision and cause us to preach. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Jiminy Cricket sang:

*"When you wish upon a star,  
Makes no difference who you are,  
Anything your heart desires  
Will come to you."*

Listen:

*"If your heart is in your dreams  
No request is too extreme,  
When you wish upon a star,  
Your dreams come true."*

At one point in C. S. Lewis' story, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, King Caspian, the children and the crew sail toward a dark island, when out of the darkness, they hear the sound of screaming. A man is swimming toward their boat. He's in the grip of an absolute panic. The crew pulls him up from the sea and on to the deck of the Dawn Treader.

Lewis writes:

The moment his feet reach the deck, he said, "Fly! Fly! About with your ship and fly! Row, row, row for your lives away from this accursed shore!"

"Compose yourself," said Reep-a-cheep, (the mouse), "and tell us what the danger is. We are not used to flying."

"Nevertheless, you will fly from here," he gasped. "This is the island where dreams come true!"

"That's the island I've been looking for this long time," said one of the sailors. "I reckoned I'd find I was married to Nancy if we landed here." "And I'd find Tom alive again," said another.

"Fools!" said the man, stamping his foot with rage. "That is the sort of talk that brought me here, and I'd better have been drowned or never born. Do you hear what I say? This is where dream-a—dreams, do you understand—come to life.

Not daydreams: dreams!"

They think for a moment, realizing what it would mean for dreams to come true and then they row like mad. Reepicheep objects and King Caspian, the brave, says, "Say what you like, Reepicheep, there are some things no man can face" That is: "Never ever wish upon a star."

They escape only after Lucy whispers, "*Aslan Aslan, if ever you loved us at all send us help now.*"

Years ago, I rented this science-fiction movie called *The Sphere*. I don't remember it real well, but scientists discover this sphere down deep in the ocean.

A few of them enter the sphere, and then strange and horrific things start happening. They realize that their dreams are coming true, along with the fears that infect those dreams. In other words, "their hearts are in their dreams," and their dreams are coming true. And instead of being the heaven, that we might expect, it is in fact hell.

The way they finally escape, is that a few of them dream that they never dreamt. In effect they dream of dying to themselves . . . but how do you do that? "*Jesus Jesus, if ever you loved us at all send us help now!*"

Save us from our dreams!

In the Voyage of the dawntreader, the wild eyed man screams, "*dreams, not day dreams*"

Nightmares are terrifying, but daydreams may be more dangerous. My children were terrified of nightmares. But as a father I was more worried about their daydreams . . .

Coleman used to say, "When I grow up I want to be a back hoe"  
And I'd say, "drive a back hoe" and he'd yell, "*Be a back hoe.*"  
Becky wanted to be a mermaid—that's half fish and confined to the sea.  
Elizabeth wanted to be the dictator of her own country and I thought she might succeed.  
Every night in His prayers, Jon thanked God for "Chuck E Cheese."  
His dream was to live every minute of his life at Chuck E Cheese's".

In a few weeks, we're driving him to graduate school at the Seattle School of Theology where he wants to study psychology and get a degree in counseling. Well imagine what would've happened if when he informed me about graduate school, I had said, "Oh John, Mom and I are so excited, we've been waiting to tell you: We accessed your savings account and added some funds of our own, and along with a group of investors, we purchased the old Chuck E Cheese's on Hampden and Santa Fe, where you will be part owner and life-long manager. Jonathan, you don't have to go to graduate school. For the rest of you life you will literally live at Chuck E. Cheese's!"

Well, I think you get my point: Children need help with their dreams. And maybe you're a child . . . just dreaming that you're all grown up.

Sometimes in nightdreams we imagine our fears, as well as desires. But dreams can also reveal what we truly desire and that can be most frightening.

According to Sigmund Freud our dreams express the real desires in the depths of our hearts . . . what we actually want.

- Bernard Shaw, said that “Hell is where you must do what you want to do.”
- Sigmund Freud taught that our dreams tell us what we really want to do in the depths of our hearts.
- The Bible says, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt*” (Jer. 17:9).
- Jesus said, “*Out of the heart flows all manner of wickedness.*” (Matt. 15:19)
- Jiminy Cricket said, “*Anything your heart desires will come to you.*”

For God’s sake, never wish on a star!

Sigmund Freud noted that dreams are completely egoistic, that is, that in dreams the dreamer is always the point. I don’t know how right Freud was in all of his dream analysis, but the Bible does point out that the human heart is tragically self-centered . . . if not by nature, at least by nurture.

I mean we all inherit a heart tremendously susceptible to a lie...told by a snake: “Take the fruit and make yourself in the image of God. Make yourself the King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Victor Hugo wrote, “Always night, never blue skies, never dawn; we march but so far we have not progressed an inch. We still dream what Adam dreamt.”

I think we all dream of being God. We all want to be the King.

If you ask people, “What do you want?” and you really discern the meaning of their answer, I think you will hear this answer: “I want to be the King.” And if you say, “Why do you want to be the King?” The answer will be, “So I can do what I want . . . to be the King . . . so I can do what I want . . . and I want to be the king . . .”

See? We may not really know what we want . . .  
and may need some help with our dreams.

We want to be God, but we don’t know who or what God is . . .

So when God kicked Adam and Eve out of the garden and subjected creation to futility—which means, “You can no longer get what you want”—was that an act of retribution or mercy?

If the world had worked for them entirely, at that point. so that every wish they wished would come true

So that every dream they dreamt would come true

So that their individual will would never ever be subject to another’s will

Would that have been heaven or hell?

That’s actually how C.S. Lewis pictures Hell in the great divorce—a place where every one gets what they want, but they no longer want what they get

and they can no longer want each other.

Saint Augustine pictured Hell as endless rows of sealed rooms in which each soul worshiped at an altar devoted to its self, in endless isolation, for all eternity.

And that's how Saint Paul depicts the wrath of God in Romans 1 . . .  
God giving people up to the desires of their own hearts.

"Anything your heart desires will come to you..."

Is that Jiminey Cricket . . .

Or could it be . . . satan?

*About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.*

—Acts 12:1-5

Well, two weeks ago we preached on this passage and read what happens next—an angel of the Lord delivers Peter from prison. At first he thinks he might be nuts, but then he realizes it's real.

*When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. They said to her, "You are out of your mind."*

[*"You are out of your mind."*—*maine*—where we get our word maniac—you're insane, you're dreaming!]

*But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed. But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell these things to James and to the brothers." Then he departed and went to another place.*

*Now when day came, there was no little disturbance among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. And after Herod searched for him and did not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent time there. Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus,*

*the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last. But the word of God (The logos of God, the Logic of God) increased and multiplied.*

—Acts 12:12-24

Isn't that something? You can outlaw the Word of God and even crucify the Word of God, but nothing is more potent than the Word of God . . .

Well Herod, the king, is insane...

and Rhoda, who appears insane, is most sane.

Acts Chapter 12 presents quite a contrast between Rhoda and Herod.

- Rhoda is a servant girl or slave—she is least of the Jews.
- Herod is King—First of all Jews.
- Rhoda suffers, she lets others have their way, *aphiemi* is the Greek word translated "suffer," "let," and also "forgive." Rhoda surrenders her will to another's will. She has to. She's a servant or a slave.
- Herod never suffers, at least not until the Angel of God smites him. The king never submits his will to another's will. He gets his way.
- No one listens to Rhoda or agrees with Rhoda.
- Everyone listens to Herod and agrees with Herod—at least in His presence. Even his pagan enemies, from Tyre and Sidon, call him a god.
- Around Rhoda everything seems to come to life.
- Around Herod everything seems to die.
- Rhoda is overjoyed and filled with wonder,
- Herod is frustrated miserable and eaten by worms.
- Rhoda is most sane . . . She knows the Truth
- Herod is least sane . . . He hates the Truth.

Herod hates the Truth, like His grandfather, Herod the Great—who had the infants slaughtered in Bethlehem hoping to kill the King of the Jews; who ordered that hundreds of wealthy Jews be slaughtered upon his death, so there would be weeping in the city the day he died.

Herod hates the Truth, like His uncle Herod Antipas, who agreed to have "The Way, the Truth, and the Life" crucified on a tree in a garden.

Now, Herod Agrippa hates the Word of Truth, and wants to be the Truth.

He wants to be king of the Jews . . . and there can't be two "king of the Jews."  
He wants to be God.

You may say, "Great, I get the point, but I never claimed to be God . . ."  
Well actually, Herod, never claimed to be God either . . .

All he did was nothing, when they all said he was really something . . . "a god."

Has anyone ever said to you:

- *"You can be whatever you choose to be."*
- *"Name it and claim it."*
- *"Truth is what you make it."*
- *"Above all, be true to your own heart."*
- *"You deserve it. You deserve whatever your heart desires."*

And did you believe them? Did you want to believe them?  
Did they look like a cricket . . . or maybe . . . a snake?

Herod didn't say he was God, I think he just wanted to be God...  
Like he wanted to be king, and made himself king.

Doesn't everybody, in some form, dream of being the king?  
But have you ever heard of someone who dreamt of being Rhoda?  
... of being "last and least?" Humbled rather than exalted?  
... a servant, rather than a king?

We all seem to dream of being king, but actually, becoming king never seems  
to work out all that well . . . even for the best of us:

Saul, David and Solomon all seem to be happier and saner, before they  
become king, rather than after.

Things never seem to go too well for Pharaohs in the Bible.

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon congratulates himself on his great  
accomplishments, then, goes insane for seven years, until He learns God is  
King and makes kings of the *"lowest of men."* (Dan. 4:17)

Pilate looked at the Truth and said, "What is Truth," then washed his hands,  
crucified the Truth, and then according to Eusebius, killed himself during the  
Reign of Emperor Caligula.

Talk about insane: Caligula had been Herod's best friend in Rome.  
Once Emperor, he declared himself a god, appointed a horse to the senate and  
died insane.  
Caligula succeeded Tiberius who was a child molester.  
And Caligula, was succeeded thirteen years later by a truly mad King named  
Nero.

If you don't trust history, just watch "Game of Thrones."  
Or follow the lives of people who win the lottery...

Or watch what happens when folks become legends like Elvis—the King.

Better yet, just observe children who never hear the word “NO!”

Children who get whatever they want,

Children who never have their will violated,

Children of parents make their children’s every wish come true.

Children who think they are the king of the world, but then, despise their own world.

Spoiled children are the most bored, lonely, and miserable children in all the world.

So was it retribution or mercy that smote King Herod? He seemed pretty miserable to me, before he was smitten. Just like Adam and Eve seemed pretty miserable knitting clothes out of fig leaves and hiding in the trees, even before God kicked them out.

Maybe God smites those He loves and drives them from the garden because He is delivering them from their own bad dreams, their own desires, their own bad will.

*“The will of the world is always a will to death—a will to suicide,”* wrote Jacques Ellul, The French Philosopher and Theologian.

And by *“will to death,”* I think Ellul meant, the desire to be king: the desire to make ourselves in the image of God, which leaves men, insane, alone and trapped in death—what Scripture calls Hades and is often translated Hell.

We all lust for Hell.

When we dream of being “king” the world shrinks, everything dies, we end up alone and utterly insane.

G.K. Chesterton wrote, *“By asking for pleasure, he [humanity Adam] lost the chief pleasure, for the chief pleasure is surprise. If a man would make his world large, he must be always making himself small.”*

Alice had to become small to enter Wonderland, like Rhoda.

Do you seek to make yourself small or large?

Do you seek to make yourself last or first?

Do you seek to serve or to be served?

And how much wonder do you experience in your world?

Wonder comes from things that are bigger than you,

things that you don’t comprehend and control.

Wonder comes from things that you don’t possess,

things that have not been branded by your ego.

Two Texans were trying to impress each other with the size of their ranches. One asked the other, “What’s the name of your ranch?” He replied, “The Rocking R, ABC, Flying W, Circle C, Bar U, Staple Four, Box D, Rolling M,

Rainbow's End, Silver Spur Ranch." The questioner was much impressed and exclaimed, "Whew! That's sure some name! How many head of cattle do you run?" The rancher answered, "Not many. Very few survive the branding."

And very few survive a king's ego.

Have you ever noticed how, around kings, folks just tend to die a lot—like James and Herod's guards, the babies of Bethlehem, and even *Jesus*.

One day in the late 80's I found a book by Shirley MacClain in the Bel Air Presbyteriana church dumpster and so I read it, on page 192 MacClain wrote:

If I created my own reality, then on some level and dimension I didn't understand—I had created everything I saw, heard, touched, smelled, tasted; everything I loved, hated, revered, abhorred; everything I responded to or that responded to me. Then, I created everything I knew. I was therefore responsible for all there was in my reality. If that was true, then I was everything, as the ancient [Hindu] texts had taught. I was my own universe.

Did that also mean I had created God and I had created life and death? Was that why I was all there was? *A chilling wave of loneliness rippled through me...*

Yeah, I suspect so:

If you create every person in your life, there are no persons in your life, only figments of your own imagination, your own will—but not other wills. There are no other persons and therefore can be no Love.

MacClain continued:

To take responsibility for one's power would be the ultimate expression of the God-force. Was this what was meant by the statement "I AM THAT I AM?"

Well I'm pretty sure that's not what was meant by "*I AM that I AM.*"

"*I AM that I AM*" is God, and "*God is Love.*"

He is not just one enormous self-centered person.

He is three persons and one substance called Love.

And His Word is called the Truth.

When you dream of being King, your world shrinks, everything dies, you find yourself utterly alone... and insane—*maine*.

Rhoda is not insane. Herod is insane.... He hates the Truth.

And isn't that the very definition of insanity?

To no longer be subject to an objective reality that we call The Truth, but instead to create your own truth or think you are the Truth?

Chesterton wrote, "The madman is not the man who has lost his reason. The



madman is the man who has lost everything but his reason.”

In other words, He thinks he possesses all reason—in Greek, that word is the word *logos*.

To be insane, is to no longer submit to the Logos, but to think you are the Lord of the Logos. The Lord of the Word of God—Truth. Chesterton notes that the mind of a madman moves in a perfect circle—it’s just a very small circle. A madman has complete faith in himself.

And now let me ask you a very difficult question: “How do you know that you are not mad? Forget about Herod, Donald Trump, and Hillary Clinton, how do you know that you are not insane, a maniac? How do you know that you are not simply creating your own reality?”

When I was about seven, after catching bugs with my best friend Bradly Braverman, I used to lie in the grass on hot summer afternoons and wonder about existence. I wondered if my brain was, like, sitting in a jar somewhere, just creating all of my experiences . . . including bugs, including Brad.

When I studied philosophy at the University of Colorado, it seemed that just about every professor would say at some point: how do you know that your brain isn’t just sitting in a jar somewhere creating all of your experiences, your own reality.

Psychological studies show that to a very large extent we each do that, we twist the truth and even manufacture truth to fit into our own preconceived notions of reality.

Quantum Physics reveals that in an utterly shocking sort of way consciousness seems to create matter by collapsing the quantum state of subatomic particles?

How do you know that you don’t create your own reality?  
How do you know that all reality is not your own virtual reality?  
How do you know that the people in your life are not virtual people in your life?

There have been a sleugh of movies about guys that fall in love, or try to fall in love with robots and various forms of artificial intelligence that they create or someone creates for them. How do I know a person is actually a person?

I’m a person *and* I hope you know that I’m utterly fascinating—I think that’s why I think about me so much.

Inside of me there is an entire universe of memories, thoughts, feelings, insecurities, sorrows, faith, hope and love—a thing that chooses, a will.

How do I know that there is a universe like that in you—that you have a will, and are therefore a person, such that we could have a relationship and know love? How do I know that your will is not merely a product of my will?

Well wouldn’t the best indication that your will is not a product of my will, be the

fact that you will disagree with me . . . even sin against me?

Sometimes we actually imagine what happens in the world and we have a nightmare. But if my imagination always creates my world, I wouldn't create a world of people that disagreed with me.

If I manufactured a virtual woman, she would always agree with me . . .

And I might use her, but find myself feeling terribly alone.

I'm pretty sure that I'm *not* married to a virtual woman of my own construction, because she does not do whatever I will . . . so I must suffer her will . . . and yet when I'm with her I feel least alone.

No one disagreed with Herod, and he felt thoroughly alone.

Everyone disagreed with Rhoda and she seems to be quite happy.

If I manufactured a virtual woman, she would never disagree with me.

If I manufactured a virtual reality, reality would never disagree with me.

I would never suffer, but I wouldn't know God. I would think "I am God,"

. . . and a chilling wave of loneliness would ripple through me . . . Or be me.

But when I suffer, my heart begins to know, I didn't create this famine, earthquake or Tsunami . . . I did not create reality with my will.

There must be another will, stronger than my will . . . that makes the rain and built the mountains . . . I am not alone.

Herod was rich enough and powerful enough to rarely suffer, and he thought he was God and went insane. Rhoda suffered and Rhoda knew God and received the Word of God: the Truth

If I manufactured my own truth, I'd never be confused.

But because I am confused, I know I'm not the Truth, but wrestling the Truth.

Chesterton wrote: "Mysticism keeps men sane."

The one thing we can't comprehend allows us to comprehend.

See? If I manufactured my own reality,

if I actually thought that anything my heart desired would come to me,

if I dreamed of being king and thought I was king,

if I thought I could make myself in the image of God and thereby become God,

Then I couldn't know God, everything would die and I'd be utterly alone and insane.

The snake said, "Take the fruit and make yourself in the image of God."

Humanity did, and each of us was trapped by death—alone and utterly insane.

See?

I think the people we often think of as insane may be quite sane.

And many that this world calls sane are utterly insane, for they think they can create themselves in the image and likeness of God.

So, was it retribution or mercy, that God, kicked humanity out of the garden, subjected creation to futility, consigned all men to disobedience and said, "*The day you eat of it you will surely die?*"

See?

Maybe it's the mercy of God that you suffer... and

Maybe it's the mercy of God that people disagree with you, even sin against you..

Maybe it's the mercy of God that one day you will die to this walking death that we call life...

Several years ago, my childhood best friend, Bradley Braverman, died of AIDS.

I hadn't seen Brad for years, but his family called me to do the service.

I used to try to tell Brad about God and His Word, Jesus, but Brad used to laugh, and couldn't seem to hear. After the service, his sister pulled me aside and said, "Peter, in the last weeks, Brad seemed to lose touch with reality. He kept mumbling, 'It's so hard to be God, I can't be God, It's too hard to be God.'"

See? I don't think Brad was losing touch with reality, I think he was bumping into reality.

You know, if I can convince myself to dream of being Rhoda—that is, to simply serve people, love people, and not worry about exalting myself . . .

I seem to be pretty happy. But usually I dream of being the King and so I worry about exalting myself and I get pretty miserable . . . Until I experience some suffering, a bunch of folks disagree with me, I get really bewildered and confused and I like just break down and cry out to God, "I can't do it God, I can't be God, it's too hard to be God." I die to myself a bit, and then, I see the Truth and then I'm OK.

At the funeral Brad's girlfriend also pulled me aside and said, "One day when Brad was struggling I said, 'Why don't you call Peter?' and he said, 'Oh Peter, I talk to him all the time.'" Well he wasn't talking to me . . . but maybe the Truth that was in me, was wrestling with Brad at the edge of the Promised Land.

According to Scripture, we're each already trapped in death—a lonely little prison—that we think of as our "self" or our "life," or our "psyche." We have each constructed this "self" based on a lie told by the devil, that we could make ourselves in the image of God.

The Bible refers to this old self as the body of flesh. The problem with flesh is not that it's physical, but that it's cut off and alone. My flesh only feels it's own pleasure and it's own pain, and therefore can't know the joy that is Love; and God is Love.

In Acts 12:23, Luke records that Herod was smitten by the Angel of God, because he didn't give glory to God, was eaten by worms, and then breathed his last. The Jewish Historian Josephus records the same event and mentions pains in Herod's stomach but not the worms.

So, it seems Luke is obviously referencing the worm that never dies in Isaiah 66.

Isaiah prophecies that one day *“all flesh,”* (which means all new flesh, all people in new bodies) will go to the edge of the New Jerusalem and look down on the dead bodies of *all sinners*, which is all people . . . and see that our old dead flesh is consumed by a fire, that is not quenched, and a worm that never dies—an immortal worm.

Scripture says, and I quote: *“The king of kings and lord of Lords...alone has immortality”* (1 Tim. 6:15-16).

So an immortal worm is not an evil worm or witless worm,  
But a Divine worm, with the best of reason.

In Psalm 22, which Jesus quotes on the cross, reads *“I am a worm and no man.”* On the cross Jesus destroys our flesh.

In Revelation 19, *“the King of Kings and Lord of Lords,” “the Word of God,”* smites *“all flesh”* and calls to the birds of the air to *“eat the flesh of kings ...and all men.”*

Then in Revelation 21:4 The *“Kings of the earth”* bring their glory into the New Jerusalem.

The Worm eats the body of flesh in which we are imprisoned.

See? I don't think that's retribution—that's Mercy.

The fact that this world is subjected to futility, disobedience, suffering and sin,  
I don't think that's retribution—that's Mercy.

Haziel mentioned the worm that afflicted his sister.

One day we'll see that it wasn't retribution, but a function of Mercy.

In Job 19:25, from the King James version, Job cries out:

*“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”*

That's not retribution, that's mercy.

See? I think it's the work of salvation

That's what baptism symbolizes—dying and rising with Christ.

So through the suffering, sin and confusion of this world, God destroys the insane illusion that you or I could ever make ourselves in His image...

And then He reveals the Truth, *“God is Salvation”*—Ye-ho-shua—Jesus, and God makes us in His own image with the revelation of Himself.

Seeing Jesus of God., crucified and risen from the dead, destroys the lie and creates us in the image

G. K. Chesterton put it this way: *“A man cannot think himself out of mental evil . . . curing a madman is not arguing with a philosopher; it is casting out a devil.”*

So I think salvation always looks something like this:

## Theoden Clip

[Gandolph approaches Theoden, who has been possessed by Saruman.]

Gandolph: I have not passed through fire and death to bandy crooked words with a witless worm.

Theoden, son of Thengel too long have you sat in the shadows.

Saruman: (Cackling laughter) You have no power here Gandolph the great.

[Gandolph dramatically reveals his white robe. Saruman is now away of his authority.]

Saruman: Wait! If I go Theoden dies.

Gandolph: You did not kill me; you will not kill him.

Saruman: Rohan is mine.

[Saruman lurches toward Gandolph; Gandolph holds him back. He collapses and Saruman leaves Theoden. Theoden begins breathing deeply. Color and life returns to Theoden's face and he becomes younger.]

Theoden: I know your face.

Salvation is a mad king, waking to the revelation of Love.

Well, I imagine that mad King Herod descended into *Hades* the day his body died, but Jesus also descended into Hades and preached to the spirits in prison. So, I believe that one great day King Herod will bring his glory into the New Jerusalem. Just like the Revelation says.

But you see, you don't have to descend into *Hades* at all. By faith, you can see Jesus now and begin to live like Rhoda now . . . and you will have nothing to fear the day your body dies, because you will have surrendered the lie that you are your own creator, savior, and king. Then you can receive the Love that *is* your Savior, Creator and King.

My point is:

Stop dreaming of being the King and dream of the King.

Stop dreaming about making yourself in the image of God and dream of God.

Stop dreaming about making yourself good and behold the Good.

If you would just close your eyes for a few minutes and picture something.

You're a mad king: Mad as in certifiably nuts and mad as in angry.

You're nuts because you think that reality should conform to your will.

And you're mad at God because reality has not conformed to your will.

In fact it feels like everything has died; you're terribly alone and very confused.

You're a mad king and you're crucifying the King of Kings,

because there cannot be two King of Kings and Lord of Lords

and you want to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

I'm simply asking you to imagine that you are yourself—that is a sinner.

It's about noon, on a hot dusty spring day, just outside of Old Jerusalem.

You're part of an immense crowd chanting in anger.  
Since early that morning you have chanted, "*Crucify him... we have no king but Caesar.*"

He hangs naked and beaten to a pulp on a tree in this garden they call Calvary.  
The sky grows black; the earth shakes; you hear Him cry from the cross . . .  
Then as you look at Him . . . He looks at you. His eyes lock on you.  
He stares at you, with infinite longing for you.  
He loves you. He has made Himself a slave for you.

You wanted to be God.	LOOK—This is God.
You wanted to know the Good.	LOOK—This is the Good.
You wanted to take the Life.	LOOK—He is giving the Life
You dreamt of being a king.	LOOK—He is the King of Kings and He has dreamt of Rhoda, And being like Rhoda—serving You.

You dream of being the King . . . and everything dies.  
He dreams of dying . . . that everything might live.

You dream of being the King . . . and find yourself all alone.  
He is the King . . . and He is dreaming of communion with all creation.

You dream of being the King... and you go insane.  
He dreams of you and He is sane. He is sanity. He is the Truth.  
He is the Logos. He is the Logic of God. He is the revelation of Love.

You have dreamt of being the King...  
and all along the King has been dreaming of you.  
He is passing through death and fire for the love of you.

You have dreamt of being the King...  
and all along the King has been dreaming of you, dreaming of Him.  
He is descending into your soul, to help you dream his dreams.

You have dreamt of being the King...  
and the King has always dreamt of being you, and of you being Him.  
He dreams that two would become one.  
He dreams that you might be His Temple, His Body, His Bride.  
He dreams that His Life would be your Life.

It turns out that you are not the dreamer, but the dream . . .  
And He is a far better dreamer than you.

It turns out that you are not the dreamer, but the dream.  
And right now, as you gaze on Him, He makes you in His own image.  
He destroys your old prison of flesh and gives you a new heart—His  
Heart . . . Then, "Anything your heart desires will come to you."

You see?

It wasn't your dream to make you in the image and likeness of God.  
It was His dream . . . and this is how He fulfills His dream . . . that is  
you.

### **Communion**

On the night He was betrayed He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body which is for you." And in the same manner He took the cup saying, "This is my blood of the covenant, drink of it all of you, and do it in remembrance of me."

[Peter points to the communion table] This is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Dream of Him.

Baptism symbolizes the fact that you're not the dreamer but the dream...  
And it turns out that God is a much better dreamer than you.

### **Prayer**

Lord God, this morning we confess to you our sin. We confess that we have been mad kings. But today we give you all glory, honor, and praise. I thank you for that because when I do that, I'm free of the problem that is me. I see that you are good, better than I ever imagined. And I don't have to worry about my dreams because you're dreaming of me. In Jesus, I thank you. Amen.

### **Benediction**

God doesn't simply discard our dreams—he transforms them.  
Jon dreamed of a party at Chuck E. Cheese and God is transforming it into a dream of a better party—called the Kingdom of God.

Psalm 37:4 says,

*"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart"*

Dream of Jesus and He will redeem your dreams

*Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.*