

01/22/12

Core Strength Part #3 – Preparing for the Next Steps in our Future Together

Introduction

- this morning I'd like to begin our time together by asking you a question:
- **Is there such a thing as “ministry dreaming”?**
 - identifying a need or opportunity around you/us and then asking God to help you glorify Him by meeting that need, or seizing that opportunity?
 - can you think of anyone in the Bible whose story included ministry dreaming?

1. Caleb

- Here's a man who's 85 years old...
- he's been a prime leader in the conquest of the Promised Land, so he has to be war worn for sure...
- but what's the request he makes when he comes to Joshua:

Joshua 14:10-12 - Now behold, the LORD has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in. Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken.
- there's a man who's been dreaming about future ministry...
- even while he was serving God faithfully and sacrificially...at the same time he is dreaming about what he might be able to do next to advance the glory of God's name...I want that mountain...to prove that God's Word can be trusted and it really is possible regardless of your age to find your strength in Him...
- that's ministry dreaming...

2. Nehemiah

- what a fabulous story of a man who hears a report of the broken-down condition of the walls around Jerusalem...
- and he immediately confesses the sins of himself and the people and then he starts dreaming about how that problem might be solved...
- and then the foreign king he served noticed that he was sad and he asked Nehemiah about it...
- and what happens next is a fascinating example of someone who not only dreamed of addressing a specific need, but who had already begun working out the details in his mind...
- so when the king said...what do you request...
- out comes the strategic plan...
- **Nehemiah 2:7-8 - And I said to the king, “If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city and for the house to which I will go.” And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me.**

- what's important about that example is for our discussion here is to point out that we're not using the word dreaming in some pie in sky, fuzzy, ethereal way...he's just a dreamer who has no connection to reality...
- no, Nehemiah was already thinking through the exact steps that would have to be taken and the exact resources that would be involved...
- that's why when he actually went to Jerusalem....Scripture tells us that he got up early in the morning to inspect the walls before anyone there knew what he was dreaming about...
- **Nehemiah 2:11-13 - So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. And I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. I did not tell anyone what my God was putting into my mind to do for Jerusalem and there was no animal with me except the animal on which I was riding. So I went out at night by the Valley Gate in the direction of the Dragon's Well and on to the Refuse Gate, inspecting the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were consumed by fire.**
- what's that?...ministry dreaming...don't you love that?...
- we could think of examples of this in the NT as well...like...

3. Paul

- **Acts 15:36 - After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are."**
- can you picture that?...you're sitting around the fireplace deciding what you're going to do...and out pops – let's go check on the churches...lets go see if there are ways we can participate in what God is doing in His world...
- or another example from his words to the Corinthians...
- **1 Corinthians 16:5-9 - But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia; and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I may go. For I do not wish to see you now *just* in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits. But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective *service* has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.**
- do you hear him dreaming?...I want to have an extended time of ministry with you in Corinth...I'm thinking about that...but right now I need to stay in Ephesus because a wide door of effective service has opened for me, and I'm dreaming about everything can be accomplished through that as well...

- that's it – ministry dreaming...
- now let me ask you this – what do you dream about?...
 - in those quiet moments in your life when you don't have to be concentrating on something else...do you ever engage in ministry dreaming?...and about what?...
- let's take it even one step further...
 - would you agree with this – humanly speaking, God has made you in such a way, and placed you in such a place, that it's will that that particular dream be accomplished specifically by you?...
 - of course we all know God can use anyone or anything to accomplish His plans – I'm not suggesting otherwise...

- but humanly speaking...that one's got your name on it
 - that's why God made you the way he did...that's why He put you where He did...
 - that's why He gave you the cluster of life experiences He did, both good and bad...
 - the God of Scripture very much works with individual people...He even knows the exact number of hairs on your head...that's why there's that marvelous text in the book of...

4. Esther

- **Esther 4:14 - ...And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"**
 - not just anyone, not just any time, and not just anyplace...
 - but you, here, right now...
 - and if you study that particular passage carefully – there's a delightful balance of divine sovereignty and human responsibility...because Esther is told – if you don't seize this opportunity, God will provide deliverance for His people from another source...but he goes on to say – there will be consequences for you and your father's house...[namely, it will perish]...but we don't need to think about the negative aspect if we're locking on to the positive one...
 - who knows whether you have attained royalty for such a time as this – you, being a ministry dreamer, right here, right now...
- with that in mind, please open your Bible to 2 Samuel chapter 7 [page 231 of the back section of the Bible under the chair in front of you]...
 - our theme this year is...**Building Core Strength**
 - emphasized in verses like - **Psalm 138:3 - On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength in my soul...that's it—core strength...**
- I've been encouraging you to read through this handout which contains our planning initiatives for 2012.....
- but one of the reasons I asked you to do that is because the introduction to this document explains the three primary ways this theme of Building Core Strength is going to be emphasized this year:
 - 1. Shoring up foundational areas in our walk with Christ and our church ministries that comprise the basis of godliness and effective community service.**
 - 2. Planning and praying for the construction of Faith West and the successful launch of a cluster of new ministries in West Lafayette.**
 - 3. Preparing for the next round of ministry dreaming as we embark on a new strategic planning process in 2013.**
- those ideas are so important that I've been doing something I've never done before...taking three Sundays to break down and provide biblical background for each of those ideas...
 - so 2 weeks ago...- **Core Strength Part 1 - Shoring Up Our Foundation**
 - then last week – **Core Strength Part 2 – Planning and Praying for Faith West...**
 - now this morning, **Core Strength Part 3 – Preparing for the Next Steps in our Future Together**
- I'd like to read 2 examples from the life of King David about him being a ministry dreamer
- **read 2 Samuel 7:1-17, 9:1-8**

- with the time we have remaining, let's organize our thoughts around these emphases:

I. An Example of Ministry Dreaming

II. The Power of Ministry Dreaming

III. The Process of Ministry Dreaming

IV. Some Potential Areas of Ministry Dreaming

I. An Example of Ministry Dreaming

A. David and the temple

- the verses we read are at a critical place in David's life and rule...
- the text says that...
- **v. 1 – the Lord had given him rest on every side from all his enemies**
- we also know that in the previous chapter, David had the challenge of bringing the ark of the covenant, that piece of furniture from the tabernacle that served as the physical manifestation of the presence of God back to Jerusalem...
- That project turned out to be problematic for sure because of the death of a man named Uzzah for handling the ark of the covenant in an indifferent fashion...and then later when they successfully brought it to Jerusalem...David held a great worship service and even danced before the people in joy and celebration that God's presence was back with them in this particular way...
- but if you know your Bible, you know even that was tempered by David's own wife Michal who ridiculed him for what he had done...
- but still, even with the challenges...now that David has rest from his enemies and is in a position to dream about the future...in what direction does his mind gravitate?...
 - building a temple...a permanent home for the presence of God...
 - and you might say – but Steve, the subsequent verses show that God didn't allow David to build it...
 - that's true, and we learn in 1 Chronicles 28:3 that God made this determination because David had been a man of war...
 - **1 Chronicles 28:3 - “But God said to me, ‘You shall not build a house for My name because you are a man of war and have shed blood.’**
 - we also learn that God allowed David's son Solomon to build it and David spent a fair portion of the end of his life helping his son organize the plans and stockpile the materials to make the project a success...
 - but the headline here is that David's desire—his ministry dream to build the temple-- greatly pleased the Lord...
 - we can that with confidence because it's in this passage that David receives the words we refer to as the Davidic covenant...the promise that the Messiah will be born through David's line...and that his kingdom will be everlasting...
 - that's why it was so important that Joseph, the human father of Jesus, be of the...
 - **Luke 2:4 - Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,**
 - the principle is – you can learn a lot about a person's house by listening to what they dream about...the things they would really like to do in order to glorify their God...the same is true with...

B. David and the hurting.

- **2 Samuel 9:3 - The king said, “Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?”**
- the word “kindness” in this passage is one of the most important words in all the OT...the word hesed – or covenant love...
- when a person dreams about that – how can I magnify God's presence through the construction of the temple, or God's mercy through exercising kindness to someone in need—that's exactly what we're talking about this morning...in ways big and small...ministry dreaming

- now, please think with me about this...

II. The Power of Ministry Dreaming

- if you're wondering where this message is going...here it is...
- the third key element of core strength is you being a person, and us being a church, that values and practices ministry dreaming...
 - where we're constantly using our God given creativity to think about new ways to glorify God and meet needs around us...
 - and that's important every day – in ways big and small...and it's especially important as we move into a formal planning cycle a year from right now...
 - our experience is that it's never too early to dream...
- now, let me ask you to consider this – how has that tendency served us in days gone by?...have you ever thought about the ministry dreamers who have gone before us?

A. The establishment of Faith Church

- do you know how our church started?...
- it was through the ministry of Pastor Baden Rowe, who was the pastor of Kossuth Street Baptist church back in the early 1960's...
- and he and their church family were concerned about the new housing that was being built on what was then the south side of our town...and they dreamed of a church being established there...so they scooped off several families from their church and led them to plant a new church...thank the Lord for ministry dreamers...

B. A philosophy of ministry focused on helping people grow 7 days a week.

- one of the things that attracted Pastor and Mrs. Goode to Lafayette was their dream of building a church where answers from God's sufficient Word were made available in a way that helped people grow in the practical areas of everyday life.
- that might sound obvious to us – but that was in the days of bus ministries and high powered evangelism...when the focus was often on numbers instead of quality of discipleship...that's being a ministry dreamer
- and there are a number of men and women who are still part of this church family who joined the Goodes in embracing that dream...and served and sacrificed in all sorts of ways in order to make that happen

C. A Biblical counseling training ministry

- Pastor Goode and Dr. Smith had also received training in biblical counseling and wanted to start a community based biblical counseling center that would serve the community and also serve as a training center for other churches that wanted to have similar ministries in their communities...
 - Pastor Goode recognized early on that having a medical doctor involved in our counseling ministry was crucial to its development...so he asked Doc Smith to join him...
 - and even though Doc had an established medical practice in Lowell, he was willing to leave that practice and move to Lafayette to help Pastor Goode fulfill that dream...
- see, that's being like Nehemiah, Caleb, like Esther, like Paul, like King David...

D. Our Biblical counseling training conference

- we've had that conference for over 25 years and we've been blessed by having servants of God from around the country come here so we can study together about how to minister God's Word to those who are hurting...
- but I can remember the year when Doc Smith, who was still the administrator of the cc at the time said – what can we do to make this better...
- what would it look like to take this to the next level...
- and the decision was made to bring in speakers from other sister counseling organizations and acquaint our guests to other leaders in the movement...

- and sure there were some risks to that dream...but we're expecting a record number of people to with us in a few weeks...that's where ministry dreaming gets you...

E. To be more effective in outreach.

- this church family dreamed about that...
 - **Vacation Bible School**
 - I mention that for several reasons but this is a good example of ministry dreaming doesn't have to be the big things – it's just taking whatever area is entrusted to you and making it the best it can be...
 - **Lafayette Passion Play**
 - did you know we actually started our drama musicals here?
 - when we started, it required a whole group of musicians, and actors, and tech people...people who dreamed about the impact that could have at Easter...and look at it today...
 - **Lafayette Living Nativity**
 - when we heard about that ministry, Pastor Goode and Arvid Olson flew down to Slidell LA to see one in action and then brought that idea back here...
 - and our church family was asked to commit a rather large amount of money to launch one here – but the vote was unanimous...and an entire crew of hundreds and hundreds of dreamers got busy...and look what we have today...

F. To start a Christian School

- people like Dan Wickert, Dale Davidson, Pastor and Mrs. Leffew...
- our first staff
- we owe dreamers like that a tremendous debt of gratitude...

G. More effective community ministry

- **Christmas for Everyone**
- **Faith Community Center**
- **Food pantry/clothing closet**
- **Community athletic leagues**
- **Dozens of other community based ministries**

H. High quality, affordable church-based ministry training

- **Establishment of Faith Bible Seminary**

I. Enhanced foreign missions program

- **Establishment of Faith Global Ministries as a missionary sending agency**

J. Faith based residential treatment for at risk girls based on biblical counseling

- **Vision of Hope**

K. New location for Purdue Bible Fellowship and West Side Biblical Counseling Center

- **Faith West becoming a reality**

- here's my point – God uses people who dare to dream about ways to minister for Him...
 - we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to men and women who have gone before us and proved the power of that important quality...
 - now it's our turn – it's part of the core strength that we hope to continue to build this year...
- now I realize you might say – how do I get started?...

III. The Process of Ministry Dreaming

A. What are the unique strengths, talents, interests, passions, experiences that God has given me/us?

- what is the Lord doing in your heart?

B. What are the needs and opportunities that the Lord has placed around me that if met/seized could bring Him greater glory?

C. What are the weaknesses that exist in you/us that need to be shored up?

D. What would that dream look like if it came to fruition?

- paint a picture, write a story, describe a goal---that's what each person we've studied this morning did – [Caleb, Nehemiah, etc]

E. What resources will be necessary to accomplish this dream and what are the possible sources?

F. What steps/processes will need to be followed to fulfill the dream? Who needs to do what when?

- you could apply those principles to anything you believe the Lord might be calling you to do, or us to do...

- now, what could that look like?...here's some of the ideas that are rumbling around already...

- I'm telling you this to encourage you to begin praying, and dreaming yourself...call this priming the vision pump...

IV. Some Potential Areas of Ministry Dreaming

- maybe it would help you to know our overall philosophy of campus development...

- we're hoping that day will come when you can stand out at the community pond, right next to the eagle statue – and name an area of need in our community, and point to a facility and ministry that is trying to address it in the name of Christ...

- "Let your light so shine among men..."

- so how do we get there?...

A. Acquire 100 acres of adjacent land and 5 remaining homes on our SR 26 frontage

- we may never be able to do that – but it will never happen if we don't pray about it, and dream about it...

- but what a gift that would be to our children and grandchildren...

- a blank tapestry on which they can dream...

B. Senior Living Community

- Affordable senior living community developed contiguous to our site as part of the Faith campus.
- Senior living residents integrated into all facets of campus life including serving at Infant Care, Pre-School, Faith Christian School, Vision of Hope, Faith Community Center, etc.
- Day-time adult care center and program.
- Expanded Caleb's Kin Program.
- Full time pastoral staff member

C. Ministry for recovering men at Bethany Farms

- Master plan developed for all 100 acres
- Working farm established for men's ministry
- Others ministries at Bethany Farms considered and launched

D. Additional facilities for Vision of Hope

- Step down apartments for phase 3 residents
- Facility to serve victims of domestic violence

E. World class approach to serving children and adults with Special Needs

- Special needs program at Faith Christian School
- Home for adults with special needs
- Sports leagues for special need children and adults
- Mentoring services
- **Instructional programs**

F. Fully developed Sports Leagues

- - the opportunities to interact with our neighbors through sports leagues is incredible...

G. New Faith Ministry Center

- New space for seminary expansion
- New biblical Counseling Center

H. Enhanced ministries for foster parents and grandparents

- Quadplexes for Families Willing to Serve as Foster Parents
- Meeting places for family reunification process

I. Hospice Center

J. Fire House for Persons Displaced by House Fires

K. Publishing