

Video Three: Kimberly Young, Roberts Memorial UMC, Alexandria, Virginia

"The Power of a Dream"

Opening Prayer

Small Group Covenant

Scriptural Passage: Once Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. He said to them, "Listen to this dream that I dreamed. There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright; then your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Are you indeed to have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words. He had another dream and told it to his brothers, saying, "Look, I have had another dream: the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." But when he told it to his father and his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What kind of dream is this that you have had? Shall we indeed come, I and your mother and your brothers, and bow to the ground before you?" So his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind. (Genesis 37:5-11, NRSV)

Jacob took careful note of Joseph's dreams. Was Jacob reminded of his dreams? Decades earlier, he ran away from home and his brother Esau who threatened to kill him. He slept and dreamed that he saw a raised staircase between earth and sky. Then Jacob saw the Lord stand on it. God spoke to Jacob: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham, and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. (Genesis 28:12-13, CEB) God spoke to Jacob in a dream. A dream of protection and promise. A dream passed down through three generations. A dream that Jacob's descendants would spread out of Egypt (Africa) to the west, east, north, and south to populate the earth.

Joseph continued the legacy of dreamers in the family. However, the family interpreted his dreams to describe a life of submission and servitude for them--royalty for Joseph. What else could the dreams mean? Jacob demonstrated obvious affection for the son born in his old age, and an "ornate robe" signified Jacob's love. Were plans in place for Joseph to lead their household after Jacob's death? Jacob's sons hated Joseph, his dreams, his words, and the robe. They chose to retaliate with violence.

Can a dream die that is written on the heart and passed down from generation to generation? God spoke to Rebekah. Was God's prophecy for Joseph as well as Jacob?

Joseph lived. His brothers sold him, and he became a slave in Egypt.

The dreams of Jacob and Joseph occurred thousands of years ago in Canaan and Egypt. One man's vision from the 15th century transformed millions of lives in Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Prince Henry of Portugal dreamed of discovering land, gold, and wealth in Africa.

Henry's dream was one step towards the transatlantic slave trade. For three centuries, threescore and six years, European slavers loaded nearly 13 million African men, women, and children onto slave ships bound for the Americas. These human beings were image-bearers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Our brothers and sisters in Christ. Henry's dream was in conflict with the dreams of the Africans captured and sold into slavery, who dreamed of freedom and self-determination.

By 1790 both free and enslaved Africans formed a community in Alexandria, Virginia. They listened to Methodist circuit riders who told Bible stories about Joseph, a slave. They dreamed about the liberation Jesus would bring: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."* (Luke 4:18-19, CEB)

Reflect on this scripture passage and the discussion question before the video.

Discussion Question (before video)

From Scripture through to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., dreams have been a powerful vehicle for imagining a better future. How have dreams shaped your life, your vision for a better future?

VIDEO

Discussion Questions (after video)

This story deals with conflict within the church and communities. How do you handle conflict with those closest to you?

We just heard how the "question of race" divided the church and the nation-leading to controversy and denominational splits. Has the question of race divided your community, your church, or your family?

How can the church today build bridges across the divides of race?

Discipleship in Action: The Power of Awareness

The history of Roberts (Davis) Chapel and Roberts Memorial UMC is a testament that enslavement, segregation, and beliefs about the superiority of race cannot erase God's vision of creation as "supremely good."

Are you aware of the role your family, community, and church played in history?
As a learner, will you seek to understand more?

Time for Self-Reflection

What is your dream of reconciliation and relationship within your family, church, or community?

Closing

Take time for comments, questions, and announcements. The facilitator or a participant offers a closing prayer.