

“The Freedom of Dreams”

Exodus 34:29-32; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Luke 9:30-32

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What would it mean for you to feel truly at home?

For me - - the question is about more than - - a house.

It's about how you feel.

And I think - - feeling free - - is a part of it.

There is a connection between feeling free - - and being at home.

Often a person wanders for a time, usually early in life, before settling into a place they call home. / This wandering is different from what I mean by freedom. Others find their home by staying rooted in the place they were born, and this rootedness does not negate freedom.

Either way, it is difficult to feel really at home if you feel confined or afraid. / I DO think that - - wandering may help you find your home - - but freedom is how you feel when you are truly at home.

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he wrote about freedom.

He was describing Moses - - as the people of Israel - - wandered in the wilderness.

And he said that - - things are different - - after Jesus - - than they were in the time of Moses. / Specifically - - the Spirit of God - - is set FREE - - in a new way.

As I think of the people wandering in the wilderness - - searching for a HOME - - I wonder what they would have thought if they could have read these words from Paul.

Paul said: where the Spirit of God is - - there is freedom.

As I was thinking about Paul's words about freedom - - and about the connection between freedom and home - - I came across a series of paintings called, “The Four Freedoms”.

The *Four Freedoms* is a series of oil paintings by the American artist Norman Rockwell. The four freedoms refer to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's January 1941 State of the Union address in which he identified four essential human rights that should be universally protected: freedom of speech and worship, and freedom from want and from fear. The paintings are now in a museum on Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The theme was the basis for the Atlantic Charter at the end of World War 2, and then the charter of the United Nations. The paintings, completed in 1943, were reproduced in the *Saturday Evening Post* over four weeks along with essays by famous writers of the time.

During the weeks of Lent (March 10-April 7) these paintings will be a launching pad for sermons and worship. The Lenten worship theme this year is: "Wandering and Coming Home". The scripture texts from the lectionary are threaded together with this theme as well. Both Jesus and Israel wander in the wilderness at first. But the people of Israel eventually return home "like a people in a dream" (Psalm 126). And as Paul tells us, our "true home is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20).

Maybe feeling a little more at home spiritually will even help us discover a new sense of freedom in our lives.

These four paintings not only deal with the topic of freedom - - they are a kind of DREAM for life together. I know that not everyone shared FDR's dream for America after WW2. And I know that even today - - there might be questions about the specifics of it.

I prefer not to dwell on that.

Instead I'd like us to think about our dreams.

And about how - - dreams - - can BOTH - - set us free - - AND - - help us find HOME.

The incident that Paul wrote about in the text for today is from Exodus - - and is the Old Testament reading. / Moses had come down the mountain - - after being with God - - and receiving the 10 commandments. / These were a kind of DREAM - - that God had - - for us.

According to the book of Exodus Moses face was SHINING - - after this time on the mountain top. / People have wondered about what that meant - - for centuries. / It's been said that this was a way of saying that God's Spirit was - - kind of - - INFUSED into Moses.

Maybe.

But I wonder - - if maybe - - it was like Moses had just WOKEN from a dream.

Centuries later - - when Peter was on a mountain top with Jesus - - and he saw a vision of Moses - - Luke says it was like waking from a dream.

Listen to how Luke describes it:

Moses appeared to Peter in glory...

Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep...

And when they WOKE UP - - they saw his glory.

I believe that this is a description of a dream - - for the future of the world.

God's dream - - for us all - - made whole - - and FREE - - and at HOME.

As we think about that, consider some of the words of this poem...

It's from a poem called - - "Dream Bearers"

In all the prophecies

The destruction of the world is written

All the Prophecies foretell

Humanity creating its own destruction.

But time and life  
Endlessly renewed  
Also engendered a generation  
Of lovers and DREAMERS.

Dreamers were...  
Men and women who dreamt not  
Of the world's destruction  
But of building a world  
Of butterflies and nightingales.

The dream bearers multiplied in the world.  
They were fiercely attacked by those  
Who bore catastrophic prophecies.  
They were called deluded romantics  
Inventors of UTOPIAN homes.

They were told their words were OLD.  
Which was true.  
Since PARADISE - - IS - - an ancient memory...  
In the heart of humanity.

Those who accumulated RICHES - - feared them.

They hurled their armies at them

But every night - - at home - - the dream bearers - - made love.

Their seed continued to GROW - - in the wombs of women.

They not only bore dreams - - but multiplied them.

They made their dreams - - run - - and speak.

This is how the world created life again.

Just as it had created those - - who invented the way

To extinguish the sun.

Like hard working little ants, they never stopped...

Dreaming and building their beautiful worlds.

Worlds of brothers and sisters

Who consoled each other

Healed and cared for each other.

They were happy.

But...

“They are dangerous” - - was the message.

“They must be destroyed” - - it was murmured.

The dream bearers knew their power.

They knew that life had created them to protect itself from death.

The prophets of darkness spent nights watching the secret routes.

But the dream traffic - - had been unleashed - - and could not be stopped.

It is said that the EARTH - - after giving birth to them

Unchained a rainbow in the sky

All we know is that we have seen them

We know that life - - created them - -

As a protection - - against the prophecies of death.

In the next few weeks - - the sermons during Lent will go one DREAM at a time.

One painting at a time.

One scripture reading at a time.

And my hope is that they will be about how to make at least SOME fo our dreams - - into reality - - in the world around us - - and in our lives.