

**Your Dreams and God's Dream**  
**Genesis 1:26, 3:21 and 1 Corinthians 15:22**  
**March 22, 2009**  
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Pinocchio Movie Clip #1:

*(Sung)*

When your heart is in your dream  
No request is too extreme  
When you wish upon a star, your dreams come true

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When I was a boy, I dreamed of being Zorro, and my heart was in my dreams. When I was seventeen, I was preparing to go to college, and my mom said, "Peter, you can't go to college. We spent all your college money on an authentic Spanish saber, a horse, a hat, and a ticket to New Mexico. Your dreams must come true – you will be Zorro."

Not really. You see, children usually need some help with their dreams.

One day, when Coleman was two, he said to me, "Daddy, when I grow up, I want to be a backhoe." I said, "You mean you want to drive a backhoe?" "No," he said, "*be* a backhoe."

One day, when Elizabeth was little, she said, "Daddy, I don't want to be a mommy when I grow up." I said, "Why, honey?" "Because I don't want breasts." I said something like, "Well, sweetheart, don't go wishing on any stars just yet."

Children need help with their dreams; I need help with my dreams.

- Freud said, "Our dreams tell us what we really want, in the depths of the heart."
- The Bible says, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt.*"
- Jesus said, "*Out of the heart flows all manner of wickedness.*"
- Jiminy Cricket said, "Anything your heart desires will come to you. When you wish upon a star."

So you sure as Hell don't want to go wishing on any old star.

- Bernard Shaw said that "Hell is where you must do what you want to do."
- St. Augustine pictured Hell as endless rows of sealed rooms, within which each person worshiped himself.

- C.S. Lewis pictured Hell as the place where everyone gets what they want, and no one wants what they get, for no one wants love.

In Narnia, there is a tree that gives health and length of life, and makes one like a god. The witch steals an apple from the tree, and Aslan says “she will loathe it forever.” The children are confused by that until Aslan explains:

Things always work according to their nature. She has won her heart’s desire; she has unwearied strength and endless days like a goddess. But length of days with an evil heart is only length of misery and already she begins to know it. All get what they want: they do not always like it...

In Romans 1, Paul describes the wrath of God as “getting what you want,” as being “given up to the *epithumia*, the deep desires of the heart” – our dreams. Freud said “our dreams are what we really want.” And he said, “Our dreams are egoistic,” that is - they’re all about us, me. In other words, we each dream of a world all about ourselves, a world in which we each get our will. We call that “free will.” But if I always get my will, there’s no room for any other will. That is, no room for persons, and I am alone. “Anything your heart desires...” and my heart desires me. That is, my heart dreams of Hell, that’s a problem.

Well, fortunately, I’m not the only one with a will, dreams, and wishes. My Father has wishes, kind of like this:

Pinocchio Movie Clip #2:

*Geppetto:* Figaro, you know what I wished? I wished that my little Pinocchio might be a real boy! Wouldn’t that be nice? Just think, a real boy.

*Jiminy Cricket:* A very lovely thought, but not at all practical.

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Genesis 1:26 “*Then God said ‘let us make man (Adam) in our own image or likeness...’*”

You know, so far, whatever God has willed has sprung into existence: light, expanse, land, stars, moon. You see, God’s will is truly free. Then God says:

*“Let us make Adam in our image.”*

I think that would be free – like a free will. You know, a heart desires Hell (to be utterly alone) unless it wills another’s will; unless it loves.

God is a trinity: three persons, one substance. Each person constantly wills the other’s will – in Freedom. Three persons and one communion of will; like a great dance. God is Love in Freedom.

In Genesis 1, God wills another will, named Adam. Yet if that other will does not will love, it might prove “highly impractical,” “highly painful.”

*“Let us make Adam in our own image and likeness...”*

That’s God’s will. Scripture says *“He accomplishes all things according to the counsel of His will.”*

*“Let us make man in our own image.”*

Some would argue that God really meant to say: “Let us make a few men in our image and likeness, and let us make most men a grotesque distortion which we will torture without end.” But he didn’t say that. He said *“Let us make man in our own image and likeness.”* His will, His dream.

Genesis 1:30 *“And it was so. And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good.”*

Now that’s the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> day, the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> day. We look around at our world and say “Hey, it’s not all very good. The economy sucks, I have heartburn, everybody dies, and I have a will that dreams its way into Hell. It must not be the 7<sup>th</sup> day...”

And that’s right – it’s not.

By Chapter 2, we’re back to the 6<sup>th</sup> day, and Scripture describes how God begins to make Adam: God breathes His breath into dust, and makes Adam (mankind – but not yet finished in His image). God tells Adam that *“the day you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will die.”* But how does Adam know that God’s will is good, if he hasn’t eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good? I mean, how can Adam chose the good, if he has no knowledge of the good? He wasn’t free to choose the good.

People say that Adam and Eve had “free will.” I don’t think they had a “free will” so much as a “random will.” We confuse a “random will” with a “free will;” we confuse simply choosing what you desire, with desiring to choose the good. Bondage is having to choose what you desire. Freedom is desiring to choose the good alone.

My dog chooses what she desires. Eve and old Adam chose what they desired. At the serpent’s tempting, they took fruit from the tree. It’s hard to blame them for that choice since they didn’t know. But once they took the fruit, they did know – they saw that they were naked, and hid themselves. *“The day you eat of it, you will surely die.”*

And yet the fruit did work according to its nature:

- They knew about the good, but knew they weren’t good.
- They knew about love, and saw they were naked of love.
- They knew about God, but didn’t know God.
- They knew themselves – they became self-conscious.

The snake tempted Eve to create herself in God’s image through the law, in the power of the flesh: God’s dream with a lie. So what Adam and Eve created was a lie. They create an “anti-dream,” the imitation dream, the imposter. This (Peter points to a diagram of the Old Adam): the Old Adam, the False Self, the “me” that “I” create, the kingdom of my judgments: Disobedience, darkness death – Hell. Like I said, “we dream of Hell.”

*Psalm 14:2 “The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of Adam to see if there are any who understand, who seek God (that is, choose God – choose love).*

*They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt. There is none who does good, not even one.”*

Not even one.

We may stumble across the good, accidentally choose something good... but we don't make a good choice with a good will, a free will, an undivided will, a will that loves in freedom. Our will is in bondage to sin. The history of Israel and the Law, the testimony of all Scripture clearly reveals: our choice is sin and death.

Adam and Eve had a random will; now they have a bad will (a will in bondage to sin and death). Adam and Eve are not created in the image of God, and so most people seem to think that God didn't get His dream. For God created a will that trumped His own will.

Can we trump God's will? Is your will to be an arrogant, sinful son of Hell stronger than God's will to make you in the image and likeness of love? Is your dream of death stronger than God's dream of Life?

In Genesis 3, God shows up, curses the world, and we would expect Him to obliterate Adam and start over. But He doesn't. Perhaps He's not finished. He hasn't said *“It is finished.”* Not yet.

*Genesis 3:21 And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skin, and clothed them.*

Adam is clothed with a sacrifice of love. It's a picture of Jesus Christ and Him crucified:

-He is God's judgment.

-He is God's decision.

-He is The Good.

-He destroys the Old Adam, and is the New Adam – the finished man.

-He is “the perfect image of the invisible God.”

Scripture tells me to “put Christ on,” to “put the New Man on,” to put this on (Peter points to the New Adam): This is the “me” that God creates.

Jesus said to His disciples: *“You didn't choose me, I chose you.”*

He is The Good, and He chooses me to choose Him.

He chooses us, and He chooses within us.

The Bible doesn't use the term “free will.” Instead, it uses terms like “faith, hope and love.”

*Galatians 2:16 I'm justified “by the faith of Christ.” KJV*

*Galatians 2:20 “I live by the faith of the Son of God.” KJV His faith in me.*

*“Christ dwells in our hearts through faith,” writes Paul. (Eph 3:17)*

“So faith in heart is Christ in heart,” writes Augustine.

“*Christ in you*” is the “*hope of glory*,” according to Paul. (Col 1:27)

“*He who is love is born of love and knows God. God is love,*” writes John. (I John 4:7-8)

So faith, hope and love in you, is Christ in you.

Corinthians 1:30 “*God made Jesus our wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*”

Philippians 2:13 “*It is God who works in you, both to will and to work.*”

I Corinthians 2:16 “*We have the mind of Christ.*”

You see, a good choice in us, is Christ Jesus in us – good will in us, free will in us, is Christ Jesus in us. God finishes Adam with Christ, and Christ is the Image of God. “*Let us make Adam in our image and likeness...*” Maybe God gets His wish – His dream. He covers “Adam.” And “Adam” means humanity.

Listen to these verses we read last time:

Romans 5:18 “*Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.*”

Where our bad choice increased, God’s good choice abounded all the more.

Romans 11:32 “*For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.*”

Romans 14:11 “*As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.*”

I Corinthians 13:45, 49 “*Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

*Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.*”

I Corinthians 15:22 “*For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*”

Apart from last week, have you ever heard a sermon on those verses? (Not one person in the congregation raises their hand.)

I don’t think I have. And they’re not ancillary verses; they lie at the heart of Paul’s theology. And they certainly seem to indicate that God gets His wish, that His dream comes true – Adam becomes a real boy. God makes all humanity in His image. “*As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.*”

Now I believe there is an eternal (*aionias*) punishment: an eternal fire, a narrow gate, a narrow way, a chasm that none can cross. Hades, Gehenna and a Lake of Fire – in two weeks, we’ll preach on judgment. On our website, I expound all those topics and scriptures. I believe those things.

But none of those things means that God doesn’t get His wish. None of that renders the following sentence untrue:

*“As in Adam **all** die, so in Christ shall **all** be made alive.”*

Maybe I’m missing something, but if so, I don’t know what the something is. So maybe God really does get His wish. But here’s what’s really confusing:

- Why are we, the church, so threatened that God might get His wish? That God might get His dream?

...Sometimes it’s like we don’t want God to get his dream.

Thomas Talbott, a graduate of my seminary, and now a Philosophy Professor at Willamette University, points at this truth in one of his articles. I’ll paraphrase:

**These are 3 Propositions I can’t believe all at once:**

1. **God is All-Loving** – so loves all, and wishes all to be saved
2. **God is All-Powerful** – that is, His will is free; His dreams come true
3. **Hell (Hades) is Endless** – Some think Scripture says this, but I think it says just the opposite (Revelation 21:4)

Well you see, if God loves all (#1), and has the power to save all (#2), then He will save all, and Hell must end. If #1 and #2 are true, then #3 is false.

Calvinists and Augustinians argue that:

#2 and #3 are true, and #1 is false – God doesn’t really love all, for God has predestined some to endless wrath.

Arminians (Baptists, Methodists, etc.) argue that:

#1 and #3 are true, and that #2 is false – God wants to save all, but can’t save all, because some wills trump God’s will. So you see, you’re saved or not saved by your will, your choice. They call it “free will.”

You know, Calvinists tolerate Arminians who believe #1.

And Arminians tolerate Calvinists who believe #2.

But if you believe #1 and #2, people freak out and call you a heretic. They act like you’re saying “Jesus doesn’t matter,” when in fact, you’re saying “Jesus is the only thing that does matter.” You see, I think they’re confusing Jesus with someone else.

Last year, I was talking with Philip Yancey about how weird this had all gotten, and he said something like: “Peter, I don’t have a problem with all these questions you’re asking. Who’s to say what God will do beyond space and time as we experience them? But Peter, it’s like these questions touch on something primal in us...”

You see, I think they do, and I’m concerned that that primal thing in us is the power of Hell in us – the old me, the primal lie. And so we fear that if God get His dream, I won’t get my dream. And my dream is me. My dream is hell.

Look at this chart (The 3 Propositions I can’t believe at once):

You see, if I want to believe in the victory of Hell – Endless Hell:

A. Perhaps I don’t want to believe that God is all love (#1).

- Scripture says, “*God is love.*” If I don’t believe in love, I don’t believe in God, and I stand condemned (we spoke on this last time).
- “*What I do not do to the last and least, I do not do to Christ.*” If I do not love the least in Hell, perhaps I don’t love Christ.
- If I won’t forgive, I’m not forgiven. I stand, naked, condemned in Hell.
- You see, if I refuse love, I refuse this (Peter points to picture of New Adam): God’s judgment of grace, and I’m left with this (picture of Old Adam): me in Hell.

So if I want to believe in an endless Hell:

A. Perhaps I don’t want to believe in a God who is all love (#1).

B. Or perhaps I don’t want to believe in a God who has all power (#2). Perhaps the church wants power; perhaps I want power.

If I don’t trust God’s power, I’ll have to trust my power.

If I don’t trust God’s will, I’ll have to trust my will.

If I don’t trust God’s dream, I’ll have to trust my dream.

If I don’t trust God to create, I’ll have to trust me to create, and me creates Hell.

Remember how Satan tempted Eve? It was God’s dream with a twist. God said, “*Let us make man in our image.*” Satan said, “Eve, you better make yourself in God’s image.” “Adam, if you want to be a real boy, it’s entirely up to you.” There’s something so seductive, so primal, in that.

Pinocchio Movie Clip #3:

*Blue Fairy:* Yes Pinocchio, I’ve given you life.

*Pinocchio:* Why?

*Blue Fairy:* Because tonight Geppetto wished for a real boy.

*Pinocchio: Am I a real boy? (he asks in amazement)*

*Blue Fairy: No, Pinocchio. To make Geppetto's wish come true, will be entirely up to you.*

*Pinocchio: Up to me?*

*Blue Fairy: Prove yourself brave, truthful and unselfish, and someday you will be a real boy.*

*Pinocchio: A real boy!*

*Jiminy Cricket: That won't be easy.*

*Blue Fairy: You must learn to choose between right and wrong.*

*Pinocchio: Right... and wrong? (looking his hands) But how will I know?*

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See my point? The blue fairy is Satan (this is a heavy night at church – lots of theology, and you learn the blue fairy is Satan)!

“How will I know right from wrong?” asks Pinocchio... Eve chose the Law for a conscience. Pinocchio gets a talking cricket (we need something better than that).

Well, the Blue Fairy says to Pinocchio: “To make Gippetto's wish come true, will be entirely up to you.” She says what Satan says, and what our hearts desire. We think God creates us to a point, and then leaves the most important part to us: The substance of His Image – free will, that is God's will, which is love, which is God, and we can't create God. To dream we can, is to dream of Hell.

Well, Pinocchio learns to be good: tell the truth, never play pool or chew tobacco. And then Pinocchio saves his father from the belly of the whale. Old Pinocchio saves his father-creator and his dreams from Hell, and becomes a real boy.

Our old man doesn't save our Father's dreams, and make us in His. Jesus, the New Man, descends into Hell, and saves our Father's dream, and makes us in His image.

I don't create me – God creates me with His grace, in Jesus.

You see, the primal lie is that I create me, but the reality is that I damn me, and God saves me. And that is all a part of how He creates me.

I'm not saved by my will, my choice, my judgments.

I'm saved by God's will, God's choice, God's judgment (which is grace).

As long as I think I'm saved by my judgments, I'm stuck in Hell, for my judgments are Hell. What most people mean by “free will” is “my will,” which is emptiness, death and Hell. You see, when I don't trust God's power, God's judgment, I trust my power, my choices, my judgment. We think this (Peter points to the old man) saves us, when it is precisely what we need to be saved from!

To trust God's power is the death of my power. So we don't trust God's power, for it's the end of our power. God's power is love that takes the form of grace. Nothing in all this world is as offensive as grace, for if I'm created solely by grace, it's the death of the lie that I thought was me... the death of my pride.

We don't trust God's power, for we don't understand God's power: it's the power of love.

God creates by giving, and we create by taking. So to make ourselves winners, we think there must be losers. To make ourselves first and best, we make others last and least. It's primal. We make scapegoats.

God came to earth as Christ and made Himself last and least. He made Himself the scapegoat. He said:

"Eve, take from me – body and blood, from my tree."

"Eve, take from me – but I give me, forgive me, to you."

*"Sin increased and grace abounded all the more."* It's the power of surrendered power. The power of love.

Love makes a space, and there love gives itself away. God makes a space, that you think is you – he makes it with you. Then God fills that space with Himself: The TRUE YOU. God gives you a **random will**, and that becomes a **bad will**, an empty will. Then God fills it with **good will**. What He takes is nothing (emptiness) and what He gives is everything (Himself).

We are saved and created 100% by grace through faith. And you have nothing to boast about.

The cost of being created is believing "I am created." In other words: I'm created by "*grace through faith, and that not of myself lest I should boast.*" God freely wills that you would will Him in freedom. You have been chosen to choose, but that choice is a gift.

So you see: you're not saved by your choice. You're saved from your choice, by God's choice in you – Christ Jesus in You. The Law is not your conscience. A cricket is not your conscience. Christ Jesus is your conscience, God's choice in you.

And this is how the choice comes to you, how God's judgment comes to you: Bishop A.T. Robinson writes:

To man there remains two ways. And the one that is crowded is still the one that leads to destruction; and many there be that find it. But as some point on that road, be it far or near, each one finds also something, or rather Someone, else. It is a figure, stooping beneath the weight of a cross. 'Lord, where are you going?' asks Everyman. And the answer comes: 'I am going to Rome, to Moscow, to New York, to be crucified afresh in your place.' And no man in the end can bear that encounter forever. For it is an encounter with a power than which there can be nothing greater, a meeting with omnipotent Love itself. This love will take no man's choice from him; for it is precisely His choice it wants.

I'd say it this way: "For it is precisely your choice God wants to create.

- Christ takes no man's choice for our choice is nothing.
- He takes no man's choice except that He gives God's choice.
- He takes darkness by giving light
- He takes lies by giving truth.
- He takes sin by filling it with mercy.
- He takes our emptiness by filling it with Himself.
- He is God's heart, coming to fill our empty dreams.

“If God's heart is in your dreams, no request is too extreme.”

- He is God's heart, the bright and morning star. He is unquenchable fire. He is love.

Robinson continues:

(Love's) will to lordship is inexhaustible and ultimately unendurable: the sinner *must* yield. God has exposed the strong right arm by which he has declared that he will curb the nations. And, lo, it is pierced by nails, stained with blood, and riveted in impotence. Is it to us too an offence and foolishness? Yet this is the authentic quality of love's omnipotence. ‘The weakness of God is stronger than men’ (I Cor. 1:25)—than any man; for ‘I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself’ (John 12:32). Christ, in Origen's old words, remains on the Cross so long as one sinner remains in hell.

The power of God is the cross of Christ – the power of love. God is love, and there is no power greater, not even your dreams. Your dreams of Hell are not greater than His dreams of you. So stop dreaming of Hell, and surrender to Heaven.

This is the Gospel:

You are not the chooser, but the chosen.

You are not the elector, but the elected.

You are not the dreamer. You are, in fact, God's dream.

In the beginning, God said, “*Let us make man in our own image and likeness.*” And this is how His dream comes true:

On the night he was betrayed, He took bread and He broke it saying, “This is my body, I give to you. Take and eat.” And in the same manner after supper, and having given thanks, He said “This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you. Do it in remembrance of me.” And so we invite you to come forward and surrender this old man, and receive this new man. “*I have been crucified with Christ,*” says Paul. “*And it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.*”

In Jesus Name, Believe the Gospel. It’s really, really good.

Communion.

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Benediction:

Prayer: Jesus, you are the love of God for us, and you’re strong. The more I look at Scripture, I think there is no one I would rather be God, even me. And you’re good. And it’s in your name that we pray. Amen.

Before you go, let me say that whenever I preach on this stuff, people freak out, because they are afraid that when they get to Heaven, God is going to say “Explain to me how long Hell lasts, and the nature of space and time.” But I don’t think He is. I think He’s going to say something like “Do you love me? And do you believe I love you? You’re home.”

But this raises lots of questions for people. So two years ago, I pulled together a 200 page document, because I just wanted to search Scripture. And the more I searched, the more I thought: “Hey none of these Scriptures cancel out these others we’ve been looking at.” In fact, they just make them that much more amazing, and that much more exciting. If you want to go online, you’ll find the document (All Things New) under “Theological Questions” on the church’s website.

It’s important that you also know that these aren’t just ideas that I’ve come up with. This is great theology – probably the predominate theology of the early church, and also the theology of people like Karl Barth, John Paul II, Han von Balthasar, Jurgen Moltmann, And for some reason, on the popular level, we don’t pay attention. And I think part of that might be because we think on some level, that it’s too complicated. But I don’t think it is. I think we’re complicated. I think the evil one has made us complicated. I think it’s actually pretty simple. God is simple in a wonderful way: God is love. “*And He who loves is born of God and knows God. And He who does not love, does not know God. God is love.*”

Now you’re kinda stressed out, aren’t you?! Because you’re wondering, “Do I love, or do I not love?” Well, we’re going to talk about that in two weeks: it’s called Judgment. We’ll talk about the flaming sword at the edge of the garden. And God knows that part of you doesn’t love. That’s why He wants to nail it to His cross. And the part of you that does love, He says, “Guess what? That’s me!”

So believe the Gospel. It’s really good news.