

Dream Big, Pray Big, Live Big
Part One – Dream Big

- *We need to hear what God is saying—dream big.*
- *We need to pray into what God is saying—pray big.*
- *We need to act upon what God is saying—live big.*
- *We can see these principles of dreaming big, praying big, and living big in Jeremiah 29:11-13.*

¹¹For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

- *Dream big and know that God’s intentions toward you are life and peace and to give you a certain hope filled with His eternal purposes.*

¹²Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

- *Pray big and come into agreement with God’s will and purposes through prayer.*

¹³And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

- *Live big, step out in obedience, and put our faith into action.*
- *Jesus promised that if we ask, seek, and knock we will not be disappointed. “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” (Matthew 7:7–8).*
- *When we study the book of Acts we see the Church as an overcoming Church. The believers knew how to dream big, pray big, and live big. Even though the early Church initially was comprised of just a handful of believers, they withstood the oppression, persecution, and power of the occupying Roman army to turn the world upside down with the message of the Gospel. “But when they (those who were opposing the Gospel) did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.”” (Acts 17:6).*
- *As we study the book of Acts we repeatedly see this pattern in the early Church of dreaming big, praying big, and living big. In Acts, Chapter four we see how the Christians responded to the threats and persecution from the Jewish religious leaders.*

- *The believers first of all acknowledged God's sovereignty and affirmed that He was in control and that they could trust Him. They dreamed big by acknowledging His predestined plan for both Jesus Christ and His Church. "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done." (Acts 4:27-28).*
- *Next the believers prayed big and asked for the power of the Holy Spirit to be manifest through healings, signs and wonders in the name of Jesus. They didn't pray that the persecution would stop, they prayed that God would grant them boldness and power in the face of persecution to proclaim Jesus. "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." (Acts 4:29-30).*
- *Once they were filled afresh with the Holy Spirit they didn't just stay in the prayer meeting. They went out and proclaimed the Gospel with boldness—they lived big. "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31).*
- *Today we want to focus on how to dream big!*
- *As believers it is essential that we have purpose—not just any purpose, but God's purpose for our lives. When Christians lack God's vision and purpose for their lives they are not only spiritually rudderless but their lives end up spiritually shipwrecked. "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint." (Proverbs 29:18a). Only by living in God's purpose will we find fulfilment.*
- *Many live their entire lives totally oblivious of eternity. They may pursue wealth, success, or temporal pleasures at the expense of seeking to do God's will. They are willfully ignorant that all the material successes of this life will be left behind and will ultimately have no eternal value. "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).*
- *Countless men and women have spent a lifetime accumulating wealth or pursuing pleasure only to realize and lament on their deathbed that they forfeited God's purposes for their lives. They lived a life totally devoid of any eternal purpose.*
- *Many Christians live small. They don't think beyond their temporal needs or look to God to use them for His eternal purposes. They don't have a vision of all God has for them.*
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- *Acts, Chapter two contains the first evangelical sermon ever preached in history. As Peter stood before the Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost, the central theme of his message was about Jesus Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. He clearly showed that the entire purpose of the Old Testament was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.*

Acts 2:22–31 (NKJV)

²²“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—

²³Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

²⁴whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

²⁵For David says concerning Him: ‘I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

²⁶Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

²⁷For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

²⁸You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’

²⁹“Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

³⁰Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,

³¹he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

- *Peter quoted from Psalm 16 and revealed that it contains a messianic prophecy regarding Jesus Christ's resurrection. David, the author of this psalm, had received an astounding revelation—that the coming Messiah, Who was to establish God's eternal kingdom would die, He would be buried, and His soul would experience Hell. However, the Holy Spirit also revealed to David that His soul would not remain in Hell or His body in the grave but that He would overcome the power of death and be resurrected!*

Psalm 16 (NKJV)

A Michtam of David.

- *The title of psalm identifies the author—David.*
- *The title also includes the word “Michtam.” The meaning of this word is not clear but many understood it to mean “golden,” although others think it is related to a word*

meaning “to cover” with the idea of protection and secrecy where one could find security in times of crisis or peril.

- *This is a wonderful psalm which tells how David found the secret of contentment and great gladness even in pressing times. It also speaks powerfully of Jesus and His sacrifice.*

¹Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.

- *The psalm begins with David calling out to God during a time of peril. “Preserve me, O God.” He was looking to God for protection and deliverance.*
- *Although David was facing a time of adversity and fear he was confident in God’s faithfulness to protect and deliver him from all his enemies—“for in You I put my trust.”*

²O my soul, you have said to the LORD, “You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You.”

- *In spite of the dire circumstances he faced, the tone of this psalm is not despair or complaint; it is settled joy. Despite his trouble, David had a praising confidence in his God—“You are my Lord.”*
- *David recognized that all his goodness was the result of God’s goodness to him—“My goodness is nothing apart from You.”*

³As for the saints who are on the earth, “They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.”

- *David rejoiced in all of God’s people. He declared those who have been redeemed as “the excellent ones” although sometimes we may not act that way. It is essential that when we are going through difficult times that we do not isolate ourselves but reach out and learn to delight in godly fellowship.*

⁴Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god; Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, Nor take up their names on my lips.

- *Those who turn away from God and seek comfort, joy, or protection from anything or anyone besides the Lord will find that “Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god.”*
- *David did not forsake his confidence in God for the false gods of this world.*

⁵O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot.

⁶The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance.

- *David confessed God to be his inheritance and what God had prepared for him was certain and wonderful. Even though he was facing very difficult times he was certain he would not only be preserved, but that a bright and glorious future lay ahead.*

⁷I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.

- *David praised the Lord for both the counsel God gave him and the instructions which he received as he daily spent time in a place of quietness and solitude reflecting on what God has shown him.*
- *The following verses reveal some of the most wonderful things that the Lord had shown David during his times with God and as he meditated on His Word—the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and His glorious resurrection!!!*

⁸I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.

⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.

¹⁰For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

¹¹You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- *Verses eight to eleven are written from the perspective of Jesus Christ. They provide prophetic insights into the hope Jesus had as He faced His death on the cross; the joy that filled Him as He contemplated the resurrection and once again being seated at the right hand of His Father in Heaven, together with all the saints.*
- *With the perspective of Psalm 16 we can understand better the meaning of Hebrews 12:2 when it says, “who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Jesus looked at the joy of the resurrection, not only His own resurrection but all of those who would put their faith in Him, and the joy of spending eternity in unbroken fellowship with the Father and all those who would be part of His Body. When it says “He despised the shame” it means He counted that shame as nothing or of little value compared to the joy of the resurrection.*
- *When we consider how unimaginably terrible Jesus’ sufferings were, starting at Gethsemane, through the floggings, the mocking and ultimately the crucifixion as He became the sin offering for all mankind, dying the death of deaths, we can catch a glimpse of how wonderful the joy must be to willingly endure such suffering. He counted the suffering and shame as insignificant in comparison to the joy of the resurrection. We must conclude that the joy and glory of the resurrection is beyond human comprehension.*

- *Peter pointed out that David was not prophesying about his own resurrection in Psalm 16 because David's body did suffer corruption and decayed. The Holy Spirit is speaking through him about Jesus and His resurrection. However, in these prophetic verses David's words are overlaid and David alluded also to his future hope for his own resurrection. David speaks about his unshakeable faith in the God who is always with him to sustain him. "I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved." (Verse 8).*
- *"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." (Verses 9-10). This prophetic word speaks about the joy Jesus had while He faced Calvary and His own death. This also speaks about the joy we can have while we face peril, trials, and even our physical death. The Father didn't abandon Jesus in the grave and He will not abandon us!*
- *The psalm concludes not only with the certain hope of the resurrection but of the promise that we will have unbroken fellowship with the Lord and with one another in Heaven for all eternity. "You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Verse 11).*
- *Deliverance from troubles brings joy and happiness, but our wonderful Saviour gives us joy in the midst of our troubles as we contemplate all that He has done for us and our future resurrection.*
- *God gave David many very wonderful promises and wonderful dreams. God promised him that his kingdom would endure for all eternity and that the Messiah Himself, the Saviour, would come through David's descendants. "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son." (2 Samuel 7:12-14a).*
- *However, without the hope of the resurrection all of David's other dreams would be meaningless to him because he would die and perish into oblivion. Along with the promise that God would establish through him an eternal kingdom, came the most important and wonderful promise—he would be resurrected to see it, experience it, and enjoy it. God promised David he would be resurrected—"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers ..."*
- *The most important dream and hope that God has given us is the resurrection! Through Jesus Christ's resurrection we can be assured that through our faith in Him we will also be resurrected.*
- *The resurrection is the most important dream we can have. Because of the certainty of the resurrection every other dream and vision for our lives springs forth and has purpose. Without the resurrection everything loses purpose. Atheism is without*

ultimate purpose and ends in oblivion no matter how much they enjoy this life or how much they accomplish in this temporal realm.

- *Because of the hope of the resurrection even our most painful experiences, severest trials, and difficult times of testing have meaning and purpose when we see them in the light of the resurrection and eternity.*
- *From our hope in the resurrection all our other hopes, dreams, and visions spring forth.*
- *In 1 Corinthians, Chapter fifteen, Apostle Paul drives home the point of the importance of the resurrection. If the resurrection is not true then the Gospel is not only powerless but it is a blatant lie. “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.” (1 Corinthians 15:13-15).*
- *If Christ did not rise from the dead and there is no resurrection then our faith is not only worthless but results in us being the most miserable, pitiful, and wretched people on the face of the earth. “For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.” (1 Corinthians 15:16-19).*
- *However, Paul concluded his discourse on the resurrection by affirming with great joy that Jesus is resurrected and we too will be resurrected! “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (1 Corinthians 15:20).*
- *Without Christ’s resurrection there is no resurrection and everything we do is in vain. Jesus’ resurrection gives our lives true and enduring meaning.*
- *Death is man’s greatest fear. “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” (Hebrews 2:14-15).*
- *The resurrection should be our greatest joy! “When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.” (John 20:20).*
- *The resurrection should also be one of our greatest sources of comfort. “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” “Then we who are alive*

and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” “Therefore comfort one another with these words.” (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, 17, 18*).

- *What was the dream that the Lord gave Apostle Paul for his life? “But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.” (Acts 9:15-16).*
- *Apostle Paul not only endured the trials and suffering, he rejoiced in them because he saw them in light of the resurrection. “Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.” (Philippians 2:17).*
- *Paul didn't dread facing his death but looked forward with anticipation and joy to the resurrection. “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:6-8).*
- *It is the belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ that is key to salvation. “But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:8-9).*
- *Daily we need to contemplate, meditate, and rejoice in all that Jesus did for us through His suffering, death, and resurrection. If the joy of our salvation is not one of the central points of our daily time of prayer and meditation then we will soon find our devotional time with God becoming dry and wooden. “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.” (Psalm 51:12).*
- *We need to receive the dreams God has for our lives but we need to see them from the context and the back drop of our resurrection, otherwise we will grow discouraged when we encounter opposition and delays or become defiled by pride and selfish ambition when our ministry flourishes.*
- *God wants to give each of us a vision and dream for our lives. “And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.” (Joel 2:28).*
- *The first dream and purpose that Jesus gave to the apostles was, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” (Matthew 28:19a). Each born again believer receives this commission from the Lord.*

- *As we walk with the Lord He will put into our hearts specific dreams and visions for our lives which He wishes to fulfill through us. Some dreams that God gives us will be unique and specific to our lives and the special gifts and talents that He has or will impart to us.*
- *If we lose our sense of a glorious future we lose hope and life can become unbearable. Some people take their own lives simply because they have no sense of purpose, vision, or hope for the future.*
- *God created within each person a need and a desire to be relevant and have purpose. He created within us a desire to have eternal significance. “He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.” (Ecclesiastes 3:11).*
- *Of the many terrible attributes of Hell one of them is that it is a place of no hope, no purpose, and no potential for change.*
- *In contrast, Heaven is a place of hope, purpose, and adventure. He has created us to rule and reign with Him for all eternity for He “has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.” (Revelation 1:6).*
- *Heaven will be the place where we will continually receive more and more revelation of who God is and His limitless love, mercy, and grace toward us. We will continue to discover more about Christ for all eternity. “and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:6-7).*
- *As we walk with the Lord and daily spend time in prayer and in the Word and fellowship with other believers, He will impart to us dreams and visions. Some will be short term and others will be life long dreams but all of them will be framed in the ultimate dream—the resurrection.*