

Martin Luther King, Jr. Service I

April 5 Chapel Sermon: Behold the Dreamer

Text: Genesis 37:12-20

Readers

- 1 Rachel Gordon (reading scripture)
- 2 Jason Evans
- 3 Tiffany Thomas

Voices:

- 1 Kiki Barnes
- 2 Camille Glover,
- 3 Sanetta Ponton,

PRELUDE

INTRODUCTION

Those born after 1968 did not hear the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on the evening news, and many of us born before 1968 only recall them in brief “sound bites” The MLK Lectures this year, provide an opportunity for our community to hear and reflect upon the historic legacy that shook the foundations of America and forever changed how we live with one another Today’s service compares the experiences of Joseph to those of Martin Luther King, Jr., and provides an opportunity for reflection upon the divine call to dream visions of God’s reign in the midst the present nightmare of injustice, violence, and tragedy.

MEDITATION

Reader 1 ²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise — *Galations 3.26-28, New International Version*

Reader 2 We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. — *Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, 1776*

Reader 3 It would take nearly two centuries for these words to become a reality for all Americans—due in large part to Dr Martin Luther King, Jr., a man who allowed God to make him a dreamer. But what is involved in the making of a dreamer? How do we know if it is our turn to stand against oppression? What responsibility do we have when God reveals to us that we can no longer ignore injustice? What is the price of answering God’s call to bring dreams to reality? The lives of Joseph and Martin may help us discover answers to these questions. Perhaps today you will hear God’s call to practice justice, love mercy and live lives that preview the reign of God

PRAISE AND WORSHIP IN SONG Awesome
WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF THE SPEAKER

by William Murphy

SCRIPTURE READINGS Genesis 37: 12-20

REFLECTIONS ON SELECTED THEMES

Historic Events from the Civil Rights Era

Readers share headlines from the Civil Rights Era while seated among worshipers in the congregation. [use of a cordless microphone.]

Called to Serve Enemies Who Should Have Been Friends

Genesis 37:12-14a

¹² Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, ¹³ and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them "

"Very well," he replied

¹⁴ So he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me " Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

Voice 1

Brown vs. Board of Education U.S. Supreme Court Bans Segregation in Public Schools

Voice 2.

Eugene "Bull" Connor Leads Officers in Mass Arrests. Hundreds of Protestors Viciously Clubbed and Savagely Attacked by Police Dogs

Voice 3.

Four Young Black Girls Attending Sunday School Die in Bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church

In Search of My Brothers and Sisters

Genesis 27:14b-17a

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, ¹⁵ a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

¹⁶ He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?"

¹⁷ "They have moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan '"

Reader 2:

By the time that Martin entered Morehouse College, he had begun to actively resist the bitterness that the experience of racism in childhood and youth could easily have created. He learned that a significant number of whites also felt that racism and segregation were wrong.

Voice 1:

Black and White Freedom Riders Board Buses to Test Desegregation Laws

Voice 2:

Mob of 200 Stones and Firebombs Bus Carrying Freedom Riders

Reader 2:

After being denied the pulpit of First Baptist church in Chattanooga, King negotiated his appointment to Dexter Avenue Baptist Church against initial disappointment of his father and his wife. Still he asks. What will they think if I come in and develop a reputation as a rabble-rouser?

Reader3

Life is not convenient. Trouble never knocks before bursting into the room
The time for Martin to decide was at hand This was a time for seeking God's guidance.

Voice 3:

Rosa Parks Arrested for Refusing to Give Up Her Seat to a White Passenger The incident involving Rosa Parks was no accident. She was tracked down by God's loving purpose in the struggle for righteousness.

Genesis 27:17b -18

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. ¹⁸ But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him

Reader 2

I realize that it will cause restless nights sometime It might cause losing a job; it will cause suffering and sacrifice. It might even cause physical death for some But if physical death is the price that some must pay to free their children from a permanent life of psychological death, then nothing can be more Christian. Keep going today Keep moving amid every obstacle Keep moving amid every mountain of opposition If you will do that with dignity, when the history books are written in the future, the historians will have to look back and say, "There lived a great people A people with 'fleecy locks and black complexion,' but a people who injected new meaning into the veins of civilization; a people which stood up with dignity and honor and saved Western civilization in her darkest hour; a people that gave new integrity and a new dimension of love to our civilization " When that happens, "the morning stars will sing together (Yes sir), and the sons of God will shout for joy "

[excerpts where Martin challenges black leadership in "Give Us the Ballot," Address
Delivered at the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom 17 May 1957, Washington, D.C.]

From: *Here Comes the Dreamer*

Genesis 27.19 -20

¹⁹ "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other ²⁰ "Come now, let's kill him and
throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll
see what comes of his dreams."

Reader 3

Hold onto dreams
For if dreams die
Life is like a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

"DREAMS" by Langston Hughes

- SELECTION More Than Anything by Lamar Campbell
- SERMON Behold the Dreamer
- CALL TO PRAYER TFWS No. 2193 Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying
- A BRIEF SILENCE
- HYMN OF PRAISE UMH No. 519 Lift Every Voice and Sing
- SENDING FORTH