

God Given Dreams

Genesis 37:1-4

GENESIS 37:1-4, 12-28

Verse 1 Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan.

2 This is the story of the family of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves.

4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

God Given Dreams

Genesis 37:12-22

Verse 12 Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem.

13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am."

14 So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron.

He came to Shechem,

15 and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, "What are you seeking?"

16 "I am seeking my brothers," he said; "tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock."

17 The man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan.

18 They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him.

19 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer.

20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

21 But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life."

22 Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him"; that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father.

God Given Dreams

Genesis 37:23-28

23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore;

24 and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

25 Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt.

26 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?

27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed.

28 When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.



This is the Word of the Lord. THANKS BE TO GOD!

Let's us pray. Dear Lord, open our eyes to see your glorious plan for us, open our ears to hear you speaking to us, and soften our hearts to understand your mission for us. AMEN.

There's an app for it! Really, there's an app for everything. Just in the religious area there are apps for the Bible, Bible study, and your daily devotions. Even the there's an app for confessing your sins to God.

But there's one app that I would like to own. It's the app that listens to me humming a song, give me the name, and then play the original song. Now that would be a great app especially if you have ever heard me hum a song. I don't know which is worst my humming or my singing. Any way, the reason I want this app is because something a get a song in my head and I can't remember the all words, the title, or who sing the song. So, I waste hours trying to remember that song. With my app, I could get over nagging about the song, and get on with life's important task.



One of those nagging stories in the Bible for me is the story of Joseph. Normally, when I am called to preach, I usually use a Gospel reading as my scripture. But today, I could not pass up the story of Joseph.

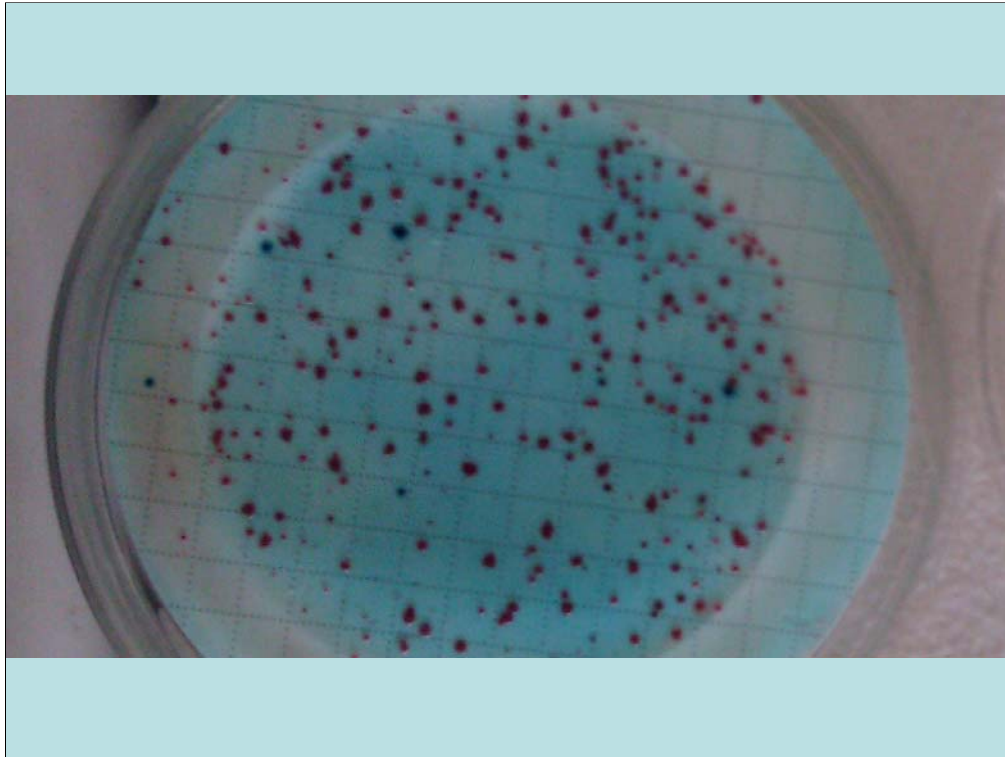
During one of my early trips to the Congo, I was discussing my mission with a Congolese man. Today, this man is unknown to me, I can't remember his face, and I can't even remember the village or city where I was. But this unknown man said that I was like Joseph. It was not colorful shirts. It was not my charming looks. It was my dreams to help the Congolese children like these.

Today's passage occurs after Joseph had made his brothers, father, and mother angry with his dreams. In the first dream, Joseph dreamed his brothers would bow down to him. That was the sheaves in field bowing to the one sheave. In the second dream, Joseph dreamed his father, mother, and brothers would bow down to him. That was the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing to him. Now you can see why they are angry and some wanted to kill him.



This morning for a few minutes I would like to share some of my dreams of Congo with you. I dream of access to safe drinking water to poor rural Congolese. Officially, you will read that less than 50 percent of the Congolese have access to safe drinking water. But in reality, seven out of ten rural Congolese have access to safe drinking water. We will just say that 50 percent do not have access to safe drinking water. No matter which you slice it, millions of Congolese do not have access to safe drinking water. They are the “Other Half”.

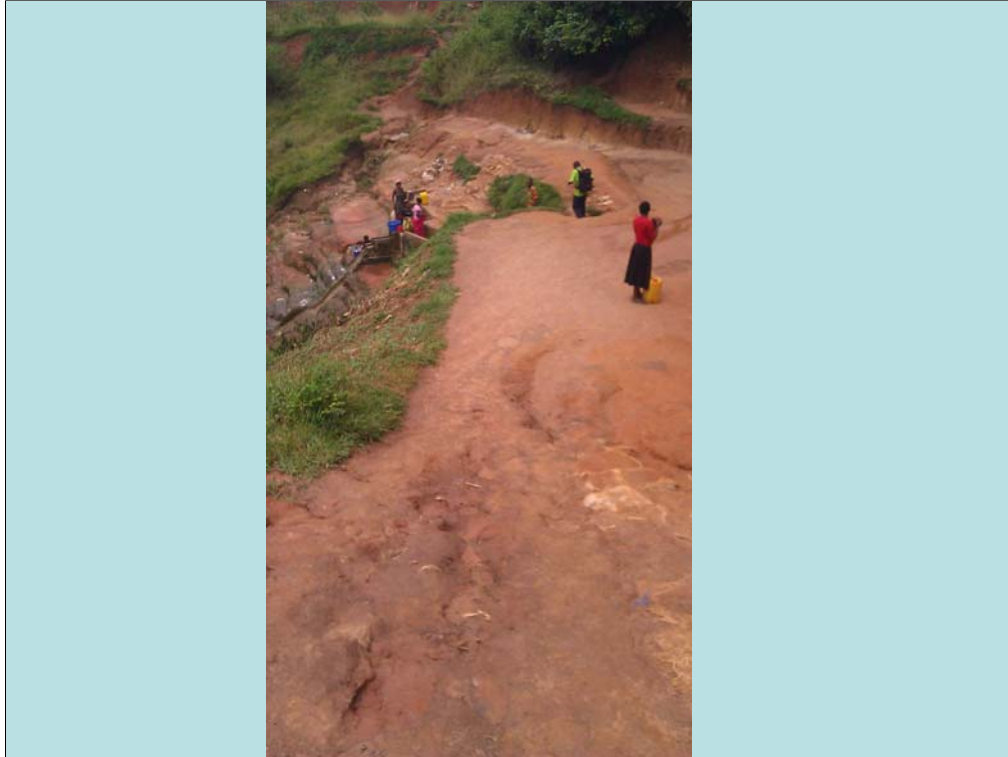
Let’s define access to safe drinking water. Get up right now, pour yourself a glass of water and drink it. If you return to your chair in less than 30 minutes, walked less than a kilometer in safety and did not become ill, your water meets most of the definition for safe drinking water, as published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, as of 2006.



Let's talk about what we found in the water. We started our water quality testing in March. Did you know that less than 50 percent of Congolese have access to safe drinking water? Here's how the World Health Organization defines access to safe water. Water must be free of pathogens, low in toxic chemicals, clear, and tasteless; and it must be within six tenths of a mile of your home. To begin our project, we purchased a water quality test kit. I took it to Congo and tested five water sources in Kananga last March. I found that all of the water sources contained coliform bacteria. One of the water sources contained unacceptable levels of E.coli bacteria, too. On this picture, the total coliform is red and the E.coli is blue. This is the water that makes adults sick but kills children. Hundreds of thousands of children die each year from diarrhea caused by drinking unsafe water. I dream of safe drinking water for the Other Half.



To address this problem in April, I started our bio-sand filter pilot program. We still testing and evaluating the sand component of the filter. When completed and properly working, a bio-sand filter will remove 95 to 98 percent of the pathogens from drinking water. These filters will clean 5 gallons of water twice per day. That's 5 gallons in the morning and 5 gallons in the evening. These filters are virtually maintenance free and will last forever. We will also implement a micro fiber membrane filter, too. The LifeStraw Family Filter was selected. These filters will remove 99.99999 percent of the pathogens from the drinking water. These filters will clean about 4,500 gallons of water and must be back-flushed daily. Both filters cost about \$30 each. The main advantage of the LifeStraw Family is lack of a daily limit of 5 gallons, twice a day. Within the last two weeks we have been asked to host a bio sand filter workshop in Congo. The workshop will teach local Congolese how to produce safe drinking water. I dream of water filters in the hands of millions of Congolese.



Filters are great if the water is near. But in many places, Water is parable of the hidden treasure in field. For many, the water is not accessible. Many girls and women walk 1-2 hours to fetch 5 gallons of water. Remember, water sources are down the hill. I don't think Jack and Jill probably went up the hill to fetch a pail of water. So, these girls and women walk hours up a hill with over 40 pounds of water on their heads.



This situation creates the critical need for drilling water wells in village centers, or at village schools, or at village health clinics. We have purchased the water well drilling rig and two vehicles to pull the rig and carry the pipes, tools and water. I hope you seen the drilling rig parked in front of the church. We will ship it to Congo soon. We plan to start drilling water wells by January 2012. We estimate the price of completed water well including an appropriate pump will be about \$5,000 each. I dream of thousands of water wells in Congo.



We have been asked by a potential partner to address other aspects of safe drinking water. We will be implementing rainwater harvesting systems where the conditions and resources are available. Basically, you need a large building with non-porous roof. For example, the vinyl classroom project will incorporate the use of a rainwater harvesting system made out of used vinyl billboards. We hope that vinyl cistern can be used to supplement traditional concrete cisterns. I dream of hundreds of thousands of concrete cisterns around village health centers and village schools.



Also, we will be implementing spring capping to protect natural water sources. The Congo River basin represents over 50 percent of Africa's water reserves. But the Congolese people have not benefitted by this blessing.

This is daily scene at one of the water sources in the village of Bulape.



Finally, we plan to address the sanitation issues, too. Some interesting composting toilet projects are being tested in Kenya. Composting toilets will further improve the agricultural output of subsistence farmer. More importantly, composting toilets and other sanitation procedures will protect the safe drinking water sources.



Congo is a big country with poor governance and a poorer infrastructure. Since their independence 50 years ago, most problems have started and grown out of proportion. It will take a period of time to positively address some serious problems like access to safe water. Approximately 30-35 million Congolese lack access to safe water. And the majority of those Congolese live in the rural areas where there are no roads or no electricity. So patience and perseverance are the necessary ingredients for success in the Congo. We will fight through those ups and downs put in our way.

After Joseph goes to Egypt, God takes his hand and leads him to the place of authority. Joseph became Governor of the Land under Pharaoh. But you should know that Joseph had some up and downs before he got to that position. He kept his faith in God's dream for him.

Finally, a famine hit the land of father, Jacob. Ten of his brothers went to Egypt to buy grain. He sold them grain and hid bundles of money in their bags. In the end Joseph was a blessing to his family just as God given to him in those dreams.



I so believe God have sent me to the Congo to help his people, the poor Congolese women and girls who walk miles to get water for their families. I believe God have sent me to the Congo to help his people, the poor baby girls and boys who drink dirty water and get sick. Our God wants us to bring safe and near water to the 'Other Half'.

Please pray for me and others as we implement these water projects. Pray that God opens our heart, eyes, and ears to the water needs of millions of poor Congolese. Amen.