

# Don't Ever Quit Dreaming...

## Don't Ever Give Up!

Preached by the Right Reverend Grant Lynn Ford at the Sunshine Cathedral first on Sunday, January 26, 2003, and again on Sunday, January 13, 2008

### THE WRITTEN WORD

#### The Light of the Ages

Isaiah 42:1-2, 4, 6-7

<sup>1</sup>“Here is my servant, my Chosen One whom I raise high with great joy. My Spirit is on him; he will manifest justice to the people of the world. <sup>2</sup>He will be gentle in speech and in action, not a rabble-rouser or a loudmouth. <sup>4</sup>With neither discouragement nor despair he will see full justice accorded to everyone, even those on distant lands beyond the seas, for they have faith in him.”

<sup>6</sup>“I, THE SOVEREIGN ONE, have called you in goodness. I will hold your hand securely and never let go! You are my gift—my promise and pledge—to all people, <sup>7</sup>to bring sight to those who do not see, to set free those who are bound, and to be a light to those who are held captive by their own ignorance and fear.”

#### The Light of the Early Church

Acts 10:34b-35, 37-38

<sup>34b</sup>“I have come to realize this truth: God plays no favorites! <sup>35</sup>No matter who you are or where you come from, everyone who reveres God and does what is right is welcomed by God.

<sup>37</sup>“You know what has happened throughout Judea, starting in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—<sup>38</sup>how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were bound by the lies of The Liar. Truly, God was with him!”

#### The Light of the Master Teacher

Matthew 3:13-17

<sup>13</sup>Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup>John objected: “I’m the one who needs to be baptized...by you!”

<sup>15</sup>But Jesus replied, “**Do it! This is the right thing to do, and this is the right time.**” So John baptized him.

<sup>16</sup>The moment that Jesus came up out of the water, the very heavens seemed to open, and he saw God’s Spirit—like a dove—coming to rest on him. <sup>17</sup>And a celestial voice said, “**This is my Beloved Son, the delight of my life.**”

### THE FOREWORD

“Dreams are like stars...you may never touch them, but if you follow them they will lead you to your destiny.” In our service today and during this web message we will look to the Master Dreamer, and learn how to follow our own dreams. Join us for worship....

### THE PROCLAIMED WORD

Robert Fulghum penned the *Storyteller’s Creed*, saying:

I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge.

That myth is more potent than history.

That dreams are more powerful than facts.

That hope always triumphs over experience.

That laughter is the only cure for grief.

And I believe that love is stronger than death.

Imagination, dreams, hope, laughter, love.

“We grow great by dreams,” says President Woodrow Wilson. “All big [people] are dreamers. They see things in the soft haze of a spring day or in the red fire of a long winter’s evening.

Some of us let these great dreams die, but others nourish and protect them, nurse them through bad days till they bring them to the sunshine and light which come always to those who sincerely hope that their dreams will come true.”

Jesus was a dreamer. He worked there in the carpenter shop, patiently working with his hands. But his head was painting pictures, using faint memories of angels and strange travelers and a trip to Jerusalem’s temple.

He was the oldest of the children, and his father had long died. But now the kids were grown, and his mother was well cared for. It was time for him to live those dreams that haunted his nights and distracted his days.

So he came to the Jordan to be baptized, declaring in his actions that he was ready to fulfill his destiny. The voice from heaven declared, [“My Son! My Beloved! The delight of my life!”](#)

Some of you know the thrill and challenge of a dream. Walt Lawrence interrupted his Thanksgiving dinner to drive to this property and look in the windows. Dr. Robert Graham made the same trip on the same day. Why? Because a dream had been building about this church finding a real cathedral for a home. That dream drove them both to set aside holiday festivities to see if *this place* was the *dream place*...and it was!

Robert Schuller tells about a dream his father had. As you probably know Schuller built the Crystal Cathedral in California, with a congregation numbering in the thousands. His messages are broadcast all over the world, and now his son is the pastor.

Robert Schuller was just four years old when he decided on his life's goal. He prayed every night: “Lord, make me a preacher when I grow up.” Schuller says his father cried when he heard his young son's prayer.

Forty years later, Schuller's father cried again as he told Robert of his own secret dream. He had once prayed to be a pastor. But his parents had died when he was just a boy, and Schuller's father had gone to work to support himself. So he changed his prayer: “God, make me a minister through one of my sons someday.” The Schullers had three children, but none of them seemed destined for the ministry. Years passed, and Mrs. Schuller bore another son, Robert. Through him, God answered Mr. Schuller's prayer.<sup>1</sup> We all have our dreams, don't we? The saddest day in our lives is when we give up on our dreams or think we're too grown up to have dreams.

Thank God, when we are not sure how to fulfill our dreams, there is someone there to dream for us. When Jesus was just a baby, Mary knew about dreams and angelic visits and shepherds visiting her child. It says in Luke's gospel: “But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.” She held a dream for her son. When he was about two years old, stately and scholarly visitors with gifts made that dream a possibility. It took ten more years for the dream to peek out for a moment, and then it went behind a cloud again. Now the dream was about to be fulfilled, the dream she held in her heart for him.

We all need someone to believe in us and to believe in our dreams.

Almost 22 years ago I met a young man named David. He was doing all right in the banking business. But there was an older man—not his father, but his mentor—who dreamed of greatness for David. He coached him, cajoled him, and complimented him when it was appropriate. Today that young man is Director of Merrill Lynch's Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Management. His life work is to help people all around this country accomplish their own dreams. His name is David Ratcliffe, and while his work has taken him to New York, he's still a member of our Sunshine Community Foundation's Heritage Board. And the man who dreamed so much for him? Dr. Robert Graham, our past president of the Foundation and a great dreamer himself.

I've dreamed dreams for many of you. I'm always thrilled when my dreams for you come true. I don't dream different dreams for you than you dream for yourself. But it's always good to have someone else dreaming with you.

It's been true in my life from beginning until now. Someone has always been there to dream with me. And I am so grateful for you who have been my mentors and my supporters. Thank you! Thank you!

Now I have great dreams for our new Canon Pastor, the Reverend Durrell Watkins. I believe he will not only keep our dream alive, but will bring new dreams to us, dreams that will make this Cathedral a powerful center for universal good.

The author Denis Waitley says, “Don't censor your dreams. Give them free rein. Dream about being president of the company, having your own business, achieving great success in your work. The only way to make daydreams work for you is to dream big.” He then goes on to say, “A captain of industry once said, ‘Show me somebody who doesn't dream about the future and I'll show you someone who doesn't know where he's going.’”

Many of you know the story of Olympic star Wilma Rudolph. Rudolph was born in a shack in the backwoods of Tennessee. Her parents were very poor. She was prematurely born and weighed only four and one-half pounds. At age four she had double pneumonia and scarlet fever that left her with a partly paralyzed left leg. She had to wear a steel brace.

But Wilma had a mother who constantly told her that she could do whatever she wanted to do with her life, that all she needed to do was have faith and persistence and courage and a never-give-up spirit. So at the age of nine Wilma did

away with the brace. In four more years she finally developed a rhythmic stride that enabled her to run. At 13 she entered her first race and came in last.

Wilma kept running, and one day she started winning. Finally she made it to the 1960 Olympics to run the 100-meter race against the unbeaten and world record holder, Yetta Mynie from Germany. Wilma won. She won again in the 200-meter. Finally came the 400-meter relay. She was the anchor, the last runner on the U. S. team, and her competitor was Yetta Mynie. Just as the baton was handed to Wilma she dropped it, giving Yetta the lead. Yet, somehow Wilma Rudolph caught up and won!<sup>2</sup>

The baptism of Jesus was the beginning of accomplishing his dreams. He believed in himself. Others believed in him: his mother, his disciples, John the Baptist, and God. Remember that voice from heaven? **“This is my Beloved Son, the delight of my life.”**

Do you know that other have dreams for you? Do you know that God has a dream for you? God wants to see your dreams fulfilled. The Apostle Paul tells us: “We’re God’s handiwork, created to do the very things The Anointed did, those things woven into the Divine Design from the very beginning just for us.” Another way to say it is, “We’re God’s dreamwork, created to accomplish everything the Beloved did, everything God dreamed for us from the very beginning of time!” *Ephesians 2:10*

Now that’s a dream you can accomplish, no matter how young you are or whether you think you’ve experienced all that life has for you. There’s much more to dream about, more to do, if you dare to dream and do it. And that’s the Truth!

### **THE AFFIRMING WORD**

I dream of good things.  
I dream of good health.  
I dream of living well.  
I dream of doing something.  
And God dreams with me...  
for health and wealth and all good.  
I share my good with others,  
and I like it like that!  
And so it is! Amen!

### **THE GIVING WORD**

Ashley Smith had lost her dream ...until she was held hostage by Brian Nichols in her Duluth, Georgia, apartment. That woke her up from her methamphetamine-induced addiction. Her life-dream came back in a flash! She read the Bible to him, fed him pancakes, and talked him into releasing her to visit her daughter. She escaped, and Nichols was later captured.

Ashley wrote a book about her ordeal, her addiction and her recovery. She says: “Life is full of beauty. Notice it. Notice the bumble bee, the small child, and the smiling faces. Smell the rain, and feel the wind. Live your life to the fullest potential, and fight for your dreams.”

To live to your fullest potential is first to give to your fullest potential. And here’s your opportunity to try it out!

### **THE FINAL WORD**

Three-time Olympic champion Gail Devers tells us: “Keep your dreams alive. Understand to achieve anything requires faith and belief in yourself, vision, hard work, determination, and dedication. Remember all things are possible for those who believe.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert H. Schuller, *Prayer: My Soul's Adventure with God* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1995), pp. 7-13. 3

<sup>2</sup> Tim Crosby *Never Give Up*, Copyright © 2001 by *The Quiet Hour*, as quoted in the January 2003 issue of *Dynamic Preaching*.