

MARK'S REMARKS

I would imagine everyone has ambitions. Let's call them dreams. Finishing a round under par, catching or shooting a creature worthy of a taxidermist's skills, completing a marathon, vacationing to that certain location, or building a new home are just a sprinkling of endless possibilities. These dreams frequently become targets that we aspire toward and as we combine the ingredients of time, energy, and resources, mixing in a generous amount of perseverance, the dream may well become a reality.

While dreams are attainable, fantasies are not. One is realistic, the other idealistic. One is a guided course of the imagination; the other an unpiloted flight of the imagination. This line of separation is obscure and in this obscurity we can fall prey to expending a vast amount of time, energy and resources into pursuing fantasies, when we believed them to be legitimate dreams and goals. Sadly, instead of reaching a destination of satisfaction and achievement, we reach a discouraging point of emptiness, want, and confusion. The student, who believes if he/she drives the trendy vehicle, wears the clothes of vogue or gives in to negative peer pressure will find true joy and acceptance is living a fantasy. As is the worker who pursues the promotion and the higher pay believing it will solve self-esteem issues.

Consider two people, madly in love, venturing out to discover their carefree, "love will be enough," storybook romance. The heroic knight rescues the fair maiden and following a wedding celebration heard throughout the land, they gallop off into the sunset. Unprepared for the reality of marriage and commitment, one day the fair maiden sees a slightly overweight shadow of her once strapping knight, no longer able to wear a shrinking suit of metal. She is saddened that he doesn't seem to call at her window anymore, frustrated that he no longer desires to fight off evil and annoyed that the courage to fight for the King and His Kingdom has been replaced by indifference.

Meanwhile, this somewhat confused and struggling knight realizes that cosmetics, creams and lotions are part of his bride's secrets. Her looks of admiration and desire that once were communicated and demonstrated so naturally are now infrequently heard or given. Times of loving embrace are repeatedly replaced with duties in the castle, work outside of the castle, and raising young knights and fair maidens. In between "once upon a time and happily ever after," reality set in and they fearfully discovered that an "I don't have to work at it," "I will always be madly in love," untroubled marriage was not pursuing a dream, but was chasing after a fantasy.

In the carefree things of life, I suppose it is harmless to fantasize. Stretching a thought shared by comedian Jerry Seinfeld, when little boys dress us like Superman, or Batman or some other hero, or little girls adorn themselves in dresses fit for princesses and crowns reserved for queens, these are not fantasies, these are options. But in the spiritual life, to believe and orchestrate a life around a fantasy is not only harmful, it can be devastating.

Fantasies such as: there is no cost or consequence for sin; because God is love He could never allow anyone to enter hell; works play a leading role in salvation; the roads to the Throne of God are many and wide; there is no need for church, her people or her message; I can delay a relationship with the Lord until I am older.

As Easter people living in a fallen world, we dream of an eternal rest in an eternal home. But between once upon a time and happily ever after, how urgent the need to share the reality of God's Word, our need for God to come to earth, and the powerful glorious reality of Easter and Pentecost to those living unpiloted lives based on fantasy. The gospel story is Good News. It is all true and it all matters. It really does. Let us continue to dream of truthful creative ways to communicate the message.

"...he who chases fantasies lacks judgment." Proverbs 12:11b

"Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ." Acts 5:42

Communicating Reality,

Pastor Mark