



I Have a Dream

Brownsburg Church of Christ
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AM Assembly

Introduction:

I am happy to join with you today in what ought to go down in history as one of the greatest demonstrations of freedom in the history of our world. Nearly 20 centuries ago, a humble Jewish man, showed Himself to be more than a man. Hanging on a cross, He died for the sins of all mankind. At dawn of the third day, He broke free from the chains of death. The momentous occasion of the empty tomb came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of sinners. It came as a joyous daybreak to end our long night of captivity. "For freedom Christ has set us free," Paul said in **Galatians 5:1**. He shed His blood to set us free from our sins, **Revelation 1:5** says. But 2000 years later few sinners are free. Nearly 2000 years later sinners continue to struggle in the grasp of Satan. Still 2000 years later sinners languish even in churches that don't know how to help them overcome their sins.

In **Romans 7:24-25**, Paul cried, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ." What a promise of freedom. In a sense, we have gathered here to cash a check. When Jesus died on the cross, God offered a promissory note to set us free and provide us with life abundantly (cf. **Romans 5:10**). Yet, 2000 years later very few of us have been able to cash this check. God's check has not been given back marked insufficient funds. No, the vaults of God's grace have not been bankrupt. God has been offering freedom for millennia. Sadly, few of us, even as Christians have learned how to cash this check, to receive this promise. I am here today because I want this promise. I do not want mere forgiveness from my sins; I want freedom from them. I want victory over temptations, over sin, over Satan. I want to walk with head held high from the battlefield, victorious with Satan and his minions lying vanquished at my feet as **Romans 16:20** promises. I want the promise God has offered. Therefore, I am happy to join with you today.

Despite the struggles and setbacks I have faced, despite the attacks Satan has hurled, despite the churches I have seen languishing instead of thriving, I still want God's promise. I say to you today, my brothers and sisters, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the Biblical revelation. I have a dream for me. I have a dream for my relationship with you. I have a dream for this congregation.

Discussion:

I. I have a dream for me.

- A. Before you understand my dream for me, you need to understand where I've been. I'm a sinner. I am no exception to **Romans 3:23**. **Ephesians 2:1-3** describes me. I have walked the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air. I was by nature a child of wrath, just like the rest of mankind. Even now, after having been a Christian for over 20 years, I can get sidetracked thinking I'm just not going to make it. But I know God's promises and therefore, I have a dream.
- B. *I have a dream that I will be conformed to the image of Christ* as **Romans 8:28-30** promises, becoming holy as God is holy (**I Peter 1:15-16**). I dream of having victory over sin and my defects, daily glorifying God with my life.
- C. *I have a dream that I will be useful to God* (**II Timothy 2:21**). **II Peter 1:5-11** says I can be effective and useful, make my calling and election sure, ensure I will never fall, and that I can guarantee my entrance into the eternal kingdom. Too many of my days have been wasted pursuing my own goals, my own flesh, my own sins. I don't want that anymore. I have a dream that even I can be useful to God.
- D. *I have a dream that my heart and mind will be guarded by God's peace*. Too often I've tried to rely on me and it always ends badly. But God promised in **Philippians 4:5-9** that His peace can guard me and keep me. Too often, because I've pursued my own sins and let my will govern me, I've been filled with anxiety, depression, fear, stress. But I have a dream of peace and serenity. I have a dream of being God's sheep, lying down in green pastures, led beside silent waters, with restored soul (**Psalms 23:1-3**). God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and sound mind (**II Timothy 1:7**). I dream of being fearless according to God's promise. I look forward to never fearing if I'll be lost. I have a dream that I will be free from all fear.

II. I have a dream for my relationship with you.

- A. One of the greatest gifts God has given me to accomplish my personal dreams of spiritual victory is my relationship with you. Therefore, I also have a dream about my relationship with you.

- B. *I have a dream that we will love each other as Jesus loved us (John 13:34-35).* I dream that our every action toward one another will be out of love, not “church politics,” self-justification, or self-service. I dream that manipulation, condescension, arrogance, and pre-eminence will be removed from our relationship so that we put each other first, seeking each other’s needs above our own (**Philippians 2:3-4**). Paul described this kind of love as he talked about us living in harmony with one another in **Romans 12:9-18**.
- C. *I have a dream that we will bear one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:1-2),* strengthening one another to overcome sin and restoring one another when we have fallen to it. Part of that dream is that we learn to be forgiving of each other rather than grudge-holding (**Colossians 3:12-13**). If we are in a relationship for any length of time, we are going to sin against each other. I know we don’t plan to, we don’t want to, we are committed not to. Yet, it will likely happen. I dream of a relationship in which we will offer grace to one another, forgiving each other as Jesus has forgiven us. **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** says two are better than one. I have learned that for me, I can’t possibly overcome Satan by myself. I need relationships with others trying to overcome sin to lean on, call in time of need, and pray with. I need a relationship with people in which we can mutually bear with one another, lift one another up, forgive each other and push each other to maturity. I have a dream that we don’t simply “go to church” together. I have a dream that we are a strength to one another in this battle against Satan.
- D. *I have a dream that we can be honest and open with one another.* I have a dream that we can learn to confess to one another, praying with and for one another so that we might be healed of our spiritual maladies (**James 5:16**). I am desperately tired of watching as brethren who appeared to be the epitome of strength fall into doubt and immorality because they were too afraid or too proud to honestly share their temptations, struggles, and sins with others. In the past year, I’ve seen two of my best friends fall. One is falling into doubt, practically discounting the truth and accuracy of scripture and I think is in imminent danger of losing his faith in God altogether. Why? Because when he started having doubts, he didn’t talk to anyone. He held it close to the vest for two years until he no longer had doubts but had convictions opposed to God’s word. Another has fallen to adultery and is abandoning his wife. Why? Because when he began to struggle he didn’t talk to anyone and get help. He tried to overcome on his own. Now sin has blinded him and he thinks the best thing for him is to leave his wife. These two scenarios are a warning for me. That is going to be me if I don’t learn to share with others my struggles when they hit. I have learned that I need people to call when lust strikes. I need to be able to share with someone what has entered my mind or it takes over. I have learned that I need to talk to someone when my fear and doubt starts to overtake my faith. If I try to fight it on my own, I’ll fall. I’m no longer interested in the shallow relationships of best friends who merely talk about the weather, sports, jobs, and material needs. I dream of a deeply spiritual and vulnerable relationship in which I can share that I’m a growing Christian who still struggles with lust, materialism, pride, anger, gluttony without fear of getting fired because I’m not perfect. I have a dream of being a support to you in the same way, providing a shoulder to cry on, an ear to listen, a mouth to encourage instead of shame. I have a dream that we brothers and sisters in Christ will no longer try to prove how right we are all the time, that we will take off our masks, and actually become a true help to each other, while we are still able to be helped.

III. I have a dream for this congregation.

- A. In my mind, it is no longer enough for a local church to be a group of people who meet together regularly. The scripture has called the Brownsburg Church of Christ to a much higher calling. I have a dream that, by the grace of God, we will accomplish more than we can imagine.
- B. *I have a dream that we will accomplish the work God has given us.* I have a dream that we will glorify God (**Ephesians 3:20-21**). I have a dream that what we do as a congregation will not be about us, our will, and our glory but about God. We are not competing with other churches. We are not trying to prove that we are the greatest. We are trying to prove that the God we serve is the greatest. I have a dream that we will hold up God’s truth for all to see (**I Timothy 3:15**). I have a dream that we will do that through our congregational teaching, preaching, Bible classes, seminars, website, etc. I have a dream that each of us individually will learn to hold out God’s truth. Why? Because **John 8:32** says God’s truth will set us free. All those dreams I mentioned for me, I have for you and for everyone in our community. I have a dream that we can show God’s truth to another soul this week, not so he/she can be convinced we are right, but so they may see the freedom God offers and embrace it in Jesus Christ. And I dream that we will accomplish this by everyone working (**Ephesians 4:15-16**).
- C. *I have a dream that this congregation will be a place for recovering prodigals (Luke 15:11-32).* Too many congregations try to simply assimilate people who mostly already look like we look. Too often churches only pursue those who are already religious but are religiously wrong. Too many churches fear letting people come in who have too much baggage. I have a dream that we will follow in the footsteps of our Savior and Head, Jesus Christ, providing a welcome for those trapped in sin: drug addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes, adulterers, homosexuals, etc., not simply providing a place that welcomes them into our assemblies, but shows them how to actually overcome their sins by the grace of Christ (**I Corinthians 6:9-11**). I think perhaps the reason so few churches are growing is

because they keep looking to convert people who have no idea how lost they are. It is the broken, powerless, and overcome who are looking for help, comfort, and freedom. We need to be a congregation that welcomes the broken with open arms, providing the guidance, support, care, and help that will point them to the only one who can heal them, strengthen them to overcome, and set them free—Jesus Christ.

- D. *I have a dream that nothing will matter about our members except whether or not they are in Christ and growing in Him (Colossians 3:11).* I have a dream of a congregation that is filled with black, white, hispanic, Indian, people of all races. I have a dream of a congregation that could care less what is your social background, what side of the tracks you hail from, whether you are a Northerner or a Southerner, whether you are a Republican or Democrat, what your GPA was, what your annual income is. None of that matters. Christ is all and in all. I have a dream of a congregation that will not let the social, political, and material interests of the world distract us from our goal to find freedom in Christ.
- E. *I have a dream that because of all this work, when outsiders come into our midst they will know God is among us (I Corinthians 14:24-25).* I understand that no one is going to prophesy what is on the outsider's heart and mind. However, I have no doubt that we can conduct our work, our assemblies, our worship in a way that outsiders can see God is with us. They will fall on their faces, worshipping God and, wanting what we have, becoming one with us in Christ.

Conclusion:

When these things happen, when we allow the freedom of Christ to ring forth from every heart here, when we let it ring from this pulpit and from our classes, when we let it ring from our teaching, when we let it ring into the hearts of our community, we will be able to look forward to that day when we no longer walk by faith, but walk by sight. We will be able to look forward to that day when Jesus Christ will say to each one of us, "Welcome, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord." On that day, when we see the glories of heaven and the glories of Christ which are not worthy to be compared with the sufferings of this life revealed in us and to us, we will be able to join hands and triumphantly shout "This our song of victory, Jesus saves, Jesus saves!" I have a dream of that day. I hope you will dream with me; more than that, I pray you will join with me to make these dreams a reality.