

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

That was August 28, 1963, on the steps of the Lincoln Monument. Martin Luther King dreamed for a table of brotherhood.

**Was that then and is this now God's dream for us?**

It was pretty clear to the ancient Israelites after their wandering in the Sinai desert, that God told Joshua they had finally arrived at the land of milk and honey, Canaan and now they would eat a meal from the abundance the land that God provided.

And it was pretty clear to Paul that the people of Corinth could have a fresh beginning, their trespasses forgiven by God's mercy, grace and love – an invitation Paul pleaded to the people of Corinth be reconciled to God and alas to realize their new creation.

And finally, it was *Abundantly* clear- undeniably – that when the father saw his wayward youngest son return, “the father was filled with compassion, ran and put his arms around the son and kissed him.” “Quickly bring out a robe, the best one, the father commanded the servants, put a ring on his fingers, sandals on his feet and kill the fatted calf – let us eat and celebrate for this son of mine was dead and is alive again.”

And so I ask is it abundantly clear to us that it is God's dream God's invitation to all of us for the meal, the bread the wine, forgiveness love and grace-

Can we live into God's dream for us – a new creation when we accept God's invitation to the meal?

**I want to but I can't always accept the invitation to the meal because this requires me to forgive.**

My Palestinian friends are soon to arrive here ( for one of them it has been nearly 2 years and I will serve them a celebratory meal at my home. I will kill the fatted calf, and bring out my finest china and feed them and they will feed me with love and God whispered grace.

I will embrace them and kiss them, knowing in my heart that God's dream for their land ravaged by unspeakable killing will be someday returned to milk and honey.

But it is not easy for me to envision as they do God's dream for a new creation out of the rubble of the Gaza war.

I can't accept the invitation to the meal I confess it is hard for me to readily forgive as my Palestinian friends forgive the trespasses against them.

Alas, I cry. For them and for my inability to forgive as they do.

But the dream of God, the dream of Martin Luther King haunts me in my stubbornness to forgive. King speaks to me.

“Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends. So even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

And so there it is my friends in Christ- we do have the chance of a new beginning. Please God, help me to realize your dream- bigger more compassionate than I can imagine. I will sit at my dining room table and listen to the frightening stories of Gaza, Jerusalem, and Beirut, and then I need to have the embrace of God and see that the enemy is the beloved invited by God to the meal.

That's what I heard at coffee one evening in Jerusalem with Bassam and Avner. A Palestinian Muslim father and Jewish father who both lost a child brutally killed in the war. They sat together with me and few others sipping thick Arabic coffee and talking about their new circle of grieving parents in Bethlehem whose young children had been shot and killed.

Forgiven, reconciled and together dreaming of brotherhood together at a meal. God's dream.

**So, let's thing about this... it was not what the younger son did coming back home but rather what the father did that made reconciliation possible.** The father forgave and loved. That made God's dream possible. The father, even though shamed by his village for the way his younger son had squandered his inheritance, the father not only embraced the returning son, but in front of all his neighbors - prepared and invited them all to the celebratory feasting meal. . The father – a new beginning- living out God's dream for us- as Martin Luther King so eloquently wrote – a table of brotherhood.

Now I am aware that King's dream has not yet been realized in our country, nor elsewhere in the world. But even so, this morning's sacred stories remind us we still must be partakers in God's invitation to the meal.

Maybe it will take courage to reach out to one another to be partakers in God's dream. Richard Rohr posits.

The courage to be honest, to ask questions. The courage to listen. The courage to feel uncomfortable. The courage to be a part of the circle, to be fed by and to feed... The courage to forgive, love and be loved....

Yes, courage to everyday be partakers in God's dream for us. Martin Luther King's dream for us  
An invitation to God's meal a table of brotherhood.

This is God's dream for all of us to eat the fatted calf drink the wine and eat the bread together all of us blond or grey haired, light skin or dark, transgender, male or female.

"I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

### *Bibliography*

*From talk of the Nation podcast , January 16, 2023*

*Richard Rohr meditation Saturday November 22, 2024*