

PETER'S DREAM

Week #4 of a 5-Week Series, "Metaphysical Bible Storytime"

Rev. Beci Rohkohl

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Okay; tonight we're going to talk about Peter's dream. And here's the funny thing. I'm a minister, and I've heard about Peter's dream before, but I've never actually looked at the Scripture part of it. So, I got to learn a lot about Peter's dream. And it's in Acts -- Acts 10: Verse 9-35.

And I'm going to give you the gist of it. I'm not going to read word for word. But I'm going to hit the highlights, okay? Because we could be here a while.

So, Peter got home, and he was hungry. Sounds about right, right? Dinner wasn't ready, though. So, he went up to the rooftop and decided he was going to pray, meditate. And while he's doing this, he falls into a trance. And in this trance, he has a vision. And in his vision, he sees this big sheet with four corners floating down from heaven down before him. And it gets to where he can see what's on it, and it's full of animals -- all different kinds of animals, though: hooved animals, slithering animals, all different kinds of animals. And he was confused. He didn't know what was going on here.

And then he heard a voice. The voice of God said, *"Go to it, Peter. Kill and eat."* And Peter was a very devout Jewish man, and he said, *"Oh no, Lord; I've never so much as tasted food that's not kosher -- that's unclean in any way."*

And God comes back with, *"When I say it's clean, it's clean. Let nobody else say that it's unclean."*

So, Peter just kind of stands there confused; he still doesn't really know what to do. This goes on like three more times: same vision inside his vision there. And as he's sitting there, he goes back up, and there's a knock at the door. And he's upstairs, and he hears his voice called.

So, he walks down the stairs, and there are three men waiting for him. And one of the men says that Captain Cornelius -- a God-fearing man well-known for his fair play by every Jew in this part of the country -- was commanded by the holy angel to get you and bring you to his house so he can hear you speak.

And Peter thought for a minute. And he knew that God was like, *"Okay, do what you're told."* So, he's decided to do what he's told. He invites them in, and then the next morning they get up and they leave.

But simultaneously over here, we have a man named Cornelius. He's actually the one that sent for Peter. And he had had a dream four days beforehand in the middle of the afternoon when he was praying. He had a vision of a man standing in front of him, and he was bright, white light. And the man commanded him, *"I want you to go send to Joppa to get Simon, the one they call Peter. He's staying with Simon the Tanner by the sea."*

So, Peter and them were on the way. Cornelius and his friends are waiting, and Peter shows up. And Peter was still kind of confused, and he's just like, *"You know, this isn't something we usually do. I'm kind of uncomfortable here, because usually Jews and Gentiles aren't in the same space."*

And then he asks Cornelius, *"Why is it that you brought us together? What is it that you want from me?"*

And Cornelius explains his vision to Peter, and Peter says, *"Okay; all right. So, now I understand that it's God's own truth, clear as day. God has no favorites. He wants me here with you. It doesn't matter who you are, where you're from, or what labels you have placed on you. If your heart is open to God and you're willing to live in that truth, the door is already open."*

So, the message of peace, wholeness, and all the things are restored in the divine order in just a few minutes in that conversation. So, they sat there and they listened to Peter talk.

So, let's talk about Peter. Who was Peter? Some of you might know Peter was a disciple of Jesus. But before Peter was a disciple, he was a fisherman named Simon. And he was fishing and he met Jesus, and Jesus called him to be one of his disciples. And he said, *"Come with me."* And then in their time together, at one point Jesus said, *"Well, I'm going to change your name to Peter, because Peter is a rock – solid -- and that's who you are for me."*

So, he was a very devout Jewish follower. Even during his time with Jesus, he really thought in his mind that most of what he was teaching was still directed at Jews. He didn't really think too much about "the other," because he thought he was kind of trying to teach the Jews to be there; to step up. And after, of course, Jesus was crucified, he became a leading spokesman for the church. Peter is the rock.

And then we have Cornelius. And Cornelius, before this, was a Roman centurion stationed in Caesarea, known as devout and God-fearing Gentile who gives generously to the poor and prays continuously. To Israel, a man of wealth and friends. So, Cornelius is introduced into the Bible; this is the only place that he's there. He comes in one more Scripture over past this, but in that Scripture he's known as "man." They're referring back to him, but they said "man." But he's not talked of before and he's not talked of after. Just this piece here with Peter.

Since neither of them, Peter or Cornelius, actually had any idea about things like dream interpretation, I want to tell you what metaphysically I found on dream interpretation on TruthUnity.net. So, Peter stands for and represents the man's inner spiritual vision. He's our faith. And according to Charles Fillmore, he's one of our 12 powers in the faith. It's his power. Right back here; he's our faith.

And Cornelius, on the other hand, metaphysically stands for outer illumination -- kind of like a prideful aspect of consciousness, but devoted, generous, prayerful.

So, when the outer calls for the inner, they come together and become one. So metaphysically, what they're talking about is that we are all one. We all have these aspects of each other. And that's what metaphysics talks about a lot -- is that we're all ... The names in the Bible are usually aspects of ourselves -- pieces of ourselves and who we are and how we relate to other people.

So in this presence, they were actually one person working on what is clean and what is unclean. And how/why is it that we, as people, make it unclean and clean? When God says *"It's clean,"* then they say that that's purity of Christ's mind. In God's mind, the deep purity and mighty strength of Christ's mind are made manifest in men as they develop spiritually. And that's what Peter was doing. Cornelius and Peter were developing together.

And Peter started to understand that. And in Unity terms, *"what God has claimed pure you must not call unpure"* is to stop denying the inherent divinity in other people. Why are we denying that they are Christ?

And we see a lot of this going on right now, right? It's "us" and "them." It's, *"They're over there doing that; we're over here doing this."* Are we better? Are we worse? What are we? We're not separate. We've already seen that God said everybody's the same. But yet we keep pointing to "other" and separation.

And I'll share with you a little bit about my history. I grew up, I started elementary school in the 60s. Some of you can't relate to that. But in the 60s, what I didn't know when I was a child was there's a lot going on in the 60s. They were desegregating the schools. They were putting everybody together and forcing everybody to be this way, right?

We were very poor. So, we lived on the bad side of town. You would call it, now, the ghetto. So, we were probably one of two white families on the block. And I went to school with mostly people of color. And I was regularly beat up by these people, but I didn't know where their anger was coming from. I kept thinking I was doing something. *"What's going on? What am I doing?"* And I didn't know what it was that was about me that was bringing on this hatred towards me. Little did I know, 30 years later, when I go back to the era, I started understanding what was actually going on.

And at the same time, in my home life ... I don't know if you had parents like this, but my father was ... Do you guys remember Archie Bunker? I kid you not, if you stood him next to each other, my dad's taller and broader, but he's the same man. And his voice was the same. He has since moved on.

But he had that ... you know how Archie always called him "Meathead"? Well, my dad had a way of calling other people worse than that. And it was "them" and "us" and "them" and "us." And I mean, I think I grew up hearing every slur you could possibly say about someone other than somebody that's Caucasian.

And it just ate me up inside. Even when I was little -- I remember even in kindergarten -- I was sitting there thinking, *"Why is he so mad? Why does he hate so much? People, they're just people. They're just people."* And I didn't know how I knew that. I'm grateful that I did know that, so I didn't take on that hatred like a couple of my siblings did -- and to this day still carry that. I didn't. So, I was definitely blessed by Spirit back then, right? There was something going on in me that said, *"This isn't right."*

In fact, my first boyfriend was on the basketball team, and I thought he was awesome. And he had a big afro, and I couldn't tell my dad he was my boyfriend, because I knew what was going to happen if I did. You know what I mean? Because it was like I had to be a whole separate person, because I knew it was okay, but I was being told at home it wasn't. That it wasn't okay; that they're different.

And what we learn here -- Charles Fillmore explains it like this: *"Peter's experience teaches that divine guidance comes to us every day, often through dreams, insights, and inner promptings. But many of us dismiss these messages because they do not recognize their spiritual meaning. Peter stayed awake and responsive to Spirit. He acted on what he received, and he let the greater good between them -- the Jews and the Gentiles, become a greater good because of the way he acted in that time. His openness helped expand religion beyond old limits of tolerance and separation."*

And he wasn't taken very lightly either, because he was persecuted for this. The Jews that he ran with were not happy about him being all-inclusive, much like my father wasn't happy with me. But Peter's awakening is God showing him that -- in every nation, among every people -- those who honor the Divine and strive to live right are welcome and accepted. Everyone that tries is welcome.

This is our consciousness. This is how we see the universal Christ and universal truth of everybody: that we're all the same.

Does this remind you of anything in particular? It reminds me of the second principle of Unity. The presence of God is in every person -- in all of us. The second Unity principle, emphasizes the inherent goodness of all people. The spirit of God dwells within every individual, making each person inherently good.

And this principle challenges us to look beyond the surface appearance and judgment and, instead, cultivate compassion and understanding towards ourselves and others.

Because we're not going to be perfect in doing this. If we're learning this, if we're just opening ourselves to it now -- if we're just learning where we unconsciously have biases or whatever -- we have to give ourselves a little bit of grace as long as we keep trying. That's the point. We recognize the inherent

goodness in people; that allows us to seek and celebrate the divine spark in each other, each person we encounter.

So, what's the radical truth here? What does this really -- Acts 9-35 -- actually say? Down and dirty it says: divine inclusion. This is the realization of divine inclusion. No person or nation is outside of God's love. No one God has cleaned is to be judged as unclean. And we know he's cleaned us all.

Divinity is not confined to religion, ethnicity, or prior religious status. It does not play favorites among peoples, traditions, or labels. We see all as one.

So, we have a change of sight. Are we ready to have a change of sight? Can you be willing to start seeing things? The person that cut you off in the parking lot; the person that's -- you know, whatever it is they're doing that's upsetting you and you're judging them for it, or you're thinking that they're "other." Can you be willing to look and go, *"You know what? There is Christ in there."*

I have teenagers, okay, at home. And sometimes I wonder ... It's like, *"Do I really not want to choke this person?"* No, I'm just kidding. But sometimes I wonder that it's just like -- some of the stuff they do, I'm just like, *"Oh, why would they think like that?"* And I place them in "other," where you don't have to act like that. But I'm not remembering that they have a divinity first. They have that. So I snapped to pretty quickly.

So, I'm learning, and I'm giving myself grace. And I'm learning in all the things that I do, and giving myself grace, as well as giving other people grace if they are thinking that I am "other." It's okay. We're all going to be there, because we're all one.

So, does anybody remember "Bruce Almighty"? Oh gosh, it's one of my favorite movies. I don't know if you remember at the end; there's a scene where he's dead now and he's up in heaven and he's with God. And, of course, God is Morgan Freeman. And they're standing there talking to each other.

And Morgan Freeman -- God -- is asking him, *"Do you want to go back to your life? Do you want to go back to this?"* Because he's fighting this whole time to get this woman back. He's like, *"Do you want to go back and be with her?"*

And Bruce says, *"No, I don't. I want her to be happy. I want her to be whole."* And then he stops and he goes, *"I want to see her through your eyes."*

That has always stuck with me. How can I see? If I was standing there in the face of God, how can I see through God's eyes? How different would my life be in everything that I do if I could do that? If I could hold that?

So, then we've got to ask ourselves: Are we seeing with divine eyes in our day-to-day life? Are we? What beliefs am I asked to release to be able to do this? What is it I believe about the world or about my life or whatever it is -- about this division that we have all over the earth? What is it that I have to release in order to say, *"I see the divinity in you. I see it."*

And who have I unconsciously labeled as "other"? That doesn't get pretty sometimes when I start writing those out ... but I give myself grace and I try again. As long as I'm willing.

I talk about willingness a lot, because when I was in my healing journey coming back, my friend just kept telling me, *"All you have to do is be willing and it'll come. Whatever it is you're looking for, it'll come. Just be willing."*

So, I invite you to be willing to just see it? To understand it? And where is the Spirit inviting you into greater openness? Where are you feeling a block, and Spirit's going, "Hey!" Maybe the knock on the door is for you! *"Come on; let's talk. Let's be one."*

And what if you could believe that nothing God created is outside the Divine Love? Everything is included. Could you believe that deep? Could you believe that strong?

So, I'm going to give you some homework here, because I like to do that. And I want you to pray the prayer that Peter prayed on the rooftop. And this is what it says: *"Show me where I'm still calling unclean what you have already cleaned. Show me what I'm calling 'other' that you have already said is one. Show me where I'm calling something bad that you have already said is divine."*

Because when you see it for yourself -- you can see it, you can change it. If you don't know it, you can't change it. But if you're asking God ...

Many years ago I prayed – I don't know if you guys know the prayer of Jabez. And it's really awesome. I prayed it for like a month, and my whole life changed. It is a really long prayer, and it's basically asking God to step into your life and show you where you're not showing up. *"Where am I not showing up?"*

Because this is what we are called to do, especially here at Unity. Especially truth seekers in Unity, because we live this. This is one of our principles: oneness with all.

So, step into your Christ Spirit. Step into your courage. And take some Spirit-guided action that matches your new vision. So, if you find something, if you come across something, go, *"You know what? I can work on that. Just that one piece."* It doesn't have to be an overhaul. I don't have time for an overhaul. I'd like to, but I don't. So, can you take one piece at a time? And can you take the time to see through divine eyes?

Blessings!