

What Dreams May Come:
September 28, 2025

[VIDEO - What Dreams May Come]. [1 Dreams]

What Dreams May Come...
Robin Williams... in a fairly serious role.

It is a movie... about life and death...
Mental health, depression, and self-destruction.
Human grief and love... that extends beyond the grave.
And it's also about heaven and hell.

But I warn you...
It is a difficult movie to watch.
There are parts of the movie...
That are what our culture would call... triggering...
That are completely heartbreaking...
And the vision of hell is terrifying.

But this vision of heaven...
Is inspirational.

I remember... back in 1998...
Seeing this movie in the theater...
Sitting there very uncomfortable...
Because of the themes...

But then... during this scene of heaven...
I cried...
Which I know...
Doesn't surprise you.

But I cried... because of the hope...
Of the vision... and the imagination...
And what I thought... and dreamed...
About life after death...
For the people I loved...
Who had gone before me.

It helped me grieve... and hope...
At the very same time.

But the title of that movie... What Dreams May Come... **[2 Hamlet]**
Actually comes from the work of William Shakespeare...
From the play he wrote...
About some guy named Hamlet.

You know some of the words... of Hamlet's monologue...
But the whole speech...
Is about the struggle... between... this world...
And the pain and the suffering...
We experience... day to day...

And the uncertainty...
Of the next world...
What really happens...
After we die.

The speech... goes like this:

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,

No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;

To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause—there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.

In the speech...
The Bard struggles...
With the uncertainty of...
Life after death.

Bud Buchheim - was my seminary preaching professor... **[3 Pulpit]**
I remember pushing the limit in class...
With the words that I spoke...
And Bud sitting in the back of the room...
Laughing and shaking his head.

So you can imagine my panic...
On normal Sunday morning...
When I climbed up into the pulpit...
And saw... sitting right there front and center...
My seminary preaching professor.

And I have to tell you...
For one moment...
I almost panicked...

But... I had no choice.
I preached the sermon I had written.

And after worship...
I stood at the door... shaking hands...
Waiting for Bud and his wife Donna...
To come through the line...

He shook my hand... and said...
You must have had a hell of a preaching professor.
Which at first... I took as a compliment...
And then I realized he was bragging about himself.
Either way... it was a good joke.
He was a good man.

Indeed... my preaching professor.
And I remember one day...
He said in class... be careful...
When describing the furniture of Heaven...
Or the temperature of Hell.
Because YOU don't know.

See that is the temptation...
Of this gospel lesson... **[4 Rich Man and Lazarus]**
To take the words of Jesus...
And make them into...
Some kind of eternal truth...
About the nature of Heaven and Hell.

To think that the point is...
That the unnamed Rich Man...
Is in this place of eternal torment...
Which he had coming...

And Lazarus... who suffered greatly...
During his life on earth...
Is in the bosom of Abraham...
Sitting right there...
Next to the Father of Nations.

BUT you know...
This is not a factual account...
Of two guys.
The Rich Man and Lazarus.

Jesus isn't reporting the news...
Or telling us... this is what actually happened...
In this given situation.

It's a parable.
And remember the word parable...
Means... to lay alongside...

Jesus is telling us... something...
About our reality...
By telling us a story...
That he made up.

It's a story.
For a purpose.

And the purpose isn't to..
Scare the hell out of us..
Or to scare us out of hell..
There's something else..
Going on here.

The nature of Heaven and Hell..
Doesn't seem to be the point.

The Men's Wednesday Night Study Group... **[5 Psalms]**
Has been reading, "The Reflections on the Psalms"...
By CS Lewis..
It's been good.

But CS Lewis... points out..
That the psalmists..
The people who wrote the psalms..
Were Jewish... and didn't have the same idea..
Of life after death... that we have.

So... when the psalms sound like..
They are talking about the eternity of Hell..
Or the eternity of Heaven..
That's not what psalmist meant.

For example... I will live in the house of the Lord forever..
At the end of the 23rd Psalm... means..
I will live in the house of the Lord..
My whole life long. As long as I live..
Forever wasn't a part..
Of the deal... at that point.

And this idea... caused Lewis to write...

It is even arguable..
That the moment 'heaven'
Ceases to mean UNION WITH GOD..
And 'hell' to mean SEPARATION FROM GOD..
The belief in either is..
A mischievous superstition.

Which is not to say..
There is no heaven and hell..
We have clear teachings about..
The promise of eternal life..
From Jesus.

But it's pretty clear to me..
That in this parable..
Jesus is not talking about..
The nature of Heaven and Hell... **[6 Law and Prophets]**

But instead....

Jesus is talking about...
Letting the Word of God...
Which at the time...
Was... the two things...
He mentioned...
Moses and the Prophets.

The Law and the Prophets...
Were for Jesus... the very living Word of God.

They were the words...
That were supposed to be taken...
Into your heart and mind...
So that you could live...
A godly life.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming,
Says the LORD,
When I will make a new covenant
With the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

It will not be like the covenant
That I made with their ancestors
When I took them by the hand
To bring them out of the land of Egypt—

A covenant that they broke,
Though I was their husband,
Says the LORD.

But this is the covenant that I will make
With the house of Israel after those days,
Says the LORD:

I will put my law within them,
And I will write it on their hearts;
And I will be their God,
And they shall be my people.

No longer shall they teach one another,
Or say to each other, "Know the LORD,"
For they shall all know me,
From the least of them to the greatest,
Says the LORD;
For I will forgive their iniquity,
And remember their sin no more.

That's how it's supposed to be...
They and we... are supposed to internalize...
The Word of God.

But the Pharisees weren't doing it.

So... if they won't take...
The words of Moses and the Prophets...
That were spoken... and written...
By the power of the Holy Spirit...
To reveal the Will of God.

If they can't take those words...
That teach them... how to live their lives...
How to be good people.
How to the godly people...

And were instead...
The kind of people...
Who were stepping over someone....
Who was in desperate need...
Day after day...

And taking care...
ONLY of themselves.

If they didn't learn what was right and wrong...
From the Law and the Prophets...
Then they haven't been reading the book.
They haven't been paying attention...
They haven't integrated the Word of God.

They haven't really changed.

And then Jesus says something...
That I think is the point...
Of the whole parable...
And if it's not...
At the very least...
It is the most powerful part...
Of the parable.

He says... **[7 Risen]**
They wouldn't be convinced...
EVEN IF SOMEONE RISES FROM THE DEAD.

Right.
Powerful because...
That is exactly what Jesus is going to do.

He is going to be raised from the dead.

And by his resurrection... he will prove...
That everything he said about God...
And everything he asked us to do...
Are the Truth.

Everything was true... validated by his resurrection.
And true... that he... and now we... have something...

Powerful to give this hurting and broken world.
We can give the world... life...
His life... our lives... life in God.

I know... it's not up to us...
To save everybody we meet... or...
To do the right thing all the time.
But that's the not the point.

God wants us to believe the truth...
And live it out.

God wants our hearts to change. **[8 Command]**
God wants us to incorporate the truth...
Of who God is...
And what God wants...

So that we become the people of God...
Who really believe... it's our job...

To love the Lord our God... with all our heart...
And all of our soul...
And all of our mind...

And that God wants us...
To love our neighbors as ourselves.

And that we live out those principles... in reality.

God wants that Law of Love... to be...
Written on our hearts.
Locked in our minds.

So that... our behavior is based...
Not on some worldly expectations...
Or political opinions...
Or even our own ideas...
That come from inside...
Our cute little brains.

God wants us to follow God.
To give our lives.
To give our love.
To give everything we are...
To God.

Or as the apostle Paul says it...
In the book of Romans Chapter 12... **[9 Transformed]**

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed
By the renewing of your minds,
So that you may discern what is the will of God—
What is good and acceptable and perfect.

So that's it.
I really think... in this parable...
Jesus is asking us...
To change our lives.

Based on the Word of God.

To live and breathe and move...
Like this faith... is sincerely important...
To me... and to my God.

This is intentional.
This is the point of my life.

I have been transformed.
I have been changed...
By the power of God.

And now... that's how I will live my life.

Then. You know... Heaven and Hell...
Are not even a consideration.

Because we know...
Beyond the shadow of a doubt...
That we belong to God.

Therefore...
We are not afraid of the future...
We have faith...
That God... will care for us...
No matter what happens...

No matter...
What dreams may come.

Thanks be to God.
Amen!