The background of the entire image is a dark, textured surface, possibly black or very dark blue. It is covered with numerous out-of-focus, circular light spots in shades of yellow, orange, and light blue, creating a bokeh effect. The text is centered and consists of three lines, each on a separate light blue brushstroke background.

DREAMS OF THE FATHER

REV. SIMON PARK

Scripture Passage

Jeremiah 20:7-13

O Lord, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me. For whenever I speak, I must cry out, I must shout, "Violence and destruction!" For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. For I hear many whispering: "Terror is all around! Denounce him! Let us denounce him!" All my close friends are watching for me to stumble. "Perhaps he can be enticed, and we can prevail against him, and take our revenge on him." But the Lord is with me like a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble, and they will not prevail. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten. O Lord of hosts, you test the righteous, you see the heart and the mind; let me see your retribution upon them, for

to you I have committed my cause. Sing to the Lord;
praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the
needy from the hands of evildoers.

NRSV

Sermon

Dreams of the Father

Rev. Kim said in last week's sermon: ***"Hope produces dreams and we live on dreams. And these dreams keep us going."*** We live on dreams, and these dreams keep us going. Dreams give us vision. They make us come alive. They spark our imaginations. Dreams give life purpose and excitement.

The story of God's people begins with Abraham, who heard a call and had a dream of going to a place that God would show. He picked up, left everything he knew and went off, with only a dream. Martin Luther King Jr. galvanized the country with his famous "I have a dream" speech. It lifted people's spirits and imaginations of what kind of world was possible.

We live on dreams, and dreams keep us going.

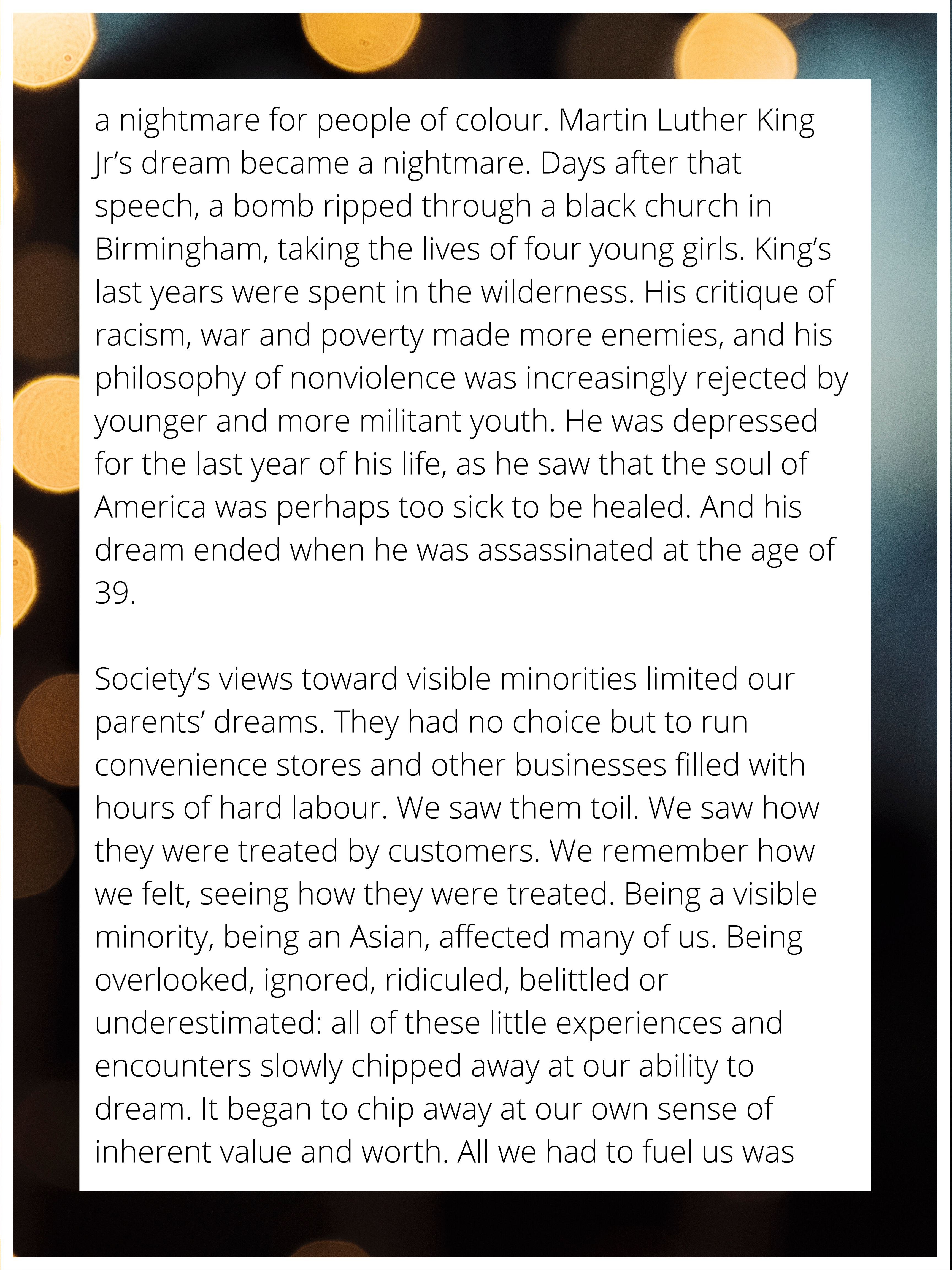
The World Kills Dreams

In this world, however, the dream often becomes a nightmare. The world kills our dreams.

Joseph was Jacob's favourite son. Jacob sent him to look for his brothers. When they saw him coming, they said this to one another: ***"Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits... and we shall see what will become of his dreams" (Genesis 37:19-20).***

My dad loved animals when he was a boy. He raised little chickens and other small livestock. One time, a little chick died, and my dad carried it inside, crying. He loved the land, and his dream was to own a large plot of land and grow things and raise animals on it. This dream led him to study horticulture at university. That dream was shattered when he quickly realized that there was no land for a poor refugee from North Korea with no dad. There was no land for one who had no connections or inherited wealth. His dream died with the harsh reality of the world he lived in. That whole generation had so many tragic experiences. Survival was the only thing they could aspire to. Yet they still dreamed, and brought those dreams to Canada. They brought their hopes to a society in which race and culture severely limit, curtail and even kill dreams.

The American Dream they envisioned was quite often

The background of the image features a dark, textured surface with several out-of-focus, circular light sources in warm yellow and orange tones, creating a bokeh effect. The text is presented in two paragraphs within a white rectangular area.

a nightmare for people of colour. Martin Luther King Jr's dream became a nightmare. Days after that speech, a bomb ripped through a black church in Birmingham, taking the lives of four young girls. King's last years were spent in the wilderness. His critique of racism, war and poverty made more enemies, and his philosophy of nonviolence was increasingly rejected by younger and more militant youth. He was depressed for the last year of his life, as he saw that the soul of America was perhaps too sick to be healed. And his dream ended when he was assassinated at the age of 39.

Society's views toward visible minorities limited our parents' dreams. They had no choice but to run convenience stores and other businesses filled with hours of hard labour. We saw them toil. We saw how they were treated by customers. We remember how we felt, seeing how they were treated. Being a visible minority, being an Asian, affected many of us. Being overlooked, ignored, ridiculed, belittled or underestimated: all of these little experiences and encounters slowly chipped away at our ability to dream. It began to chip away at our own sense of inherent value and worth. All we had to fuel us was

adapting to and surviving in this world, on the terms given to us by the world.

We lost our ability to dream. To dream of a different world, a better world. Many of us have adapted and survived and even thrived according to the terms given by the world. Through that, you have enjoyed the kind of security and stability that our parents never had. We have learned to enjoy the day to day blessings that we have and appreciate what we have. But my sense is that buried underneath the surface of everyday blessings lies broken and shattered dreams. Underneath the surface lies disappointment. Unresolved hurts. Untended wounds. Over time, we have left it all underneath, and tried to move on enjoying the day to day life. But the result is that we have lost our ability to dream. The world kills dreams.

The Cross is Where Dreams are Shattered

The dreams of fathers are a powerful thing. They have a way of shaping the flow, narrative and outlook of a child's life.

Our God the Father had a dream for his Son, Jesus.

This is the dream that Jesus had from God: ***“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:18-19).*** This dream propelled Jesus in his ministry, but this dream led him to the cross.

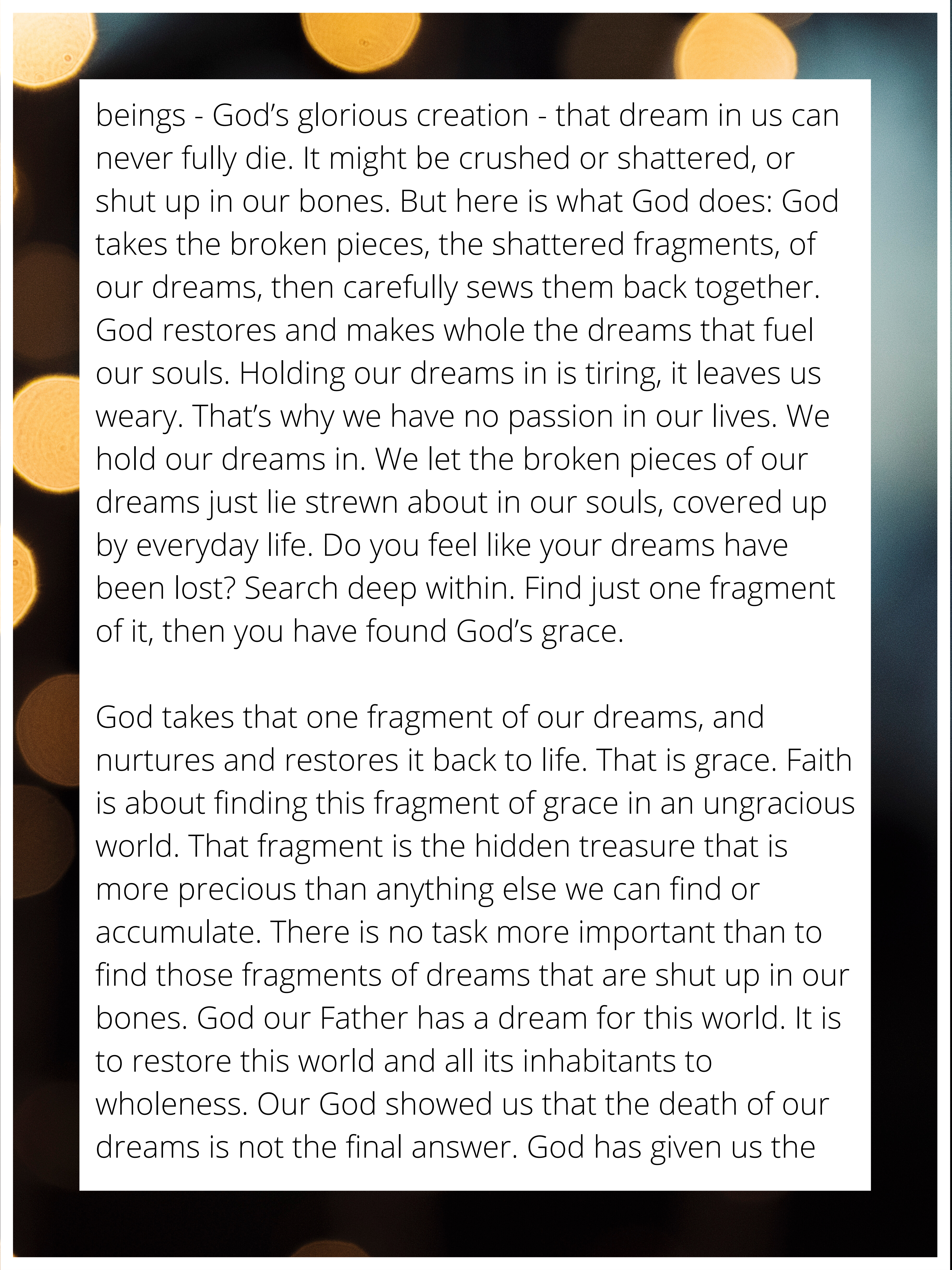
Our experiences in the world teach us to fear dreams. Fear - whether our own or that of others - crushes our dreams. This fear crushed the dreams of Jesus. His ministry, full of the power of the Spirit, evoked too much fear in the hearts of the ruling classes. His ministry of healing undermined the authority of the powers that be, and threatened the stability of the system they benefited from. Those dreams were killed on the cross.

The cross is the place where our dreams are shattered, destroyed and killed. At the cross, the power of the world expresses its triumph over our feeble dreams. The cross is often the end destination of our dreams, and we let them die there.

Jeremiah began his life with a great dream. God gave him the dream to be a prophet to the nations and to speak God's word. When Jeremiah expressed fear, saying he was only a boy, God replied with this: ***"Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you" (Jeremiah 1:7-8).*** But his dream became a nightmare. He developed enemies all around. People were waiting for him to fail, and he's enemies tried to kill him. By today's passage, he is at his wits end and in the depths of despair: ***"For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long" (Jeremiah 20:8).*** The dream of speaking God's word had become his worst nightmare. He was at his cross. But Jeremiah then says this: ***"If I say, 'I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,' then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot" (Jeremiah 20:9).***

The Fragment of our Dreams

My friends, at the core of our faith is the belief that our dream can never fully die. As long as we are human



beings - God's glorious creation - that dream in us can never fully die. It might be crushed or shattered, or shut up in our bones. But here is what God does: God takes the broken pieces, the shattered fragments, of our dreams, then carefully sews them back together. God restores and makes whole the dreams that fuel our souls. Holding our dreams in is tiring, it leaves us weary. That's why we have no passion in our lives. We hold our dreams in. We let the broken pieces of our dreams just lie strewn about in our souls, covered up by everyday life. Do you feel like your dreams have been lost? Search deep within. Find just one fragment of it, then you have found God's grace.

God takes that one fragment of our dreams, and nurtures and restores it back to life. That is grace. Faith is about finding this fragment of grace in an ungracious world. That fragment is the hidden treasure that is more precious than anything else we can find or accumulate. There is no task more important than to find those fragments of dreams that are shut up in our bones. God our Father has a dream for this world. It is to restore this world and all its inhabitants to wholeness. Our God showed us that the death of our dreams is not the final answer. God has given us the

power of resurrection. God's power of resurrection revives the dreams that fuel our souls. *God's dream is more powerful than the world that kills dreams.*

Do you believe this?

This is so hard to believe in the world of power we live in. But Jesus said that all we need is faith the size of a mustard seed. We just need to find that fragment of our dreams for God's grace to become activated in us. And now, our Father's dreams live on in us, the body of Christ. We embody God's dreams for this world.

The Fragment of our Dreams

To the dads and parents in our midst, our dreams are powerful. They shape our children. If we lose our ability to dream, we deprive our children of the ability to dream as well. In addition to loving them and providing for them, we must take the journey of finding the broken fragments of our dreams.

By the time we had Joonie, my dream and desire of serving the world through ministry was burning like fire in my bones. But fear was stopping me. What finally

pushed me to take the plunge was when I looked at Joonie and thought about what kind of dad I wanted him to see. Do I want him to see a dad who played it safe by letting fear have the best of him? Or did I want him to see a dad who dared to dream and act on it, even if it brings about failure and hardship? I felt I owed it to him to show what living by faith looked like.

We want our kids to be passionate about what they do. Passion comes from dreams. Dreams for a better world, and dreams about how they might be a part of building that better world. Let us dream, and let us give our children the gift of dreaming.

God is our refuge. God will protect our dreams with the power of His grace. The prophet Joel had this vision: ***“I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28).*** I pray that we may reclaim the dreams that God has given to each of us. Search with all your heart for these fragments of your dreams. Don’t hold them in. God will help you discover and rediscover these fragments, and lovingly bind them back together again.