



### **Living a Dream or a Fantasy?**

Young Jessica Watson has now sailed out of Sydney and begun her adventure. Jessica is the 16 year old Queensland girl determined to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world. Beyond the debate as to whether Jessica is too young to undertake such a risky adventure, her sense of dream is unmistakable. We might remember some ten years ago, another young sailor, Jesse Martin who sailed solo around the world. He spoke of the importance of having a dream, of following one's dream. I remember him saying at one stage that he had not been afraid of dying on the high seas because if he died he would do so in the pursuit of his dream which for him was far better than turning eighty without ever having followed his heart. It was the pursuit of his dream that was of primary significance for him and the result was of secondary importance. In an earlier interview he remarked that if people are not enabled to follow their dream it is then that they turn to things that are destructive. Our dreams are critical for an enlivened life, a happy life, a full life.

Both Jessica now, and Jesse before him, believe that people can do whatever they like if they are prepared to follow their dream. Perhaps that is somewhat naive, and life is a bit more complicated. What is not naive about their thinking, however, is the recognition that simply having a dream is not enough. Dreams demand courage, they need risk, they require strategy; they beg a great deal of discipline, preparation and skill. Dreams take us into and through uncomfortable places. They do not promise easy times. They lead us into a very radical confrontation with ourselves. They lead us beyond ourselves. They demand a fair degree of self-transcendence. In the end, dreams are actually hard work. Dreams cost. There is a price to pay. It is this that separates them of course from simple fantasy or daydreaming.

True dreams mean self-sacrifice. This is where the confrontation between Jesus and a number of people in the gospel emerges. Take for example the Rich Young Man in Mark 10:17-22. He, too, has an apparent dream. But his dream is revealed to be a

fantasy. It cannot bear the demand of self-sacrifice. He is not prepared to pay the price of self-transcendence. True dreams do not simply serve the ego as has his pursuit until now. Rather true dreams demand that the ego serve them. And that will mean responding often to the call to go beyond ourselves, to often transcend ourselves according to the strategy and discipline that true dreams demand.

The Christian dream is a true dream. It is the dream of an enlightened and enlivened life, a life fully awake, a life fully perceptive to the presence of God, a life lived with others in such a way that the deepest human qualities characterize our relationship with one another. This dream demands we go beyond what makes us comfortable; it demands we transcend ourselves.

Are we following a dream or a fantasy? Jesus reminds us that the answer lies in the cost: are we prepared to pay its price?

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