

Movie Message on Hope: Dreamer  
Isaiah 40:1-11  
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St. John United Methodist Church  
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Perhaps you have heard the story of millionaire Eugene Land, who had been asked to speak to a class of 59 sixth-graders in East Harlem. What could he say to inspire these students, most of whom would drop out of school? He wondered how he could get these predominantly black and Puerto Rican children even to look at him. Scrapping his notes, he decided to speak to them from his heart. "Stay in school," he admonished, "and I'll help pay the college tuition for every one of you." At that moment the lives of these students changed. For the first time they had hope. Said one student, "I had something to look forward to, something waiting for me. It was a golden feeling." Nearly 90 percent of that class went on to graduate from high school.

Today is the first Sunday in Advent, the season of expectancy, preparation, and waiting for the coming of the Savior into the world and into our lives. Today the theme is hope. The Bible says that hope is the conviction of things not yet seen. What is it that you hope for? What convictions do you have that something will happen in the future? In the midst of hopelessness these Harlem students were given something to look forward to...something waiting for them.

The movie for today is about hope. It is about a thoroughbred race horse named Sonador which means dreamer in Spanish. Sonador falls in a race and breaks her leg. She is about to be put down when her trainer, Ben Crane, buys her for \$8000. Ben, his wife, and daughter, Cale, live on a family horse farm without horses. Ben has a difficult relationship with his father who was a legendary horse trainer. In this scene we see the family tension.

**VIDEO CLIP 15:15 – 17:50**

What are the tension points in your family? Is the root cause money or parenting style or values? Tension is not the same thing as conflict. Tension often comes before conflict. It tells us that conflict might be around the corner. But we need to realize that there is tension in every single family who has and will ever live. Most of us would do well to learn to accept tension and not always let it trigger us to prepare for full scale battle. Nobody enjoys tension or the feelings that conflict can bring. Such issues can easily drape a cloud over our feeling of hope for the future.

The Crane family decides to rehabilitate Sonador for the purpose of breeding her. Despite their estranged relationship Ben's father offers to help with a gift in a coffee can. Let's watch.

**VIDEO CLIP 40:00 – 41:15**

Sonador recovers from her injury but then the family discovered that she is unable to have offspring, thereby destroying the dream they had of breeding her. Brokenhearted, Cale, decides to run away from home riding Sonador. While Ben was chasing them in his truck his helpers discovered that Sonador was running faster and faster. So now with the hope of one dream dead, they turn their hope to another possible dream. Could Sonador actually race again?

So they work with her to the point where they enter her into a race. It is a claim race which means that anyone can buy any horse in the race. Ben thought Sonador had no chance of being claimed but she finished third and was claimed. Another dream dies. Ben's daughter, Cale, was devastated. Ben is frustrated that Cale does not understand reality and takes out his anger on her.

### **VIDEO CLIP 54:11 – 55:48**

Have you ever had the experience of dream after dream dying in front of your eyes? There is not a person in this room who has not had at least one dream, one hope disintegrate. What do you do when your dreams die? Do you become bitter and resentful, hurting those closest to you?

This is what was happening to Ben. But then he went to Cale's school for Parent's Night. Parents are asked to read aloud selections of their own child's writing. The teacher invites Ben to come to the front of the class to read the story, Cale wrote for class. Let's watch.

### **VIDEO CLIP 56:48 – 1:00:29**

As Ben read Cale's story a light turned on in his soul. In this story he sees himself as the character of the king, as he termed it, "Stupid king." This is the power of story. When we see ourselves in a story it enables us to look at ourselves from a new perspective.

How about you? When was the last time you looked at yourself from a fresh point of view? We get accustomed to our own familiar, comfortable points of view. It's hard to see from another perspective. Story has the power to do this when we allow ourselves to enter into it.

This is the power of scripture for you and me this Advent season. Isaiah wrote about a voice crying in the wilderness. "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together."

Isn't there something in your spirit that yearns for a time when everything that is a barrier or a mountain or a crooked road will vanish? And the glory of God will be seen by all people? What mountain, what barrier looms before you right now? Is it your financial future, your children's choices, your physical maladies? Don't you yearn for the hope that these things will vanish and we all will be able to see God in all of God's glory? This is my hope. This is the hope we have in the Son of God born in Bethlehem.

In our story Ben surprises everyone by buying back Sonador and giving sole ownership to Cale. She and the other staff work hard to get this horse in racing condition. Then she drops a bombshell on everyone by announcing that she wants to enter Sonador in the prestigious Breeder's Cup.

**VIDEO CLIP 1:04:22 – 1:06:12**

Have you ever heard about someone's dream, a dream that was so huge, that you felt that it was impossible? As people grow older they tend to leave the dream world in favor of the real world. Dreamers only get hurt by life that is often too real and raw. Better to be a realist so we don't get our hopes too high.

But Cale had a big dream and a community who supported her in this dream. All their hope was pinned to one horse called Dreamer. That horse made it into the Breeder's Cup. Here's what happened.

**VIDEO CLIP 1:33:33 – 1:38:43**

When it comes to God's dream for the world, what is wrong with having really high hopes? What is wrong with husbands and wives having a really loving and intimate relationship? What is wrong with wanting to see an end to children dying of AIDS in Africa? What is wrong with dreaming of a world where the poor are lifted up and justice prevails for everyone? We are people of God! We are the people of very high hopes. We are the people of big dreams.

May this Advent season be a time for you to dream big dreams. May this Advent season be a time for your hopes to rise on the wings of prayer and centered on a very special baby laid in a manger.