#1. WHEN DREAMS ARE DREAMED

Read Genesis 41:1-36. In both the Old and New Testaments, there are examples of God communicating with people through dreams—even with those who do not yet believe in Him.

At the same time, the Bible emphasizes that it is God's Word—"the testimony of Moses and the Prophets" (Luke 16:29-31)—that is the foundation for faith and repentance. In 2 Timothy 3:15, Paul reminds us that Scripture alone "is able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus," not dreams or visions.

Consider the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) which warns that even miraculous signs or visitations cannot substitute for hearing and trusting God's revealed Word. In the parable, father Abraham tells the Rich Man, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." Here Jesus Himself—who will actually rise from the dead—equates the salvific authority of the Old Testament Word to Himself, the Word made flesh.

Given all this, how should this shape the way we interpret our own dreams, or the dreams others claim to have, especially in times of grief or spiritual searching?

#2. A THING FIXED BY GOD

Read Genesis 41:37-57. Imagine you are Pharaoh, the most powerful man in the world, ruling over Egypt with all the wisdom and resources an ancient empire could offer. Yet, you are troubled by mysterious dreams that none of your magicians or wise men can interpret. Despite all your power and prestige, you find yourself at the end of your own understanding—desperate for insight beyond human wisdom.

In this moment of humility and vulnerability, God raises up Joseph, a Hebrew slave and prisoner with no political power or social status and a questionable past, but one who bears God's wisdom. Joseph's ability to interpret Pharaoh's dreams is not from human cleverness, but from the Lord, who alone is the source of all true wisdom. Through Joseph, God provides not only understanding but also a way to prepare for the future and save many lives.

In this way, Joseph becomes a powerful "type" of Christ. Through God uses Joseph we see that our greatest need for wisdom and hope comes not from the world's strength or knowledge, but from God alone. And ultimately, in Jesus Christ, the full embodiment of God's wisdom and salvation, we find the grace and truth to face any uncertainty, trial, or fear in life.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. Paul teaches us that the "wisdom of the world" pales compared to the "wisdom of God" revealed in Christ crucified—the place where God's power and wisdom meet our greatest weakness. How does this perspective shape the way you face life's challenges today?

#3. In Genesis 41:38, Pharaoh says, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?” (Genesis 41:38). This is the first time since Genesis 1:2 that the phrase “ruah Elohim” (the Spirit of God) appears, highlighting Joseph’s unique walk with God. Though Joseph was a young prisoner—a position of weakness—his humility, grace, and love in serving Pharaoh testified strongly to the Spirit’s working in him.

This invites us to consider how the Spirit manifests, especially in our own weakness and meekness. Joseph’s confidence wasn’t in himself but in God who gave him the wisdom to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams. The Bible consistently teaches that humility, grace, meekness, and love are clear marks of God’s presence with us.

- ✞ What does Pharaoh’s recognition of Joseph as a man “in whom is the Spirit of God” teach us about how God’s Spirit might be identified or revealed in someone’s life? What characteristics or fruits of the Spirit do you see demonstrated through Joseph?

- ✞ Joseph’s leadership and wisdom came through humility and grace rather than ambition or pride. How does this shape our understanding of strength in a Christian context?

- ✞ How does knowing that God’s power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9) encourage you in difficult seasons?

SESSION 16 Answer Key:

Question 1:

1. Scripture is Primary: The LCMS holds the Bible as God's inspired, inerrant Word and the ultimate authority for faith and life. Dreams must be interpreted through the lens of Scripture.

2. Exercise Caution with Dreams: While God may use dreams, the LCMS advises caution and discernment. Scripture warns against placing undue trust in dreams (Ecclesiastes 5:7; Jeremiah 29:8).

3. God's Main Communication Today Is the Word: Although God spoke through dreams in biblical times (e.g., Joseph), these are exceptional cases. God primarily communicates through Scripture and the Means of Grace today.

4. Discernment Is Essential: Any dream or vision that conflicts with biblical teaching should be rejected.

5. Focus on the Means of Grace: The LCMS emphasizes reliance on the Word and Sacraments as the primary ways God nurtures and guides believers.

6. Balance Openness with Testing: While not dismissing the possibility of God speaking through dreams, the LCMS insists that all such experiences be carefully tested against Scripture and approached with caution.

Question 2:

1. The Limits of Human Wisdom and Power (Genesis 41:37-57):
   - True wisdom comes from God alone, revealing human limitations regardless of status or power, and God can use unexpected people and situations to fulfill His purposes.

2. Joseph as a "Type" of Christ:
   - Joseph foreshadows Jesus by being rejected and suffering yet exalted, providing physical salvation to many, just as Jesus provides spiritual salvation to all.

3. The Wisdom of God vs. the Wisdom of the World (1 Corinthians 1:18-31):
   - Paul contrasts human and divine wisdom by showing that God's seemingly foolish cross is actually His ultimate power, challenging believers to trust His wisdom despite worldly perceptions.

Question 3:

Pharaoh's recognition of Joseph as a man "in whom is the Spirit of God" teaches us that the Spirit's presence is often revealed through humility, wisdom, and faithful service rather than outward power or status. Joseph exhibits key fruits of the Spirit such as patience, love, self-control, and gentleness, showing us that true godly strength flows from grace-filled character and dependence on God. His example reshapes our understanding of strength in the Christian life—not as self-reliance or pride, but as humble trust in God's wisdom and timing.

Moreover, knowing that God's power is made perfect in weakness encourages us in hard times by reminding us that our vulnerabilities are opportunities for God to display His strength through us. It is in times like these that we most resemble Christ. When we are weak, if we remain humble and open to the Spirit's work, God can use those moments to grow our faith, deepen our character, and witness His glory. Like Joseph, embracing meekness and reliance on God enables us to walk as authentic bearers of His Spirit even in life's most challenging seasons.