

I want to tell you about a man named Denny Brauer. Denny was a bricklayer and made a good living at it. But he had another passion - **Bass Fishing**. One day in 1980 Denny came home and revealed the deepest desire of his heart, which no doubt shocked his wife to the core. He wanted to move from their home in Nebraska to a place where he could fish - full time - **as a professional bass fisherman**.

I guess you can imagine Denny's wife thought of this. Jack McCallum in Sports Illustrated captured their prospects nicely when he wrote, *"Deciding that you wanted to make a livable wage as a bass angler in 1980 wasn't quite as risky as deciding that you wanted to make a livable wage as, say, a marble shooter, but it was close."*

But amazingly enough, Denny's wife said, "Well, let's go **GET THE CATCH OF THE DAY!**" And they packed up and moved to where the fish were. It turned out to be the right move, too. Two decades later, Denny Brauer has a Saturday morning fishing show on ESPN called, **"The Bass Class with Denny Brauer,"** as well as two instructional videos and a couple of books. He has endorsement deals with so many companies that when he goes to a tournament to fish, he is festooned with so many logos that he looks like a NASCAR driver. *Brauer is doing quite well since he made the transition from bricklayer to fisherman* - In one recent year, he earned almost \$800,000 in prize money and endorsements. **Denny Brauer is a man who made a gutsy, courageous career change to pursue his passion of "CATCHING FISH" –some would say that each day, Denny is enjoying the "Catch of the Day."**

Our scripture tells the story of four fishermen who themselves made a dramatic career change, so to speak, **trading one kind of fishing for another**. After Jesus of Nazareth came walking by the Sea of Galilee one day, Peter, Andrew, James and John, **WERE PURSADED TO "GO FISHING" WITH HIM....and because of them...Jesus pulled in, "THE BEST CATCH OF THE DAY."**

Yes, Jesus pulled in the "Catch of the Day" when he hauled in Peter, James, John and Andrew that day by the Sea of Galilee. It might not have been his biggest catch, *but it certainly was the "Catch of the Day"* and each of these disciples would have their own times when they too, would make a **"Catch of the Day"**

***Let's look at the passage: **Matthew 4:18-23**

As we found out last week, Andrew had already become a fisher of people. **YES, Andrew had moved from a SEEKER to a POINTER and introduced his brother Simon to Jesus.** That must have been some special kind of encounter. Jesus must have really been struck by something in Simon's character that set him apart. **Jesus even gave him a new name. Peter, the Rock.**

But Peter didn't immediately jump onboard. Or maybe he did and didn't really know what that meant until Jesus came walking along the beach that day and said, ***"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people."***

These disciples might have been the "Catch of the Day" but they caught something too. That day those four men and all the others who would follow later, **experienced their "CATCH OF THE DAY."**

WHAT WAS THEIR "CATCH OF THE DAY?" The Dream, the Vision and Mission of Jesus.

SO, What Was Jesus Dream? Jim Egan worked at the West Coast Computer Fair in 1977. His job was to help customers decorate their booths. Industry shows are the cheapest way to reach customers within the trade, but some undercapitalized entrepreneurs hardly have enough to rent a booth, let alone pay for the decorations. Egan was approached by a couple of long-haired kids who wanted some chrome displays to make their booth "look flashy." Egan said he had the displays, but they were for rent. The kids said they were short of cash, but perhaps Egan might

like some stock in their new company. Egan, who had seen them come and go in his twenty years in the business, said he would accept only hard cash. **So, Steve Wozniak and Steven Jobs did without the chrome, fixed up their booth, and kept the stock in Apple Computer to themselves.** Presumably, Jim Egan is still decorating booths for hard cash.

But I'll bet, Jim Egan wishes he had caught onto the dream of those two young men.

Just like the man at IBM told a young Bill Gates, *"Why would anyone want to have a computer on their desk?"*

We have to have dreams don't we. We may even need dreams before we can catch a Vision. WHY?
Because our VISION is made out of or is the merger of many DREAMS. Dreams are sort of strange and nondescript thoughts and ideas, but a VISION gives those thoughts and ideas solidity and strength.

Ask Walt Disney. He began with ideas, that led to dreams which he put on paper that gave him a vision... and most of you know the rest. "You have to dream first. Walt Disney said, If you can dream it, you can do it."

I agree, it's just that some dreams take longer to do or act on. And some dreams are dependent upon others.

Israel dreamed of the coming of the Messiah. When he showed up, many of them thought it was too good to be true and wouldn't accept Jesus for who He was.

But there were those, like Peter, James, John and Andrew, who knew immediately who he was and dropped everything to follow. ***The dream not only lived in them but the dream had become alive in them and began to UNITE into a VISION.***

BUT JESUS HAD A "VISION" TOO... *Jesus' VISION was of a world where there would be no more guilt or sin.* Where the virtues of honesty, truthfulness, trust and care triumphed. A world where the love for God and love for "one another" would rule everything we do.

That type of world, Jesus called the Kingdom of God. A Kingdom not of power and might. A kingdom which doesn't have any physical borders, but a kingdom that lives in the heart of humans. A kingdom with a King who moves us to do what is right. A kingdom in which the King moves us to love one another because we have experienced His love for us. A Kingdom filled with people whose purpose is to honor God with their lives. **That's the Vision Jesus had. And that's the Vision that captured Peter, James, John and Andrew.**

I wonder what that Vision would look like. J. Edwin Orr, a former professor of Church history at Fuller Theological Seminary, described the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the Welsh Revivals of the 19th century. As people craved the Holy Spirit they did all they could to confess their wrongdoings and to make restitution.

Believe it or not this created severe problems for the shipyards along the coast of Wales. Over the years workers stole all kinds of things. Everything from wheelbarrows to hammers had been "borrowed" or stolen. However, as the people sought to get right with God they started to return what they had taken. The result was that it wasn't long before the shipyards of Wales were overwhelmed with returned property. There were such huge piles of returned tools that several of the shipyards had to put up signs that read, **"IF YOU HAVE BEEN LED BY GOD TO RETURN WHAT YOU HAVE STOLEN, PLEASE KNOW THAT THE MANAGEMENT FORGIVES YOU AND WISHES YOU TO KEEP WHAT YOU HAVE TAKEN."**

That's the Vision Jesus had. And that's the Vision that captured Peter, James, John and Andrew. Their Dream had UNITED into a Vision and that Vision became their Mission.

So, What Was Jesus “MISSION” For US?

A Mission that Jesus confirmed at His ascension was... ***"Go, into all the world making disciples of every nation, baptizing in the name of the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit."*** And that's what they did. That was their Mission. That's what their followers did. That's what the followers of the followers did all the way down to us. That's what we're called to do, as well. **And when WE have the Dream and the Vision, the Mission isn't hard at all, even in the worst of circumstances.**

When the missionaries were forced to leave China in 1951, and Christians began to be oppressed by the Communist government, the future of the church looked bleak. In the preceding decades of western mission work, many of the approximately one million Protestant Christians had become "rice Christians," accepting the forms of Christianity more for personal gain than genuine conviction. When the pressures began to mount, they soon fell away. With the coming of the Cultural Revolution and the suppression of all institutional religious functions, it seemed that Christianity in China was doomed. Yet during this period of terrible persecution, committed Christians, not afraid to defy the principalities of this world, began to meet secretly in their homes. When regular church services were outlawed during the "Great Leap Forward," these informal cottage meetings became the primary structure of the church. As their pastors were killed or imprisoned, members of the laity came forward to provide leadership. Women especially took an active role. When their houses were searched by the Red Guards, and all Bibles and Christian literature destroyed, the people drew upon their memory of Scripture and shared experiences to build up one another in the faith. As the Christians in these small groups displayed extraordinary courage, zeal, and love, the gospel spread to their neighbors and fellow workers. Freely they gave their own food and clothing to the needy and poor, especially to those whose breadwinners had been killed or thrown into prison. They visited the bereaved and prayed for the sick, often seeing God miraculously heal. Typical of this, was the way some believers cared for a Communist school teacher who became seriously ill. So genuine was their compassion, that upon her recovery she, too, accepted Christ, only to suffer public ridicule on return to her work. **Required to appear at a public "confession" meeting, she protested: "When I was ill, you did nothing to help me. It was the Christians who did everything!" That fact shamed her critics into silence.** Today the Church in Communist China is alive and growing because individual

Christians continue to do their part to be **“FISHERS OF PEOPLE.”** To share with others, JESUS HIMSELF. To be part of the **“MISSION,”** and share the **“ACTIVE VISION”** of the LORD.

They brought in, “THE CATCH OF THE DAY,” so that they could get Caught up in his Dream, his Vision, and his Mission, and hopefully make it their own.

THIS MAY SOUND LIKE A “FISH STORY,” too you, but it is a story that journalists have verified. Jim Cone was boating on the Intra-coastal Waterway in North Carolina when a Mackerel jumped into his boat. It grazed his daughter's head and landed in his wife's lap. Other than a few small cuts, there were no injuries except to the fish. **Most fishermen do not expect the catch to come to them. They realize that they must go out to where the fish are.**

You and I go out to where the fish are every day. But the question is, **are we living in such a way that people think the faith we exhibit could be the “Catch of the Day” for them?**

Are we living a life that is filled with the Dream and the Vision that leads to the Mission of Christ? Ask Yourself, ARE YOU? And if so.... **Are you ready to GO FISHING? Are you ready to live the life which proclaims Jesus as the “Catch of the Day?”** REMEMBER, there will be times it will seem risky, but if we at least try, the results could promise you and me the **“BEST CATCH OF THE DAY—JESUS HIMSELF, RIGHT IN OUR LAPS!”** Amen.