

There's An App For That
Week 4 "Vision"

Craig said that VISION is a "purpose ... a direction for your life."

Who do you know that has a VISION for their life?

Here is what Gail Smith posted on Facebook about her son Kyle this week...

-He has just graduated from the Air Force Academy...

"Proud of Kyle's accomplishments but he did it for a reason bigger than him. He believes in his country-the sacrifice it takes to protect it. As proud as I am of his accomplishments, I'm more proud of his selflessness to commit his life for his beliefs."

See ... in my opinion, vision is recognizing something bigger than yourself ... something moral, something honorable, sometimes even risky ... and choosing to pursue it for the greater good.

With today being a part of Memorial Day weekend ... I have selected a video that honors our men of the armed forces while at the same time ... painting a picture of vision. I think you will enjoy it.

Show VIDEO

Any tears? Let me tell you, I had them streaming down my cheek.

And I do want to say "Thank you" to those in THIS audience today who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

But ... I also want to ask after watching that video, for those of us who have never served in the Military ... what do WE have that is worth fighting for? What is the vision that drives us?

My goal today ... is to get you to wrestle with THAT question. “What is the vision that drives me?”

The warm weather is going to arrive EVENTUALLY to NW INDIANA and stay for awhile. But until that time, let me prep you by showing you some beautiful images of my home state of **North Carolina**, where it’s already been warm for quite a while.

These next images are of the **Outer Banks**. The Outer Banks is essentially an island barrier for the state. It’s not very commercialized, just lot’s and lots of natural beach beauty.

All up and down the Outer Banks Coast line you will find old, historical lighthouses. They are actually very beautiful and a reminder of years gone by.

Stories are told that along side most of these lights houses were **Life Saving Stations**. You need to know that from Nantucket, Massachusetts all the way to the southern tip of the Outer Banks it was known as “The Graveyard for Ships.”

In the early 1800’s a group of compassionate and courageous volunteers formed these little groups known as “Life Saving Stations”. They were a kind of rescue society. These brave men would gather as volunteers, almost like our volunteer fire departments.

They dotted the coast line up and down the coast 5 to 10 miles apart.

And these men would go out in the ocean, risking their lives to go out and try to save those who had been shipped wrecked, and were caught in the dangerous rip tides.

Not long after the “Life Saving Stations” were established ANOTHER kind of group begin to establish itself up and down the coast.

Clubs begin to be formed that were known as **“Yacht Clubs”**. These Yacht Clubs had a totally different purpose than the Rescue Societies.

The Yacht Clubs' purpose was to meet together and talk about the pleasure and the comfort of sailing ... they would eat food together ... it was much like a country club kind of setting. And it became a very private kind of thing, where only those who could afford membership could come.

One of those has a far nobler vision than the other. Nothing wrong with a country club ... it's just not very visionary. But to risk your life to rescue lives ... that's pretty awesome!

Way back before any Life Saving Stations OR Yacht Clubs there was something formed that we know as the Church of Jesus Christ. The "ecclesia" the "Called Out Ones". And as this little band of men and women began to form these SPIRITUAL LIFE SAVING STATIONS ... they begin to spring up all over the world.

And they reached out to men and women who were drowning in dangerous waters of life. They brought them in to a safe place where they found hope, and they found rescue and comfort and they found purpose for their life.

But over the years these spiritual life saving stations, tragically through the centuries begin to turn into Yacht Clubs. Yeah, they lost their outward focus ... not all of them ... but many of them. They lost their mission their vision of rescuing ... and they begin to focus on their own needs, their own wants, and their own comforts.

And that is not what God has called the church to be. It's definitely not what God is calling First Christian Church of Dyer to be. Friends, God has called us to be a LIFE SAVING STATION, to be a Rescue Society.

The motto of a Life Saving Station was ... "We will always go out, but we might not come back in." They were willing to risk their lives for the sake of other people.

I think this is God's desire for His church. Just look around ... look around your school, look around your workplace, look around your neighborhood ... there are all kinds of people caught in the riptides of life. They are spiritually drowning. There are all kinds of people who need a hand, all kinds of people; who need to

be pulled out of the wreckage ... and that is what God is still calling the church to do.

May it be said of us ... “That they will always go out ... even though they might not come back in.”

There is a group of nine of us who feel like we have been “called out” to go to the **Dominican Republic**. Through a connection that I have in a previous ministry, we have found a group of Dominicans and Haitians ... who have NOTHING. Our small goal this year is to build a home that may house 2 – 4 families. Without us GOING ... without us caring, it would not happen.

Nine of us ready to GO OUT ... but it will not happen without YOUR support. We still need a couple of thousand dollars to make our goals of the home, and building them pews for their church a reality. If you have helped us financially ... we cannot say THANK YOU enough. If you haven’t helped out yet, we just want you to know that there is still a big need.

Last week we were in the Sermon on the Mount. This week, we are going to conclude this series by a return visit to Matthew, and his recording of the Sermon on the Mount.

Now ... if you have a Bible with various colored print, I am sure that you know that the RED PRINT means Jesus spoke those words, and if the print is black ... it means someone else is speaking.

Let’s look at **Matthew 7:28-29 (NLT)**

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,²⁹ for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law.

Black print ... Matthew is describing what happened when Jesus finished teaching.

Jesus amazed the crowd! How? He taught with real authority.

What does THAT mean?

Well ... Let's look at how the Message translation puts it ... I think it will give us some clarity on what it means to teach with authority.

Matthew 7:28-29 (MSG)

When Jesus concluded his address, the crowd burst into applause. They had never heard teaching like this. It was apparent that he was living everything he was saying—quite a contrast to their religion teachers! This was the best teaching they had ever heard.

What made it different? He was LIVING what He was teaching!

Matthew wanted us to follow in Jesus' footsteps. He wanted us to live out Jesus' teachings too.

In fact, that is what Matthew had just written before this section. RED LETTERS.

Matthew 7:24-26 (NIV)

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

What is Jesus saying? DO what I've said and be smart. Go do something else and be foolish.

I think one thing we can take from this is to spend some time in the teachings of Jesus ... spend some time in the RED LETTERS ... AND THEN try to apply them to our lives.

In Jesus' little story here, the storms came to both men. The storms came to the guy who listened and applied the words ... and the storms came to the guy who listened and did NOT apply the words.

What was the difference in outcome? One man stood strong, and one man is going to go kaplat!

You could look at this text and surmise ... "Storms are going to come my way ... I better know what kind of foundation I am standing on ... or what am I living for"

Jesus had some other similar words on this subject ...

John 15:4-5 (NLT)

⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

⁵ "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

This is a part of the vision that Jesus wants to give us ... REMAIN in me, [find me, believe me, live for me] and you will produce MUCH fruit. What does that mean? A big part of my life vision should be finding Jesus, believing Jesus ... and then living for Jesus. But it grows from there. If I am where I am supposed to be with Jesus ... my life is going to produce fruit ... I am going to share what I have ... and it is going to impact other lives.

There are people hurting, there are people struggling all around us ... they are drowning right in front of us ... is this worth risking our lives for? Is there anything that we have to offer? Are WE a rescue society or not?

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens (come to me all those who are drowning in life), and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Rescue IS available!) ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

Yoke = Jesus' teachings, His way of life. He's telling us ... it is the best way to live ... and it is not a burden, no it's light. YOU can do this! ... that's what He is saying.

Conclusion: (Dean Trune Blog)

My OPO

Life flies by us. Many of us experience days at the speed of sound. The urgent shouts at us and the distractions beckon us. On the spectrum of life, we range from workaholics to being spiritual lazy. For many, life is a blur with not much to show for it at the end of the week, month, or year. It would be great if productivity and effectiveness increased directly with our speed of life. It doesn't. In fact, they seem to move inversely with our NASCAR lifestyles. It takes natural disasters, funerals, and sickness to slow us down, at least temporarily.

The mindset of OPO brings life into focus and a "sorting out" of what's really important. Without it, I am confused and with it, I am intentional. OPO? It stands for "***one primary objective***". When I open my eyes in the morning, I have an OPO for the day that lies ahead. I normally have a ***bazillion secondary objectives*** (BSO's) but I have only OPO. The magnitude and urgency of my BSO's often overwhelm and eliminate my OPO.

My OPO is to spend quality time with God. It usually includes reading from His Word, talking to Him, and listening to Him. It doesn't have to be formal, long, or at a particular time of the day. It just needs to happen. It offers a foundation for me to live in obedience, faithfulness, and boldness. His wisdom, power, and love exude from the life where OPO's are reached regularly.

There are two kinds of BSO's: necessary and unnecessary.

Necessary BSO's would include:

family

work/ministry

eating

parenting

school

etc.

Unnecessary BSO's would include:

entertainment

sports

computer time

becoming successful at anything unimportant

etc.

If our unnecessary BSO's are eliminating our OPO, then we must re-evaluate our objectives and elevate the importance of our OPO.

Jesus said in **Matthew 6:32-33**

³² These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

Are ready to seek God above everything else? Are you ready to live righteously?

That's our part. That is visionary living ...

Around here we say it this way ...

We love God

We love others

We follow Jesus.