

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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Then God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens." (Genesis 1:20)

If you could be a bird, what kind of bird would you be? Would you be a hummingbird, unique in your design and flying ability so as to hover and change direction at warp speed? Or are you more inclined to have a desire to soar like an eagle, so high above the earth that you truly get the bird's eye view of everything below? Or maybe you are into the brightness of the blue bird, which seems to be carrying the sky upon his back, as one old song says. You probably wouldn't choose to be a buzzard, feeding on stinking carrion as a daily lunch special. Just a side note, I wonder what buzzards ate for breakfast before the introduction of sin and death into the world? I would choose to be a pelican. Let me tell you why.

While on a recent getaway to the Outer Banks my wife and I were given the privilege of seeing and doing things for the very first time. During a ferry boat ride on the southern end of the barrier islands we watched a group of pelicans make numerous passes before us as they scanned the water for their food. They would swoop down within inches of the water surface and occasionally one would dip down into the sea and open its mouth to scoop up these living sea creatures. The next day we went to the northern end on a hunt for wild horses. As we rode on the beach, a line of pelicans in formation were on our right flank, between the crashing surf and the Hummer in which we were riding. They seemed to know instinctively when a huge wave was coming in and would swerve and rise above the foam. Then they settled down low again, swooping in and scooping up the food that the Father provides for them, day after day.

Pelicans are fishing machines. Efficient in their design, able to glide on the wind, its beak transforms into a built-in net so none of their catch gets lost. If I was a bird, I would like to be a pelican. This fishing machine fits into my philosophy about fishing which goes like this:

A bad day of fishing is better than a good day of working. But I'm not a pelican...and you're not a bird. So what is our design as human followers of Jesus? What did the Creator have in mind when He made you and me? It has something to do with fishing...Consider these words.

Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. (Mark 1:14-18)

Just as some inner voice compels the pelican to swoop and scoop, so does the Word of God speak to us. Just as surely as Jesus called out to these fishermen, He still calls to us. It may be the natural inclination of pelicans to fish for fish. It's the way they're made. But men have to be taught how to fish for fish. And they also have to be taught how to fish for men. Jesus can make us *become* fishers of men. Some people have told me they don't know what to do and stumble over what to say. The truth may be that they may not *want* to become fishers of men. Desire drives pelicans and men. Do you want to be a fisher of men? How can that happen? We have to become new people to fish for men. The Lord gives us a clue in this passage. We start with the gospel as it comes to us and respond to it. *Repent and believe.* Then tell the story...the Kingdom of God is at hand. The time is now for all to know the King is coming soon. I want to be a fisher of men...the Lord's fishing machine. Soon...and very soon, we are going to see the King.

So let's fish for men till He comes. Working for Jesus is like joining in the joy of fishing!

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam