

A (Veggie) Tale Worth Telling

Phil Vischer, creator of Veggie Tales, returned to **Liberty University** recently to share with students in convocation about how to properly carry burdens after surrendering our dreams to God.

Last October, Vischer talked to students about the rise and fall of his dream and company Big Idea Productions. On Monday he told the second part of his story.

Vischer opened his talk with popular **Veggie Tales** voices, including Bob the Tomato, Archibald Asparagus and Pa Grape.

The success of Veggie Tales is unmatched in the Christian circle. About 50 million Veggie Tales videos have been sold. A CNN poll found that Veggie Tales was among the top 10 watched videos on college campuses and that Veggie Tales videos can be found in one-third of all American households.

Big Idea Productions began with humble beginnings in 1991 and released its first 30-minute program, "Where's God When I'm Scared?," in 1993. Vischer's dream was to tell God's stories by using the media tool of "branding" to communicate it.

His dream became reality and Big Idea went from three to 200 employees; many people called him the next Walt Disney and he contemplated theme parks like Disney World.

Vischer said that while he was at the peak of his career he was living "discouraged and on the edge of burnout." He overworked himself so much that he was hospitalized with a stress-induced heart problem. In 2003 Big Idea Productions went bankrupt and was sold at a public auction.

After losing nearly everything when the company was sold, Vischer began seeking God in this new place in life, reading over Scripture and praying. He had realized that he had valued

his career and God's dream over God himself.

"It's very easy for a dream to become an idol if you think it's something you can't live without," Vischer said.

He said his dream to reach young children with the gospel through Veggie Tales was a burden that he did not know how to carry properly.

"Only one person has lived who could actually save the world, and his name wasn't Phil," Vischer said.

He encouraged students to exchange the "worldly burdens" of expectations, outcomes, ego and burdens that stem from childhood with "Christ's burdens."

He read from Matthew 11:30 which states, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." He explained that Christ's burden for his people is simply obedience to Him, not what they can offer.

Vischer challenged students to seek God and He will carry the "purity of the burdens" he has placed in each person's life.

Since 2003, Vischer has worked on other projects, including Jelly Telly, an online network for children, and has written the book "Me, Myself, and Bob," which he signed after convocation for students. He is also a consultant for Veggie Tales.