

John 1:29-42

### **We Have Found the Messiah!**

To say that Andrew lived in Peter's shadow is an understatement. Peter had the kind of personality that filled up a room when he walked in.

You might love him or hate him, but you couldn't ignore him. He is mentioned over 160 times in the New Testament.

Peter is the first disciple to boldly say to Jesus "You are the Messiah", the Christ, God's Anointed One. Right after that he rebuked Jesus when the Lord told him that he would be crucified in Jerusalem.

Peter was the one who tried to walk on water. He told Jesus he didn't need to wash his feet. And he boasted that he would be with Jesus through thick and thin and then wept after he denied Jesus three times in his hour of need.

When the Holy Spirit came upon him he preached and 3,000 people were baptized. Peter cast a wide shadow.

Andrew was Peter's brother. Andrew is mentioned a total of 12 times in the New Testament.

And 11 of those 12 times, Andrew is literally referred to as "Peter's brother" or he's mentioned in the same verse as Peter.

Maybe you have lived in the shadow of a sibling, a favored son or daughter. Or worked quietly in the trenches only to have a co-worker or committee member bask in the spotlight.

Andrew's whole life may have been overshadowed by his bold and boisterous brother but it was Andrew who brought Peter to Jesus. And bringing Peter to Jesus was as great a service to the church as any person has ever done (William Temple).

John the Baptist was standing around one day with a few of his disciples and he saw Jesus in the distance.

“Look!” he said. “There he is. The Messiah. God has kept his promise. God has revealed to me that the Passover Lamb and the Good Shepherd we’ve been waiting for has come.”

Then two of his disciples go off to follow him. They are no longer content to look at Jesus from a distance. “Where are you staying, Rabbi? Can we come with you?”

Notice how Jesus responds. He doesn’t push them or boast about himself. They’ve just met.

Jesus asks them a question:  
“What are you hoping to find? What are you looking for?  
One of the men who went to spend the day with Jesus was Andrew.

At the end of the day Andrew goes back to the family fishing boat and tells Peter what he has seen and heard:  
“You’re not going to believe this, we have found the Messiah!  
You must come and meet him!”

The movie Jesus of Nazareth, has this scene in it. Peter has just come off his boat after a hard day and night of fishing, with little to show. He’s tired and cranky.

He and Andrew are walking along and Andrew is trying to tell him about the Lord.

Peter says, “I’m trying to scratch out a living here. By the time the stinking Romans and bloodsucking tax collectors are finished taking their cut I’ve hardly got enough to feed my family and you’re off with another one of your holy men. Tell your holy man if he wants to do something useful he can fill up my net with some fish.”

Andrew smiles at his friends and says,  
“You can’t talk to him when he gets like this.”

But he does convince him to come with him and then he comes  
face to face with Jesus,  
who looks into his eyes and soul and says  
“You are to be called Cephas. You will fish for men and women,  
and on your witness I will build my church.”

In the spring of 1992, fourth graders in Portland, Maine,  
were being taught about the ocean and the Gulf Stream  
that flows along the East Coast and then turns towards Europe.

According to a news article, the teacher had the kids put messages  
with their addresses in empty wine bottles,  
and then a fisherman took the twenty-one bottles away from shore  
and threw them into the ocean.

They hoped that some of their bottles might drift to England.

Three months later, two bottles washed up in Canada.  
Two years passed.  
The students heard nothing else and assumed rest of the bottles  
were lost at sea – a failed experiment.

Then one day a student received a surprise letter from a girl in France.  
She found one of their bottles while she was walking with her father  
along the beach.

Our efforts to share our faith can be like tossing a bottle with a message  
into the ocean.  
We share the gospel with other people however we can –  
a piece of writing, a testimony, an invitation to church,  
a prayer with someone in need.

We may not see an immediate response and think maybe our message  
is forgotten, “lost at sea.”  
But years later we learn that the Spirit of God – like the mighty Gulf Stream  
has carried our message to its destination.

Like the saying goes:

“Anyone can count the seeds in an apple,  
only God can count the apples from a seed.”

Statistics show over and over that while things like preaching are important,  
personal sharing of faith and friendship are the primary means  
that people come to church and are brought to Christ.

Not by fancy slogans or glossy brochures.  
Not by committees planning marketing strategy.  
Not by trying to be more relevant or trendy.

But by people, like Andrew, who have found Christ,  
and then tell other people  
what they have seen and heard.  
Simply inviting them, in Jesus’ own words, ‘to come and see’.

I am very grateful for two people who would never consider them  
evangelists yet who played an important role in my life.  
They were to me what Andrew was to Peter.

About twenty years ago, a woman named Sharon lived three or four houses  
down the street from us.  
We had recently moved into our house and during a random conversation  
she had with Stephanie one day she invited Stephanie to church.  
We didn’t go right away but one day we did.  
St. Andrews was the church where I was eventually baptized.

Another evangelist was Max.  
After we attended church for awhile Max called me  
one Saturday morning and asked me if I would help  
with the pancake breakfast the next morning.  
At the time I thought they really needed help with the pancakes.

Maybe they did. But, looking back, I think Max knew the time was right  
to invite me from sitting in the back of the church on Sunday  
mornings to becoming a part of the church.  
It was the first time anyone had ever asked me to get involved.

Jesus calls people like Peter and Paul for very special purposes.

But he also calls people like Andrew and Sharon and Max and us  
every day to be channels of his blessing.

God asks us only to plant seeds and water the seeds and let Him take care  
of the growth.

Like Andrew,  
follow Jesus,  
spend time with him,  
invite other people to come and meet him.

That's the difference between going to church and being the church.