

Bramalea Baptist Church – Pastor Stephen Semple – January 15, 2017

BRINGING PEOPLE TO JESUS

John 1:35-42

FOCUS

What would you say is the KEY to seeing the kingdom of God go forward and grow? You may think of a variety of responses, but essentially the answer is – YOU & I.

You and I, as ordinary yet faithful believers in Jesus Christ, are the KEY to seeing God's kingdom grow. This is exactly what Jesus said on at least 2 occasions as recorded in the Word of God:

Matthew 28:19,20 – *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*

Acts 1:8 – *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

Paul adds these words in 2 Corinthians 5:20:

“We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.”

The apostle Peter too reiterates the command in 1 Peter 3:15:

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

How can the task of making disciples be accomplished? How can we be ambassadors who bring reconciliation to those around us? It can be accomplished as each one of us as ordinary people are faithful in bringing those we know and are in contact with to Jesus.

A few years ago [LifeWay Research](#) conducted a survey of 15,000 adults for the [North American Mission Board](#) to try to determine which approach in getting people into church. The research showed us that best-received means of seeing new people walk into one's church is, well, a personal invitation.

- 67% of Americans say a personal invitation from a family member would be very or somewhat effective in getting them to visit a church.
- 63% of Americans say a personal invitation from a friend or neighbor would be very or somewhat effective in getting them to visit a church.

Church growth experts, Win and Charles Arn, in their research have found that there's one specific reason visitors come to church – what they call the “friendship factor”. They say: *“We've asked more than 50,000 people over the last 10 years why they came to church, and between 75 and 90 percent of respondents say, “I began attending because someone invited me.”*

The Arns did another survey of 14,000 Christians. They found out that between 75-90% credit their Christian faith to a friend or relative. (*Christianity Today*, may 18, 1994)

In other words – most people are brought into the Kingdom of God because you and I have reached out a friend or relative and introduced people to Jesus. You and I as faithful ordinary people, are key to bringing others to Jesus.

This morning I want to look at a Biblical example of someone who did just that. He, as an ordinary person was faithful in being a witness. He is a model for us for bringing people we are in contact with to Jesus. I will be asking you to make an application this morning by thinking about specific people you can influence for Christ. Our example is Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. Our text is John 1:35-42.

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

³⁹ "Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus.

Sometimes we may get the impression that evangelism is done by the "Billy Grahams" of our day, or in churches by the pastor, or those with the gift of evangelistic preaching.

In his book [*Evangelism in the Early Church*](#), historian Michael Green argued that evangelism was the prerogative and duty of every church member. Green argues that *"Christianity was supremely a lay movement, spread by informal missionaries ... the spontaneous outreach of the total Christian community gave immense impetus to the movement from the very outset."*

This is the example Andrew shows us. From this story of Andrew I want to draw out 2 simple principles for our application.

ORDINARY PEOPLE LEAD OTHERS TO CHRIST

Andrew was an average fisherman in Galilee. As a Jew he had been taught about the coming of the Messiah in the synagogue and from the OT writings. One day a prophet appeared on the scene. He was a strange fellow dressed in camel's hair and eating locusts and wild honey. This fellow, John the Baptist, preached a message of repentance in light of the coming Messiah. Andrew began to follow the teachings of John the Baptist. Perhaps he was even baptized by him. Andrew was eagerly waiting for the coming Messiah.

One day John saw Jesus passing by and said to Andrew and others, *"Look, the lamb of God!"* Irresistibly and immediately Andrew and another unnamed disciple began to follow Jesus. They spent the day with him and came to the conclusion that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Messiah. Verse 41 is key. The first thing Andrew did with this new knowledge was to go and tell his brother Simon – *"We have found the Messiah!"*

Andrew was an ordinary fisherman who found Jesus and immediately became an effective witness and evangelist for Christ. Simon or Peter, of course went on to be the dominant disciple of Jesus. Andrew always remained in the background. I don't know if you noticed it or not, but before Simon Peter is even introduced into the narrative of John 1, Andrew is introduced as *"Andrew, Simon Peter's brother"*, in v40. Again in 6:8 Andrew is presented as *"Andrew, Simon*

Peter's brother." The presumption here is John's narrative is that everyone knew who Peter was, and Andrew would only be known by his identification with his more famous brother Peter.

When Andrew was introduced it was always: *"What's your name again? Oh yeh, you're Peter's brother aren't you?"* Maybe some of you can relate to that experience. But the point I want to make is that Andrew was no superstar. He was an ordinary person. Most of us can relate to a person like that.

It is interesting to note that although it was Andrew who was the first disciple of Jesus Christ, he is never mentioned first in the lists of the 12. Peter is always first. Andrew is listed second in Matthew and Luke, and fourth in Mark and Acts. But John wants to point out in his narrative that it was Andrew who was the first disciple and who was even the evangelist to his brother Peter. William Temple says that this was probably *"as great a service to the Church as ever any (person) did"* (Morris – Expository, p49).

Andrew was not a superstar, just an ordinary fisherman, but by his witness to Peter he had a great impact on the kingdom of God didn't he? This has so often been the case down through Christian history.

Annianus of Damascus is not usually a celebrated name in Christian history, yet he is the one who was instrumental in the discipleship of Saul of Tarsus as we read about in Acts 9.

Probably no one here knows of a monk by the name of Erfurt. But he is the one who first taught Martin Luther the doctrine of justification by faith which led to the Reformation and eventually the establishment of evangelical churches like ours.

Or think of the Sunday School teacher who felt led to speak to a young man about his eternal destiny. He was hesitant and not at all sure of what to do or say. But he plucked up the courage and stammered out words that told of the love of Christ. The result was the conversion of Dwight L Moody, the most famous and effective evangelist before Billy Graham.

Maybe we think of ourselves as just an ordinary person, but God can use us for great things. We all have friends, family, co-workers, co-students – people we are in relationship with. We are called to be ambassadors just like Andrew. We are called to introduce those we know to Jesus. We don't know how God may use us, or even how God may use the people we bring to Jesus. And if we don't do our part for the Kingdom – it may not get done by anyone else.

Think back to Peter and the day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus. Peter preached to a huge crowd gathered in Jerusalem that day. Some 3,000 people responded to the invitation to trust in Jesus. Amazing, but it might never have happened if it wasn't for Andrew and his witness.

In God's plan and purposes there is a need for both the *"Andrew's"* and the *"Peter's"* who will be fishers of men. The Peter's can be characterized as the large institutional commercial fishing trawlers. They are out there seeing many people caught in their massive nets for Jesus. But then there are the Andrew's out there – ordinary people – out there with their Wal-mart fishing rod catching people for the kingdom. In God's eyes both are necessary and important. Why? Because both are equally faithful!

FAITHFUL PEOPLE LEAD OTHERS TO CHRIST

It is true that Andrew was not Peter. He did not have the same gifts and personality. But he was effective as a witness for Christ because he was faithful. There are 3 instances in the gospel of John where Andrew is mentioned. In each one he is bringing someone to Christ.

A. Andrew Brought His Brother To Jesus (John 1:41-41)

The first instance is the one we have already been looking at in John 1 where Andrew brought his family member Peter to Christ.

Would you agree with me that it is not always an easy task to witness and win family members to Jesus? Sometimes those closest to us want the least to do with our faith. Even Jesus' family wanted little to do with him and his message before the resurrection. At one point they wanted to have him committed because they thought he was crazy.

In my family and Margo's family only my brother and his wife and their daughter have so far trusted in Christ. My brother and his wife came to know the Lord about 15 years ago now when we invited them to the Billy Graham crusade in Toronto. They were hesitant to come at first, but they did and God has been working in their lives ever since then.

It is not always easy to witness and win family members for Jesus, but we need to be as faithful as we can as his witnesses.

The apostle Paul in Romans 10 implores -

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

B. Andrew Brought A Child To Jesus (John 6:1-15)

The second time we come across Andrew in the gospel of John he is bringing a young boy to Jesus. The passage is John 6:1-15. The scene is just before the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. A great crowd had gathered to see Jesus, but now they were hungry and tired. Jesus asked Philip where they could buy food for the crowd. Philip pulled out his solar calculator and protested that it would take 8 months wages to feed this group. Then Andrew spoke up. He had a boy with him who happened to have a lunch of 5 small loaves of bread and 2 fish.

We don't know exactly what Andrew had in mind, we can only wonder. But he nevertheless brought the boy and his lunch to Jesus. Imagine being that boy as you saw your lunch being miraculously multiplied to feed such a crowd. It would have made a deep impression.

We need people today who also bring boys and girls to Jesus. You never know what kind of miracle God will work as a result of our faithfulness. All those who are involved in Sunday School and children's ministry in our church are doing a significant work. They regularly bring people to Jesus.

C. Andrew Brought Seekers to Jesus (John 12:20-33)

The third record of Andrew in John's gospel we find him bringing a group of Greeks to see Jesus. It was a few days before Jesus' crucifixion. There were many in Jerusalem for the feasts

including, the text of John 12:20-33 tells us, “*certain Greeks*”. They approached Philip first asking if they could see Jesus. Philip didn’t know what to do. Christ’s mission had been to the people of Israel. He wasn’t sure if this would be appropriate. So Philip went to Andrew. Andrew immediately brought these Greeks to see Jesus along with Philip.

We are not told anything more about it. We don’t know how they responded to Jesus. But Andrew was faithful in bringing these outsiders, but seekers to Jesus. That is again a good example for us.

According to Jesus’ commands the church is to be a group of people committed to proclaiming the gospel and bringing others to Jesus. Andrew understood this very well. He was faithful in bringing others to Jesus every time he is mentioned in the gospel of John. If you are a follower of Jesus you too need to be a faithful witness wherever you are and seek to bring family, friends, co-workers, children and outsiders to Jesus. It doesn’t matter who you are, or what gifts or abilities you have – God has appointed you as an ambassador to introduce people to Jesus and bring the message of reconciliation to those God has placed in our path and circle.

CONCLUSION

In your bulletins is a response sheet for this morning. I’ve called it “*Who Can I Be An Andrew To?*” We want to think specifically about who we can seek to influence for Jesus Christ like Andrew. This sheet is similar to the one Billy Graham’s organization uses when a crusade is going to come into town. But at all times we are called to be an Andrew.

There is a need for ordinary Christians to be faithful to the call, commands and commission to bring people to Jesus. There are many people that only you may be able to impact. Perhaps they will never know Jesus without your faithful witness.

I want us to take time right now to list on the sheet 1,2,or 3 people you can begin to pray for and seek to witness to and win for Jesus. Do it now before you leave and forget all about it.

It may also be that you have never personally come to know Jesus. Before you can bring others to Him you need to come to Him yourself first. If that is your desire I want you to take the Welcome sheet in the bulletin and indicate that on it. We would love the opportunity to tell you about what Jesus means to us. Give us that opportunity. Or if you know someone in this church who knows Jesus ask them about their faith. They would be pleased to share it with you.