

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

The Witness of Andrew John 1:35-42

We are constantly bombarded by the goings and comings of various Hollywood celebrities. Hollywood celebrities cannot go out to eat without an entourage of paparazzi following them. They cannot go to a grocery store without people coming up to them and asking them for their autograph. But celebrity is not limited only to the entertainment world. There are Christian celebrities as well, people such as Billy Graham or James Dobson. In the midst of all this fascination with certain well known celebrities we may have a tendency to downplay the strategic role that we can have in impacting this world for Christ.

If we do this, we are making a big mistake. Being obscure does not mean that God cannot strategically use us in a very powerful way to expand His church.

If any of you have any doubts about what I have just shared all we have to do is to read **John 1:35-42**. What does this passage say? "**And again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, (36) and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (37) And the two disciples heard Him speak, and they followed Jesus. (38) And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" And they said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are you staying?" (39) He said to them, "Come, and you will see." They came therefore and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. (40) One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. (41) And He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). (42) He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called 'Cephas'" (which is translated Peter)." These events recorded for us in these few verses will prove themselves particularly significant in the future expansion of the early church. At the heart of these events we see a rather obscure disciple of Christ named Andrew. Was Andrew a high profile personality? Absolutely not! Would he become a high profile individual? No! Not particularly, but even so he played a very important and strategic role in the future expansion of the early church through the events described in **John 1:35-42**.**

What *qualities* in Andrew made it possible for him to play such a strategic role in the explosive growth of the early church? What qualities in Andrew made it possible for him to be a difference maker?

I would hope that as we consider these qualities that it would motivate us to follow in Andrew's footsteps. What is the first quality that we see in Andrew that made it possible for him to play such a strategic role in the explosive growth of the early church?

Andrew actively *pursued* the truth about Jesus (John 1:35-40). Unfortunately most people in America fail to do this. Let me ask you this question, "How many of the people in your neighborhood, in your workplace, at your school have actually considered what the Bible says about Jesus? How many of them have actually sat down and considered seriously whether or not Jesus is in fact the Christ, the Son of the living God who came into this world to take away sin?" I would have to believe that the answer to this question would have to be, not many.

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Most people are not like Andrew. Most people are indifferent about the claims of Jesus, and they display that indifference in one of three ways. First of all, people can display indifference about the claims of Christ by totally ignoring what Jesus said, dismissing out of hand as fiction what the Scriptures teach. These are the people who will not give you the time of day when you attempt to share Christ with them. Secondly people can display indifference about the claims of Christ when they, though intrigued by those claims, are not willing to expend the energy to verify those claims through their own personal study of God's word. It is interesting to them, but not so interesting that changes anything. Their life will go on just as it had before. Thirdly people can display indifference to the claims of Christ when they quickly give mental assent to those claims either out of expediency or respect for a certain authority figure without any energy on their part being expended to confirm or validate the claims concerning Jesus that have been made personally. These are people we would classify as only giving lip service to Christ's claims.

Those who do not actively pursue the truth about Jesus, who have demonstrated indifference about what the Scriptures teach about Jesus, will not very likely ever be strategically used by God to impact this world for Christ. They will not ever be used by God to meet mankind's most deeply rooted and important needs both in time and eternity. But this was not true of Andrew. He actively pursued the truth.

Let us now examine **John 1:35-40** and see if this is not so. How does this section begin? "**Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples.**" The next day means the day after the events spoken of in **John 1:29-34**. The "**next day**" means the day after John the Baptist had identified Jesus as "**the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**"

And what is John the Baptist pictured as doing on this "next day?" He is pictured as standing with two of his disciples, "**Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples.**"

Who are these two disciples who were standing with John Baptist? We know that one of these disciples is Andrew based on **verse 40**. And we have good reason to believe that the other disciple standing with John the Baptist would have been the author of this fourth gospel or in other words the Apostle John who repeatedly refuses to use his name when he interjects himself into the text. Who are the two disciples standing with John the Baptist? The two disciples standing with John the Baptist were Andrew and John.

So what happened "**again**" as these two disciples were standing with John the Baptist? John the Baptist once again identified Jesus as the "**Lamb of God.**" Let us read **John 1:36** "**he (John the Baptist) looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God."** This is the second time on two consecutive days that John the Baptist has identified Jesus as "the Lamb of God." How will his disciples respond to this second pronouncement? The first time that he had pointed to Jesus and declared Him to be the Lamb of God there was no recorded response from those who were with him in **John 1:29-34**. But this certainly is not the case this time.

Let us go on to read **John 1:37**, "**And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.**" When it says that Andrew and John followed Jesus this does *not* mean that they had become His disciples. John the Baptist it would appear from the text never told Andrew and John to follow Jesus. And neither is there any indication that Jesus asked them to follow Him.

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When it says that Andrew and John "followed Jesus" it means that they *literally* followed Him. In light of John the Baptist's mission, which was to prepare people for the coming King or in other words to prepare people for their Messiah and also in light of John the Baptist's recent pronouncement repeated on two consecutive days that Jesus was the Lamb of God, these two disciples of John the Baptist apparently felt compelled to follow or in other words to tail Him.

How close did they get to Jesus? Did they get within 500 yards? Did they get within 100 yards? Did they get within 10 yards? Apparently they got so close to Jesus that Jesus could hear their footsteps. Let us go on and read **verse 38**.

"And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and said to them, "What do you seek? And they said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means teacher), where are you staying?" The verse says that Jesus "turned." Why would He have turned? I believe that we would have to conclude that He heard them following him. I believe that we would have to conclude this based on the fact when Jesus turned He was able to have a normal conversation with them. He did not have to use hand gestures. He did not have to raise His voice. He just simply asked them, in what would appear a very normal voice, **"What do you seek?"**

Notice He does not say, "Whom do you seek?" rather He says, **"What do you seek?"** Were they seeking the removal of sin? Were they seeking the entrance into the kingdom? What were they seeking? This is the probing question that Jesus asked.

How do they respond to Jesus question? Let us continue to read **verse 38. And they said, Rabbi (which means teacher), where are you staying.**" Andrew and John, as somewhat timid but hopeful observers, were unable to candidly respond to Christ's question "What do you seek?" If Andrew and John had answered Jesus question "what do you seek?" candidly, I believe they would have answered, "We seek the *truth*." But they did not answer Him candidly.

They responded by first of all addressing Him as "Rabbi." The word "rabbi" is the customary form of address for disciples speaking to their teacher. The term literally means "great one." Why did John feel the need to explain the term "rabbi?" He explains the term because he was mindful of his non-Jewish audience, which we see he also does in **verses 41 and 42**.

So how did they respond to Jesus question, "What do you seek?" They responded back, **"Rabbi (which means teacher), where are you staying?"**

What do you think they wanted? Do you think they wanted His address or did they want an invitation from Him to come and see where He was staying? I don't believe that there was much doubt about what they wanted. Certainly Jesus knew what they wanted. Look at His response in **verse 39**. Let us read this verse, **"He said to them, "Come and you will see." They came therefore and saw where He was staying;" and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour."**

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What time is John trying to convey when he says it was the tenth hour? Because John is counting hours from midnight like the Romans rather than from sunrise like the Jews the tenth hour means 10:00 AM. This way of counting helps us to understand how the apostle John is able to say that these two disciples stayed with Jesus that "day" rather than saying that these two disciples stayed with Him "that evening."

What a great morning and afternoon that was for Andrew and John. They talked with Jesus for what it would appear to be hours. And it was during this period of time that they found what they had been seeking. Andrew and John during their visit with Jesus found the truth. They confirmed for themselves that Jesus was the *Messiah*.

Andrew had actively pursued the truth and this active pursuit of the truth led him to take ownership of the truth. Andrew and John did not simply assume that Jesus was the Messiah based on the pronouncement by John the Baptist that He was the Lamb of God. They pursued the truth for themselves and made it their own. Hopefully you have done this. Hopefully you have not taken what has been said to you about Christ lightly, Hopefully each of us have pursued the truth about Jesus and confirmed all those things for yourselves personally. This is very important. It is the first step in putting ourselves in a position to be strategically used by God to advance His church.

Those who actively pursue the truth will not only be protected from error but they will be *energized to do things*. And this leads us to the second quality that Andrew possessed that made it possible for him to be strategically used to bring about the initial explosive expansion of the early church. And what is that quality?

Andrew actively sought to *spread* the truth (John 1:40-42). It seems very reasonable that once we have actively pursued the truth and are personally convinced that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and He came to take away the sins of the world that we would want to spread this truth and this is exactly what we see Andrew doing.

Let me read for you **John 1:40, "One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother."** Of course, we are all familiar with Simon Peter. Simon Peter spearheaded the rapid growth of the early church. But what were the events that led up to Peter playing such a strategic role? It began with guess who? It began with Andrew. Let us read **verse 41, "He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ).**

Andrew, before he did anything else wanted to share the truth that he had found with his brother *Simon*. This is the model that we should follow when we are seeking to share Christ. We need to start with those who are closest to us. We should not be looking for a pulpit or a platform to speak from in order to share Christ, we should be looking at our relationships and for the opportunities that are all around us. This is what we should do first. Will we somehow be used to change the world in some dramatic way personally by following this model? There certainly is that possibility. How do we know this? Let me read for you the very next verse.

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John 1:42, "He (Andrew) brought him (Simon) to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is translated Peter)." After Andrew told Simon that he had found the Messiah he took him to see Jesus. I don't think that he had to drag Simon with him. I would imagine that Peter in fact wanted to go but he needed Andrew to show him where Jesus was staying. And as Jesus was looking at Simon, something very significant happened, He gave Simon a new name. And what was that new name? "Cephas," it was like a nickname.

The name "Cephas" was Aramaic for "rock." When Andrew and John were with Jesus there is no record of Jesus giving them new names. But here when Andrew brought his brother to Jesus, he immediately is given a new name. What does Jesus call him? Cephas or in other words "rock."

What is the significance of Jesus giving Peter this name? It seems odd in light of the impulsive, volatile, and unreliable nature of Peter that we see in the gospels. But Jesus is not giving this name to Peter to highlight who he was but who he would *become* in Him. And isn't this exactly what we see later in Peter?

Certainly Peter needed to be a rock on the day of Pentecost when he stood and declared before the Jewish multitudes **"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him (Jesus) both Lord and Christ – this Jesus who you crucified."** Peter acting like a *rock* spearheaded the explosive growth of the early church.

Did Andrew at that moment understand precisely the significance of the words of Christ? Probably not! But there is no way that he failed to understand that something very significant had taken place and he had been a part of it.

CONCLUSION

Look around you this morning. Do you see any celebrities? No! But hopefully what you do see are disciples of Christ, who, if they choose to follow in the footsteps of Andrew are in effect making themselves available for God to strategically use them in the expansion of His church.

God often works that way. Few have ever heard of Edward Kimball. His name is a footnote in the annals of church history. He was a timid soft-spoken Sunday School teacher whose class was one day visited by a young man named D.L Moody. The boy had no knowledge of the Scriptures and was a rather crude personality. But after the class Mr. Kimball felt compelled seek this young man out for the purpose of sharing the claims of Christ. Apparently the only thing he knew about him was where he worked, so that is where Mr. Kimball went.

Let me read for you his personal account of this particular incident, "I decided to speak to Moody about Christ and about his soul. I started down town to Holton's shoe store. When I was nearly there I began to wonder whether I ought to go just then during business hours. I thought maybe my mission might embarrass the boy, that when I left the other clerks might ask who I was, and when they learned might taunt Moody and ask if I was trying to make a good boy out of him. While I was pondering over it all I passed the store without noticing it.

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Then, when I found I had gone by the door I determined to make a dash for it and have it over at once. It was during this encounter in the shoe store that D.L. Moody gave his heart to Christ.

Of course you know that D.L. Moody was used as a great evangelist, both in America and in England. His ministry made a massive impact on both sides of the Atlantic. Tens of thousands testified that they came to Christ because of his ministry. Among Moody's converts were people like C.T. Studd, the great pioneer missionary, and Wilbur Chapman, who himself became a well known evangelist. Moody subsequently founded Moody Bible Institute, where thousands of missionaries, evangelists, and other Christian workers have been trained during the past century and sent out into all the world. All of that began with one obscure Sunday School teacher, who like Andrew, was willing not only to pursue truth but to share truth.

Are you like Andrew, willing to actively *pursue* and *share* the truth about Jesus with those God has brought into your life?