

Trinity Baptist Church
Sunday 15th May 2022. Andy Banks
How Can I Share My Faith?
I Am Andrew Character Study

We're continuing our short series based on the Christian Life and Witness course, and today we're looking at what we can learn from the Apostle Andrew about why and how we can share our faith. But let's read first from John 1:35-42 and 12:20-22.

[Read John 1:35-42; 12:20-22]

1:35*The next day John [the Baptist] was there again with two of his disciples. 36When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, 'Look, the Lamb of God!'*

37When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38Turning round, 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.

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

Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which, when translated, is Peter).

12:20*Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. 21They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. 'Sir,' they said, 'we would like to see Jesus.' 22Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.*

[Pray]

I wonder if anyone knows who Albert McMakin was? I wouldn't be surprised if you don't. For he was just an ordinary farmer in Charlotte, North Carolina in the 1920's. His greatest achievement may have been persuading his young friend, who only grudgingly went to church with his family, to attend a rally at which the fiery evangelist, Mordecai Ham, was speaking. Why might that be his greatest achievement? Because his young friend was Billy Graham. Billy had resisted attending the meetings for several weeks, although God had been working on his heart, stirring his curiosity, such that he was looking for a way to attend without losing face for reversing his opposition. Albert provided that way including inviting him to drive his truck, and at the meeting Billy Graham became a Christian. Few have heard of Albert McMakin. But what a service he did for the Gospel by his quiet, faithful, personal witness to Billy Graham! And the apostle, Andrew, had very similar *characteristics*.

1) Andrew's characteristics

a. Ordinary.

Firstly, he was *ordinary*. He was a fisherman (Matthew 4:18) – not a bad business, but nothing remarkable! Then, he is often referred to with the tagline "Simon Peter's brother" (e.g. John 1:40; 6:8). It's clear who

was the famous one in the family! Yet, he never seems to have resented or become jealous of his brother's pre-eminence – even when Jesus invited his brother and his two fishing associates to special events without inviting him. He was happy to quietly do his bit, out of the limelight. He never wrote any Scripture, and he was never famed as a great preacher or scholar. Fittingly, Dr. Peter Marshall, the wartime pastor of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC, described Andrew as “the saint of the rank and file.”

He was *ordinary*, yet God used him in extraordinary ways. Reliable Christian tradition says that he preached in Scythia, Asia Minor and Greece, and was ultimately crucified for his faith in Achaia in Greece: crucified on a diagonal cross, because he did not consider himself worthy to die in the same way as his Lord Jesus – hence the saltire that became his symbol, as featured on the Scottish flag. Andrew was *ordinary*, but God empowered him to do extraordinary things.

b. Open

Partly, that was because he was *open* to new revelation and understanding about what God was doing in his time. He was a *disciple* of John the Baptist, who came calling people to repent of their sins in preparation for the coming Messiah (John 1:35 & 40). Andrew listened, opened his heart, and responded. Then, when John pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, Andrew was open to this truth – and open to learn more about Jesus (John 1:35-39). We don't hear much about him individually after that, but one of the few other references also sees him keen to learn. In Mark 13, Jesus predicted the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, and Andrew was one of four disciples (with Peter, James and John) who took the time to ask him privately for more information. He was *ordinary*, but he was *open*, eager to learn.

c. Observant

Thirdly, he was *observant*. That was true *spiritually*. From spending just a few hours with Jesus, he observed what many *learned* men failed to understand even years later, declaring to his brother, “We have found the *Messiah!*” (John 1:41). His spiritual eyes were open to see Jesus' greatness and destiny even at that early stage!

But he was also *observant practically*. When Jesus and his disciples were in a remote place surrounded by a hungry crowd well in excess of 5,000, it was Andrew who noticed the small boy who had *some* food, and brought him to Jesus. True, he didn't know how this tiny offering could solve the problem, but he saw that if he brought the boy to Jesus, something amazing might happen (John 6:8-9). Andrew was ordinary, open and observant. I wonder, can you see anything of yourself in his characteristics?

2) Andrew's Conversion

Next, we turn to Andrew's *Conversion* – how did God cause *him* to believe in Jesus as the promised Messiah?

a. God used a respected associate:

Firstly, God used a *respected associate*. Andrew knew and trusted John the Baptist, both as a prophet and teacher, but also, by this stage, as a faithful friend. So, Andrew believed what John said about Jesus. People will listen to our witness if they respect us. And we win their respect by being truthful, consistent,

respectful, good listeners, realistic about ourselves and the Church, yet faithful in sharing the transformation that Jesus brings. People will listen if we witness like that, even if they don't agree with us.

b. God used a redemptive analogy

Secondly, God, through John, used a *redemptive analogy* to bring Andrew to faith. It was an analogy that would have been very familiar to him: "Look, the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36). The day before, John had made a fuller statement, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Every Jew's religious experience involved the slaughter of animals, often lambs, to cover over their sins so that their relationship with God could be maintained. The Lamb's blood was shed in substitution for the person's own blood because God's declared penalty for sin is death. God accepted the Lamb's death in place of the human, and forgave their sin. This was second nature to any Jew. So, John used an analogy they knew: "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" The two big differences were, firstly, that John pointed to a *human*, not an animal; and secondly, therefore, that when Jesus offered his own life in place of ours, his sacrifice didn't just *cover over* our sins, but truly *removed* them from us. It was a powerful redemptive analogy!

c. God used a relational approach:

Lastly, God used a *relational approach*. John spent *time* with Andrew. A Jewish disciple, would literally follow their teacher around, sharing life with them and learning from them along the way. It was relational. That's why we run our family days, and small groups, and YP Fridays – to create opportunities for relationships to grow. Likewise, *Jesus* spent time with Andrew and his friend, ate with them, shared life with them, and taught them. God usually uses existing relationships to bring people into relationship with him. 80% of those who come forward at a Billy Graham Evangelistic Association event are brought by a friend. Alpha is so effective because it is relational. I came to faith through reading Mark's Gospel with my *brother* and going to church with a *friend*. God loves to work relationally.

3) Andrew's Concern: John 1:40-42; 6:8-9; 12:20-22

But, if that is how Andrew was *converted*, what effect did that have on him afterwards? This brings us to Andrew's overriding *concern*, which was to share his new faith and bring others to know Jesus.

a. He brought Simon Peter to Jesus (John 1:40-42)

i. His priority

Notice this was his absolute *priority*: "The *first* thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah.'" Why such urgency? Because he was excited! The Jewish nation had waited expectantly for a millennium and more for their Messiah, their Saviour, to come. Now Andrew had met him! But his urgency was surely also because he loved his brother. They grew up together, they worked together, there was a strong bond between them. He must have known that Peter longed for the Messiah as much as he did. He couldn't keep such good news to himself!

ii. His procedure: Find, tell, bring.

His urgency probably means that he didn't even think about *how* to share the news. But his simple *procedure* was nonetheless a good one. He found, he told, he brought to Jesus. This wasn't accidental – he intentionally went looking for his brother, in order to share this great news with him. Then the attention-grabbing headline just burst out of him: "We have found the Messiah!" He told him what he'd observed, what he'd experienced of Jesus. And then very simply he invited Peter to come and meet Jesus himself.

Andrew only had limited knowledge, but *he* had become convinced by meeting Jesus. So he knew that the most likely way that Peter would become convinced was to meet Jesus. Obviously, today, we can't bring people to physically meet with Jesus. But what can we do? We can invite them to an event where they can encounter Jesus themselves. And / or we can open the Bible with them ourselves and explore the Scriptures that talk about Jesus with them.

b. He brought Greek people to Jesus (John 12:20-22)

i. The foreign dilemma – Would Jesus be interested in Greeks?

But Andrew didn't stop at his brother. He went on inviting people to meet with Jesus throughout his life. One Passover Festival, Philip came to him with a *foreign dilemma*. Some Greeks had come and asked to see Jesus (John 12:20). It seems that Philip asked Andrew about this because he wasn't sure that Jesus would want to bother with non-Jews.

ii. The foremost direction – if in doubt, take them to Jesus.

Andrew's response was to fall back on the *foremost direction* of his thinking and practice thus far: if in doubt, bring them to Jesus and let him decide. That's what he had done with Peter and with the little boy who had the provisions. That's what he should do with these Greeks. In fact, there may not even have been any *doubt* in Andrew's mind. His thought process might have been as simple as, "They need Jesus, they want to see Jesus, let's bring them to Jesus. It doesn't matter who they are."

Conclusion: Lessons from Andrew:

So, what can we learn from Andrew for our own witness? Firstly, we learn that God delights to use ordinary people in extraordinary ways. And we don't have to be the great preacher to make a big difference! Think of the impact that Andrew made in bringing Peter to Jesus. Think of the impact that Albert McMakin made in bringing Billy Graham to Christ. Secondly, part of the secret of Andrew's usefulness was that he was open to learn and intentional in growing in his faith. This kept his witness fresh and sharp. Thirdly, we see the vital importance of relationships for our witness. People *can* come to faith through the witness of a stranger, but they *usually* come through the influence of someone they know. And fourthly, we learn that everyone can minister like Andrew if they are excited about having met Jesus. We can all seek out someone we love, tell them what we know, and invite them to come and hear about Jesus.

On your chair when you came in was an "I am Andrew" card. It suggests four steps we can all follow. Firstly, pray. Write on the card someone who you will commit to pray for every day, asking God to open their heart and to give you opportunities to talk to them about Jesus. Nothing happens in the spiritual realm without prayer. Secondly, share. Spend time with them, share life with them, and as you do share about the God Loves You tour event with them. Thirdly, bring. Invite them to come to the event, meet them at their house, and bring them along. David is trying to organise a bus to transport people from Trinity to the Excel, so you could bring them on that. Or, if you think that might be too intimidating, drive them yourself or go with them on public transport.

Lastly, follow up. Especially if they become a Christian, invite them to our Discovery Courses with you. And, if possible, read the Bible together with them. They will be given a copy of John's Gospel at the event, so that's a good place to start. It's actually easier than we may think to open the Bible with someone who is open to Jesus, and to learn together about him. I ask three questions of any passage: "What does this

show me about Jesus? What does this show me about me? How should I respond to what I've read?" Then simply trust God to speak through his Word. Because he will! Pray, share, bring, follow up. Are you willing to try?

[Pray in groups for the names people have written down]