

Theme: telling others about Jesus. Something that most of us don't find particularly easy to do. So I thought we would see what we could learn from two of the greatest personal evangelists in the Bible, the first is of course Jesus himself and the second is someone to whom, for obvious reasons, I am particularly drawn - and that is Andrew

Andrew was an ordinary fisherman working in partnership with his older and much better known brother Simon in the little fishing village of Bethsaida on the shore of Lake Galilee. He wasn't one of Jesus' special three friends, like James, John and Simon Peter, he never wrote a gospel or epistle, he may have preached a few cracking sermons but they were never recorded for posterity.

Andrew would have been totally amazed to know that 2000 years later people, churches, cathedrals, universities, hospitals, towns would be named after him.

What's more he was to become the saint patron of a strange (some might say very strange!) country that he had never heard of, 1000's of miles to the north-west of his home who proudly flew a blue and white flag and sometimes even painted their faces with an emblem based on the means by which he was to be executed by the Romans. Because Andrew was a quiet hero.

What was it that transformed him from being an ordinary fisherman into such a hero of the Christian church? Above all, he met Jesus.

But as well as that, Andrew was great at bringing people to Jesus:

- *the little boy with the 5 loaves and 2 fish, which led to feeding the 5000*
- *those Greek Jews who wanted to see Jesus*
- *I suspect it was Andrew who right at the beginning in the story we're about to hear said to his friend - "Let's go and see this Jesus that John the Baptist reckons is the Lamb of God". That friend may have been Philip, who often goes around with Andrew and who we know is one of the first to respond to Jesus or it may have been John who wrote this story.*
- *But perhaps most significantly of all, Andrew brought his brother Simon Peter to meet Jesus*

Let's hear now how this happened in **John 1 vv.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 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.

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.*

And he brought him to Jesus. This is what you and I are called to do.

We're told that Jesus had such compassion on people and he saw them as being like *sheep without a shepherd, lost, going astray. If they were left to their own devices they would either starve to death or fall down a cliff, or eat poisonous food or be savaged by a wolf. One way or another they would surely die.* This is why he came, to rescue us from certain death.

And if we are followers of Jesus and have any compassion at all in our hearts then we know that the only hope our friends our family our colleagues have is that they meet with Jesus. And that means that you and I are called like Andrew to bring others to Jesus. Now you and I know this is not easy, in fact it is downright impossible without the grace of God.

There is so much in this story we've just heard, but this morning I want to focus on what we can learn from Jesus and Andrew about bringing people to Jesus. 4 vital principles based on 4 short phrases from the story

1. ***“What do you want?”*** - the words of Jesus to Andrew and the other disciple i.e. *What are you seeking? Longing for?*
 - This was the wonderful thing about Jesus is that he treated everyone he met as an individual of great value. *No –one likes to feel that they are simply a target for your evangelistic fervour or your pet project.* They'll run a mile. But Jesus always paid personal attention - he took the trouble to find out *what someone really wanted e.g the woman at the well – Jesus did not see her as a despised Samaritan or a person of the opposite sex with whom he was not allowed to talk in public. Even though he could see she was an outcast, despised by all the other women in the village and he had insight into her very chequered past, he saw her as a human being created and loved by his heavenly Father and who had desperate needs – and so he strikes up a conversation with her Will you give me something to drink.* Interestingly, when the disciples come back from their shopping trip and see the woman, John comments that none of them asked her *What do you want?*
 - *CAP conference talk: Jesus the master restorer – Because they have such a love for the things they restore they see the value and beauty in something you and I would consider just a heap of junk. For example:*



- *Whereas the restorer/enthusiast would say “My goodness that is a 1926 Dodge Brothers Series 116 Sedan” and see its glorious potential and eventually restore it to this:*



- *What do you want?* = finding out what makes them tick, their needs, desires, hopes, fears.
This can apply even to street evangelism

this leads us on to Jesus's next words:

2. **'Come and see.'**

"Come to my home or where I'm staying, come and spend time with me, let's get to know each other"

The Jesus way means having:

- a willingness to spend time with them, open your home to them
- a willingness to let that person see the real you, as you really are.
We reveal a lot about ourselves in our homes don't we? *People who come to my home will pretty soon discover that I'm a hopeless gardener,
Come into my study and you'll discover that I struggle with tidiness issues
If my wife and children are around you'll discover all sorts of other things about me, because for some reason they don't really see me as the Vicar – I'm a husband, I'm a dad and they treat me accordingly*
- But even if they can't come to your home, *Come and see* means come and see the real me - share something of yourself with them, your hopes, worries, fears, experience, challenges
open your heart to them
And that will mean at the right time being open about your faith, your relationship with Jesus, your involvement with your church, maybe how you came to faith, or how God has answered prayer or maybe even how he has not answered prayer, because it is about being open

This leads us to the next phrase: what Andrew says to his brother Simon

3. **'We have found the Messiah'**

- Now the chances are that if you went to your friend or colleague, and said: *'We've found the Messiah'*, they would think you were completely barmy!
The only reason Andrew said this to his brother Simon, is because he knew that Simon, like him, was desperate to find the Messiah. So really what Andrew was saying to Simon is: *I have found what you are looking for.*
- It's unlikely today that people are looking for Jesus, or if they are looking for Jesus, they don't yet know it.
However, if you have spent time with them and getting to know them then you will know what they really *are* looking for:

and they chances are they are looking for love, meaning and purpose in life, community, forgiveness, maybe even rescue...

And I know and you know that we have found all of that in Jesus.

So that's when you have the chance to tell them.

Michael Green's picture of rowing around an island until you find somewhere you can land your boat. Sometimes there is a huge obvious great wide beach where you can easily land your boat. Other times, it may take a while to find that tiny narrow hidden cove and even have to row around the island several times before you can find it.

This is where Jesus was so brilliant, he met people at their point of need.

He showed them something of God's beautiful kingdom by healing the sick, bringing sight to the blind, restoring the leper, or forgiving the sinner and that became the entry point for their relationship with Jesus.

This is what we're doing through CAP: we're not just dealing with people's money issues; we're showing them something of the Kingdom of God which includes being free of debt, but in the process, we are getting to know the person, their needs and hopes and fears and all the time showing them the love of Christ. And then as God gives us opportunity, we are saying to them, *What you are desperately seeking, we have found in Jesus – He is the Rescuer, the Restorer – the Messiah.*

So this leads us to the final principle:

He brought him to Jesus – Andrew brought his brother Simon Peter to Jesus

- It's really not our job to convert people: that can only be done by Jesus through his Holy Spirit. Our job is to bring people to Jesus.

- How are we going to do that?

Just as master restorers have the right specialist tool for each particular job, so we will need to find the right tool for a particular person at a particular time:

- being open about our own experience of Jesus
- bringing people to church
- sharing with them a Christian book
- reading the Bible with them
- praying with them
- bringing them to Alpha or an outreach event
- street-evangelism: using the *Try praying* booklet
- **PRAYER** *i.e. bringing them to Jesus in our prayers.*

Question: Does anyone know the name of the person who brought Billy Graham to Christ? Probably not! I certainly don't. He was no-one famous, but through that unknown person, hundreds of thousands have come to Christ, through the ministry of Billy Graham.

It was the same with Andrew. As far as we know, he never preached a powerful sermon, but Peter did – certainly on that first day of Pentecost, when thousands came to Christ,.

Andrew never led a famous church, but Peter did.

Andrew was not involved in the momentous step of taking the gospel to the Gentiles, but Peter was.

HOWEVER, it was Andrew who brought Peter to Jesus.

You might feel that you cannot preach, or lead a house-group, let alone a church, or even share the gospel with someone. You might feel that you don't have the right words to say, but at the end of the day, it's not a matter of having the right words, but of having the right heart – like Andrew. And like Andrew, as you get to know that other person, that Jesus loves so much, as you get to know what they are truly seeking, you can say to them *Come and see* and you can bring them to Jesus.