

Come and See
John 1:29-42a
January 15, 2017

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel." Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

In today's world, there are only a few truly famous people. Andy Warhol said that everyone has their 15 minutes of fame, but I don't believe that. This world is made up of billions of people who will never be famous internationally, nationally, or even locally. Most of us probably fit into that category. However, being a "nobody" isn't all bad. Behind every famous person there are "nobodies" who helped to mold that person into whom they turned out to be.

Boston, 1856, a Sunday school teacher, named Edward Kimball, led a young shoe store clerk to faith. That young man, Dwight Moody, became a famous evangelist. In 1879, Moody inspired F. B. Meyer, who began to work hard to reach the lost in England. Meyer influenced Wilbur Chapman, who came to America to evangelize. Chapman witnessed to an ex-baseball player named Billy Sunday. Sunday organized rallies to spread the Gospel message. During one of those rallies, in 1924, a young man named, Billy Graham, came to faith.

The conversion and work of Billy Graham can be traced back to a humble Bostonian Sunday school teacher. In today's Gospel reading, we heard about another "nobody" who invited someone, who was to become very famous, to "come and see."

This unsung Bible hero is Andrew. Andrew is usually referred to as Peter's brother. Andrew is only mentioned 12 times in Scripture. Eight of those 12 times he is simply called Peter's brother. Most times, when he is spoken of, Andrew is mentioned second. This another sign that Andrew wasn't one of the people who get noticed.

When the apostles are listed, Andrew is always in the middle of the list. He wasn't part

of Jesus' inner circle – Peter, James, and John. However, Andrew was one of the first two to follow Jesus. You might think that would gain him some status, but it didn't. And yet, through all this, you never find any reference to Andrew being resentful. He just kept on following Jesus.

All of this is not to say that Andrew never did anything that deserved praise and recognition. Andrew did something truly amazing with his life. He brought people to Jesus. Right from the beginning of his relationship with Jesus, he brought people to Jesus. Let's look at three of these times.

Our reading says: *Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus* (Jn 1:40-42a NIV).

Was Andrew's witness to his brother important? To answer that, you only have to read the story of the first Christian Pentecost: *Those who accepted [Peter's] message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day* (Ac 2:41 NIV). Three thousand people came to faith in Jesus – go Andrew!

Another day, Andrew brought a small boy to Jesus. *When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish."* (Jn 6:5, 8-9 NIV). Andrew brought a boy to Jesus and Jesus used what that boy had to feed and witness to thousands of people – go Andrew!

One more. *Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus."* Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus (Jn 12:20-22 NIV). When those Greeks wanted to meet Jesus and Philip didn't know what to do, he turned to Andrew. Andrew made the connection with Jesus. When those Greeks went home, I'll guarantee you they talked about meeting Jesus. The witness goes on – go Andrew!

I don't know if any of us could carry out evangelism like Peter did, but we can all be like Andrew. Witnessing is a scary thing for some Christians. They don't feel they're qualified to answer hard question. Maybe they don't know their way around the Bible well enough to give them confidence. But that doesn't disqualify them for Andrew-style evangelism. Anyone one can invite a friend, relative, or acquaintance to come to church or Bible study.

If you are someone who has never tried to bring another person to Jesus, or if you have tried and they didn't respond, let me give you some steps for "Andrew-style" evangelism.

The first thing you must do is to have a real desire to see that person saved. You can't be a successful witness for Jesus if you don't have a sincere desire to see the lost come to faith. Evangelism begins with you getting in touch with God's desire to see everyone be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Next, you need to pray for that person. Prayer is a powerful tool. Keep in mind that prayer is about changing you, it's not about changing God. God works through our prayers to change us into the people he wants us to be. Praying for someone who is lost will increase your desire to see that person saved.

One of the easiest forms of evangelism is a person testimony. Sometimes good Lutherans get a little squeamish when they hear the words "personal testimony." But it's really not hard. It's just a matter of telling someone what Jesus has done in your life. After all, who knows more about your life than you?

If you don't feel like a Bible scholar, this step is for you. Invite your lost acquaintance to a place where they will hear the Gospel message; church, Sunday school, home Bible study. You don't need a Master of Divinity degree to invite someone to church.

All evangelism depends of the presence of God's Word. Whether you are actually reading God's Word, putting God's Word into your own words, or sharing how Jesus has changed your life and saved you, God's Word is the vehicle through which the Holy Spirit brings faith to the unbelieving heart.

In his letter to the Roman Christians, Paul explains: *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. 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? Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ* (Ro 10:13-14, 17 NIV).

One more thought on how to be an Andrew in this world. What is the most effective way for the Gospel message to spread?

The Gospel message is best spread on a one-on-one basis. Mass conversions are very rare. The great advances that the church has seen in the past have been the result of one person telling another person.

The Bible has many accounts of one-on-one witnessing that led to faith; God to Abraham, Naomi to Ruth, a servant girl to Naaman, Jesus to Matthew, and, of course, Andrew to Peter.

People come to faith in ones and twos more than any other way. The growth of the church comes from personal contact. The reality of evangelism today is that very few people come to faith in Jesus by way of the "flashy" methods – large revivals, radio broadcasts, and television programs.

Most of the people you see here today are here because someone else's personal witness to them. That witness may have come from a friend, a spouse, a neighbor, or a godly mother or father, but it came on a personal basis.

There is no substitute for personal work. If you know someone who doesn't know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, don't wait for tomorrow. Invite them to church. Don't become discouraged if they turn down your first invitation. Some cold hearts take longer to warm up than others. Give the Holy Spirit multiple opportunities to work.

We are just beginning another new year. We can look back on the past year with regrets of what we could have, or should have done differently. However, we can't go back and change things.

But each day God gives us a chance to start again. Each day is another opportunity to be an Andrew to those around us. We might feel like "nobodies", but we don't know how God will use our witness. Look what God accomplished through F. B. Meyer, Wilbur Chapman, Billy Sunday, and Billy Graham because Edward Kimball invited Dwight Moody to "come and see." Look what God accomplished through Peter because Andrew gave his brother the invitation to "come and see."