

Andrew, the Quiet Connector

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The First Disciples of Jesus John 1:35-41

³⁵ *The next day John (the Baptist) ... was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” ³⁹ He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed (Jesus) was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. ⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah.”*

This is not a flashy passage, like the Cleansing of the Temple, or the birth of Jesus, or David and Goliath, or Noah and the Ark, or the Parable of the Good Samaritan....But it is still one of my very favorite stories in scripture.

It is only in John’s gospel that we learn anything about the apostle Andrew. In Matthew, Mark and Luke, he is just in a list of the 12 disciples, and in virtually every list he is described as “Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother,” even though Andrew was a disciple of Jesus first. In the biblical accounts Simon quickly overshadows Andrew and it is Simon that will be in the inner circle of Jesus’ disciples with James and John. Not Andrew. Andrew seems like kind of an ordinary Joe.

In John’s gospel, we find two other incidents involving Andrew. In chapter 6 Jesus is out in the countryside and huge crowds have followed him out to hear his teaching. And they become hungry. Jesus asks Philip, “How are we going to feed all these people?” Philip replies, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” Then it is Andrew who brings to Jesus the little boy with the five barley loaves and two fish.

Then in the 12th chapter of John we read: ²⁰ *Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks.* ²¹ *They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."* ²² *Philip, (again not knowing what to do) went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. (12:20-22)* It's possible that Andrew and Philip served as translators between Jesus and these Greek inquirers.

So, three incidents concerning Andrew. First, he brought his brother, Simon, to Jesus. With what effect? Simon became a disciple of Jesus and ultimately the undisputed leader of the early church. Then Andrew brought the little kid with the bread and the fish, which enabled the miracle of the Feeding of the 5000. Third, Andrew brought some inquiring Greeks to meet Jesus, and they no doubt returned to their homeland, spreading the teachings of Jesus all the way to Greece.

Andrew brought people to Jesus. Andrew the Connector, the father of networking. What an example for us. To bring people to Jesus.

"Uh, oh, the preacher is going to bring up the dreaded "E" word!"
Evangelism.

Many of us have been the victims of evangelism done badly: the in-your-face confrontation of well-meaning people literally trying to scare the hell out of us.

Thomas Long writes: "'Evangelism' is for many people, frankly, a nose-wrinkling word, a term they hold in approximately the same regard as the phrase 'professional wrestling.' Both are considered to be activities that draw large, uncritical crowds, involve a measure of sham, work on irrational emotions, and could end up hurting somebody." (*Preaching In and Out of Season*, p. 77.)

This morning I'm not asking us to be confrontational. I'm asking us to look to the example of Andrew, the quiet connector.

Do you know anyone who is looking for love in all the wrong places?

How many of you have invited someone to come to church with you in the last year?

I will say for the umpteenth time that our motivation to invite someone to church, whether it's St. Luke's or Oak Grove, is NOT because the church needs more members to pay the bills and do the work. Our motivation is not OUR need; it's THEIR need. There are thousands of spiritually hungry folks in our neighborhood, folks who need what we have—to know Jesus, to have a community where they would be accepted and challenged to grow, where the aged are cared for, where children and youth are valued and affirmed, where we can hear decent preaching most weeks, wonderful music every week...Where we can join in mission, share burdens...make friends, find outlet for our generosity, meet folks from different cultures, use our gifts, develop new skills, ...and change the world

How did you get here? How many of you just looked for a Presbyterian Church in the Yellow Pages? How many found us online? How many of you drove by and saw the Rainbow flag and the electronic sign, and thought, "I need to know more about this place"?

How many of you are here because someone invited you? (About 25 or 30 people raised their hands at the second service.)

Then I invited folks to tell about a recent experience. At the 8:15 service Jacques Chasse' told about meeting Pdon Pinkham at a NAMI march a few months ago...At the 10:45 Pdon gave his version of it. They noted that in the course of marching along together they struck up a conversation. Pdon mentioned he was interested in singing in a choir again and Jacques and Cecelia told him about Oak Grove's wonderful choir. They also told him about the amazing Green Committee and so on. Pdon has jumped into the choir and the Green Committee and is delighted to be a part of the Oak Grove family now. Pdon was so enthusiastic people gave him an ovation.)

Now, I have heard people say, "All of my friends already belong to a church." And it's true that we are not interested in sheep-stealing. Our focus is on folks without a faith home. You may not have any *friends* that are unchurched. But you certainly have some acquaintances without a faith home: your neighbor, the person from your yoga class you've been talking to, that new member of your bridge club, your mail carrier, your mechanic,

your hairdresser...Maybe you know someone in crisis, who has recently gone through a divorce or a death or a job loss...

If your acquaintances think church is boring, bring them next week when we have the salsa band!

Look at the people Andrew brought to Jesus: he brought his brother, someone from his own family; he brought a child, he brought those Greeks, people who were very different from himself.

Whom will we bring? It may be the greatest thing we ever do in our life.

Let me give you a minute to think and pray about that. Ask God for the name of the person God has in mind for you to invite.