

January 20, 2008

Come and See

We all have weaknesses in life. You know the kind I'm, talking about some men just cannot walk by the tool corral at Orchard, Lowe's or Home Depot. Some women can't pass a purse in a display window; some younger males can't drive by an auto mall or a car lot without stopping. While other younger people can't pass up the latest cell phone or ipod. I'm more complex I struggle with tools, i really do, but put me anywhere within 100 yards of any stereo equipment and I'm like iron. Not that I'm strong as steel or saying I'm some sort of superman no I'm like iron drawn to a magnet. When I was in college I used to read Stereo Review and High Fidelity Magazines. I filled out every card that was in those magazines asking for catalogs or product information then it came. What's it? The Stereo Discounters Catalog. Stereo Discounters was a business in Baltimore Maryland that lived up to its name. You could get stereo equipment at a massively reduced price. I got a great system form them but you know what, it didn't stop me there. I ended up ordering a system for my brother, my roommates, the guy across the hall, a professor, my best friend and eventually upon graduation fellow workers at the school I was at, a system for the school, a system for the church, a number of systems for members, one for the organist. I just had to share what I found, it was a great deal. This is exactly what happened to Andrew in our Gospel this morning.

Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. He heard what John had said about Jesus. Look! The Lamb of God. So Andrew immediately followed Jesus and quickly realized Jesus was the Promised Messiah the Christ the one who had been prophesized. He who Abraham, Moses and Elijah longed to see the great Deliverer. What's a person to do with such profound knowledge and insight? Share it, after all, this is much more important than Stereo Discounters. So Andrew went to his brother Simon, also called Peter or Simon- Peter and said, "We have found the Messiah, come and see." Andrew was the first of Jesus' disciples; his desire to share led to Peter, then James and John, soon Phillip and then Nathaniel and the rest of the story that fills the rest of our windows here at the church. So much can be learned from Andrew that first disciple. But first a little background.

He was the son of John or Jonah, according to Matthew 16:17. He was born in Bethsaida, which is a little town on the Sea of Galilee. This is found in John 1:44. Both he and his brother, Simon-Peter, were simple fisherman who lived in the same house and Capernaum, which is found in Mark 1:21 & 29. Both Andrew and Peter left everything they owned to follow Jesus, according to Luke 5:11, Matthew 4:19-20 and Mark 1: 17 & 18. We also know that he was one of the disciples who was very close to Jesus. Usually we hear of Peter, James and John, but Mark 13:3 adds Andrew to that threesome. In John 6:8, it is Andrew who brought the two fish and five loaves to Jesus for the feeding of the 5,000. And in John 12:22, it is Andrew who fixes a little problem. Some Greeks came to see Jesus. They approached Phillip and said, "We want to see Jesus". Phillip evidently didn't know what to do so he went to Andrew. Andrew immediately took them to Jesus. I always like that one he didn't form a committee, seek advice from others; he went straight to the greatest authority on earth. This is what we know about Andrew when we look to the scriptures and in a nutshell when we look at those scriptures we see that Andrew was someone who gets to the task at hand. He doesn't procrastinate. Tradition would back this view up; traditionally Andrew is believed to have taken the Gospel to Asia Minor, focusing on the areas around the Black Sea and what is modern day Russia, Romania and Turkey.

He is considered to be the founder of the Church of Constantinople, which is now known as the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church and has grown to be the second largest Christian church of today behind only the Catholic Church. Andrew eventually was executed for his faith on an X-shaped cross know as a saltier, this was by his request since he did not feel worthy to die the same death as his Lord Jesus. For two days he preached from that cross and stopped only when he was at the point of death. Yes, indeed, Andrew got right to the task at hand. Andrew is a perfect example of a phrase we learned last week; *semper reformandi*.

Semper Reformandi is a phrase that comes out of the Reformation it means always changing or reforming. Andrew went from being a lowly fisherman to the patron saints of Scotland, which know you know why the Scottish national flag is blue with a white X in the middle of it. Also the patron saint of Russia, Sicily, Greece, Romania,

Amalfi, Malta and Prussia. He is also known as the saint of the army rangers, mariners, fishermen, rope makers, singers and performers. I guess that last performance was rather impressive. Wow, what a change from fisherman to all that.

When I think of that and I think of our church and I think of Christians I feel today like I'm back in the gym and getting my team ready for the big game. You've all seen it in the movies or maybe you have experienced it personally. What's that? Well the speech, you know the speech where the coach points out that there is no difference between his players and the players of the other team and he'll tell them something like, "we all put our pants on one leg at a time". It's that speech where they go into this huge arena or go out onto this huge field in a coliseum he tells them that football field is still 100 yards long or that Olympic track is still a quarter mile around, the free throw line is still 15 feet away.

Sometimes when we look at the Bible we tend to take the individuals in the Bible and we tend to elevate them and say I could never be like that but Andrew was a simple human like you and me. Andrew received the gift that God promised through His Son Jesus, a promise that Jesus made to all who believe in him. That gift is the gift of the Holy Spirit which, according to Acts 1: 8, "gives us the power to be witnesses." We all have that same promise and that same gift the difference might be that Andrew didn't do what so many Christians do today. We make excuses for why we can't share the Gospel, for why we can't preach. Andrew didn't make excuses he got to the task at hand and he trusted what Jesus said. He trusted that the Holy Spirit would give him the words to say. He trusted and he invited, Peter, the people of Asia Minor and you and me to come and see, to come and see that Jesus is the Messiah, to come and see that the Holy Spirit who has been promised is given to us and is powerful, to come and see how wonderful being a disciple of Jesus Christ really is.

In our Savior's name, Amen.