

Life of Peter #1 Andrew the brother of Peter
The Life of Peter
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Please turn to John's Gospel, the first chapter of John's Gospel. We are reading together verses 29 through 42. John's Gospel, chapter 1, verses 29 to 42.

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One." 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 around, 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. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

Friends, we have had our September communion and we're nigh on the way unto our new sessions witness and work for the Lord in this place and I want this morning to begin a new series of messages and to take for our series the biography as it is recorded in the New Testament of Simon Peter, one of the chief of the Lord's disciples. I've never preached on the life of Peter before, although I have preached on certain incidences in his

life, but it has been a very thrilling and enjoyable study to look at the life of this Galilean fisherman from the village of Bethesda, and I hope that throughout the coming months, God willing, as we learn about Peter, we will all find that we are blessed by reading and thinking about this man.

In one sense, he's a very popular figure. I think many of us have a great affection for Peter although whether or not affection is because he keeps making mistakes, I don't know. I think that's one of the reasons why I like him. You can always depend on Peter to say the wrong thing, although he sometimes says the right thing.

In a sense, he's very very popular and well-known. In 1886, I think the writer Henry Sienkiewicz wrote a novel, "Quo Vadis," for which he was later awarded a Nobel Prize for Literature, and that novel based on some legends about Peter from the early church, was later turned into a film, then in the late 1940s, Lloyd C. Douglas, an American minister who had achieved a great hit with his novel, "The Robe," wrote a novel about Peter called "Big Fisherman," and Peter has been known, I think, by a lot of people as the big fisherman.

Some people who don't know much about the Bible, at least know that Peter is standing at the Pearly Gates of heaven with a large bunch of keys deciding who to let in and who to keep out. I suppose that's some sort of a garbled idea of a statement in Matthew 16 where Jesus says, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

And yet although he's so popular, in a sense, in another sense he's a very vague, cloudy figure. I think we Protestants tend to be a bit suspicious of Peter because of the absurd claims that are made by Roman Catholicism about this man. They regard him as the first bishop of Rome and all the succeeding bishops as the successors and followers of St. Peter, as they call him although there is no historical biblical evidence whatever for this claim.

Then we evangelicals are very keen on Paul, rightly so. For us, Paul states the Gospel very clearly and biblically and brilliantly. We study Paul but we tend to neglect Peter, and that's a neglect that I would hope that we'd be able to begin to correct in this series. I hope that we'd all understand Peter better, that we'd all understand the Savior better, and that we'd grow to love them both, because Peter is a huge figure. There is no man mentioned so often in the Gospels as the name of Peter, apart from the name of our Lord. Peter's is the next name in frequency. In all the lists of the disciples throughout the Gospels, his name always comes first.

No one in the Gospels speaks so often as Peter. He has more to say than anybody else. No one is addressed more often by Jesus than Peter. The Lord has more to say to Peter than to any other disciple. No disciple is praised so highly by Christ as Peter. And no disciple except Judas is condemned so severely and rebuked so stingingly as Peter.

He's a man of contrasts. He is confused and clear-sighted. He is cowardly and courageous. He is strong and he is weak. He's larger than life in his good qualities, and in his faults.

He was one of the inner three: Peter, James and John. The special friends of Christ.

He was the leader and the spokesman of the apostolic band. On the day of Pentecost, it was Peter who was selected by God to be the preacher on that mighty day when 3,000 people were brought into the church and the Holy Spirit came down from heaven.

It was Peter who was chosen to go to the house of Cornelius, the Gentile, with the key of the kingdom which is the Gospel, and open the door of the kingdom to those Gentiles in that house by the preaching of the word.

Later in his life, we find him as a pastor and the tradition of the church and there would be a statement of Scripture which would support this, would be that he died a martyr.

How much there is to learn from such a man but where do we begin? If we want to begin learning about Simon, where do we begin? I wonder where you would begin. Well, we begin in the shadows. We begin with a figure who stands behind Peter and is completely overshadowed by Peter, his brother Andrew. He's the first disciple mentioned by name in the New Testament and yet he's almost always in the background. The first mention of him in John 1:40 is very very significant. He's introduced to us as, "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother." Do you ever get tired of being known as someone's brother or someone's sister or someone's son or daughter, or for some of us now, someone's parent? It's humiliating, isn't it? Andrew is known as Simon Peter's brother right at the beginning and again in chapter 6, verse 8, we find the same description of Andrew, "Simon Peter's brother."

We know very very little about Andrew. Legends connect him with Asia Minor and with Scotland, of course, but they are only legends. We know little of his later career. There is an early tradition that he was crucified in Greece but we have no idea whether there is any historical value in that or not, or whether it's another legend.

We know a great deal about Peter. We know almost nothing about Andrew, and yet if there had been no Andrew, there would have been no Peter. Humanly speaking, Peter owed everything to his quiet, reserved, almost unknown brother, and if Andrew had been as silent as many believers are today, then humanly speaking I wouldn't be preaching a series on the life of his brother, and I think in honor of Andrew and I think because Peter would have wanted us to begin here, I want to begin our series on Peter not with Peter himself but with Andrew, the brother who led him to the Lord Jesus, to whom he owed his salvation. So we think for a short time this morning about Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

John 1:40-42,

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.

Let's look for a moment at Andrew's motivation, his motivation as a witness. He didn't need to be urged to take up the task of personal evangelism. He didn't need to attend any training course in witnessing. His preparation, his motivation simply sprang from the time that he spent with the Lord Jesus.

He and John were disciples of John the Baptist, probably their brothers also, Peter and James, but we know certainly that Andrew and John were disciples of the Baptist, and John the Baptizer said to them one day as they talked together, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" And Andrew and John followed this Lamb of God, this Jesus, and they spent a whole day with him talking to him and listening to him, and during that day somehow we are not told how, faith was born and developed in Andrew's heart and he believed, "This is the one we have been waiting for. This is the Messiah. This is God's answer, God's Deliverer, God's Savior." He may not have understood much about what that meant at this point, but he knew that here was someone very very special and he was so excited and thrilled by this awareness that he couldn't wait to share that wonderful news with others.

This was his motivation, his enthusiasm for the Jesus whom he had found for himself, his excitement at this wonderful discovery in his own life. It's natural to share good news. If we hear of something even commercially worthwhile, we want to tell it to others. If there's an offer at some shop, a wonderful offer that's only going to last for a time, we tell our friends and our neighbors. "Did you hear about such-and-such? Take advantage of it." We hear of something wonderful happening to a friend, we like to pass it on, it's good news. Here was someone who was so thrilled at having found Christ that he wanted to tell others. He wasn't driven by guilt, he wasn't urged to do it by a preacher, no one said it was his duty to be a personal witness, he wanted to do it. He couldn't help doing it. It was natural to him. This is the best of all motivations for personal witnessing. He had found Christ for himself and he wanted to tell others and if we don't tell others, what does that say about our own relationship with the Lord Jesus? Our excitement at knowing him? Our enthusiasm for his person? Andrew's motivation.

Secondly, let's look for a moment at Andrew's mission field. His mission field. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother. His brother, the human being who was nearest to him in every way, and in that he is our example. Andrew shows us that our mission field begins with our nearest and dearest. For parents, your mission field is your children. That's where it begins. That's where you must devote your whole lives, the focus of your effort, to see that by God's grace your children may be brought into the kingdom. In our families, our first mission field is any member of our family who is not a Christian. Our place of work, our neighborhood. Andrew, the first thing he did was to find his brother. He said to himself, "I must tell Peter. Peter must know this good news. I want him to share it with me."

There is both obligation and opportunity. There is an obligation of Andrew. Who else should he speak to first? There is an obligation on all of us. Who is it our duty to speak to? There are other people that we may have a chance to speak to, but who must we speak to? Who must we speak to? Those who are nearest to us, yet the old proverb says, "The shoemaker's wife is always the worst shod." Her husband's so busy making shoes for other people, he never has time to make shoes for his wife and there are many Christians and they're awfully busy and their eyes are running to and fro throughout the earth and they're interested in all sorts of causes and things, and yet the people beside them, the people under their noses, as it were, the people who are closest to them either by blood or by geography or by circumstance, these people can be overlooked. They are spiritually long sighted, they don't see what's beside them. The question is: who is my brother? Who is your brother? Where is your mission field?

There's not only obligation but there's opportunity. Andrew had a natural link. It was easy to find his brother. It was easy to speak to his brother. He had repeated contact with him. He was ready to listen. Yes, of course, we have to go out and knock on doors, we have to meet strangers, we have to take opportunities, if we can, to speak to them about the Lord Jesus Christ, but you know, most of us have people who we know well and meet often, we don't have to go and knock on their doors, we don't have to try to dream up opportunities, we're brushing up against them all the time in our homes or at work, our contacts with them are natural contacts, they are repeated contacts, we see them not occasionally but again and again and again, and the witness of our lives can be observed by them. Perhaps that's the problem sometimes. Perhaps their lives just don't measure up. Perhaps we're a stumblingblock to them instead of a help to them. But what a tremendous opportunity we have. For every one of you here today, there are people who would listen to you who wouldn't listen to me. There are people who would listen to you who wouldn't come into this building to hear a sermon. And each one of you have many many opportunities constantly before you, a mission field for witness. Andrew thought of the person nearest, "I must tell this person."

Thirdly, let's think of his message, a very simple message, "We have found the Messiah. We have found the Messiah." It's simple. It's attractive. It's very personal. He doesn't argue with Peter. He doesn't condemn or criticize Peter. He doesn't tell Peter that he's all wrong. He simply tells Peter of the one whom he and John had found. "We have found the Messiah."

Andrew didn't know very much yet. I'm sure he didn't know at this time that Jesus was the Son of God. I'm sure that he didn't know that he had existed from all eternity; that he'd come down from heaven. He didn't know at this time that Jesus was going to die on a cross and rise again from the dead. He didn't know that the Gospel was going to be preached throughout all the world. There was so much he didn't know but what he did know, he really believed. He really believed it with all his heart and soul. What he knew was little but he really believed what he knew.

My friend, you may be sitting here today and saying, "I couldn't talk to anybody else about Christianity. I've never read any theology. I'm not a great student. I wouldn't know what to say." Here's a man who said very little but he believed what he said. He believed what he knew. He said, "We've found the Messiah," and by God's blessing, that was all that was necessary. We don't need to know a great deal to witness. We need to believe what we know with all our heart.

One of the most famous evangelists in the 19th century was D. L. Moody. Now there were some things about Moody's message and his methods that certainly were not biblical and, in fact, did some harm, and yet he was a great and godly man whom God used in a wonderful way. It's very interesting to hear how D. L. Moody was converted. He had a Sunday school teacher called Edward Kimble, a very shy and retiring man who found it very difficult to speak to people, and this Sunday school teacher became convinced that he should go and speak to the young man really who was working in a shoe shop. So he went one day at lunch hour and he found him in the back part of the shoe shop wrapping up shoes and Kimble says in his own words, "I went up to him at once, put my hand on his shoulder and laid what I felt was a very weak plea for Christ. I simply told him of Christ's love and of the love Christ wanted in return." It was enough. That was enough. That's all he said. He just said to Moody, "Christ is a loving Savior and he calls you to love him." That was enough.

There's another story in history of a minister who had a very learned and intelligent man in his congregation who was an unbeliever and this minister decided that he was going to do all he could to bring this man, he was a professor at the university, to bring him to faith in Christ, to convert him. So he planned and prepared a whole series of sermons answering every objection. It was a brilliant series and into it he poured all his talent and all his learning and week after week after week, he preached this series of sermons and really it was aimed at that one unbeliever. Perhaps not a very good thing to do but it was aimed at that one unbeliever in the congregation to try to clear up all his difficulties and answer all his questions. One day to his joy, the man came to him and he said, "I have become a Christian. I've trusted Christ as my Savior." And the minister was filled with gratitude and he said, "Look, could you tell me which one of my sermons was it which made the difference, which brought you to faith?" And the intelligent man, the professor said, "Well, it was none. One day we were going out of church and old Mrs. So-and-so tripped on the step and I reached out and caught her by the arm and she looked up at me and she said, 'Sir, do you love Jesus?'" And he said, "It was that that started me thinking and it was that that brought me to faith."

You see, God's ways are not our ways. God can use a very very simple word. In fact, God likes to use people who feel weak and inadequate. God delights. If you're sitting here today and you think, "Well, I haven't very much to offer," you're the very person that God would delight to use. If you're thinking, "Well, I know someone in my family and they're not a Christian but I really wouldn't know what to say," you're the very person that God would love to use because all the glory would be his. They would never be tempted to say, "I was converted because of the cleverness and the brilliance and the arguments of that person." And time and time and time again, God has brought people to faith by

something very simple and all of us, no matter how inadequate we feel, can say what Andrew said, "I have found Christ." We can go to anyone and say, "I have found Christ and I would love for you to find him too." Who knows what God would do with that statement.

John Calvin comments, "Andrew has scarcely one spark," that means he doesn't know very much, "has scarcely one spark, and yet by it, he enlightens his brother. Woe to our apathy," Calvin goes on, "if we more fully enlightened than he do not try to make others partakers of the same grace."

His message. And lastly, Andrew's method. His motivation, his mission field, his message, and his method. It couldn't be simpler: he brought him to Jesus. He brought him to Jesus and it's a fact that every time we meet Andrew in John's Gospel, he is always bringing someone to Jesus. John only mentions Andrew three times individually and every time, he's bringing someone to Jesus. This is the first time, then chapter 6, verse 8 and 9,

8 Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, 9
"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish,

Different context but he's bringing him to Jesus.

And in chapter 12, verses 21 and 22, the Greeks say,

21 ..."Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." 22 Philip went to tell
Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

There's a wonderful consistency here. Andrew's motivation seems to have been this, his method seems to have been this, "I want you to meet my Master. I want you to meet my Master." Whatever the circumstances. Whatever the need. Whatever the situation. "I want you to meet the Lord Jesus."

That's the method. He brought them to Jesus. We have to bring people to the Savior, somehow face-to-face with him. We can't save them. We can pray. We can witness. We can set an example by our lives. We can love them. We can do everything that is mortally possible for them but we cannot arouse one spark of spiritual concern in their hearts. That is the sovereign work of God the Spirit. So in a sense, we can't bring them to Jesus savingly but we can somehow bring them face-to-face with Jesus, with Jesus as he's preached in the church, with Jesus as he's found in the Bible, with Jesus and the fellowship of Christians, but somehow those for whom we are responsible, bring them, confront them with the person of the Savior, that they know it's not about rituals, it's not about laws, it's not about standards of behavior, it's not about parental expectations, it's not about what other people think, it's not about churches, it's about Jesus Christ.

Not many of us may be Peters, but we all may be Andrews and I hope you've that longing in your heart this morning, "God, make me an Andrew. I may never stand up, as it were,

in the day of Pentecost and preach to thousands, I may never hear the words, 'Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah.' I may never lead the church in its deliberations and councils but I can be an Andrew. I can be an Andrew." The Christian church began with one brother witnessing to another.

One closing thought: do you have an Andrew in your own past? Who was your Andrew? Who brought you to the Savior? You should pause a moment and give thanks for them and that we have an opportunity, give thanks to them. Peter will through all eternity. He'll always be grateful his brother Andrew brought him to the Lord.

Let us pray.

Father, as we begin to think of this great servant of yours, Peter, flawed in so many ways yet so greatly blessed and used by you, we thank you for the quiet man about whom we know so little but to whom Peter, humanly speaking, owed all, the man who having come to faith made it his resolve to find his brother and to bring him to Jesus. Father, thank you for Andrew. Thank you that every time we meet him, he's doing this. Thank you that he was content, it seems to be, in Peter's shadow. Thank you for using him. Lord, help us, each one of us now in our hearts to pray that we may be like Andrew and that we may be used to bring someone else to the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, our own memories go back to people who were Andrew to us and we thank you for them and for the blessing which came to us through them. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.