



“Simon Peter’s Brother”

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Do you ever feel insignificant and that what you contribute to Christ doesn’t really matter? Is it frustrating to see others stand in the spotlight, and for their place in the kingdom to seem so much more important than your own? I want us to look at the life of one of the twelve apostles who usually doesn’t receive much attention. There is very little about his life or his work in the ministry of Christ that stands out to most people, but truth be told, he was one of the most effective and consequential associates of the Lord Jesus. I think the common concept of him can be summed up by how the apostle John introduces him to us.

John 1:40 “One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.”

Can you perhaps identify with Andrew here? His name is immediately attached to his more famous and visible brother, Simon Peter. In fact, we’re introduced to him as Simon Peter’s brother before we’re introduced to Simon Peter. Some of us would probably find it hard to play second fiddle to our brother or anyone else for that matter, but Andrew’s life was much more consequential than you might think. And *your* life may be more impactful than you feel it is.

Aside from Jesus, no name is more familiar to readers of the New Testament than the name Peter. He was such an outspoken and gifted man in the Lord’s ministry that he was given a leading role while Christ was on earth and when He established the Church after going back to Heaven. It was Peter who was given *the keys to the kingdom* and first preached to the Jews and then the Gentiles. But Peter had a brother, and three times he is mentioned in John’s gospel. Two of those times, John apparently felt it necessary to remind us that Andrew is Simon Peter’s brother: one being in our text which we just read and the other several chapters later.

John 6:8 “One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him,”

Even the synoptic writers made this near automatic association.

Matthew 4:18 “And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.”

I suspect Andrew heard himself described that way so many times that it almost seemed like part of his name. I think he must've been a gracious and humble man to not have resented that and become bitter and indignant. Many of us would if we were always referred to in that manner. We never read of where Simon was introduced to someone as Andrew's brother; it was always the other way around. Why is this? We can only assume that perhaps Andrew was not as talented as his brother. Perhaps he had a quieter, more shy nature. Perhaps he wasn't a very good public speaker or couldn't express himself very well. Maybe he didn't like to bring attention to himself. If it was that he lacked in talent and ability, he certainly fell behind some of the others as well, for we often read of James and John, *the sons of thunder*, and Peter accompanying Jesus on several important occasions, but Andrew is not mentioned there. He was not in the inner circle of disciples.

One day, when Jesus was in the city of Capernaum, Jairus came to the Lord begging Him to come and heal his dying daughter. Jesus hastened to his house, but permitted no one to go in but Peter, James, and John along with the father and mother of the girl.

Luke 8:51 “When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl.”

That might've stung poor Andrew. If not, what about when Jesus later took Peter, James, and John with Him up into the mountain of transfiguration and permitted them to see that glorious scene?

Mark 9:2-3 “Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.”

Or when Jesus was in His most difficult hour in the Garden of Gethsemane on the eve of His crucifixion when He told Andrew and the others to sit outside while once again, He took Peter, James, and John into that inner sanctum of prayer and devotion?

Mark 14:32-33 “Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed.”

Have you ever thought about how excluded Andrew and the others could've felt? Especially Andrew, for he had been part of these men's lives long before any of them met Jesus. Not only that, but their coming to know Jesus was originally because of Andrew. It was the faith of Andrew that led to Simon following Jesus in the first place. It was because of the curiosity, initiative, and urging of Andrew that Peter ever came to know Jesus. And now, Peter stands in the spotlight, while Andrew will forever be known as Simon Peter's brother.

We don't read of a single sermon that Andrew ever preached. We read of no special place of honor or recognition that he received. In fact, to have been so instrumental in the launching of Christ's ministry, very little is said about him in the gospel records. But have you ever considered that perhaps to be

called “Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother” was more of a credit and a compliment than it was a slight or an insult? For, as important as Peter became to the ministry of Jesus and as powerful a preacher and influential force in Christianity that he was, truth be told, we owe the conversion of Peter to his brother, Andrew. And let us never forget that. That should encourage all of us and teach us some important lessons.

What the gospel writers tell us about Andrew paints a beautiful portrait of a beautiful life. We may not read of any great exploits, no sermons that he preached, no gospels bearing his name as the author. But what we do read is the record of a godly man who committed himself to Jesus and made much more of a difference than it may seem. Andrew was a man of great spiritual interest. He was not part of the elite religious class in Jerusalem. He was a fisherman from Galilee—an ordinary man, just like Peter was before he met Jesus—but he apparently had a keen spiritual interest in life. Even though he was one of the first two disciples of Jesus, he was the disciple of John the Immerser before he became a disciple of Christ.

We don’t first meet Andrew on a boat on Lake Galilee. We don’t meet him on the streets of Capernaum or Bethsaida. We meet him some sixty miles from his home on the other side of the Jordan River where he had listened to John preach. John the baptist was preaching the imminent coming of the Messiah. He was out there stirring up the sin-hardened people by preaching that the Messianic prophecies were about to be fulfilled and the long-awaited kingdom of the Christ was about to appear. Back in Capernaum, the only preaching the others heard was from the cold and formal Pharisees in the synagogue, but John’s preaching was different. It was soul-piercing, convincing, and convicting. It was anticipatory and exciting. With his mind filled with Old Testament prophecy, Andrew was out seeking for their fulfillment and he was looking for the dawn of Israel’s new day. As John preached the coming of the Christ, he moved many of the people to repent. I think that number included Andrew. The very fact that Andrew had gone all the way out into the Jordan wilderness to listen to the preaching of John shows what great interest he had in the things of God and how zealous he was for the real truth of God. He was interested in the things of God. His waiting for the Messiah was not some vague, superstitious thing, like so many others, but was a real and living hope burning in his heart.

So, one day, as John was down there preaching, and Andrew and his companion were listening, Jesus came walking by. John pointed and said, **“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29)**. The record says that the two disciples heard John speak and they followed Jesus. They’d been following John, but they were such careful students of the baptizer that they crossed over the bridge that John was building to Christ Himself. They began to follow Him.

John 1:38-39 “Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), “where are You staying? He said to them, “Come and see.””

With that invitation, they followed the Savior home and dwelt with Him well into the day. Can you imagine the thrill and wonder of that as Jesus, for the very first time, began to explain who He was, showing them the prophecies of scripture and how He fulfilled them? And when they left that intimate meeting with the Lord, Andrew had all the proof that he needed to know that this was the long-awaited Christ and Savior of the world. He hastened home, probably with a spring in his step and his soul ablaze.

John 1:41-42 “He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus

looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone)."

He brought Simon to Jesus, and in that great encounter, Jesus gave Simon a new name and with it, a new life, a new purpose, and a new beginning.

There is another occasion where Andrew was quietly working in the background that led to a great turn of events during Christ's ministry. Andrew does not appear nearly as often as his famous brother Peter, but every time he is mentioned, you'll notice that he is the channel of a great blessing that came about for someone or for many people. His name once again appears in connection with one of the beautiful stories from the ministry of Christ and one of His most famous miracles. Jesus had been healing the sick, moving among the people, and He crossed over the Sea of Galilee with His disciples, followed by the multitudes because they had seen His miracles. Jesus became such a person of interest because of the things He had the power to do that He could hardly get away from the throngs. These people were simply following Him for His miracles, and they followed Him around to the other side of Galilee. The Bible says that Jesus sat down with His disciples in the mountain and looked out over the multitude and knew how hungry they must've been. He turned and asked Philip where they could find enough bread to feed that size of a crowd.

There was no way they could feed such a group of people with their meager resources. But the Bible says that Jesus was just testing Philip and He knew what He was about to do. But somewhere along the way, what I want you to notice is that Andrew had apparently made the acquaintance of a little boy in that crowd. Perhaps while the other disciples had bigger things in mind, here's Andrew taking notice of a little boy carrying his lunch. Maybe he struck up a conversation with him, winning the friendship of that boy. Maybe the kid offered to share his lunch with him.

John 6:8-9 "One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?""

Here again is Andrew, bringing someone to Jesus. He brought a rough, coarse, hotheaded fisherman to Jesus who became the great preacher and apostle, Peter. Now he brings this little boy forward to Jesus with his tiny lunch and Jesus so famously takes the loaves and fish from him and has His disciples make the people sit on the grass. Jesus offered thanks for that little meal and He began to hand out bread and fish to His disciples to give to the multitude. That crowd of thousands of people ate until they were full. Our focus is rightly on the miracle and on Jesus, who worked the miracle, but don't forget Andrew. He, in his quiet, unseen way, was here in the background watching and working. It was thanks to this humble and faithful disciple that one of the greatest miracles of our Lord took place and thousands were fed.

Then we get to the final week, Passion week. Jesus had entered into Jerusalem in His great triumphal entrance, and as usual He is attracting the attention of the crowds. This was the week of the Passover and the city was brimming with people.

John 12:20 "Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast."

There is a great deal of mystery as to who these people were. They could've been Jews who spoke the Greek language, maybe Gentile proselytes. Lightfoot suggests they were simply heathens who had come

to the feast and were in the court of the Gentiles. Whatever the case, they had evidently heard enough or seen enough pertaining to Jesus that they were very interested in Him and they were bold enough to approach the disciples and request a private interview with Him. They approached Philip, perhaps because his was a Greek name, and they thought maybe they might have an inroad with him. But Philip didn't know what to make of their request. So, what do you suppose he did? Turned to big, bold Peter, the leader of the group? Do you suppose he went and consulted with the sons of thunder, James and John, to see what the inner circle thought was best to do? No.

John 12:22 “Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.”

Philip sought out the quiet wisdom of Andrew. Andrew, that good judge of character. Andrew, who was always watching for opportunities to share the Christ with others. As you can imagine, Andrew thought it right to grant these men access to the Master, so they encountered Jesus. Now, we don't know what came out of that meeting. The Bible doesn't tell us. But people who met Jesus never left Him the same. I like to think that perhaps seed was planted that later led to their conversion to Christ. We don't know. All we do know is that Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was very interested in them and like the others before, he brought them to the feet of Jesus.

As I said earlier, it would've been very easy for Andrew to become bitter and indignant over his lowly station in the Lord's ministry. Had it been many of us, we would've felt the sting of exclusion. Perhaps we would've grown discouraged and thought, *Am I no better than that? I've tried so hard to make a difference, but no advancement, recognition, or place in the inner circle? Am I really that insufficient and unable to impress the Master? Am I that lacking in talent and ability that this is all I'm going to get out of all of this?* Or perhaps we might've been hurt and thought, *That brother of mine! After all, I'm the one who brought him to Jesus and look at him now, getting all of the glory and attention and opportunities. I guess that's what I get for introducing him to the Messiah. I should've just kept it to myself.* Or perhaps, we might've protested when Jesus called Peter, James, and John aside and took them up to the mountain top to let them in on that sacred moment when Heaven opened and glory came down. Andrew could've said, *Really, Lord? Don't you remember that I was the first one to follow you? These fellows wouldn't even know you if I hadn't gone to get my brother, and You let THEM go with You and witness this wonderful thing and not me?*

But I don't think that's how Andrew responded. It took great humility for Andrew to play the part that he did in the Lord's work. It took a lowly spirit to be content to stand in the shadow of his brother and the others. Truth be told, people like Andrew are the people the Lord can do the most with. After all, when James and John and their mother Salome were clamoring over who would get to be the greatest in the kingdom, there's Andrew, just patiently and faithfully waiting on the promised kingdom to unfold and play his lowly part in it. While Peter time and again impulsively speaks and acts and has to be reined in and gently rebuked by the Lord and corrected for getting ahead of Him, there's Andrew—faithful, sure, steady, dependable, and quietly working to bring people to Jesus.

Friend, I want to tell you those are my kind of people. Content with where Christ put them. Jesus had His reasons for putting Peter in the spotlight. Jesus had His reasons for surrounding Himself with the three who were closest to Him. And Andrew knew better than to question that. I think Andrew must've just been filled with joy to know the Messiah and overjoyed to serve Him in whatever way the Lord wanted him to serve Him. That's how Christ looks at people in His kingdom today. They let Christ place them wherever He sees fit in His work and they don't seek position, fame, or recognition. Their aim is the glory of Christ. There is reward in that, dear friend. God uses people like that in mighty ways that we

often don't stop to realize, and God honors people like that in a different sense of honor than what we sometimes seek.

The last mention that we have of Andrew is in **the book of Acts** when Jesus was preparing to ascend back to Heaven, His ministry complete. He is mentioned with the other apostles who went and waited in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit and the Kingdom on the Day of Pentecost.

Acts 1:13 “And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James.”

We know all about the Day of Pentecost and the events that transpired. Peter, Andrew's brother, had the starring role among the apostles that day. After all, Jesus had told him in Caesarea Philippi that He would give him the keys to the kingdom, and here it is. It was brave, bold, and now converted Peter who stood with the fire of conviction in his bones and accused the people of crucifying their own Christ. It was Peter who so eloquently convinced them that Jesus was the Son of God and the Savior of the world. It was Peter who spoke the words that brought thousands of people that day to repentance and baptism into the Church of Christ. He preached one of the most famous sermons to ever fall from human lips, aside perhaps from the sermons of the Lord Jesus.

I like to think, as Andrew stood by and watched his brother preach, that where some might've pouted or felt slighted, overshadowed, or jealous, that he perhaps let his mind wander back and remember that day 3 ½ years earlier when he ran so excited to find his brother, Simon, and bring him to Jesus. And look at him now! No matter who you are or what talent you do or don't possess, what opportunities you are or are not given, you can be an Andrew. You can use what you have and what you're given in your own way to bring people to the Christ and affect the eternal destiny of others. There is no greater work to be done. As the old spiritual says, *If you cannot sing like angels, if you cannot preach like Paul, you can tell the love of Jesus, you can say He died for all.*

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