

Andrew: He Brought His Brother to Jesus

[John 1:35-46](#)

Unsung Heroes and Heroines of the Faith

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Who was the Andrew in your life? Who brought you to Jesus? When my parents carried me into the Augustana Lutheran Church at the age of eight months, they were Andrews, bringing me to the Savior through the sacrament of baptism. Years later, Mr. Caswell drove me to Sunday School and Earle Croft taught me when I got there. They were Andrews. Bernie Yorton was my junior high youth advisor and Gordon Wood was the pastor on whose sermons I took notes when I was in high school. They too were Andrews.

Evangelism (and evangelism simply means bringing others to Jesus as Andrew brought Simon to Jesus) is enormously diverse, ranging from parental influence, to a car full of kids on their way to church, to a teacher talking about the Sermon the Mount, to a volleyball game at the beach, even to something as old-fashioned as preaching. Some Christian groups advocate a single approach to evangelism. It may be a tract entitled "The Four Spiritual Laws," or the techniques in a program called "Evangelism Explosion." But today's text contains no fewer than four methods of evangelism. John refers a couple of friends to Jesus: "Here is the Lamb of God" he says, as he points them in Jesus' direction. Andrew shares his personal experience: "We have found the Messiah." Philip quotes the Bible: "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote." Then Philip extends a simple invitation: "Come and see," and that is perhaps the most effective of all evangelistic methods. Because studies show that 80% of people who profess their faith in Jesus and join a local church do so because someone invited them. I'm guessing that the majority of the forty-four persons joining our church today heard about NPC from a friend or colleague. Perhaps the person inviting them didn't know a lot about the Bible, nor could they explain the doctrine of the Trinity. They simply said, "Come and see." Come and hear our choir. Come to the annual women's brunch and hear Kay Coles James. Come and take the Alpha course. Come and enjoy the warmth of a friendly congregation. Come and see! That's evangelism, and that's something every one of us can do. Andrew brought his brother to Jesus; whom will you bring next Sunday?

My childhood experience also taught me that evangelism is invariably centrifugal. It always moves outward, like the ball on the end of the string that I used to whirl around my head. When I let it go it flew outward, propelled by centrifugal force. In the same manner, there are at least five centrifugal episodes in today's text. First, John tells two of his disciples that Jesus is the Lamb of God, and those two move outward from John to Jesus. Andrew is one of them, and after spending a single day with Jesus he moves outward to bring his brother Peter to Jesus. Then, a couple of days later the good news reaches outward to Philip, and Philip goes outward to Nathaniel. This is the gospel's centrifugal force, moving outward from John to Andrew to Peter to Philip to Nathaniel.

And, more recently, from Oscar to Pauline to Tom, and from Tom and Carol to Sharon, Alicia and Tamara, our three daughters, and from Sharon and her late husband Larry to their three children, Kristy, Tom, and Melissa, all of whom have made professions of faith. And the same, I'm confident, will be true of our three youngest grandchildren. Evangelism is centrifugal, which means that the Christian faith will go on and on, ever outward, always expanding, widening, spreading, multiplying.

Or will it? If the future of the Christian faith depended on you, how long would it last? You met Jesus Christ because someone shared their faith with you; has the sharing now reached a dead-end? It's a sobering question because Christianity is always just one generation away from extinction. If every Christian chooses not to share their faith, Jesus will someday join the Druids and the gods of Valhalla as nothing more than a historical curiosity. If all of you elect not to pass on your faith there will be a For Sale sign posted out front in about the year 2075.

But don't bother calling a realtor because there is something compellingly motivational about the Gospel, and the motivation is none other than Jesus Christ. There was something about Jesus that convinced Andrew he was the long-awaited Messiah, something that sent Andrew running to find Simon, to grab him by the lapels and to say, "You've got to meet this man; we have found the Messiah." The author of the Gospel doesn't tell us what that "something" was, but from my own experience I can make a pretty good guess. I learned long ago that there is nothing I can do to make myself acceptable to God. I also learned there is nothing I have to do, because Jesus has already done it. Jesus accepts me, not because I pray and tithe and happen to be a minister, that is to say, not because of who I am or what I do, but because of who he is and what he has done for me. Who is he, and what has he done for us? "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," says John the Baptist. "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," says Simon Peter. John wrote, "We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us."

And I'm here to tell you that there is no sin you will ever commit that you can't share with Jesus because he promised to forgive every shred of it. There is no act so heinous that will make him turn his back on you, for he asked forgiveness, remember, even for those who drove the nails through his hands and feet.

The Bible calls it grace, and grace is nothing more nor less than God's unmerited, undeserved, unlimited, unfailing favor, offered to every living being. The Apostle Paul wrote, "By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast." And Robert Capon writes, "Your life in grace is the life of a crippled person on an escalator: as far as being able to walk upstairs is concerned, you are simply dead; there is nothing for you to do. But then you don't need to do anything, because the divine Floorwalker has kindly put you on the eternally moving staircase of Jesus—and up you go."

If that's true, (and I believe it is!) it's the best news ever published. Let's pass it on, and not just to keep the For Sale sign away from the door. Let's pass it on so many, many more can join us on "the eternally moving staircase of Jesus."

