

Series: Joy in the Journey

Today: Andrew—A Model for Leaders (and the rest of us)

Text: John 1:35-42

**A Sermon preached by the Rev. Randolph T. Riggs, D.Min.**

**Sunday, January 10, 2010**

**First Presbyterian Church of Lancaster, PA**

Today is an important day in the life of our church. Later in our worship service we will set aside a group of people whom we have chosen to be our leaders for the next three years. It is an important day for them, as well. To be elected as an Elder, a Deacon, or a Trustee in the PCUSA is to respond to the call of God in one's life to move from the role as a participant in the life of a church's ministry and accept the responsibility for its leadership; setting its direction, husbanding its resources, and providing for the care of its people. All of us are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ, but not all of us are called to be leaders in the church. So today is special for those who have been chosen, and it is important for us because we have chosen them to guide us in the way of Christ.

Our text for the morning deals with the calling of the first leaders in the church: Andrew and Simon Peter. We know that they are brothers, but in the Gospel accounts, Andrew always seems to play second fiddle to his brother, Simon. Rarely is he mentioned in the New Testament without the post script of his attachment to his brother. He is always called: Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

Simon gets most of the attention of Jesus. Simon is the one whom Jesus gave another name, Peter, which means "rock" in Greek, and Jesus said of Peter that it was on solid faith like his that he would build a church. That may have seemed strange to those who knew the two men. They probably saw Andrew as the one who was more concerned about his faith and his own spiritual growth than Peter. He had left the family business to become a follower of John

the Baptist. He was the one who was the more curious about whom God had chosen as the Messiah who would change forever the relationship we have available to us with the Creator of the universe.

Andrew's journey begins when John the Baptist points to Jesus and says, "*Look, here is the Lamb of God.*" Immediately, he leaves John and begins to follow Jesus. I believe that Andrew's story reveals two things about those who are called to leadership in the church: First and foremost, they need to have a desire to know Jesus. Second, they need to be willing to have their lives transformed by their relationship with Jesus.

### **Desire to Know Jesus**

When Andrew caught up with Jesus after John had said, "*Behold, the Lamb of God,*" I found the question Jesus asked them fascinating. Jesus asks them, "*What are you looking for?*" It is an interesting question, isn't it? Jesus must have known Andrew was looking for something that was missing in his life; something to give his life to; something that would allow him to make a difference in the world.

Or perhaps he was taken by surprise. Perhaps it is simply an awkward moment—kind of like when you get caught staring at someone. Andrew may have simply been trying to cover his embarrassment. So he stutters: "*Uh, uh, where are you staying?*" And isn't it just like Jesus to take us right where we are. We don't have to have the perfect question or the perfect answer in order for him to say, "*Come and see.*" Andrew spent the rest of the day, and by the end of the day he knew he had found what he was looking for. He had found the Messiah, and he knew his life would never be the same.

If you want to know Jesus, you don't have to know what you are looking for, but you do have to be willing to spend time with him. You have to get to know him.

He doesn't need to get to know you. He was there when you were conceived. He has been with you every step along the way of your life. There is nothing you have done that He doesn't know about. There is no success that you have attained in your life that he hasn't been there to celebrate. There is no sin in your life that he hasn't been ready to forgive. He knows you. In the words of the hymn some of us have come to love, *Borning Cry*:

*I was there to hear your borning cry, I'll be there when you are old  
I rejoiced the day you were baptized to see your life unfold.  
I was there when you were but a child, with a faith to suit you well  
I'll be there in case you wander off to find where demons dwell.*

Andrew asked to spend time with Jesus; to get to know him better; and the more he got to know him he came to believe that he was the Messiah, the One God chose to create the bridge all of us need in order to find our way back to God.

Pastor Jack Hayford tells of visiting one of his parishioners with only hours to live. He was not sure what to say, so he asked an open ended question: "Carl, how are you feeling?" Carl was a very experienced and highly respected lighting director at CBS, and Pastor Hayford said he looked at him, his eyes misted slightly, and he said, "Pastor Jack, you know when you're in my business, it's the combination of lights, the skill at blending things together in order to create special effects, that's what this job is about. Well, this morning I woke up and in the quiet of my heart, Jesus spoke to me and he said, 'Carl, how would you like to direct a sunset?'"

Jesus didn't need to spend time with Andrew to know who Andrew was, but Andrew needed to spend time with Jesus to know that he was, indeed, the Messiah, the Chosen One of God. This is where his journey intersects our journey. If we are unwilling to spend time with Jesus, it is unlikely that we will know who he is and the power that he wants to offer us as leaders or as followers of Jesus Christ. So tell me, what does your calendar say about your

relationship with Jesus? Are you spending time with him; getting to know him; allowing him to have influence in your life?

### **Lives Transformed**

Which leads me to my second point: Leaders in this church need to be willing to have their lives continually transformed by their relationship with Jesus. When Andrew spent time with Jesus, he came away certain that Jesus was the Messiah. He changed his direction. He was willing to follow him instead of following John the Baptist. Then he did something that was uncharacteristic for him: he shared the good news with his brother Simon, and he brought Simon to meet Jesus. And when Simon met Jesus, everything changed including his name. He became Peter, and he committed his life to follow Jesus.

John Ortberg, the Pastor of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church has a good illustration about what spiritual transformation is like. He writes: *Spiritual transformation is a long-term endeavor. It involves both God and us. I liken it to crossing an ocean. Some people try, day after day, to be good, to become spiritually mature. That's like taking a rowboat across the ocean. It's exhausting and usually unsuccessful.*

*Others have given up trying and throw themselves entirely on "relying on God's grace." They're like drifters on a raft. They do nothing but hang on and hope God gets them there.*

*Neither trying nor drifting are effective in bringing about spiritual transformation. A better image is the sailboat, which if it moves at all, it's a gift of the wind. We can't control the wind, but a good sailor discerns where the wind is blowing and adjusts the sails accordingly.*

*Working with the Holy Spirit, which Jesus likened to the wind in John 3, means we have a part in discerning the winds, in knowing the direction we need to go, and in training our sails to*

*catch the breezes that God provides. That's true transformation. [Source: John Ortberg, "True (and False) Transformation," Leadership journal (Summer 2002)]*

Karen Watson was a missionary to Iraq who was killed nearly six years ago. She wrote a letter to her pastor giving instructions for her memorial service in the event that she lost her life on her missionary journey. Those final instructions are words for our leaders to live by as they begin or continue their service:

“In regards to any service, keep it small and simple. Yes, simply, just preach the gospel....Be bold and preach the life-saving, life-changing, forever-eternal gospel. Give glory and honor to our God and remember the Missionary Heart:

Care more than some think is wise.  
Risk more than some think is safe.  
Dream more than some think is practical.  
Expect more than some think is possible.

Please remind people that I was called not to comfort or success but to obedience. There is no joy outside of knowing Jesus and serving him. I love you and my church family.” [Source: *"Keep Sending Missionaries," Baptist Press (3-24-04)*]

### **Conclusion**

While I have been speaking to our new officers this morning, I have really been speaking to all of us. Andrew's journey reminds us all that if we really want to know Jesus, we have to be willing to spend time with him, and we have to be willing to allow that relationship to change the way we live our lives. And all of us could stand to remember the missionary heart:

Care more than some think is wise.  
Risk more than some think is safe.  
Dream more than some think is practical.  
Expect more than some think is possible.

May we continue to grow in faith and we consider the journey of Andrew.