

Andrew: The Disciple Who Brought People to Jesus

John 1:40-41; Mark 3:18

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My name is Andrew and I was, or rather **am** a disciple of Jesus who is called the Christos, the Messiah. I am not famous like my brother Simon – you probably know him by another name – a name Jesus gave him one day after asking all of us what people thought of Him and who He was – Peter.

Our family was in the fishing business – quite successful, I might add. The business had been handed down for several generations to our father, Jonas, or John as he was often called, and we were next in line to inherit the business. We had several boats and other partners – like James and John and their Dad, Zebedee. We have worked together all of our adult lives – even as kids. We have been friends forever, it seems, growing up in the fishing business, washing nets, repairing the nets, catching fish, selling them to the families around Galilee and further out. It is hard work, but we didn't mind. Profitable, too. We made a comfortable living as our ancestors did too.

But it could be tricky, too. You never knew when you would have a good night of fishing – or catch nothing – or when a storm would suddenly arise in the middle of the night. It could capsize your boat, or you could lose all the fish you had caught. No, it wasn't an easy way to make a living, but we loved the challenge and the smell of the salt in the air and the pull of the nets when you had a large catch – which was rare, but it **did** happen – twice that I recall, and both times was when Jesus was present.

I have always had a hunger for spiritual things. John and I had heard about a man named John the Baptizer and wondered if he could be the Christ. We left our boats one day and traveled out into the wilderness where we heard the baptizer was preaching.

Repent was his message. He urged **everyone** to repent – whether they were common people, tax collectors, or even Roman soldiers. There were even some from the Council in Jerusalem who went to hear John, and they had the same question that we had: “Are you the Messiah?” Our people had longed for Messiah for hundreds of years. Could this possibly be the one for whom we have waited?

John answered their question and ours as well, as he called himself “the forerunner of Christ”. He said he was just the one who was sent from God to prepare the way for the Messiah. John and I decided to follow this baptizer for a while, to hear what he had to say. We told the baptizer up front that we wanted to meet and follow Messiah – whoever he was. One day as John was speaking, he paused and blurted out, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” That was the day we left John the Baptizer and started to follow Jesus.

“Where do you live,” we asked. “Where are you staying?” His answer surprised us.

He said, “The birds of the air have nests, and the foxes have dens, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” It was late afternoon when we first met Jesus, and we spent that afternoon till evening sitting at his feet, listening to his words and wondering if this **is** the Messiah that our nation has longed for over the years.

Shortly after that we went back to the family businesses – John with his father Zebedee, and I with my father Jonas. We had stayed away as long as we could from the boats and the nets and the fishing. I could hardly wait to talk to Simon, my brother and telling him about meeting Jesus for the first time.

“I really believe that we have found the Messiah, Simon. You have to go with me and meet him. I have never heard a Rabbi speak as Jesus does. He speaks with authority, not like the Scribes and Pharisees. I just know that he must be the one our nation has been waiting for.”

Simon agreed that if Jesus ever came up to Capernaum, he would give him a chance to prove that he was the Messiah.

It wasn't long before Jesus made his way to Capernaum where we lived and worked at the Sea of Galilee. It was morning and after fishing all night and taking our catch to markets around Galilee, we were busy repairing our nets. It was a tedious job, but one that was necessary if we didn't want the fish that we caught to slip back out of the nets. Jesus saw us working hard on the shore with our fathers, Jonas and Zebedee.

It was obvious that all six of us were fishermen. Jesus looked at Simon, John, James, and me and offered us a new job – fishers of men – if we would follow him. I'd already convinced Simon that this was the Messiah, and James must've convinced John too, for all four of us that day left our fathers and became disciples of Jesus. I am sure that our fathers thought we had lost our minds, leaving a thriving business, a business that would become ours when they could no longer handle the work, and follow an itinerate preacher and teacher who didn't even know where he would sleep the next night. But there was something about Jesus that caused all four of us to want to follow him.

The next three or four years were not easy for us. Other men became disciples of Jesus as well, but we were the first ones. The group continued to grow until there were twelve of us who were with Jesus during his ministry on earth.

One day when Jesus was talking just to us twelve, he asked a question, “Who do people say that I am?” We had heard all kinds of discussions among those who heard Jesus speak. It was not hard to guess who most of the people thought he was.

I said, “Some people think you are Elijah.” Another disciple suggested that people thought he might be John the Baptizer come back from the dead, while others thought that maybe he was Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.

And then Jesus looked at the twelve of us and asked us personally, “But who do **you** say that I am?”

Simon, my brother, was not the least bit shy about giving his opinion – about anything! He spoke up and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” That must’ve been the answer Jesus was hoping for. He turned to Simon and said,

“Blessed are you Simon, son of Jonas. No person has revealed this to you, but my Father in Heaven. I am going to give you a new name, Simon. Your name means “**reed**”. I’m going to change it to “**Rock**” – your name from now on will be called Peter.”

I could not imagine Simon being a rock. I would never have given him that name myself, or he might’ve thrown a rock at me. But it was the name Jesus gave him, and the name that would stick with him for the rest of his life. Simon, I mean Peter, became one of the spokesmen for the disciples, and an outstanding leader.

I was more quiet and reserved and did not mind if Peter took the spotlight. I was so glad that I brought him to Jesus, because I knew he would make a great disciple – much more important than I would. I looked up to Peter, not only as a brother, but as a follower and disciple of Jesus Christ.

We traveled all over the area of Galilee and watched Jesus preach, teach, heal the sick, and perform many miracles. As time passed, Jesus’ fame soared. There was a large crowd that found him and wanted to hear him preach. There were people of all ages in that crowd. Some of them traveled a great distance to hear him. It was exciting to see so many following Jesus. But something bothered the disciples – including me. It was getting late in the day, and the people had been with us all day. They would be getting hungry. They had not brought food with them for lunch. I looked around to see if anyone had any food – but the only food I saw in the crowd was the lunch of a little boy whose mother had sent five loaves and two fishes with him.

Some of the disciples told Jesus that we better send the people home before they faint from hunger. Jesus wanted to know why we don’t feed them. Let’s be reasonable. How would we get food out here in this desert area – a wilderness – for there were no places around there to buy bread. And it would take six month’s wages to buy food for that many people. They told him they didn’t have that much money. When they were finished arguing with Jesus, I brought a little boy with his sack lunch to Jesus. I thought, it’s not much, but at least it’s something, **if** that little boy is willing to share his lunch. I wondered how far it would go to feed so many people, The little boy **was** willing to share his lunch if Jesus needed it. The other disciples looked at me as if I had lost my mind. But at least a **few** people could be fed from those little loaves and fishes – perhaps the weakest ones.

Jesus thanked me for bringing the little boy to him and took that small lunch and prayed to God, thanking Him for the bread and fishes and asking God to multiply it to feed the crowd. Then Jesus told us to organize the people in groups of fifty. That meant they were spread out over a large distance. We did as Jesus asked us to, and after the prayer, he gave the bread and fish to us, and invited us to feed the people. I cannot explain what happened that day, I only know that a miracle occurred and five-thousand men, plus women and children all had enough to eat and there were twelve baskets of food left over – all from that little boy's lunch. Each disciple had a basket of food left over after everyone had finished their meal. That little boy took home a basket of food and tried to explain to his mother what had happened to his lunch.

I enjoyed introducing people to Jesus.

Another incident happened later. There were some Greeks who wanted to meet Jesus. We all knew that Jesus was so busy. They had come to Philip and asked him how they could get some time alone with Jesus. Philip came to me and asked what we should do. I said, "Let's just bring them to Jesus, Jesus would want that. And he did. Afterward, I was so glad that I was willing to bring them to Jesus.

After we came to Jerusalem, the tension was so great between Jesus and the religious leaders, that it reached a dangerous point. We didn't want Jesus to go to Jerusalem in the first place. We knew that it wasn't safe for him in that city, but he insisted that Jerusalem was where he needed to go. Well, we weren't going to let him go alone. If they tried to attack Jesus, they would have to go through us first. The first day in Jerusalem Jesus asked for something strange. He asked two of us to go get a donkey that had never been ridden before. He told us the exact spot where the donkey would be and that if the man who owned the donkey wanted to know why we were taking it, we were simply to tell him that the Master had need of his donkey. To our surprise, he readily agreed to our request. We took the donkey to Jesus and he got on the animal and we led him through the streets of Jerusalem. The crowd began to chant, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

Some people laid their coats down for the donkey to walk on. Others waved palm branches and laid them down. It was a day of great celebration.

Little did we know that a few days later, Jesus, our Messiah, would be arrested, tried, and executed on a cross. We were devastated, disoriented, and destroyed. The first day of the week, we gathered – all of us disciples of Jesus, except two – Judas who took his life after betraying Jesus, and Thomas. We were so frightened and disillusioned. Three years of our lives were wasted, it seemed, following Jesus and the dream of a new Kingdom of God – and now he was dead. It didn't seem possible. We all felt like failures – deserting Jesus when he needed us the most, denying him, and betraying him. Why did he have to die. He was so young, so good, so kind – reaching out to the least, the last, and the lost, and now it was all over

Then some women – friends of Jesus – came to where we were huddled together, and announced that the body of Jesus was gone from the tomb where Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea had tenderly laid him. Peter and John ran to the tomb to see for themselves. When they returned, the news was better than we could have imagined. They were babbling on and on about some angel telling them that Jesus was alive. Did they actually **see** him? No, but Mary of Magdala had both seen and touched him.

If only **we** could see him for ourselves so we wouldn't have to take the word of someone else. The door where we were meeting was locked, and we were careful who we allowed inside the room. I know this will seem hard for you to understand, but Jesus came into the room – didn't use the door either – just somehow entered the room and showed us that He was alive. He told us not to be afraid – just as he did the night he was arrested.

A week later Thomas was with us, but he said he would not believe that Jesus was alive unless he saw Jesus for himself, and touched the scars on his body. Jesus again came into the room. He told Thomas to touch the wounds he had received so he would be convinced that he truly **is** alive.

We saw Jesus a number of times after that, but not on a regular basis. So Peter, my brother, spoke up one day and said he was going back to fishing. James, John, and I decided we would go also. We went out on the family boat and fished all night, but we didn't catch a single fish. Then as we were ready to give up, we saw someone the shore calling out to us.

"Have you caught anything?" We told him No. Then he said the strangest thing to us who had been fishing in that Sea of Galilee all of our lives. He suggested that we cast out nets on the other side of the boat. Well, we had nothing to lose, so we did as he had suggested – and we caught so many fish that our nets were starting to break.

Peter knew right away who that must be. He grabbed his tunic, put it on, and jumped out of the boat and swam to shore to meet Jesus.

When Jesus returned to heaven – we watched him as he rose from the ground until the clouds blocked our view – we returned to Jerusalem and after Pentecost, and the Church was established, we disciples decided we had better do what Jesus had asked us to do – go preach the Gospel to all people. I traveled north, above the Caspian Sea as a missionary – just bringing more people to Christ, as I had done with my brother Simon Peter, the lad with five loaves and two fishes, and the Greeks who wanted to meet Jesus.

And so as I close my story tonight, I would ask **you** to do what Jesus asked me to and each of his disciples to do – just bring people to Jesus. Amen.