

The Lives of The Twelve Apostles

“Ordinary People Used In Extraordinary Ways”

Sermon # 1

“Andrew: Bringing Others to Jesus”

John 1:35-42

Tonight we are going to embark on a study of the lives of the twelve apostles. Sometimes in Scripture the Twelve are called “disciples” (*mathes*) which simply means “learners” or “students.” But in reality Jesus had multitudes of disciples but these twelve men were specifically called and chosen as apostles. The word “apostle” (*apostoloi*) simply means “messenger” or “sent one.” A careful study of Scripture shows that this term was always used to refer to these twelve men and their position. No one other than Paul is referred to as an apostle, he was called “an apostle to the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13) and was seen as an apostle “born out of due time.” (1 Cor. 15::8).

The study of these men is particularly fascinating because they were ordinary men just like us. They were approachable. They have characters that we can identify with. They too were prone to mistakes, misjudgments, wrong attitudes and even lapses in faith.

Many Christians become discouraged and disheartened because they believe that their lives are not all they could be and that they are all too human. We tend to think then that we are worthless nobodies and that God could never use us. But the fact is that nobodies are just the kind of people that God does use, because that is all He has to work with.

The disciples had different temperaments and backgrounds. And boy, were they different! One was a former Zealot a radical determined to overthrow the Roman rule. But on the other side, one was a tax collector a virtual collaborator, seen as a traitor to his own nation. At least four, and possibly as many as seven were fisherman, from Capernaum, perhaps having known each other from childhood.

None of the group was highly educated, yet remarkably these ordinary men, were left to carry out the ministry of Jesus, in the process they left a enduring impact on the world. Jesus entire ministry from baptism to resurrection lasted only about three years. And the intensive training time with the disciple’s was only about half that long. That means that these few men, had little more than eighteen months training for the monumental task to which they were called. By comparison a modern seminary degree requires twice that or 3 years.

Jesus had many disciples but from the many he chose twelve for a special job. John MacArthur in his book, “Twelve Ordinary Men,” maintains that there were four different stages in the call of the apostles.

First, he called them all to salvation. Second, he called them to ministry, when he said to them "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). It is at that point that they left everything to follow him full time. The third stage was *apostleship*, in Matthew 10:1-4 we are told that after a full night in prayer Jesus selected from the larger group of disciples, twelve men to in particular and made them His apostles. We have four lists of the twelve apostles in the New Testament (Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:13-16 and Acts 1:13). The fourth stage of their calling was *martyrdom*, which occurred after the Lord's resurrection. [John MacArthur. *Twelve Ordinary Men*. (Nashville" W Publishing Group, 2002) pp. 3-5]

This call is seen in that all of the apostles gave their lives for the sake of the Gospel. It is said that,

- Matthew suffered martyrdom by being slain with a sword at a distant city of Ethiopia.
- John was put in a caldron of boiling oil, but escaped death in a miraculous manner, and was afterward banished to Patmos.
- Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downward.
- James, the Greater, was beheaded at Jerusalem.
- James, the Less, was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple, and then beaten to death with a fuller's club.
- Bartholomew was flayed alive.
- Andrew was bound to a cross, whence he preached to his persecutors until he died.
- Thomas was run through the body with a lance in the East Indies.
- Jude was shot to death with arrows.
- Matthais was first stoned and then beheaded.

[www.bible.org/illus/a/a-75.htm]

This twelve men changed the world and tonight we are going to look at the first man to become one of the Twelve – a disciple of Jesus Christ, his name is Andrew. Andrew is the disciple that everyone has heard of and nobody remembers. At least five times he is listed as a disciple and three of those times he is called "Simon Peter's brother." That is like saying, that it was the fact that he was Simon Peter's brother that made him significant. Andrew obviously lived his life in the shadow of better-known brother.

As we have already noted Jesus' call was, "Follow me and I will make you fisher's of men." The fact that Andrew did indeed become a successful fisher of men as Jesus had promised is borne out by the fact that each of the three occasions in which Andrew is mentioned in Scripture, he was engaged in introducing others to Jesus.

Andrew - The First Disciple (John 1:35-40)

Andrew's personal encounter with Jesus took place the day after Jesus' baptism (John 1:29-34).

In verse thirty-five we read, "Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. (36) And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (37) The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. (38) 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?" (39) He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remain-ed with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour)."

Andrew went immediately and found the person he love most in the world, his brother, Simon and brought him to Jesus.

Verse forty, continues the story by telling us, "One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. (41) He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). (42) 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)."

It is significant that the first disciple to follow Jesus was the first to bring his own brother to Christ.

You don't have to memorize some special plan. You don't have to memorize the New Testament. You don't have to be licensed or ordained or have the church's permission. All you have to do is spend time with Jesus and then go and tell someone about it!

You may or may not be aware of the story Edward Kimball, a Sunday school teacher. He had a young man in his class who he was concern about and he determined in his heart to talk to him about Jesus. But just the thought of talking to this rather crude young man left him trembling in his boots. But he set out one afternoon to the shoe store where he worked. He was a timid and soft-spoken man the opposite of what you think of when you think of a bold evangelist. He went into the shop frightened and unsure whether he even had the courage to confront his young man with the gospel. When Kimball recalled this incident years later said, "*I never could remember just what I said: something about Christ and his love and that was all.*" He said that it was decidedly a "weak appeal." But this young man gave his life to Jesus. This young man's name was D. L. Moody, and he became a well know evangelist.

The story says that after evangelizing America, D. L. Moody started on England. There in England Frederick B. Meyer heard his message. One of the illustrations that Moody used did not at first stir Brother Meyer. Then one of his Sunday school teachers came to him and said, "Brother Meyer, the illustration that that preacher gave in our church the other day stirred my girls so much that there has been a lot of weeping, confession and testimony. We are sure that the Holy Spirit has come among us; and we have had an experience in our class that you won't believe!"

F. B. Meyer was so affected by the testimony of that teacher and those girls that he got off by himself, and soon it began to grip him in the same manner. His ministry began to open up and spread, and as it did, he was invited to come to America.

He came and went to Furman University to preach. One young fellow in the student body had decided to quit the ministry and go back to a secular job. But the message by F. B. Meyer was given with such fervor and flame that the young fellow stepped out, came forward and renewed his vow to his calling. He became the great R. G. Lee.

F. B. Meyer went on to influence J. Wilbur Chapman. J. Wilbur Chapman influenced Billy Sunday. Billy Sunday influenced Mordecai Ham. Mordecai Ham preached and a young man named Billy Graham got saved. Billy Graham became a renowned evangelist around the world—all because Edward Kimball — one nobody — won one other nobody and started a series of dominoes falling that ended up with ten of thousands saved in Moody's ministry, thousands in Meyer's ministry, thousands more in Chapman's ministry, thousands more in Lee's ministry, and finally hundreds of thousands more in Graham's ministry. All because one fellow won one soul to Christ!

There can be no question that the most effective means of bringing people to Christ is one at a time, on an individual basis.

The second time Scripture mentions Andrew it is in connection with the feeding of the 5,000 recorded in John 6:5-13. It was Andrew who brought the boy with the five loaves and three fish to Jesus.

The third time Andrew is mentioned is in John 12:20-23. Here we are told that some Greeks sought out Philip and asked to see Jesus. Philip who didn't know what to do, took them to Andrew, and Andrew in his usual style took them to Jesus.

Something to think about!

In John chapter one it was Andrew brought Peter to Christ, making him the first home missionary, and in chapter six he brings some Greeks to Christ making him the first foreign missionary.

“Was Andrew an ordinary man? Yes, but he was man whose influence is abiding because of his love and loyalty to Christ. He was an ordinary man of average capacity; he was without outstanding gifts; but he was of sterling character. Though he had no earth-shaking achievements to his credit, through his faithful witness and self-effacing service he left his mark on succeeding ages. The world needs more such ordinary people (men).” [J. Oswald Sanders. Just Like Us: 21 Character Studies from the Bible. Chap 13- Andrew. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978) p. 138]

After a life time of service to the Lord in the shadow of his more famous brother he continued to be faithful, endeavoring to bring people to Jesus, right to the end. Tradition says like all the others he died for his faith, crucified on an X shaped cross somewhere in southern Greece.

Conclusion.

I heard of this Game Warden who had a friend who would come back from fishing with hundreds of fish on ice. He was bewildered at how this man could catch so many fish every time he went out. One day when he was talking with his friend, he asked him, *"How do you catch so many fish?"* His friend said that he should accompany him the next time he went fishing and he would show him how. They set a date, and early one morning they made their way to the lake. The Game Warden noticed that his friend only had a small bag with him. He had no rod and reel, no tackle box. He wondered what he had in the bag. As they arrived in their boat at the right location on the lake, his friend reached into his bag and pulled out a stick of dynamite. He lit the dynamite and threw it into the water. The dynamite detonated in the water scores of stunned fish floated to the surface where the man scooped up and into the boat. His Game Warden friend exclaimed, *"You can't do that! I'm a Game Warden. It's illegal to use dynamite to catch fish."* The Game Warden was beside himself, and went on and on and on about how the man was breaking the law. The man calmly reached back into his sack, pulled out another stick of dynamite, lit the fuse, and handed it to the Game Warden, and said to him, *"Are you going to sit there and talk, or are you going to fish?"*

The real issue a simple one. We have been called to be "fishers of men" and while Christians do a lot of talking about fishing, what we really need to do is fish.