

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Nobody likes to be in someone else's shadow. St. Andrew is often remembered in this way, he's the brother of St. Peter. Beyond that, there's not too many other details we have yet, he occurs more in the Gospels than many of the Twelve. So, what do we know?

- He was a native of Galilee (Matthew 4:18)
- His brother was Peter (Matthew 4:18)
- He has a Greek name as does the Apostle, Philip
- He was a fisherman (Matthew 4:18)
- He was a disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35–42)
- He was likely baptized by John (John 1:35–42)
- He was the first of the twelve to encounter Jesus (John 1:35–38)
- He left his family business to follow Jesus (Matthew 4:20)
- He introduced to Jesus the boy with fish and bread (John 6:8–9)
- He helped to introduce some Greeks to Jesus (John 12:20–23)

The commonality in all these things was the work of the Lord and Andrew serving him as the Lord sent him to do. Jesus called Andrew to be his disciple and apostle even as the Holy Spirit had called him to faith. Andrew is our forefather and brother in Christ and today, November 30, the church remembers and celebrates his life and confession of Jesus. We honor those who have gone before us in the faith not because of how great they are but because of who they point us to, Jesus.

The book of Hebrews says, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” Andrew was one of those witnesses just as we hear of countless others. Backgrounds and places in history will vary but it's the same Lord who calls us as his own into his holy church. Anytime you look at the apostles and other figures throughout the history of the church, their lives point you to Christ and you see examples of faith to which it is beneficial to learn about. That's something wonderful to see and truly does honor these men and women who went before you in the faith. Their history is your history as the people of God just as their Lord is your Lord.

Andrew confessed Christ and John's Gospel gives you a glimpse into this. Listen again to those words, “The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God!’ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, ‘What are you seeking?’ And they said to him, ‘Rabbi’ (which means Teacher), ‘where are you staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and you will see.’ So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.”

Andrew followed Jesus the one to whom his previous teacher, John the Baptist was pointing him to and so, perhaps, we could say that Andrew was the ultimate disciple of John. Andrew heard John. John preached about and pointed Andrew to Jesus. Going to his brother, then, he was following in the footsteps of his teacher. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He came to John on the banks of the Jordan just as he came into the world to redeem his people. Jesus came and sought out Andrew for that's what Jesus does, he comes to seek and to save.

God sent John the Baptist. God sent Andrew. God uses preachers to deliver what Jesus has accomplished and won by his perfect life and his atoning death and as proclaimed in his glorious resurrection from the dead. The Christian faith is

a faith that is sent out and goes forth by the same Lord who has come, is here, and is coming again. Andrew went to his brother and told him about Jesus. That's something to learn from his life. Confessing Christ doesn't need programs or gimmicks, it's as simple as Andrew going to his brother and bringing him to Jesus. He took him to where Jesus was found. This wasn't him in his office of an apostle rather this was a brother loving his brother. It's no wonder that he did this for faith can't but speak forth and confess the Lord. Andrew spoke the truth to his brother and the rest is, well you know what happened.

Andrew was a Christian just as you are. He was called by Jesus to faith through God's word. Yet he was also called in a special way, that is different from all of us to serve in the specific office of an Apostle. In Matthew 4 it is written, "While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him." Andrew was sent out by the Lord just as he said in Matthew 28 to the apostles, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Jesus called Andrew and the other apostles to baptize, teach, and preach the Gospel because through the folly of what he preached, Christ crucified, people were saved. Sinners need Christ and without him we are lost forever. This week in the Church Year is *Ad Te Levavi*, from the Introit where we cry out, "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame. Let not my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame." Lift up your souls and listen to Jesus. Jesus has come, he comes now, and he is coming again. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world for he is your Lamb of God and has taken away your sin. The Lord is your righteous, that is his name and that is the name placed upon you and you have it in the waters of your baptism.

Follow in the example of Andrew. Listen to God's servants, his preachers, sent to preach to you his word of both law and gospel. It's the same thing which has been given to God's servants to preach throughout history by the same Lord who comes to redeem his people. In the first reading the Prophet Ezekiel was given what to say by God. "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul. Again, if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds that he has done shall not be remembered, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the righteous person not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning, and you will have delivered your soul."

It's nothing short of God's abundant mercy that he has come and sends his preachers. Lest we forget that or take it for granted he preaches to you today and calls you to listen to his word just as Ezekiel, John the Baptist, Andrew, and Peter did. "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it," Jesus says and there is indeed great blessing found here in the Holy Scriptures read and proclaimed. God works through his word and the call for his preachers to preach is a call for them to be faithful to God no matter the cost. God's word is not always received well because it confronts sinners with their sin, and it calls us to look outside of ourselves for our very existence and life. To be a Christian is to place everything, all fear, love, trust, hope, and all things in the hands of God who is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Yet, in this world at least, there is sometimes a cost as sin, death, and the devil still seek to destroy Christ and his people. Andrew, tradition has it, was a martyr who died on a cross in the shape of an "X." But the thing about this is even if the world should take our life, Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life and in Holy Baptism we have been crucified and risen with Christ. Andrew has life in heaven now and Jesus will raise up his body on the Last Day even as Jesus is risen victoriously from the dead.

Advent Midweek—St. Andrew—November 30, 2022

This first week of Advent on St. Andrew's Day, Jesus calls you to cast aside your sin. He calls you to cling to the word of God which is the breath of God spoken to you and declares who you are before his throne. God calls you to despair of yourself, your works, and your will because they are hostile to God. Rather God's word says, "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!' But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?' So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

You have Jesus right now and are saved. What does this mean? Your Lord took upon himself your sin and the sin of the whole world as the spotless Lamb of God who perfectly fulfilled the law of God because he loves you. He satisfied the righteous judgment of God's wrath poured out against all that is sin and what you deserve. His death is your atonement with God so that by his wounds you are healed and his blood cleanses you from all sin. And three days after his death he rose, and the Lord pronounced his "amen" to the sacrifice and this was and is your justification. Now you have peace with God through Christ and stand before him with a clean conscience because your confidence, trust, assurance, and all things of faith are found in Christ, your Redeemer, the Lord your righteousness. "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

Thanks be to God this day for St. Andrew. Thanks be to God for Ezekiel, John the Baptist, Peter, the Apostles, and all of God's saints through the ages. Jesus came and has sent his servants and "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" Jesus does this for has come, comes now as word goes forth and accomplishes his purposes, and he is coming again. On that glorious day you, dear saints of God, will stand with Andrew and those Faithful Servants of the King before the throne of the Lamb who has been slain yet is raised and together, we will all sing his praises and rejoice in the new heavens and the new earth he has prepared for us. What a glorious eternal day that will be where all sin, death, and the crafts and assaults of the devil are no more. Until that day, follow in the example of Andrew and go to where Jesus is found. Cling to Jesus through his word, your baptism, and his Supper knowing that the day is drawing near, and Jesus is coming for you. "Come, Lord Jesus."

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