

Sermon – 21/03/2004 am

Andrew Follows Jesus

Study Text: John 1:35-42

How has your week been? Any interesting things happen? Meet any interesting people? If not then you will today as you enter in to this Scripture with us. It tells of another day in what was an amazing week in the life of John the Baptist, in the life of his disciples and in the history of our world.

What was so wonderful about this week? Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Lamb of God was revealed. He was revealed to Israel – and now whenever and wherever this passage is read, He is revealed to the whole world. On this day the first two men to follow Jesus do so at the urging of John the Baptist; and by the end of the day another has been brought into the church of Jesus Christ.

John saw Jesus coming towards him on the second day. Now it is the third day and he sees Jesus again walking by. And again he cries out *Behold the Lamb of God*. His message was the same as the day before. But this day we see a response to his proclamation. We see that two of his disciples heard him speak and they were moved to follow Jesus.

What was John's message on the fourth and the fifth day? We are not told for the focus shifts from John to Jesus but surely it was the same – Behold! the Lamb of God. He did not get tired of sharing this great news – the good news.

Some of the Lord's servants have faithfully proclaimed the gospel not for days but for weeks and months and years and not seen one follow Jesus. Does that mean they must change the message? No. The message does not change – it is forever the same – Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

John knew this was his task in life. He was delighted to see these two men leave him to follow Jesus. He was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, not his own ideas, not traditions and laws of men. He wanted people to follow Jesus not him.

Not all evangelism we see is like that of John. The primary aim of some groups is to get people to follow their teachings. They deliberately keep people in the dark telling them they must have a priest or some guru to explain the Bible to them. They make converts dependent on the group leader rather than dependent on Christ alone.

True proclamation of the gospel points people to Christ and delights when people learn to feed themselves from the Word of God. Andrew and the other disciple went to follow Jesus himself and learn from him.

The message then remains the same. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.*

Follow Jesus

Who were the disciples who followed Jesus this day? One was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother and the other? We are not told but it is generally thought that he was John the writer of this gospel. These men were fishermen from Galilee – in fact from the fishing village of Bethsaida.

They had come down to hear John the Baptist and became his disciples. That was until this day. For on this day they left him to follow Jesus. They wanted to find out more, find out for themselves what John meant when he called Jesus the Lamb of God and the Son of God.

There was Jesus walking before them. This was the time to find out. It was no time to delay. He may not be there the next day. They were not going to fall into the trap that many do today – the trap of the Devil when he tells people who hear the gospel – Oh there is plenty of time yet, another day I will look into the claims of Jesus. But that day may never come. Maybe some travellers on the train in Madrid thought such a thing.

Look at the wonderful **grace of Jesus** shown towards these two men. Jesus knew they were following him – in fact he knew the thoughts of their hearts. He graciously turned to them with the invitation *what are you seeking* or what do you want? This was a simple question that broke the ice as it were; it was an invitation to them to explain what they wanted from him.

It was also a very profound question. It was a question that would be asked again and again of those who followed Jesus. At the end of this very week he performed his first miracle, turning water into wine. And there were many more miracles to come. John calls them signs, signs that manifest the glory of God in his son Jesus Christ.

Many followed Jesus for purely earthly benefits – he seems like the political deliver we need, he provides us with bread, he heals the sick and so on. *What do you seek* Jesus said to his first followers, Andrew and John, and to all who follow him. How would you answer this question?

How did these two men reply? They replied with a question themselves. Addressing Jesus as Rabbi they asked *where are you staying*. What did they mean? They were not going to check out the mansion or palace where he was living were they! He was probably staying in a tent or even a cave. They were in effect saying we want to hear what you have to teach us. Rabbi means teacher as John translates it for his Gentile readers. It means 'great one' or 'master' in Hebrew.

They wanted some time to sit with Jesus and learn from him after having heard what John the Baptist had to say about him. We are not told what Jesus taught them – and as much as we would like to know. Bishop Ryle aptly comments 'if it had been good for us to know the conversation, it would doubtless have been recorded. There are no deficiencies in Scripture'. What we do know is that they came to know Jesus as the Messiah, the anointed of God, for that is what they proclaim the next day.

The grace of Jesus is seen again in v.39 when he invites them *to come and see*. Reflect for a moment on these first recorded words of Jesus. *What do you seek* he asks those who come to him. Then he invites them to *come and see*. He is ever ready to reveal

himself to those who examine their hearts – those who come humbly and with the right motives unto him. This is a standing invitation. It is an invitation extended to you, and one that you can extend to others. Phillip said to Nathaniel *come and see*.

It was about the tenth hour when all this happened. Now there is some uncertainty about what time of day this was – and it is not critical anyway. If it was according to Jewish time it would have been 4pm. Some however think John uses Roman time which counted from midnight and so would be 10am.

Find others

‘It is of the nature of the Christian experience that those who enjoy it desire to share it with others’. Followers of Jesus Christ must be finders of others. Andrew found what he was looking for in life – the anointed One, the anointed of God – prophet, priest and king.

He found the truth. He found the way, the truth and the life. This was wonderful news, news that he had to share. So he went to find his brother Simon. *He first found his own brother Simon*. Most understand this to mean that this was the first thing that Andrew did. It could mean that he found his brother before John found his viz James. But either way the picture we are given is that Andrew wasted no time in finding someone with whom he could share this good news. Relatives and friends are usually such people.

Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus the Christ, the anointed of God, in effect anoints Simon in turn, anoints him with a new name. He was called by his father Simon, his father being John or in short form Jonah. Jesus gave him the name *Cephas*, or in Greek *Petros* meaning stone.

What this name change will mean for Peter will be revealed, but at this time it reflects the divine knowledge and authority of Jesus, the Son of God. Those who come to Jesus and believe on him are no longer their own. They are not the master of their own destiny but they have a new master who rules in their life.

This is Andrew, the first to follow Jesus. And the first thing he did was to find another. To bring his brother to Jesus. He did not stop there. Andrew was always bringing people to Jesus. He brought the young boy with the loaves and the fish to Jesus (6:8-9). He knew Jesus had the answer to every situation, to every need. Later he brought some Greeks to Jesus (12:22).

Andrew was not the leader that Simon became, but let us remember, it was he who found Simon Peter and brought him to Jesus. He quietly spent his days bringing people to Jesus. The church started to grow as Andrew brought people to Jesus, and it continues to grow in the same way today.

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