

John 1:40-42

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[0 : 0 0] Now let's turn to John's Gospel, John chapter 1 and verses 40 to 42. John chapter 1 from verse 40.

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, we have found the Messiah, that is, the Christ.

Then he took Simon to Jesus, then he brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, you are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas, which when translated is Peter.

Now we noticed last week how these verses, particularly the verses just before this, were really talking about the beginning of the Christian church.

Now we know that we've got to be careful in saying that because in one sense the Christian church was there right from the beginning. From the very beginning when God promised to Adam and Eve that one descendant of theirs, the seed of the woman, would destroy the power of Satan.

[1 : 2 5] And whenever people believed that, right down through history, Abraham and David and all the rest of them, that was the church of Christ, the Christian church.

And also we know that there was a very special stage in the history of that church at the day of Pentecost. And we read about that when the Holy Spirit came in power and brought all the blessings and benefits of Christ's finished work, bringing it to men so that people of all nations could believe in Jesus Christ and be saved.

But as we noticed last week, in a certain sense, this was the beginning of what we know today as the Christian church. Because this was the first time that anybody really followed Jesus in this very personal way in which Andrew and the others did it.

Remember how they went from standing beside John the Baptist and they walked over and they followed Jesus. And that was a very visual step that they took, something that could be seen as they went from John the Baptist to follow Jesus.

And there we have the beginning of, of course, the apostles and therefore they're called the foundation of the church. I would like to think with you today about what happens immediately after this.

[3 : 0 0] Immediately they follow Jesus. We discover that Andrew, one of these disciples, he does something. And it's about this thing I want to think with you.

We're told in verse 41, the first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him.

The emphasis here is that this was the first thing that he did. And this first thing he did was what we today might call evangelism or telling someone the gospel.

Doesn't matter what words he used to describe it. It means quite simply that he went and he got his brother and he told him about Jesus. That's really quite simply what it was.

But I'd like to notice that this was the first thing that he did. And that tells us something, not just about Andrew and his way of thinking, but it tells us really about how important this should be for the whole Christian church.

[4 : 16] It should really be the first thing, something that has priority, something that is extremely important. Andrew could have done lots of things.

He could have spent all his time simply with Jesus. Or he could have gone away and he could have got out his Bible, the Old Testament, and he could have read it and he could have discovered more and more about what it teaches there about the Christ.

He could have done lots of things that were right and good in themselves. He could have gone off home and had his dinner. He could have gone off home and gone back to bed.

He could have done lots of other things that are perfectly normal and natural in themselves. He could have gone off home and had his dinner. He could have gone off home and had his dinner. He could have gone away from Jesus and sort of forgotten about it and got on with something else.

And perhaps got angry with someone and started shouting at them. In other words, he could have gone away and done something wrong. Lots of things Andrew could have done.

[5 : 30] But the first thing that he did when he left Jesus was to find his brother Simon Peter. The first thing he did. In other words, coming from Jesus, having discovered Jesus himself, it was the most natural thing in the world that he should find someone else and tell them about Jesus, to tell them what he had discovered.

Now that ought to be the characteristic of the Christian church still today. And it should be the characteristic of every Christian. Every one of you here who has come to know Jesus Christ as your Savior, as the most important and the most marvelous person who has ever lived, who has transformed your life, who has given you the hope of glory, it is the most natural thing in the world, the right thing, that you should want to tell other people about him.

And it's the most natural and the most right thing in the world that the whole Christian church should be engaged in works of all different kinds that will bring Jesus to the attention of the world round about.

It is the most right and most proper thing that throughout churches, right throughout this country and right across the world, today, preachers will be preaching about Jesus and inviting people to come to him.

Because these preachers have come to know Jesus for themselves. And they've come to know that he is the most marvelous person who has ever lived.

[7 : 16] And it's the most natural thing that they want to tell others about this one who is now their Savior and Lord. And of course, it's entirely right and proper that the church as a whole should be seeking to discover ways by which this good news about Jesus is made known to other people.

Now today, as we know, there are all kinds of problems that we often talk about in this area. Because we have got the problem, for instance, that not everybody goes to church.

In fact, in Aberdeen here, it's an even lower proportion than in many other parts of the country. Only 9% of people go to church in Aberdeen.

That's out of every 100 people, only 9 go to church. Now that is a situation that should make us really think, how are those other people, how are those 91 other people out of every 100, how are they going to hear about the Lord Jesus Christ?

It's almost the opposite of the story that Jesus told. Remember about the 100 sheep? And there was one that was lost. And he went out to find the one that was lost.

[8 : 45] It's almost the opposite. It's the large number, the 91, that are lost. Outside, even coming to hear the gospel in a Christian church.

How are they going to hear? And it's right and it's proper that the Christian church should be debating these things and trying to think of ways by which the good news of Christ can be communicated to people who don't come inside the church at all.

And, of course, we can have lots of ideas as to how to do it. Many different ways. By literature, by television perhaps, by radio. All sorts of ways. But, and this is what I'd urge upon your attention today, there is one sure way in which the gospel can be communicated and communicated most effectively.

And it's a very simple way. And it's exactly what Andrew does here. The first thing he did was to go and to find his brother Simon and tell him.

Now, it may not be the easiest thing in the world to do. To just personally, one-to-one, with someone you know, tell them about the fact that you're a Christian and that the Lord Jesus Christ can save us from our sins and bring us to heaven.

[10 : 16] But that is the most essential thing that must be done in communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ. And what we ought to be praying for and working for is that we would take this initiative ourselves and to do this work.

This thing that is very simple, but yet quite difficult to do. Because in this way, the gospel is most effectively communicated to people.

You know, someone could have come and spoken to Simon. Someone from another village, someone from Jerusalem, a scribe or a Pharisee or someone. Imagine, say, if Nicodemus had come to Jesus by this stage.

Nicodemus perhaps come and talk to Peter. And, you know, I don't think that would have had much effect upon Peter. Because Peter was a fisherman. And Peter didn't know much about all these clever people in Jerusalem and the kind of things they would have talked about.

But the person who came and spoke to him was his own brother. His own brother, Andrew. And he knew his own brother, Andrew. And he knew what kind of person he was.

[11 : 37] And he knew what Andrew was talking about. And he knew that Andrew had discovered something that was more important to him than anything else in the world.

So this brings home to us the priority of this, what we may call personal evangelism. And I think today this is one of the most obvious things that's missing in the Christian church.

I feel it myself. And I feel it as I talk with other Christians. That we have all kinds of aids and schemes for evangelism. We have crusades.

We have radio. We have literature. More than perhaps the Christian church ever had before. Maybe we're not making use of all these as we ought to. But they're there.

But the problem is that people aren't reading the books. The mass of people aren't going to the special meetings or even the special crusades. The mass of people.

[12 : 42] But you and I, in our everyday contacts, have contacts with people that no one else has contact with. And you and I, as Christian believers, have contact with people who don't know Christ.

And that ought to make us stop and to think what we can do to speak to such people concerning Christ. The very first thing that Andrew did when he came to know Jesus was to tell that to someone else.

And notice, of course, that someone else was his brother. He went away and he found his brother. His brother Simon.

And he told him, we found the Christ. Now, what I said earlier about the importance of it being someone that Simon knew, that, of course, is important when we think about Andrew as well.

Because Andrew could have gone off and tried to speak to someone else. Andrew could have perhaps gone and tried to speak to somebody he didn't know.

[13 : 59] He could have gone out into the middle of the street and stopped the first person he met and spoken to them. Now, who knows? It might have had some kind of effect. We don't know. But we know this.

That the Lord Jesus makes a special point with one man at any rate in getting him to stay where he was with his own people.

Remember the man who called himself Legion, the man who was demon-possessed. And when Jesus had set him free from the evil that was enslaving him, the man, of course, wanted to be with Jesus.

And he wanted to go with them back across in the boat, across to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus wouldn't let him. He said, You stay here in your own country, among your own people, and you tell them how much the Lord has done for you.

And that, it seems to me, is the pattern that ought to be followed still within the Christian church. Again, the Christian church began where they were in Jerusalem and Judea, and from there they spread out.

[15 : 02] But they began where they were. And that command is still the same today. We begin where we are, and with people that we know. Because God has placed us in the situation where we are.

We believe in a sovereign God. That is a God who is in control, not just of what we may call religious things, and the fact that he has made known a message to us, but he's in control of the ordinary everyday affairs of life.

He's in control of the fact that you were born where you are, that you were educated where you were, that you live where you do now, that you do the work that you do now. He has placed you there. And he has a purpose for you being there.

And part of that purpose, no doubt, is that you are in contact with people there that nobody else is in contact with. And perhaps you are the channel to those people of the grace of God, and there is no other channel to them.

Just think, if there is no other channel to these people that you know, then if you are not telling them something about the Lord Jesus Christ, then nobody is.

[16 : 07] So, Andrew here began with his own family. First of all, with his brother Simon. And he went and he found him.

We're told that he went to find him. He put some effort into this. Perhaps it was difficult to find him because there was perhaps crowds of people round about there where John the Baptist was. But he went and he sought him out and he found him.

And he told him this most wonderful of all things. Now, for ourselves, we ought to start where we are, with our families, with our friends, with our workmates, and seek to tell them something about the Christian faith.

We may not be the greatest explainers of what Christianity is. We may never be great preachers or great evangelists in that kind of public sense.

But we can surely do what Andrew did here, who went and he told them, we have found the Messiah. And that's what I want to think about next. The actual message that Andrew had.

[17 : 11] He had something to communicate. He was coming there from meeting with Jesus and he was bursting to tell his brother Simon what it was he had discovered.

And he puts it quite simply in these words, we have found the Messiah, that is, the Christ. These are just words in different languages, Messiah in Hebrew and Christ in Greek, both meaning the anointed one.

That is, the one that God has chosen and set apart to be the representative. The representative for men, just as the high priest was men's representative before God and God's representative to us.

One chosen by him, a great king who was going to rule us. So, when Andrew says here, we have found the Christ, we have found the Messiah, Peter, Peter, Peter, right away would have known something, at least of what, what Andrew was on about when he was speaking about this because this was something that every Jewish person knew about, that throughout the Old Testament it was promised, God had promised, that a descendant of Adam and Eve, a descendant of Abraham, a descendant of David would come and would be a great ruler and a great savior, one who would deliver people from the oppression of evil.

So, right away, Peter knew what he was talking about and this was the message that Andrew had to communicate, a very simple one. This Messiah that we've read about in the Old Testament, that we've been brought up with, this idea of the Messiah, he says, quite simply, I found him.

[18 : 58] I found him. Peter, I can take you to the house where he's staying and you can meet him. Now we can perhaps just imagine the impact that that must have had upon Peter.

We don't actually know when exactly Peter came to believe in Jesus. There are certain stages in his life that are very interesting and this is the first stage of it.

But we know that the impact that these words would have had upon Peter that Andrew, his brother, was saying to him, you can come with me and you can actually meet this man, this most marvelous person that has been promised for us.

Now, it's exactly the same for us still today in the sense that we have still a message that concerns a man. too often, perhaps, we get rather involved in what Christianity actually is.

And Christianity is as deep and as wide and as profound as the deepest ocean and deeper. But, in essence, there is something very straightforward to be communicated.

[20 : 17] There are all kinds of doctrines that are all important because they all relate to the center of what Christianity is. But, we may have a tendency to concentrate on maybe some of these external things that are perhaps further away from the center than is necessary.

What is in the center is a man. And what we have to tell people about is not, first of all, a church or a doctrine or our way of doing things or whatever.

What we have to tell people about is what Andrew told people about here. And that is about a man. The Messiah. The Christ. And our message today is just the same. It is quite simply this.

We have found the Messiah. We have found the Christ. Now, for many people today, we have to explain exactly what that means.

Perhaps 50 years ago, you would hardly need to explain to anybody, even somebody you met on the street, you would hardly have to explain to them who the Christ is.

[21 : 26] But today, you have to explain. Because, not just for this year or for the last couple of years has only 9% of people been going to church, but for years and years and years this has been the trend.

So that you have generations growing up who don't know the very basics of what the Christian gospel is. So there has to be explanation. But the basic message is the same.

We have found the Christ. Now today, as I've said, that may have to be explained in various ways.

But at its heart, there is still something that rings a bell with people no matter who they are. because the Jewish people certainly were educated to expect this man.

But every group of people in the world and every person in the world has got something of this kind of longing in their hearts.

[22 : 33] How else can you explain the great success of some people who have some kind of charisma, some kind of leadership so that other people look up to those people and they expect great things of them throughout the history of the world.

We've had people who put their trust in great emperors, great leaders, great generals, great soldiers right up into this century. People looking up to someone like Adolf Hitler or Mussolini and imagining that they were going to bring them great things.

There was this great hero worship of such people. Now we can have hero worship in a much more innocent way than that. But it is the very idea that we as individual people and as groups of people should look up to someone else and expect something great from that other person.

Now, sadly, we're always disappointed because the very greatest person that is merely an ordinary human being cannot deliver, he cannot satisfy, he cannot provide all our dreams and our longings.

But the very fact that we have that longing implies that we know that there is some way there is some message, there is some man that really can fulfill our deepest longings and meet our needs.

[24 : 10] And that is the message that the Christian gospel is. That there is one who will not disappoint you. There is one who is all he claims to be and who is all that other people say he is.

We have found the Messiah. we have found someone who is worth worshipping. We have found one who is worth living for and even who is worth dying for.

We have found him. That's the Christian message. And we ask people to examine those claims and to set them against every other person and every other kind of claim and every other kind of doctrine or philosophy in the world and to see the comparison.

We have found the Christ. other people may talk about a great leader or a great man. Other people may talk about the whole idea of a Messiah.

We say quite simply we have found the Messiah and we know him personally. Just as Andrew was saying here to Simon we found the Messiah. I know him.

[25 : 18] I've met him. He's my friend. I've been at his house. He's shown me hospitality. So today we say we have found the Messiah. He has shown us hospitality.

He has invited us in. He has given us shelter from the storm. And then finally we need to look at the fact that Andrew brought Peter to Jesus.

Then he brought Simon to Jesus who looked at him and said you are Simon son of John you will be called Cephas which when translated is Peter.

You see Andrew wasn't satisfied with just telling Peter. He actually brought Peter to Jesus. Now we don't know did he have to sort of drag Peter along or was Peter coming willingly because he was curious he was interested.

Probably the latter. But the point is that Andrew's enthusiasm was so great that he was prepared to drag Peter along. He wanted him to be there.

[26 : 29] He brought him to Jesus. So our evangelism or our speaking of Jesus ought to be of the same quality. It's not just a take it or leave it kind of thing that we preach what the gospel says what these bible verses say we just leave it at that or that we in speaking to someone of Christianity we just tell them what our church believes or what the bible says and that's it.

No. It's a committed thing. A preacher of the gospel is not just asked to state those doctrines or quote those verses. He's called upon to demand people to believe in them.

He's called upon to invite people to come to Jesus Christ. He's called upon to be enthusiastic in presenting his savior to men and women.

So with ourselves if we are to speak of Jesus we are to speak of him not as one who is just contained in doctrines and verses but we are to speak of him as our living loving savior the one who loved us and gave himself for us.

And when we do it in that kind of way then there's communicated to other people how important he is to us. And that surely is what Andrew was doing here as he brought Peter to Jesus so that Peter was confronted with Jesus.

[28 : 05] It wasn't a kind of take it or leave it thing. He was brought there right face to face with Jesus. Now that is what we are asked to do. We cannot convert people any more than Andrew could convert his brother Simon.

He couldn't change it but he did everything that was humanly possible. He told him about Jesus and he brought him to Jesus and that is what we are asked to do.

Preachers cannot convert people. I cannot convert you if you don't know Jesus. I can't change you into being a Christian no matter how much I'd like to be able to do so.

But I do what God has commanded. I tell you the gospel and I plead with you to come to Christ and with as much power as is in me I want you to be confronted with Christ so that you see that there is only two alternatives to accept him or to reject him.

But then that is my role. I bring you to Jesus. Then the rest of what transpires is if you like private between you and him.

[29 : 24] As what happened here was very much person to person between Jesus and Simon. And this we notice is the very beginning of the great transformation that took place in Simon.

And first we notice that Jesus knew who he was. We're told that he looked at Simon and the expression is here not just that he glanced at him but that he looked him over.

He sized him up. He looked at him very carefully and he said to him you are Simon son of John. He was emphasizing to Peter that he knew who and what he was.

He was emphasizing to Peter that he could see what kind of man he was. He's referring to his natural life so far.

He was Simon. That was his name. That was what he was known by. That's what he meant to other people. He was Simon. Simon the fisherman. He was Simon son of John.

[30 : 35] Referring to his father, his family, his background. That's what he was. Jesus emphasized to Peter that he knows all that about him.

Now this is the first thing Jesus has to say to you if you don't know the Lord Jesus yet. He knows you. He knows your background. He knows your character.

He knows your personality. He knows everything about you. He knows what you are naturally in the condition you're in now. And he knows every need of yours.

He knows every longing of yours. He knows every dissatisfaction of yours. He knows it all. No one can tell him anything about you. He knows you for what you are.

But then also Jesus looked at Peter and he said this is what you are Simon son of John but you will be called Cephas which is Peter or which is a rock because it's just again the two languages Hebrew and Greek Cephas the rock and Petros a rock in Greek.

[31 : 53] So Jesus looks at him and says this is what you are but this is what I'm going to make you. Now when we meet with Jesus and we're confronted with Jesus personally like that that is what Jesus is saying to us.

He's saying I know what you are and I know all your needs and I know all your sins I know all your failures I know you in your natural condition as a sinner against God but here is what I am offering to you here is what I'm going to make of you if you trust in me.

For Peter it was that he was to be made a rock. Now we know that Peter it would seem in his own character and his own personality was very far from being a rock.

As the story unfolds in the gospels we know how impetuous Peter is how he rushes into things how he's not very stable like a rock is.

He has a great heart and he is foremost in believing in Christ and wanting to do things for Christ when he does come to believe in him but he's impetuous and he can fluctuate he's not stable and solid like a rock.

[33 : 11] But Jesus says to him you are Simon son of John but you will be called Cephas you will be called a rock now we read of that great day the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the church where there was the real public beginning of the church that was to spread internationally throughout the world when people were speaking the gospel in different languages that great day who was it who was the rock who was it who was so solid and dependable who stood there before all the leaders and before all the learned scholars of the day and spoke of Jesus it was Peter Peter who before just a few weeks before had forsaken Jesus left him denied him but yet there he was as solid and dependable now as a rock that is what the Lord

Jesus Christ made of Peter although we know that even after that there were fluctuations in Peter's life yet this is most definitely what he had become now the Lord Jesus is saying to us today exactly the same he's saying to you I know you I know you what you are I know all your needs I know all your troubles I know all your sins but I've got something that I want to make of you by your faith in me I will make you into that I will make you to become such a person that you never dreamed you could become even in this life you will become of service to me and you will become of service to other people in a way perhaps that you never dreamt of before and if only people could see you as you will be in glory they would fall down at your feet in astonishment that you should become such a glorious person and friend of God the Lord Jesus is saying to you I know what you are but this is what I want to make of you and this is what I will make of you through faith in me and in my work so today if we have any longing in our heart to come and to meet

Jesus hear this message the message that Andrew first spoke we have found the Messiah and the words of the Messiah were I know you but I know what you are going to be and he has this word for us of what we are going to be all that is asked of us is that we accept and believe that he has the power and he has the authority and that he has the love and he has the grace to be able to do that to us though we don't deserve it and although we ourselves could never achieve it for ourselves he is able and willing to do it if we receive him let us pray oh our gracious Lord we thank you for all the grace and love you've shown to us in Christ Jesus that he came into this world to seek and to save the lost we thank you that he set his love and affection upon people like

Andrew and Peter people that others might have passed over and rejected and thought not worthwhile or important in the society of the time yet he chose them and he made them into the foundation of the Christian church we thank you that his power is the same today for all authority is given to him in heaven and on earth and he has commanded us to go and to teach all nations and we pray that you would please help us and enable us with that work today that work of the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ enable each person who knows you to tell other people about Christ and grant us Lord a dependence upon yourself in prayer to long and to desire for your power at work within us so that people will not just hear what we say but they will believe it and accept the Lord Jesus Christ for themselves we ask it all in Jesus name and for his sake amen