

Andrew - The Quiet Apostle

I would like to introduce you to a man called Edward Kimball. Edward was a quiet, timid Sunday School teacher in 19th century America. This softly spoken individual found himself one day under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, walking to a shoe store in Boston where he intended to make a witness for Christ to a brash and rude nineteen year old.

Edward Kimball recalled this incident with the following statement: "I decided to speak to him about Christ and about his soul. I started down town to Holton's shoe store. When I was nearly there I began to wonder whether I ought to go just then during business hours. And I thought maybe my mission might embarrass the boy, that when I went away the other clerks might ask who I was, and when they learned might taunt him and ask if I was trying to make a good boy out of him. While I was pondering over it all I passed the store without noticing it. Then, when I found I had gone by the door I determined to make a dash for it and have it over at once."

Many of us will identify with this account of a witness made to a skeptical non-believer by a quiet, timid believer in Christ Jesus. Edward Kimball's appeal was by his own words a "weak appeal" with "limping words". Yet he had done the most valuable thing in all the world, he had led a personal appeal to another of the free gift of salvation in Christ Jesus. It was no great, impassioned speech or sermon filled with oratorical delights. His words didn't fill great auditoriums or find the widespread acclaim that can come with mass media publication. His words were meagre but his service to God was mighty and so the fruits of this simple, quiet appeal, held in the stockroom of a Boston shoe store would go on to have enormous repercussions. Edward's weak appeal drew the tear filled commitment of a reborn heart that same moment from the crude teenager.

The brash nineteen year old of whom Edward Kimball spoke of was one D.L Moody, the same soul who would go on to become one of the most famous preachers in America and England in the 19th and early 20th centuries. D.L Moody led tens of thousands to Christ and he established the Moody Bible Institute, an establishment that would go on to train many preachers, missionaries and other Christian workers for decades to come. Yet none of this would've transpired unless Edward Kimball, a name extremely unfamiliar to the history books, had made his 'weak' petition to a young D.L Moody. It was by this personal testimony and witness that a soul was brought to service of Jesus Christ and that newly reborn heart was set to work to bring thousands more to eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. The value of a seemingly small work must not be underestimated in the eyes of eternity.

This more recent example of how one easily forgotten name was used mightily by God to set in motion the call to grace for thousands more, was set by the quiet by faithful actions of one of the first two men called by Jesus to be one of His twelve disciples. This quiet soul was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Both fisherman from the poor and rough region of Northern Israel that was Galilee. Andrew and Simon Peter were engaged in the hard labour of fishing with their likely long time friends the brothers James and John (familiar to us as another two of the disciples of Christ).

We read of the call to Andrew in John 1 and we see how prior to his discipleship of Jesus, Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. In verses 35-42 of John 1, the day after Christ's baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist, we read of how after John the Baptist declares to all that are gathered that Jesus is The Lamb of God. Hearing this wondrous declaration, the fulfilment of all the hope of the One whom Andrew and John (heavily indicated that John is the other of the two disciples outlined in this passage) were longing for, the eagerly awaited Messiah. Herein we witness the first of the great character traits displayed by Andrew (and John), a faithful commitment to perseverance and patience in waiting for the

Messiah and a decisiveness in following Him when they already had a teacher leading them in the form of John the Baptist. How many have fallen short of following Christ Jesus when they have happily followed one of His servants?! It is a faithful and courageous heart that leaves behind what is familiar yet mortal to follow One whom is the fulfilment of all wondrous truth and holiness. For to follow such a perfect being as Jesus, one will be inevitably made aware of they're tremendous sin when in His thrice holy presence. This sting of sinful conscience is what drives away the pretenders of faith from the sincere; ones who will attend a church, sing a hymn, adopt a form of morality, praise a Christian leader/teacher, etc yet will not truly repent of what wretches they are and place their faith and trust for their salvation in Christ Jesus. Andrew though is quick to run after Jesus with a heart ready to trust in Christ, made ready by the faithful preaching of John the Baptist.

True repentance of sin and faith in Jesus is the transforming, regeneration of the fallen heart, taking it from death to life and it's utter joy cannot be confined and so Andrew immediately sets out to tell of the good news of his discovery of the Messiah to his brother Simon Peter.

Now all Christians, and even many non-believers are aware of Simon Peter. His fame is far and wide, his strong, often foot in mouth character and powerful preaching at Pentecost automatically draw attention. Doubtless Andrew, being his brother, would be all too aware of Simon Peter's often overpowering, dominating character, a character very much at odds with his own. Many times such differing characters between siblings creates friction, tension and even animosity. Yet there is no trace of this in the actions of Andrew. Rather than fearing how his brother may dominate and monopolise the time and attention of Jesus, Andrew races to tell his brother that the Messiah is here (John 1:41).

This single, simple act sets into motion world changing events. Andrew's individual witness to his brother Simon Peter, begins, by the grace and will of God, the call of the apostle who would bring thousands to Christ at Pentecost and be a foundational stone in the construction of the Church. Andrew's love for his brother caused him to seek him out immediately and share the wondrous news of Jesus. It is a startling fact when we place ourselves next to Andrew and consider what our first act was when we were saved by the same Saviour Christ Jesus. Did you race to find your family members and share the joyful news of the finding of your Redeemer? Surely a hard swallow is due at this point.

It is by such means, an individual petition, a personal testimony and witness that brings many to faith in Christ. As John MacArthur noted, the majority of converts to Christ have become so following a personal witness from a friend, colleague or family worker. It is by such seemingly humble origins that much fruit is brought forth by the hand of God. The planting of one humble seed is what prompts the growth of a mighty oak with it's numerous branches and thousands of green leaves. It is a powerful message that the actions of Andrew gives us today. Just because you have not been called to be a great orator, preacher or writer for God does not relieve you of your commission to spread the Gospel. It may be by your labour's that one goes on to bring many to Christ. Your reward in heaven is assured for you will have been faithful in a few things, and so in His eternal grace you shall be set over many.

This though was not the only time that Andrew quietly led individuals to Jesus. In John 12:20-22 we read of some Greeks who desired to meet with Jesus and initially approached Philip in the hope of gaining this meeting. Philip went to Andrew, perhaps unsure as to how Jesus would receive non-Jews, or even maybe he was simply too timid to ask Jesus directly, and so Andrew took the Greeks directly to Christ with Philip in tow. Andrew demonstrates a clarity of purpose in his decisiveness in bringing the intrigued Greeks to Jesus; another act of the immediacy of the faithful heart to bring others to Jesus Christ. Andrew was not concerned about social protocol in introducing Gentiles to Christ, his desire was simple and pure, to bring lost souls to faith in the Messiah Jesus Christ. His actions are a quiet but stern challenge to many in the Church today who act clumsily when a 'socially undesirable' individual comes

in hope to learn of Jesus Christ. I have witnessed it first hand, a gathering of faithful souls fall about with mutterings and dithering action over a sinful soul who does not seemingly meet their suitable criteria for a potential follower of Christ but who nevertheless shows an earnestness in knowing Christ Jesus. It is these very souls, longing for salvation through Christ Jesus, that should be taken with swiftness and great care to the feet of Our Lord Jesus. Andrew, though a quiet disciple, easily left in the shadows by his brother Simon Peter (at least according to the world's estimation on such matters) acts with a tender assertiveness that is in the manner of Our Lord Himself.

Even though Andrew is a quiet soul, rarely mentioned in the Scriptures and many of these brief mentions are only a collating of his presence amongst the other disciples as they are listed by the Gospel writers. Yet it is Andrew's awareness of the value of the individual, of the seemingly insignificant that is a glorious testimony of the intimacy of care and love that Christ Jesus extends to His own. In John 6:9, it is Andrew that brings the boy with the five loaves and two fish to Jesus whilst all the other disciples are busy flapping in a panic as to what to do with a hungry multitude late in the day, miles away from sources of refreshment and sustenance. Only the Lord knows if Andrew brought this meagre offering forward in complete faith of His Lord's miraculous powers and ability to provide irregardless of circumstances, or if it was done as just a simple attempt at trying to do something constructive in a pressured moment. Either way the key point is that he acted with resolve, a resolve that went to Jesus as the source of all hope in each situation. No Andrew never commanded the 'headlines' of the Gospel narrative but it is his quiet but faithful example that is gently but toweringly exalted by God's own Word. Consider how all the events in which Andrew's individual actions are recorded (outside of the general group bickerings), he is never subject to correction by Christ. His consistent faith and application of that faith is honoured by God for all eternity much like Enoch's. Think on how little is written about Enoch, yet his walk with God was so close that God took him straight to heaven without tasting death. You see it is not always the grand, world shaking life of faith that is most highly exalted by God. It is the humble, faithful, consistent, loving walk with Him that is most treasured by God. What joyful news this is to all of us, for how many of us will ever stir the world in the manner of the heroes of the Scriptures? Who can dare dream of reaching the world known labour's of men and women such as Wycliffe, Wesley, Whitfield, Moody, Spurgeon, Lady Jane Grey or Corrie Ten Boom? The vast majority of lives gifted life by God will be put to work in manner as Andrew was. Yet as we have determined what an exalted position this is truly.

My friend, your labours are known unto God and your reward is being prepared for you in Our Fathers House. Don't look longingly at those who draw much attention for their labours in Christ's name. I am familiar with this shame. It only serves to drain the soul of any joy in Christ and poisons the happy song of one's own testimony that a sneering world is already eager to destroy. Andrew was never crafted by God to be a grand preacher, he was not given life to write in fine verse, he was never created to be another Peter or John; he was given life to know the Lord Jesus and to bring others to a wondrous personal relationship with Him. Is there a finer existence to be gifted than to lead another to the throne of Jesus Christ?!

Andrew's example is brightly lit though he stood in the shadows in many ways, for it is lit with the radiant light of Christ's grace towards the humble hearted. To all men reading this, strive to be as Andrew. Though he was a gentle soul, happy to let others bask in the limelight, he was faithful, humble, decisive, personable, loving, compassionate and purposeful. Such traits should be the hallmarks of any man. These traits bring about an individual who, by the Lord's grace, is aware of their sinful nature, happy to rely on Christ Jesus for all things, joyful in service of their Saviour, eager to bring others to their Redeemer, a keen eye for those who are searching for salvation and a humility to know that all glory is God's. If but the world was filled with such men! Though this is not to be in this age, it should not dampen our desire to grow, to grow in Christ Jesus so that when our labours are called to a close, we

shall share in the same reward as Andrew all by the grace and glory of Jesus Christ Our Lord and Saviour. Amen.