"And His Brother, Andrew"
January 23, 2005

Being a kid brother can really be a drag. I was fortunate that I only got called "Michelle's brother" a few times. Anytime I went out with her, people asked, "Is this your brother?" I didn't have a name. I was just "Michelle's brother". Both of us were in band and took piano from the same teacher – and high expectations were placed on me because of her abilities in both. I had a few of her teachers in middle school and the first day it was always, "Aren't you Michelle's brother?" I have another sister, but she was older so I got far less of that due to her. My highest thanks was that Michelle went to the Baptist church while she was in school and I went to the Methodist so at least I didn't get, "Why don't you pray as well as your sister?" If that had happened, I might really have a complex!

My older sister actually got it far worse. Kim has never been very outgoing, and people often referred to her as "McKim" – starting to call her Michelle because that was the sister that was better known, and only stopping themselves after they had realized their mistake. To this day, if I want to get on her nerves, I refer to my oldest sister as "McKim".

Still, I was lucky – I didn't get it nearly as bad as my other friends. For their first year in high school, I knew kids who whole identity was known as, "Aren't you so-and-so's brother?" If their older sibling was known for sports, they were expected to be just as good. If they were good at academics, then anything less than A was expected. If they were artistic, they were to be the next Da Vinci or Eric Clapton.

I don't know what it was like growing up in the shadow of Peter, but as the younger brother, the first thing I read in today's passage were the words, "and his brother, Andrew." We find that all through Scripture. Even when the gospel writers would be compiling lists of the

disciples of Jesus, right after Peter, it would say, "And his brother, Andrew." What a drag! I'm sure some of you spouses can relate – going out with your husband or wife and being known as their spouse and not for who you are.

We don't know what it was like for Andrew, but it had to be frustrating. In last week's gospel reading, we discovered that it was Andrew he first followed Jesus – literally! He and an unnamed disciple went home with him and had dinner. Afterwards, Andrew took his brother, Simon, to meet Jesus. And that is where today's passage sort of picks up – we don't know how long after that event this happened, but Simon and Andrew were out fishing when Jesus called out to them to follow him. And they did. And from that point on, nothing was the same for any of them.

But for Andrew, he would forever be in the shadow of his more famous sibling. And we have no idea how that made him feel. Many authors have tried to play him up to be like Judas, wanting the spotlight that once was his – just him and Jesus, or maybe a similar role of James to John – equals in the eyes of the Master. But instead, after that day on the water, it would be Peter, and his brother Andrew. And we have no idea how that made him feel.

But I have an idea: probably not too shabby. Andrew is known typically for bringing people to Christ. First, he brought Peter. Later, he brings a boy with a few fish and some loaves to Jesus – and a miracle happens. Andrew has his moments after that – he is hanging out with his brother when they inquire about when the Temple will get destroyed and gets in on a private conversation usually reserved for Peter, James, and John. And once with Philip he brings some Gentiles who are seeking Jesus – once again, he brings people to the Lord – but that really is it. No stories of him preaching in Acts. No stories of great miracles done through him. Nothing special.

And yet, that isn't the end of the story for Andrew. While the Bible doesn't tell the rest of the story, there is a history of him preaching all over Asia. There were stories of his miraculous healings, of his converting many, and possibly most famously, being the first of the disciples to be crucified – not like our Lord, but in an X-shaped cross. The Catholic church has venerated Andrew because they declare he was the first called by the Lord. He is given the title "the Forerunner" because he went ahead of the other future disciples.

What I find amazing about Andrew is this: although I'm sure he realized he was the first, he was not afraid to become the last. It something to us as Christians today, to read the Bible and think, "Man, Andrew got a raw deal." But there is no indication of that at all in the Bible. While he may not have gotten the press time of his brother, he still served the Lord. He didn't get the fame, but he was serving the Master. He wasn't part of the inner circle, but he was known by Jesus.

The Catholic Church says Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, Romania and Russia, I think in many ways he is the forerunner of most of us in the faith. We aren't likely to be like Peter, preaching on Pentecost and converting hundreds. Nor is it likely we will have a Damascus Road incident like Paul – being blinded by the Lord. We are more likely to be like Andrew – being known for nothing more than having an excitement about our God. When he calls, we follow. When we meet someone looking for the Messiah, we take them to Him. And not being too scared to ask our Lord those questions on our heart – and not being to sad when we don't hear exactly the answer we were looking for. I see more of Andrew in the church than any of the disciples.

Among the disciples, Andrew is not even one of the most well known. If I asked any one of you to name 10 people in this church, you would probably begin with people in the spotlight –

Bill or I, Kristin, your Sunday School teacher, Mary Sue – but all of us are here but for a brief time. If I said you could only name people who were not leaders in the church, you might have a little harder time. Andrew was one of those people.

The other day, someone had out "Bible Outburst" and they pulled the card, "Name the Disciples" – and I struggled to get more than 5. "Peter, James, and John" were pretty fast. "Judas" was next. "Matthew" I said struggling a little – and then said, "Levi" just in case since that may have been his other name. And after that I struggled. I'm not sure I ever said "Andrew."

If I quizzed someone in the church for the first 10 members that they could name of the top of their head, you might be hurt that they didn't remember you. And if you talked to them after, you might even discover they didn't remember your name. And then you don't feel apart of the Church. You feel like no one cares. And you feel sorry for yourself.

My message if you have ever felt that was is – be like Andrew. The Bible probably would have called him "what's-his-face" except he had a famous brother. Yet, Jesus knew him. Jesus invited him to eat with him. Jesus called him to be his Disciple. Jesus gave him the power at Pentecost. Andrew was forgotten by God. He was empowered by the Holy Spirit. He was excited to be a friend of our Lord.

And that is our calling as well. God promises to do great things in us – but He doesn't promise to make us great. Well, actually he does – if we are the least, he will make us great. But if you are expecting to be well known in the church and well thought of because of all you have done, look at the example of Andrew. He was there from the very beginning. He introduced the man who would be the cornerstone of the Church to the Messiah. He was an instrument in

feeding the multitudes. And yet, thousands years later, he is just "Simon Peter's brother, oh what's his face".

John the Baptist – the first leader of Andrew – once said to his disciples, "I must decrease so that Jesus may increase".[1] I can't help but wonder if Andrew didn't understand that. Because he lived it. He isn't known for all that he did. He is known for his brother, who changed the world. He is known for being a disciple of the Lord, who brings us eternal life.

Christ calls us to be like Andrew. We watch tv or go to the book store and we see people who have been made famous for following Jesus. We come to church and see the "famous" ones around us. And we wonder what they are doing that we aren't. But it isn't right living or anything special that makes any of them famous. And if any of them aren't living right, it is between them and God – the Bible makes it clear that the greater the spotlight is put on you, the more responsible you are for what you do, for what mistakes you make because the affect others.

I see Christ wanting us not to be ambitious like it seems Judas was, but instead having an excitement for our Lord like Andrew did. Peter made a ton of mistakes that got included in the Bible – his nearly drowning when he tried to walk on water, his denying Jesus 3 times on Good Friday. James and John made mistakes too – trying to get seats of respect in heaven. But Andrew just shared his Lord with those who he felt were seeking the Lord. He ran to his brother. In faith, he brought a young boy to Jesus. Not knowing what else to do, he brought a group of Gentiles to speak to Jesus on a day when Jesus really just wanted to be alone. He wasn't the best speaker. But he knew someone who was. He took them to Jesus.

Jesus wants us to be like that. He doesn't want us to be worried if our names our misspelled in the bulletin. He wants us to be known by Him. Not for how much we gave – but that we gave everything for Him. Not for who was in our family – but that we left our family, let

[1] John 3:30.

everything, and followed Him. Not because we accepted him one day when we were kids – but that we sought Him every day of our lives. That we had a passion for Him. And when we didn't know what else to do, we brought others to Him – because we knew He was what they were really looking for.

If this church had 1,300 Andrews, we would never look to our side and wonder what the Baptist were doing. If we were all like Andrew, we would discover that our pride was going away. We wouldn't worry if people knew our names – but instead that God knows our name. We would instead be seeking ways of bringing people to our Lord.

Andrew was Simon Peter's brother. That is the title that the Bible gives him. But I know another title that Jesus gives him as well: good and faithful servant. We might be better known in this world for those who our parents are, but that really shouldn't matter. Our lives aren't making a name for ourselves in this world. Our lives are simply to be known by our God.

So, what is God calling you to do? If you aren't sure, be like Andrew. Be excited about the one you have discovered. The next time you don't know what to say to someone who is hurting or confused, be like Andrew, and take them to the Lord. Maybe that person will remember you. Maybe they won't. But hopefully, they will remember Jesus Christ. And who better for them to remember anyway?

It may have been a drag being better known as the brother of Peter, but Andrew never lost sight of his calling. That day so many years ago, he threw down his nets on the beach not to claim fame or fortune, but to follow the one who would bring salvation to us all. Christ calls us to be like Andrew. Follow Him. With excitement. With passion and zeal. And not knowing what will happen next – or if even anyone will remember what happens. Be like Andrew. Follow Jesus.