

## **The Importance of Second Fiddle Andrew**

All but one of them gave their lives, a supreme sacrifice for the cause they believed in. Beheaded, crucified, and one, according to tradition, was crucified upside down. Several of them contributed 21 books to what has become the most published, most purchased, and most read literary work of all time— the Bible.

They were the foundation in a spiritual movement that forever changed the course of human history. In 300 years, what started as a fledgling little offshoot of Judaism grew to overcome one of the largest empires to ever exist on the face of earth. Today, more people profess and strive to live according to the teachings and writings recorded by these men than any other religion. We know them simply as the Apostles.

Yet there could have been no more unlikely cast of characters. They were an oddly diverse assortment of personalities and backgrounds. They were fishermen, gruff, uneducated blue collar workers. One was a tax-collector - a hated collaborator with Rome, regarded by other Jews as a traitor and a thief. One was a zealot - a political revolutionary actively working for the forceful, military overthrow of Roman rule. One was a Pharisee - a religious perfectionist and a self-righteous cultural elitist. Others were unknown - We know nothing of their lives before Christ called them, and we know next to nothing of their lives after their three years with Him, yet He chose them to establish the church and change the course of history.

Nobody would have chosen these guys. They didn't have the right education. They didn't have the right background. They didn't have the experience or the proven track record. Their résumés were all wrong. Let's shed a modern light on this. Let's say that Jesus was beginning his earthly ministry today, and contracted a hiring consultant to help him pick his team. Jesus submits his names for approval and receives this email in reply.

To: Jesus, Son of Joseph  
Woodcrafter's Carpenter Shop Nazareth 35922  
Email: Jesus@carpenter.com

From: Jordan Management Consultants  
Jerusalem 26544  
Email: JMC@JerusalemOnline.com

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for management positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our battery of tests; and we have not only run the results through our computer analysis, but have also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant.

It is our professional opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education, and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable, makes impulsive decisions, and is often outspoken and braggadocios. The two brothers, James and John, sons of Zebedee, are given to fits of temper, and are prone to place personal interests above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. We also believe it is our duty to inform you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. James, the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot in particular have radical political and para military leanings. Both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.

One of your candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind, and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious, and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right hand man. All of the other profiles are self-explanatory. We wish you every success in your new venture.

That's the human way of looking at things. Nobody would have picked these guys. Nobody - that is, except for Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus who sees things in people no one else sees. Jesus, who finds potential where everyone else sees only failure. Jesus, who believes in what you can become without holding what you are against you. Jesus, who does the extraordinary with the ordinary. Yes, Jesus, he's the one. He picked them. He picked you.

Jesus took these egocentric, self-serving, unqualified men and changed them into sold-out, world changing servants.

An exploration of this unlikely cast of characters won't only show us what God could do with them, but it is also a comforting and challenging reminder of what God can do with us

Let's begin our exploration this morning with the life of Andrew. Andrew is a guy that always had to play second fiddle to his big brother, Peter. He grew up in Peter's shadow. He heard how Peter was doing in school. How Peter performed on the football team. He got all of Peter's hand-me-downs.

Some of us grew up in the shadow of our brother or sister. Or maybe it was the shadow of our parents that loomed large over our lives. Others of us will never throw the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter touchdown bomb. We will never make multi-million dollar deals. We will never have hundreds of thousands of followers on Instagram.

The truth is, most of us will never be a celebrity. We will never be carried off the field on our team's shoulders. No writer will ever write a rave review of our work. No crowd will ever yell

for our encore. And despite what Andy Warhol said, we will not be famous, even for fifteen minutes.

But have you ever stayed to watch the end credits of a blockbuster movie? Have you ever read the names that scrolled on the screen? Have you ever read what they do? What the heck is a key grip anyway? You see a movie isn't successful only for the dozen stars that appear on the screen. Hundreds and hundreds of people are working behind the scenes and in the shadows. Without them no movie would ever get made, No album would be recorded, No concert would be performed, No team would win the championship. It takes people who are willing to play second fiddle. Without second fiddle players, nothing could be done.

Andrew was a second fiddle player. Andrew was not a star. He would never have appeared in anyone's list of "Who's Who" in anything. Other than when Jesus called him, and few other incidental references, Andrew takes the stage in Scripture on only three occasions. In each instance, Andrew was bringing someone to Jesus. He is not known for any great thing he said or did. All he did was bring people to Jesus. Sometimes the people he led to Jesus led to great things. But Andrew was never in the spotlight. He never got the credit. He never got the leading role. He played second fiddle, but without second fiddle God would not have been able to conduct the beautiful symphony that he did

### **I. Andrew Brings Peter to Jesus**

Andrew was the brother of Peter. He was from the town of Bethsaida. Bethsaida was a large, Gentile city built by Herod on the northern shores of Galilee. It was from here that he and Peter had their fishing business. Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist. He was there when Jesus was baptized by John. He heard what John had to say about Jesus. He knew that John believed that Jesus was the Messiah. He knew that He believed John, and so he believed in Jesus. This is where we pick up the story.

*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). And he brought him to Jesus (John 1:40-42)."*

Andrew's conversion experience was so intense, he brought his brother to Jesus and convinced him he was the Messiah as well. Of course we know that Peter would become one of Jesus' inner circle. He would become the leader of the apostles following the ascension of Jesus. It was his sermon that was the first recorded sermon ever in the history of the church. He would become the most influential leader in the early church. Andrew, well, Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. Without Andrew, there is no Peter,

There is no indication that Andrew was ever jealous of Peter. There is no hint that he felt slighted. In a similar situation we might have considered ourselves snubbed. "After all," Andrew

could have said, "I was one of the first two disciples. I was the one who brought Peter to Jesus. Why am I not included in the inner circle? Yet from all we know, Andrew was content to play second fiddle. All that mattered was that he was a follower of Jesus and that he could play his part well, however small that part might be.

We also see here in Andrew a bit of God's definition of success. God defines success differently from the world. Success in God's eyes is not just achieving for ourselves, but it is enabling others to achieve. That is what Andrew did for Peter Andrew put Peter in a place he could thrive, and he gave him the freedom to thrive when he got there. He didn't try to manage or manipulate Peter to satisfy his own wants. There is something here every church needs to learn. True, successful ministry happens only when we are willing to put others in a position where they can thrive.

Too much attention is put on me, myself, and I. We tend to focus too much on our own needs, our own gifts, and our own desires. This hinders ministry all over the church because we want to see ministry done our way. But when we're willing to let others succeed, and we're willing to give them the room they need, and not worry about getting the credit, then ministry can flourish. After all, God should get the glory anyway? Right?

## II. Andrew Brings A Small Boy to Jesus

But it wasn't just future leading apostles that Andrew brought to Jesus. Later on, in John 6:5-9 we read about this scene,

*When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip. "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.*

*Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"*

*Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" (John 6:5-9)*

It's a story most of us know very well, the feeding of the 5,000. All day the crowds had been following and listening to Jesus. They had not eaten all day, and the sun was beginning to grow lazy in the sky. They were too many, too far out of town. But Jesus knew they needed physical food as well as spiritual food. It wasn't just the crowds that needed fed spiritually, though. So did the disciples. And so Jesus uses the occasion of a physical feeding to provide some spiritual feeding for the twelve. He asks a probing questioning to see if they were really paying attention, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" Jesus already knew, but what about the disciples?

It shouldn't have been a trick question. They've already seen amazing miracles. They have seen that Jesus is not only Lord of the spiritual realm, but the natural world as well. They've seen Jesus change ordinary water into extraordinary wine. They've seen him heal an official's son with just a word. They've seen a lame man walk away with his mat rolled up and tucked beneath his arm after just one short encounter with Jesus. They've seen all of this. They should know by now. But do they have faith enough? Are they really beginning to understand?

Philip doesn't get it. He's still thinking in earthly terms, *"Eight months wages wouldn't be enough to give one a bite."* What about Andrew? Well, he doesn't quite understand either, but what little he does have, he brings to Jesus, *"Here is a boy..."* Maybe not quite the answer Jesus was looking for, but it was something to work with— Five loaves and two fish. It wasn't much. But it was all he had. And he gave it to Jesus. That's what counts.

And notice here how Andrew is referred to, Simon Peter's brother. He's already been eclipsed by his sibling. But it doesn't bother Andrew to play second fiddle. Once again, Andrew only plays a small part, but God does great things with it.

How about you? Will you give God all you have, even if it's just a little? Are you willing to let God do great things with your small part? Because you see, in God's eyes, there are no small parts. Second fiddle is just as important. The fact that it is the second part doesn't mean that it is second rate. No second-rate violinist would ever be hired by a symphony to play second violin.

### **III. Andrew Brings Some Greeks To Jesus**

Andrew is not through. In John 12:20-22, he brings even more to Jesus.

*Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "We would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew: Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. (John 12:20-22)*

We don't know what these Greeks wanted. We don't know what the conversation was about. We have no idea what came of this meeting. But we do know that there were people who needed to see Jesus, so Andrew took them to see Jesus.

Don't miss the fact that these were Greeks. They were Gentiles. They weren't Jews. Good, Godly Jewish men didn't associate with Gentiles. It would have been very easy for Andrew to think he should keep these people from Jesus, that he needed to protect Jesus from these people; that they weren't worthy of Jesus.

You're going to run into some people in life that you're going to think they don't deserve Jesus. They're not ready for Jesus. They're not the kind of people we want in church. But it's not our job to be the bouncer for Jesus or the gatekeeper for the church. Our job is simple: bring people

to Jesus. It doesn't matter who they are. It doesn't matter what their past is. It doesn't matter how much of a mess their life is. We bring them to Jesus and He does the rest."

We live in a world full of people who need to see Jesus, who's going to take them? Will it be you? Perhaps God wants you to be the Andrew in their lives.

We can learn a great deal from Andrew, because most of us have to play second fiddle. We should accept our roles both graciously and gratefully. In musical compositions second violin is equally important to first violin. A musical score is composed for all of the instruments in an orchestra. The harmony would be incomplete and the effect of the composition would be diminished without a second violin.

I have shared this quote before from the great Leonard Bernstein. He was once asked what is the most difficult instrument to play, to which he answered, "2<sup>nd</sup> violin. I can get all the 1<sup>st</sup> violinists I need, but to find a competent and skilled 2<sup>nd</sup> violinist who plays with enthusiasm, that's the problem."

You know, all of this seems familiar. I've heard something like this before.

*The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts, and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts, and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ... The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!"... God has combined the members of the body and has given greater the problem honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it, if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

Let me tell you the story of Al and Frank, and for you old school Monday Night Football fans, I don't mean Al Michaels and Frank Gifford. Al and Frank were best friends studying to be artists, but they were also very poor. So they decided that one of them would work, while the other studied art full-time, when he was done, they would reverse roles. They drew lots, and it was decided that Al would study art full-time, while Frank supported them.

After several years, Al finished his studies, and eventually his work was acclaimed. He then returned to exchange places with his friend, Frank. But when he arrived, he discovered what a great sacrifice Frank had made for him. Frank had worked at such hard, manual labor that his fingers and sensitive hands had become permanently crippled. It was not possible for him ever to be an artist, but there was no bitterness in his heart. His happiness was in the joy that he had made Al's successful career as an artist possible.

One day as Al saw Frank kneeling, his rough and gnarled hands clasped in prayer, Al began to sketch those roughly chiseled hands. Out of that original sketch came what is now Albrecht

Durer's most famous and enduring work, a painting simply entitled *Praying Hands*. And though Franz Knigstein never became an artist, his haggard hands, that made Albrecht's career possible, became the centerpiece in one the most famous works of art in history.

Franz, we salute you.

Andrew, we salute you.

To all who graciously and gratefully play second fiddle, we salute you.

We need more of you.