



# TRUTH APPLICATIONS

Sermons

## Where Is Andrew?

John 1.35–42; 6.1–10; 12.20–26

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### Introduction

In the early 1990s, the school where I taught added the 12-minute newscast by Channel One to our daily schedule. Generally speaking, the reporters were young and not as polished as their older counterparts. One young man, a few years older than the others, was the exception. Because he was more seasoned, he was sent to cover nearly every major story, so often that, in the cases of the catastrophes he covered, I joked to my students that he must have been *causing* those events.

Since then, I recall seeing only one or two of the other reporters with the larger networks. But the reporter who seemed to be everywhere for Channel One has done okay; for some time, he has been featured on a show bearing his name on CNN and has also been featured in the regular rotation of contributors to the CBS news magazine production, *60 Minutes*. His name is Anderson Cooper.

Some people seem to have a knack of being anywhere significant events occur. They don't cause the events, but often their presence influences things after they arrive. Andrew, the apostle whose life is the basis for this study was one of those people. One article notes that "the NT shows little interest" in him (MacDonald 1992, 242), and in fact his name appears only 12 times.

- Three are in lists of the twelve apostles (Matt 10.2; Mark 3.18; Luke 6.14).
- Two are in the reports of Jesus calling four fisherman to follow him (Matt 4.18; Mark 1.16).
- One says that he shared the house where Jesus cured Simon's mother-in-law (Mark 1.29).
- One includes him with those who asked Jesus for more details about the temple's destruction (Mark 13.3).
- Even in John, where his name appears the other five times (John 1.40, 44; 6.9; 12.22), we are given no additional details about his family or home (Burge 2000, 82).

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But when Andrew appeared, good things invariably happened. Like many of us, he was present with little fanfare. But that fact reminds us that it is just such people whom God often uses in the best ways. We'll focus on three texts in John.

### **A Man of Insight**

In John 1.35–42, Andrew recognized that Jesus was the Messiah (v. 41). His recognition was not instantaneous. He had been a follower of John the Baptist who pointed him and another disciple to Jesus as the Lamb of God. They “followed him” and “stayed with him that day” (vv. 37, 39), giving them some opportunity to evaluate him and see how he measured up to John’s affirmation. But Andrew didn’t delay long in reaching at least the preliminary conclusion that they had found the Messiah, a conclusion he then shared with his brother Peter.

In John 6.1–10, Andrew was the one who recognized the possibilities in the fact that the boy had the five loaves and two fish. The contrast between Andrew and Philip in this text is noteworthy: one saw the cost—eight months wages; the other remembered the signs they had seen Jesus do and believed that he would surely be able to do something in this case.

In John 12.20–26, Andrew joined with—or perhaps confirmed the thinking of—Philip in understanding that Jesus would receive the Greeks who came seeking to know more about him; they knew there was room for Gentiles in Jesus’s presence (20–22).

### **A Man Who Showed Initiative**

In all three of the passages we’re studying from John, we see Andrew taking initiative. In 1.39, 41, Andrew and the other disciple of John who was with him “came and saw where [Jesus] was staying” and went and stayed with him for the rest of that day. But Andrew then went and “found his own brother” to tell him they had found the Messiah. In 6.9, he saw how the boy’s meal could be of use and spoke up. In 12.22, he and Philip “went and told Jesus” that the Greeks wanted to see him.

Think about these situations more. Would Peter have come to know and follow Jesus anyway? There’s no way to know, but we do know that as events did occur, Peter found Jesus because of Andrew. Would Jesus have discovered the loaves and fish or found another way to feed the 5,000? We can surmise that he would have, but Andrew’s action makes the question moot. Would Philip have led the Greeks to Jesus on his own? He was a follower of Jesus, so it’s certainly not unreasonable to think he would have either led them himself or turned to someone else among the disciples. But, as the record stands, we don't have to wonder. In each instance, Andrew took the initiative and did what he was capable of doing.

### **A Man Who Used His Influence**

Others have also pointed out that Andrew used his influence for good. As Gary Burge writes, “Each time we meet [him] in the Gospel [of John] he is bringing someone to Jesus” (Burge 2000, 76). In John 1.41, “he first found his own brother Simon.” In 6.9, he took the boy with the loaves and fish to Jesus, only vaguely aware of the difference it would make. In 12.22, he “went and told Jesus” about the Greeks.

Two things in particular stand out. First, his actions in each case depended on where the people in each case were in their lives and determining their specific needs. He brought Simon to the

one he knew to be the Messiah (John 1.41). He brought the boy to him in the belief that Jesus could do something, but he did not presume to know what it might be (6.9). In the case of the Greeks, he simply told Jesus about their request (12.22).

Second, and of greater importance, in each case he took the person to *Jesus*. Andrew knew he could not feed the 5,000; maybe Jesus could. Andrew was not the one the Greeks needed to see; Jesus was. Andrew could not live Simon's life or have his faith; Peter needed a relationship with Jesus.

His example leads to two questions. How important is it for us to use the influence we have? How much more important is it for us to do what we can to help people see and enter a relationship with Jesus?

### A Man Who Acted Intentionally

Andrew was so effective in what he did because he first intended to be a disciple of Jesus. Notice that, where Andrew was concerned, we are not told the details we like to know about people. For that matter, we're not told much about Peter and the others either. Their stories are important because of their relationship with Jesus.

When we think of Andrew's story this way, we see that he shows the essence of genuine discipleship. The language of 1.39, 43 is instructive. In verse 43, the account of Philip's introduction to Jesus that parallels Andrew's, Jesus told Philip to "follow me." In verse 39, he told Andrew and another disciple to "come and you will see." The words for seeing (ὁράω, *horaō*; βλέπω, *blepō*) are frequently used in John's gospel—84 times in all—so much so that the phrase, "come and see" is practically a formula for discipleship (Burge 2000, 343).

But that is only part of the story. John then tells us that they "stayed with him that day" (v. 39). The idea of staying, remaining, or abiding [μένω, *menō*] occurs 40 times in John to describe the disciple-master relationship (cf. 4.40; 6.56; 8.31; 12.46; 14.17, 25; 15.4–7, 9–10, 16; 21.22–23). The word accentuates the fact that Andrew had a personal relationship with Jesus, one that opened his eyes to seeing and living the truth Jesus embodied and taught. What is more, Andrew intended to follow him and sustain his relationship. Because he did so, he also intended to introduce others to Jesus. He knew the truth and blessings to be found in the relationship and wanted others to experience it too.

### Conclusion

Referring specifically to Philip, but with words that could also describe Andrew, Bruce McLarty has written:

When Jesus called Philip, He said simply, "Follow Me." At that point in Philip's life, there was much he did not understand about Jesus and little that he did understand. Nevertheless, he followed—and, in following, he gradually came to see who Jesus was. If we want to understand Jesus, we must first be willing to follow Him; for it is in following that we come to understand (McLarty 1997, 49).

God accomplished great things through people like Andrew. He still can—if we are open to letting him. Will we follow Jesus, even when we do not understand?

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## Works Cited

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