

- Readings: Matthew 4:18-24; John 1:35-42, 6:5-13, 12:20-26

Introduction

- St Andrew - patron saint of Scotland - don't know how much that means to you!
 - not a lot to me, I confess!
 - (should really have this sermon in November, at St Andrew's day...)
- As with many of the disciples, various legends grew up surrounding their lives:
 - in Andrew's case without even a whiff of Scriptural foundation!
 - for instance the St Andrew's cross is an accretion to the early legend that Andrew was crucified.... but didn't want to dishonour his Lord, so asked to be crucified on a diagonal-shaped cross.
- None of the legends, however, actually tells us anything about Andrew himself, or the **kind of priorities he might suggest as our patron saint!**
- This evening spend time getting to know the guy, spending time with him:
 - hopefully learn from his priorities...
- Fairly anonymous - not someone we know a lot about:
 - one of the **disciples** - maybe remember that he was **called by Jesus with his brother Peter** while at the fishing... guess that would be about it.
- We read **four** of the **five** incidents where Andrew is particularly recorded as being present:
 - the other is when he was with Peter, James & John listening to Jesus' teaching on the signs of the end of the age in Mark 13
 - and that tells us more about Jesus than about Andrew!
- **Take each of those incidents in turn, and see what kind of a picture builds up:**

"We have found the Messiah!!"

- **John 1:35-42**
- Andrew **disciple of John Baptist** - looking for God's Kingdom.
- One of the few who picked up on John's message that one greater than he was coming after him
 - who followed John's drawing attention **away from himself towards Jesus.**
- Imagine pain it must have caused John to lose disciples:
 - Andrew and possibly John (unnamed in John's gospel).
- John introduced them to Jesus - and they started to get to know him.
- **"Where do you live"** probably implies, **"where can we find you when we want to ask questions, not just today but in future?"**
- So imagine joy when Jesus immediately says, **"come and see"**
 - not just **"here's my phone number"**, but **"come on up for coffee!"**
- Andrew was a seeker, someone with a "prototype" faith, just beginning to germinate and grow, meeting Jesus, spending time with him, learning about him and from him - introduced by another who very quickly fades out of sight.
- **Andrew spent time with Jesus, and time builds relationships.**
- Andrew also began to put into practise the lesson he'd just learned from John the Baptist:
 - **he started to introduce other people to Jesus!**
- Andrew immediately told his brother Simon.
- Sometimes family and close friends are the hardest to share our faith with:
 - because they know us through and through, because we know that we can't get away from them, because we are so used to the way they are that we find it hard to think how they might be, perhaps even because our own identity (son of, father of, sister of...) is wrapped up in who they are....
- I've seen people weeping that they found it so hard to speak of the one who is most important to them to their families.

- Need to run the risk of exposing ourselves, what we do and whom we believe.
- Maybe have to begin simply by (i) talking of the things we are involved in at church or wherever, and (ii) revealing our motivations:
 - why was I involved in SS (work colleagues at EPCC never found that out!).
- As Andrew spent time with Jesus, as his relationship with him grew, he naturally shared him with others.

"At once they... went with him"

- **Matthew 4:18-24**
- Andrew was a fisherman - quite probably in partnership with his brother Simon Peter - certainly they were close - when Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law, she was at "the home of Simon and Andrew".
- Fishing wasn't just his hobby, his Saturday afternoon relaxation - it was his job, career, livelihood.
- Seems that after some time of getting to know Jesus, Andrew was confronted by him with the decision to follow him - to leave behind his job, his security, and follow.
- (Scholars have sometimes thought the two episodes are contradictory - seems much more likely that they mark different stages in Andrew's developing relationship with Jesus.)
- Andrew decided to follow - and to learn from Jesus how to catch men!
- For Andrew, his bringing other people to Jesus, his calling on them to follow him, was always in the context of him having taken that step of commitment himself.
- He knew what he was talking about - he knew Jesus, and he understood what it meant to follow him.
- That's critical for us too, as we seek to introduce others to Jesus:
 - we need to know him for ourselves;
 - we need to have committed ourselves to him whole-heartedly.
- Over the years I've done little bits and bobs of outdoor activities:
 - mostly through outdoor centres - abseiling, rock-climbing, etc - absolute need to trust the instructors - knowing they've done it themselves - they "know the ropes" (literally!) - OK, I'll do it too...
- Andrew knew Jesus - Andrew had trusted Jesus and demonstrated that trust by following him himself.
 - how will someone know you trust Jesus if you never allow them to see it?
- I was immensely challenged at a conference a number of years ago during one of the seminars:
 - Elaine Storkey - London store (John Lewis) - trying things on - changing rooms - overheard sales assistant talking - stayed for ages to hear more!
 - talking about her church - all the people who came - how their lives were being affected for God - what they were learning - young people struggling not to succumb to pressure to sleep together - people struggling with alcohol - people repenting of sins, practically, and making up (relationships, money, ...) - pressure pastor was under - people who were back-sliding - husband of church member coming to faith - etc, etc, etc.
 - Like a soap opera!!! Other staff were agog, wanting to hear next installment.
- **Why?**
- Because it was real - because that woman was introducing her colleagues to the reality of Jesus at work in people's lives, not to the shallow surface stuff we so often content ourselves with!
- So for Andrew, he could draw others to Jesus for he knew him himself.

"There is a boy here..."

- **John 6:5-13**
- Very familiar scene of the feeding of the 5000 - one of the few incidents that occurs in all four gospels - great crowds following Jesus - out into a remote place to hear his teaching.
 - **nothing for lunch!**
 - Jesus wants to stretch his disciples
 - essentially asks Philip "**what are we going to do?**"
(*May well be that Philip and Andrew are friends - they are the disciples mentioned by name here, and in the incident with the Greeks in John 12, Philip brought them first to Andrew...*)
- Philip doesn't answer the question - doesn't even bother with where they could buy bread; overwhelmed by cost - and presumably the fact that they didn't have 2/3 of a years wages to hand!
- Its **Andrew** who brings the boy (could be a young man or a slave - same word) to Jesus.
 - how brave a thing it was for Andrew to do - nothing like enough for the huge crowd - so much so it was a joke!
 - sniggering in the front row of the crowd, or from the other disciples?
- Stupid thing to do or say, except that it was **Jesus to whom he brought the boy.**
 - prepared to take the risk, of disappointment and of the destruction of his reputation, because it was to Jesus he was bringing the boy.
- Did he guess what Jesus would do? **I doubt it!**
- But he came to Jesus anyway!
- **We too need to learn that boldness.**
 - there are some situations in which it seems unlikely that anything will change, that God will intervene - the available resources are too small, the chances of success too slim, whatever...
 - do we **give up**, walk away?
- **Andrew brought the boy to Jesus anyway** - we should bring people to Jesus anyway, not knowing what he will do with them or make of them.
 - many will have heard of **Nicky Cruz**, a gang-member in 50s or 60s New York - and pastor David Wilkerson who sought to bring that vicious thug to Jesus - chances of success, negligible - but Jesus was able to completely transform that situation, that person, and bring not only one gang-member but thousands of others since to faith and salvation!

"...the two of them went and told Jesus"

- **John 12:20-26**
- Finally Andrew and the Greeks:
 - in Jerusalem, week before Jesus death;
 - culmination and focus of Jesus' whole ministry;
 - been working with Jews mainly up till now;
- Greeks come to Philip, who asks Andrew what to do and together they bring them to Jesus. (Philip and Andrew's names are Greek sounding...)
 - why was there such a big deal for Philip? Why did he need to ask Andrew too?
 - Gentiles - outsiders - not able to come to God in popular understanding - outside God's covenant.
- Jesus is Messiah, **Jewish promised Saviour and king** - for Gentiles too?
 - for Jesus it is a sign that his hour has come, for all nations and not just Jews and local inhabitants are coming to him - he is to be Saviour of the world.
- Again, there was a **big step for Andrew to take here, bringing people to Jesus.**
 - these were outsiders, beyond the pale of those who were religious.
- This is the other thing we can learn from Andrew - not just to bring people to Jesus, but an openness to bring the outsiders to him.

- I'm pretty certain everyone here tonight can think of someone they know or come into contact with who seems "outside":
 - maybe its because of the faith they currently adhere to (Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Mormon, whatever...)
 - maybe its because of the particular sins they flaunt - sexual relations outside marriage, maybe a few others (though striking how many other major sins, of greed, injustice, envy, disrespect... we are prepared to live with in the church!);
 - maybe its their attitude to church or to Christians as you've seen it expressed over the years - "they could never become a Christian!", "I can't see them ever coming to church here!"
- There's a need for **boldness** - trusting Jesus that he can handle such people, even if we are not particularly sure what to say or do!
- Andrew, consistently, introduced people to Jesus - in ways appropriate to the particular context - **the excited running up to his brother Simon Peter, the more tentative "there's a boy here..."**, **the uncertainty of going with Philip to Jesus about the Greeks.**
- We too will follow in his footsteps, introducing people to Jesus:
 - and we'll spend time planning ways of doing that;
 - ask yourself "how do I get to know people better?"
 - most often answer will be a variant on spending time with them and will include some opportunity for information (initially), then later plans, emotions, fears, hopes to be shared - communication.
- **How can I introduce XXX to Jesus?**
 - mention him as you might a friend;
 - provide contexts in which information can be exchanged - things you do and say, answers you give to questions, ...

Conclusion: the Introducers!

- **Lets be introducers**, those who bring together and then step back:
 - **who put Jesus to the fore and ourselves and our ways last.**
- **Lets be Andrews** - of whom we know so little, for he always pointed people to and brought people to his Lord.