

"Lesser Known People of the New Testament"
"Andrew"

We are continuing this series of messages where we're looking at people who might be considered "minor characters" in the Biblical drama – sometimes only briefly mentioned – but who played an important role in the early church, and can instruct and inspire us even now. Today, we'll look at a man named **Andrew**.

I want to read 2 passages of Scripture mentioning Andrew, and see if you can spot a common element in both of these Scriptural references.

The first one is John 1:35-40: "The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother."

The other Scripture is from the account where Jesus feeds over 5,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish. As a huge crowd has gathered on the side of a mountain to hear Jesus, feeding them becomes an issue. Jesus asks, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" Then it says this: "One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?'" (John 6:8-9).

Did you catch something found in both of these Scriptures? *Both refer to Andrew as "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother."* Wouldn't you just love that if you were Andrew? That's the tag for your name: you're Peter's brother.

Simon Peter – he's a big name person in the New Testament! When Jesus asks, "Who do you say I am?" it's Peter who speaks up, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus responds, "You're blessed, Peter, and you're the rock on which I'll build my church." It's Simon Peter who gets out of the boat and tries to walk on the water to Jesus. It's Simon Peter who's a member of that inner circle of 3 disciples (Peter, James and John) who are with Jesus on the mountain when He is transfigured, and Moses and Elijah appear to them. Andrew wasn't there. *"Andrew, Simon Peter's brother."* Andrew is in the shadow of his dominant, headline-grabbing brother.

Did you ever feel like you're living in the shadow of somebody else? Someone else who gets all the attention? Someone else who outshines you in some way? It happens a lot, doesn't it?

It can happen in families. A husband or wife is the dominant person, or gets most of the attention. And the spouse feels left out, even invisible sometimes. In one church I served a woman who was a member of the church was having marital problems. Her husband was a school principal, well educated, while the wife lacked both the education and the social skills

her husband had. And to be honest, she wasn't overly attractive in her physical appearance. In counseling with her, it was easy to see that she felt overshadowed by her better educated, more socially adept, husband.

It can happen between brothers and sisters. One child in the family feels that a sister or brother is the favored one, and they're always living in that sibling's shadow. It can be seen in a school setting, where the older child in a family is an outstanding student, or gifted athlete. Then their brother or sister comes along, and is constantly being compared to that older sibling. "Oh, you're Tracy's sister – she was such a great student!" "Was Jack Smith your brother? He's one of the best ball players we've ever had at the school." (Like you didn't already know!).

A pastor writes this: "I've been in my brother's shadow most of my life. When Bill was nine years old he was a star in the West Grove Little League. He played in a field rimmed by signs advertising local businesses. In the middle of center field was a sign for the local saving and loan. All the kids knew that if anyone ever hit a homerun out of the ballpark right over that sign, a savings account would be opened in their name and the bank would make the first deposit. Bill was the first one to hit the magic home run.

"The bank president came to a game to present Bill with something symbolic of the savings account. The ceremony was held on the pitcher's mound. Bill, a charming, blue-eyed, blonde so impressed the bank president that the bank decided to feature Bill in an advertising campaign. As a skinny 13-year-old with red hair, freckles, braces and glasses I didn't appreciate the day a photographer came out to our house and spent an afternoon photographing Bill in his baseball uniform—pitching, batting, leaning on the bat—you get the picture. I had always suspected that there was something special about Bill and a few weeks after the photo session all the local newspapers confirmed that for me, running ads with huge photos of Bill that said, "Bill Hannum is a winner and you can be too when you open a savings account at the West Grove Savings and Loan."

"Just like Peter got a great deal more ink in the New Testament than Andrew, my brother throughout his life got and continues to get a lot more press than I ever will. Just last year a local historian wrote a book about Penn Township where my mother has lived for most of her life. He interviewed and wrote about her and the article contained many mistakes. It says for example, 'Mrs. Hannum has one child, a son, named Bill, who is a policeman in Petersburg, Virginia.'"

This living in the shadow of someone else can happen in the work situation. We take the place of someone who retired, or moved to another department or another company, and get the message that we'll never be able to do the job like they did.

I've had this in my line of work. You go to a new church, and somehow feel like you're living in the shadow of the previous pastor, or a revered pastor from the past. At one church it was both the former pastor, and a retired pastor who had served that church and still showed up every so often. At another church it was living in the shadow of a pastor who led that church during its heyday, when the church was packed with people. A parishioner at another church told me how

dynamic the previous pastor was (the unspoken assumption being that I wasn't like that).

I had been at one church maybe a month or so, and word got back to me that a prominent member of the congregation was telling people that he didn't think I could fill the shoes of the previous pastor (I think his shoe size must have been about a 22½). I thought, "For heavens sake, give me a chance!" But this story ends well: I actually came to love that man and his family. He was the photographer at our wedding!

This living in the shadow of someone else can happen to those who live with someone who's in the public eye. It's easy to feel this way if you are the spouse, say, of a doctor, or a college president, or a community leader who's very visible in the community. It can happen with pastors. Ask Nancy! Like she's "the pastor's wife" (and doesn't have a name of her own). There have been times when we've been in line after the service greeting people, and a person has walked up to me, talked to me, then walked right by Nancy who's next to me, like she were invisible.

Most of us, in some way, at least at times, has felt like we're living in the shadow of someone else who's more prominent, more gifted, more important, than we are. *Andrew, in a sense, is the patron saint of those who feel like they're living in the shadow of some other person.*

So what can we do? Well, here are some typical responses. *We become bitter, and jealous.* We resent that person and our situation, and become jealous of him or her. Another response: *We put ourselves down.* We give in to feelings of inferiority, low self-esteem. We view ourselves as second rate, second best. Needless to say, neither of the above is a positive solution to the problem!

I think we can look at Andrew and find some help, however! Turn again to John 1:35-40. Andrew is a disciple of John the Baptist. The two of them are with John one day when Jesus walks by. "Look, here's the Lamb of God!" John says, pointing to Jesus. And Andrew and this other man begin to follow *Jesus*. They go with Jesus to the place He is staying. Let's pick up the story. "One of the two who heard John speak and follow him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, 'You are Simon, son of John. You are to be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter'" (John 1:40-42).

What was the first thing Andrew did after staying a while with the Lord? He goes to his brother, Peter, and says, "We have found the Messiah!" John writes, "He brought Simon to Jesus" (John 1:42). Peter becomes super famous as a disciple of Jesus, but Andrew is the one who introduced Peter to the Lord! In the book, "12 Ordinary Men," John MacArthur writes that when introducing Peter to Jesus, "Andrew must have known that Peter would take charge, yet he brought him anyway—this says much about his character."

Hold that thought. Now let's look at some words found in John, chapter 12. "Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from

Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus" (John 12:20-22). Some Greeks are in Jerusalem at one of the religious festivals. They come to Philip with a request: We want to see Jesus. These are Gentiles, Greeks, and they want to meet Jesus. What does Philip do? "Philip went and told Andrew" (John 12:22). Why did he go to Andrews? It doesn't say. Maybe Andrew had a reputation of introducing people to Jesus! Because he and Philip go to Jesus and connect Him with these Greek seekers.

Andrew isn't mentioned a lot in the New Testament. But one thing stands out: *It seems as though he's always bringing people to Jesus.* If you were known as someone who's always bringing people to Jesus, would you feel good about that? I would hope! Is that something important? I would think! You get the point, don't you?

Just because we may be overshadowed by someone else doesn't mean what we do isn't important, or that we ourselves aren't important and valued! We may see the public figure, the one in the news, the headline grabber, but think of the people behind the scenes enabling that doctor or borough council member or TV anchor to do their job. The support staff. The spouse or children who often make sacrifices so that this person can be in the spotlight. Maybe we can't do what someone else does, but we can do what we're cut out to do.

Something that follows from this: ***It's just not helpful to always be comparing ourselves with someone else.*** We've heard that before; but it's so important. Stop comparing yourself to someone else! If we're into comparing ourselves with others, we'll always find someone who's more gifted or better at things than we are. Can I be at peace with who I am, and what I can do to contribute to the big picture?

One other thought that follows: ***Our value is rooted in God – not in whether or not we outshine someone else!*** If my sense of worth, my self-esteem, is dependent on whether or not I think I'm better than someone else, I'm in trouble! Because there will always be someone better at something, or more gifted than me! So you're the head of a company? There's always someone who heads a bigger company than yours! You're a good musician? There's always someone better at singing or playing an instrument than you. So you're the Vice-President of the U.S. You're in the shadow of the President. You're the President of the U.S.? In the minds of some you will always live in the shadow of a previous President who accomplished more than you!

Your value – my value – is rooted in God! That's part of the good news of the gospel! No matter what you look like, how much or how little talent you have, whether people pay much attention to you or not – you are of infinite value because you've been created by God, in His image. You are unique and special, and loved so much by God that He gave His Son Jesus to die for your sins.

So, Andrew had to live with being called, "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother!" As far as I can tell, Andrew never read the gospel John wrote. If he had, I wonder if he might have called John out

on they way John describes Andrew! "John...why am I always referred to as 'Andrew, Simon Peter's brother!' C'mon, give me a break!" But for all we can tell, Andrew graciously accepted being overshadowed by his sibling. We don't know if he ever complained about it, but from all indications we can guess that he was at peace with being himself, and doing what he was called and gifted to do.

Hopefully, we won't go down that road of being jealous of someone who gets more attention than we do...or putting ourselves down because we're always comparing ourselves to others. But rather, we can be at peace with who we are and what we are gifted and called to do, because we know our self-value is rooted in the love of a God who created us, and redeemed us through His Son Jesus.

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