

# We Are the Church

## Part Six: Introduce People to Jesus

*John 1:40-42; Matthew 4:18-20; Luke 19:10*

### 1. The calling

- *Luke 15:4-6*

- first

- find

- family

### 2. The conversation

- *Luke 8:39; Acts 8:4; 1 Timothy 1:12; Psalm 107:2*

- spoken

- simple

- sure

### 3. The culmination

love.learn.live.

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## **We Are the Church**

### **Part Six<sup>1</sup>: Introduce People to Jesus**

I remember walking into the lobby of Chapman Hall – an old brick dormitory that was the freshman men's dorm on the campus where I went to college. There was a bunch of people hanging around in there – guys and girls (it was the only place in the dorm where the opposite sex was allowed!). And as I remember, in my mind the crowd grew silent and my eyes were tunnel-visioned to this very attractive and vivacious blond girl. I thought to myself, "I've got to meet that girl!" Later, a friend of mine introduced me to her. Of course, it was Shelly! It took more than a year before I'd get to actually go on a date with her, but boy am I glad we were introduced! The rest, as they say, is history!

Introductions have the potential to change your life. If you call yourself a Christian, then you've already had the greatest introduction ever; you've been introduced to Jesus! And you now have the extreme privilege of introducing others to the greatest person they'd ever want to know!

We are continuing in our series called, "We Are the Church," exploring some of the ways that we are the church, even if we temporarily can't all meet together in one place yet. But most of what the Bible tells us about the Church has to do with our unity in Christ to accomplish his mission. Our mission as a church is really pretty simply stated, and it encompasses everything we do here. Our mission, if you don't know it, is:

*Introduce People to Jesus Christ*

*Equip People with a Faith that Works*

*Live as People with Purpose.*

As a church, everything we do is to accomplish this. Here's what it means: we will love people enough to introduce them to Jesus, and we show he is real in the way we love people. We will learn and grow in our faith, and we will live our lives on purpose for his kingdom. We love, learn, and live. We follow that mission because we are the church.

So today we want to explore the first part – introducing people to Jesus Christ. We've chosen that word "introduce" intentionally, because it is really vital to our mission and it speaks volumes about our attitude and approach to how we share the Good News of God's love. We don't preach at people, we don't debate with people,

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<sup>1</sup> Based on a Bible Study by Francis Dixon, "Series 15, Study 2, *Andrew: Bringing Others to Jesus*," [www.wordsoflife.co.uk](http://www.wordsoflife.co.uk)

we don't thrust pamphlets into people's faces, and we certainly don't argue, berate, or judge people. We believe we have met the greatest person ever – the greatest God ever – and he is so great and so loving and so giving and so rescuing and so redeeming and so forgiving that we *know* you would love him too! We can't wait to introduce you to him. Now, if a person hasn't met Jesus and doesn't know him yet, we know we can't *make* someone accept Jesus; we're not here to *make* anybody do anything. But we *are* confident that you will love him too, so we want to introduce him to you. Whether or not you want to get to know him better is entirely up to you. Either way, we will keep loving you and respecting you regardless of what you do.

Now, there are a lot of examples in the New Testament of people introducing others to Jesus, but we are going to look at the example of Andrew. We learn in the Gospel of John that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist's. John the Baptist introduced his disciples to Jesus, so Andrew began following Jesus. Andrew immediately realized that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, whom the Jewish prophets had promised centuries ago. Let's pick up the story from there:

“Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means ‘Christ’). Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, ‘Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas’ (which means ‘Peter’).” (John 1:40-42, nlt)

Andrew is mentioned only a few times in the New Testament, but each time we see him, he is introducing people to Jesus. First was the passage we just read, when Andrew introduced his brother Peter to Jesus. Then, Andrew introduced the little boy with the five loaves and the two fish to Jesus and Jesus used that little boy's lunch to perform an amazing miracle, feeding over 5,000 people (John 6:8-9). Finally, Andrew introduced a group of Greeks to Jesus (John 12:20-22).

Introducing people to Jesus is the *primary task* we have as Christians, and that's why it is first in our tri-priority mission statement. What we see Andrew doing is exactly what Jesus had told him to do:

“Jesus walked alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, because they were fishermen. ‘Come, follow me,’ he said, ‘and I'll show you how to fish for people.’ Right away, they left their nets and followed him.” (Matthew 4:18-20, ceb)

Andrew took that call to heart and we see him doing it throughout the New Testament.

When we introduce others to Jesus, we are continuing the very mission Jesus said that he came to accomplish:

“For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.”  
(Luke 19:10, nlt)

And we carry on with that mission.

Andrew was just an ordinary person – like all of us – but like him, the Lord can use us to help others grow into a life-giving relationship with Jesus. Andrew doesn't get a lot of press in the New Testament like Peter or Paul did. We don't know if Andrew ever even preached a sermon. BUT - he introduced Peter to Jesus, and *Peter* preached *a lot* of sermons! We talked last week about Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, when thousands of people accepted Jesus. But Peter would *not* have preached, and thousands would *not* have come to Christ, if it weren't for Andrew. So let's learn from Andrew so that we can introduce people to Jesus.

First, let's see...

## 1. The *Calling*.

Every Christian has this calling, first and foremost. We all have this call to introduce others to Jesus. Listen again to verses 41 and 42:

“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 1:41-42, niv)

Did you catch that; “*The first thing Andrew did.*” Notice the word *first*. When Andrew met Jesus and realized who he was, his first thought was to tell his brother. As soon as he realized who Jesus was, he answered the call to introduce Jesus to the other people he knew and loved. How could he *not* want them to know this great person he'd met? Many of us who know Jesus or have just entered into a relationship with him have this eagerness to introduce others to him. Unfortunately, over time our enemy and our culture convinces us that we should *not* talk about Jesus, because no one wants “religion shoved down their throat.” So we gradually stop telling others about Jesus. And it's true – no one wants religion shoved down their throat.

Author Kevin Harney tells a story about a battle. A wrestling match. A test of wills. Every day, at exactly the same time, Margaret would go to the bathroom cabinet, open it, and take out a huge bottle of castor oil. Then she would head to the kitchen to get a tablespoon. At the sound of the drawer opening and the silverware rattling, Patches, her Yorkshire terrier, would run and hide—sometimes under the bed, at other times in the bathtub or behind Margaret's recliner. Patches knew what was coming.

Someone had convinced Margaret that her beloved dog would have strong teeth, a beautiful coat, and a long life if she gave him a spoonful of castor oil every day. So, as an act of love every 24 hours, she cornered Patches, pinned him down, pried open his mouth, and—as he whimpered, squirmed, and fought her with all his strength—she poured a tablespoon of castor oil down his little doggie throat. Neither Patches nor Margaret enjoyed their daily wrestling match.

Then one day, in the middle of their battle royal, with one sideways kick, Patches sent the dreaded bottle of castor oil flying across the kitchen floor. It was a momentary victory for the dog, because Margaret let him go so she could run to the pantry and grab a towel to clean up the mess.

When Margaret got back, she was utterly shocked. There was Patches licking up the spilled castor oil with a look of satisfaction only a dog can make. Margaret began to laugh uncontrollably. In one moment, it all made sense. Patches *liked* castor oil. He just hated being pinned down and having it poured down his throat.<sup>2</sup> No one wants to have the Gospel shoved down their throat. But everyone wants to meet someone as loving, accepting, forgiving, and transforming as Jesus.

Listen to those two verses again:

“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 1:41-42, niv)

Did you catch that? “The first thing Andrew did *was to find* his brother Simon...” Notice the word ***find***. We don’t really know how far Andrew had to go to find Peter, but he found him, which implies Peter was “missing” somehow, right? He was missing out on Jesus, and he was missing out on the greatness of being a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Peter was missing from God’s kingdom, so Andrew answered the call to find him.

There’s a word that is used to describe people like that; usually it’s the word “lost.” We get that word from Jesus’ own statement of purpose that we quoted earlier:

“The Son of Man came to seek and save those who are *lost*.” (Luke 19:10)

People don’t always like being labeled as lost, and I can understand that, even though I once was lost myself, but now I’m found. But maybe “missing” is a more precise word. Either way, it’s every Christian’s calling to “find” those who are missing out on Jesus and introduce them to Him. Jesus described it with this parable:

“Suppose someone among you had one hundred sheep and lost one of them. Wouldn’t he leave the other ninety-nine in the pasture and search for the lost one until he finds it? And when he finds it, he is thrilled and places it on his shoulders. When he arrives home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Celebrate with me because I’ve found my lost sheep.’” (Luke 15:4-6, ceb)

Do we realize that all of the people around us who don’t know Jesus are missing out on God’s Kingdom? Do we realize that every person like that is a child of God who is lost? Heaven’s refrigerator is filled with milk cartons with the faces of God’s lost children on them. Answer the call!

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<sup>2</sup> Kevin G. Harney, *Seismic Shifts* (Zondervan, 2005), p. 23-24

The first thing we need to do is find people we can introduce to Jesus.

And who was it that Andrew found? **family**. Andrew started with his own family. Do you have people in your own immediate family or in your neighborhood who haven't met Jesus? Start praying for them and start looking for Spirit-led opportunities to make the introductions. You don't have to have all the right answers. You don't have to be ready to debate. You simply answer the call to introduce them to Jesus, the one you've met.

The first thing we want to do is find those who have *not* met Jesus – especially those closest to us – and make the introductions.

Now, see...

## 2. The **conversation**.

What did Andrew *say* to Peter when he found him? He said:

“We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.” (John 1:42, niv)

All Andrew did, like we just said, was tell Peter what he knew about Jesus. Let's say you want to introduce me to a good friend of yours. So I ask you about your friend. How would you answer? Would you begin to recite his historical verifications? Would you begin to explain to me the theories and reasoning that validate the reality of your friend's existence? Would you be prepared to argue with me about whether or not your friend was a real person? I highly doubt you'd do those things.

So the conversation when we make introductions is important. Don't over-think it! Notice a few things about Andrew's introduction: first, it was **spoken**. Many Christians often say, “I'll be a witness for Jesus with my life; not my words. I'll let my actions do the talking.” And there is *some* merit to that – we *need* our lives to back up our words. We love and serve our community because we want to show them what Jesus' love looks like. But listen: actions without words are anemic, and words without action are empty.

If you are going to introduce me to a friend, but you don't *speak* to me, how am I supposed to figure it out? This isn't a game of charades. If I don't know Jesus, I'll watch your relationship with Jesus, but I also need you to tell me about him.

There's a story of when Jesus healed a man, and then told him, “Return home and tell the story of what God has done for you.” (Luke 8:39, ceb) (see also Mark 5:19!). *Just tell the story*. Most of us are ready to talk about *anything* when we are asked our opinion. I know people who will tell me way more than I want to know about the Seahawks. Why not be willing to introduce people to Jesus and simply speak what we know?

It's not complicated; just keep it **simple**. Even a child could've understood what Andrew told Peter. We aren't making a theological, philosophical case about the theistic anthropomorphic tendencies of humans versus the incarnation of the divine

Theos in our ethos! (I know what all those words mean!) Introducing people to Jesus is as simple as introducing one friend to another. In Acts 8:4 we are told that it was simply a natural part of the believers' lives to tell people about Jesus wherever they went:

“Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.”  
(Acts 8:4, niv)

Have *you* met Jesus? Do you know some things about him? Has he answered your prayers? Simply tell people *that!*

And then also see that Andrew's conversation with Peter about Jesus was ***sure***. Andrew was absolutely certain of his message, and that's what people want to hear today. They don't want to hear theories or arguments; they want to know if *you* believe it – are you sure of your truth? Granted, there are a lot of things we *don't* know about God, but there are a whole lot of things that we *do* know for sure. The Apostle Paul said it this way:

“I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to safely guard all that I have given him until the day of his return.” (2 Timothy 1:12, tlb)

Speak what you know, keep it simple, and share what you are sure of. We aren't making a sales pitch and we aren't trying to close a deal. We are simply making introductions. We are simply making friends and introducing people to Jesus.

The Bible says:

“Has the Lord redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others he has saved you...”  
(Psalm 107:2, tlb)

By the way, this is where our actions show our surety.

We have a call to introduce people to Jesus; that should be the first thing we think about doing, finding those who are missing (especially those closest to us), and we have conversations with others by speaking simply about what we are sure of.

Finally, see...

### **3. The ***culmination***.**

In other words, we're talking about the desired result or what we hope to see happen when we introduce others to Jesus. The desired result of introducing people to Jesus is not to “win someone over,” it's not to debate someone into converting, it's not to evangelize or proselytize or sermonize or homilize or anesthetize or accessorize or carmelize anyone! All that we desire and hope to do is help people to know Jesus and how great he is, just like we know him. So, we introduce them to him.

We see the culmination of it all in Andrew's story of introducing his brother Simon (Peter) to 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 1:41-42, niv)

He brought him to Jesus. That’s the hope, that’s the goal, that’s the point of making an introduction. If I have a great friend, and I think you’d like to meet him or her, then I would introduce you to each other, and I’m hoping that you two will become friends, also.

It’s important to see that Andrew *brought* Peter to Jesus; he didn’t tell Peter to *go find* Jesus. Andrew led Peter to Jesus and made the introduction.

Let me put it this way: of all the people in this room, how many of you had someone else introduce you to Jesus – whether it was a parent or grandparent or friend or stranger, a pastor or a teacher? Raise your hand if at least one person introduced you to Jesus in some way. See?

It is a fact that almost every single one of us who are Christians today, were brought to Jesus by someone else.

That’s what happened in the Bible; every town Jesus went to, people brought their sick friends to Jesus so he could work in their life. The woman at the well brought her *whole town* to Jesus so they could meet him. (Matthew 14:34-36; John 4:1-42)

Andrew was a human link between his missing brother and Jesus. Was it worth it for Andrew to introduce Peter to Jesus? Think about what it must have been like for Andrew - how Andrew must have felt - on the Day of Pentecost when his brother, Peter, stood up and preached to a crowd of thousands about Jesus and over 2,000 people became Christians (Acts 2:1-47) and the Spirit-filled Christian church was borne! *You never know what God will do through your simple introduction of someone to Jesus.*

While we can’t control what someone else does or doesn’t do, or how God works in their life, it’s still up to us to make the best introduction we could ever make to the people we know and love. They are missing out on knowing Jesus, on all the great things that come with being a part of God’s kingdom family.

*Pray*