

John 1:29-42a

If they had “thank-you” cards in the days of the apostles, Andrew would have received one from Dorcas of Joppa, and from Cornelius of Caesarea, and from the lame man in Jerusalem who used to sit by the gate of the temple called “Beautiful;” and possibly from more than 3,000 people who were baptized on the day of Pentecost after hearing a sermon preached by Simon Peter. Dorcas was a wonderful Christian lady who had helped many during her lifetime. When she died, Simon raised her to life again by the power of God. Cornelius was brought to the Faith as Simon Peter spoke to him about Jesus; and Peter, by God’s power, healed that man who could not walk.

Andrew did none of these things; Simon Peter did them all—but if they had “thank-you” cards in those days, Andrew would have received many of them because he did one thing: Andrew brought his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus. “Thank you Andrew,” the cards would have read, “Thank you for bringing your brother to the Lord, because through your brother, Simon Peter, Jesus has done great things for us.” And I suppose that if John the Baptist were still alive, all of these Christian people would have sent him a “thank-you” card as well, because John pointed Andrew to Jesus.

To whom or to what is your life pointing? You and I may not be the next “Simon Peter.” We may not do “great things” for the Lord during our lifetime. We may not be remembered, as Peter is, for being used by God to bring many people to Christ. The only thing Andrew is known for, besides telling Jesus, along with Philip, about some Greeks who wished to see Him, is this one little verse in our text: “(Andrew) brought (Simon Peter) to Jesus.” Nothing else about him stands out. Andrew was an apostle, but thank God that He called other apostles as well, because Andrew, from what we’re told, did not do a whole lot for the Lord.

And yet, my friends here at Christ Lutheran, even if our little congregation is made up only of “Andrews,” we are truly a blessing to our community and to the world because even if you and I point only one other person to Christ in our entire life, the angels rejoice over one soul that repents; and that one soul, whether it’s a brother or sister, a friend, or a child, may, like Simon Peter, do great things for the Lord.

And so, again, I ask: What is your life pointing to? John pointed to Jesus, and so Andrew followed the Lord. Andrew pointed to Jesus, and so his brother, Simon, was brought to Christ. Does your life also point to Jesus, or is there something else to which it is pointing?

Does your language point to the Lord, or does it point away from Him? Can others tell that we’re Christians by the words that we speak, or do curse words get in the way of our faith? Do we often pass up opportunities to speak of our faith because we have somehow formed the idea that faith and religion is for Sunday morning—the rest of the week we talk only about life and politics, sports and weather?

And Sunday mornings does our life point to Christ and the hearing of His living Word, or does it point to everything else which has become more important to us than being in the House of God? Do we point our children and those under our care to the hearing and studying of God’s Word, or do we forsake our God-given responsibility and allow them to point themselves to whatever they want to do on Sundays and the rest of the week?

Does our giving point to Christ, or does it point to all the things we buy for ourselves? Do others, by seeing what we give to the Lord, believe that He is important to us; that we value Him and His work highly, or does our giving point them to the fact that Jesus doesn't really mean much to us?

We may not be a congregation of "Simon Peter's," but is it true that we are not even a congregation of "Andrew's?" We may not be called to bring thousands to the Lord, but can we not, at least, bring ourselves and our families to the Lord's House each week? To do that is to be an "Andrew." We may not be able to support the work of the Lord around the world, but in giving just one-tenth of our income He will use us to support His work in this place. To do that is to be an "Andrew."

This is not the time, nor is it ever, to point to the person sitting next to us; to point to what they are not doing for Christ. This is the time to point to ourselves; to our wretched heart and life and to say, "God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner." In doing this, let me tell you this good news: Your God does not point His accusing finger at you. Rather, God's accusing finger points to only one place—the cross of Jesus. "Behold," He says through His prophet, John, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." God pointed His anger at Jesus, and so He was punished for your sins. God pointed His Son to the cross, and He took your place in hell. Your life, and mine, may be pointing in all the wrong directions, but God points you to His Word of Grace which points out clearly for you that Jesus was wounded for your transgressions; He was crushed for your offenses.

John pointed to Jesus in the waters of the Jordan, and today also, God's servant points you to Christ in the waters of your baptism: This is who you now are! You are baptized into Christ, you are His child. You are washed clean of your sins. John pointed to Jesus and cried, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" And today also, God's servant points you to where that Lamb who died for you is given to you—here at His altar. In these elements of bread and wine Jesus comes to you to forgive you for not pointing to Him with your life, and to strengthen you to point always with your life to Him.

Do you see in these things how merciful your God is toward you? You and I deserve eternal death and punishment, but in Christ God points you to heaven and declares to you: This is your eternal home, for Jesus has saved you from the curse of your sins.

Is it any wonder why Andrew brought his brother to Jesus? He had no idea what great things God would do through Peter. He simply loved his brother, and so he pointed him to Jesus. He brought him to the Friend and Savior of sinners.

God is not asking you to be a "Simon Peter," but can you, with God's help, be an "Andrew?" If you believe that Jesus is your Friend and Savior, is there not a friend of yours whom you can bring to Jesus? If you believe that Jesus shed His blood for your eternal salvation, is it not time to speak of His saving blood to someone in your family whose life is pointing away from Him?

Friend, Jesus does not forgive you because you are an "Andrew." He forgives you. No matter how pointless your life may seem, He forgives each and every one of you. And

because He forgives you He empowers you to be an “Andrew” to others. He helps you speak of your faith seven days a week. He enables you to live your faith.

And so my fellow “Andrews”...God will go with you and be with you to help you point to Christ with your life—the same Christ, God’s Lamb, who died for you and who points to you and says: You I love, and you I forgive. Go in peace. Amen.