

Average Man

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 November 2020

Preacher: Rev. Paul Welch

[0 : 00] What a joy it is to be with you today. A lot of faces I don't recognize because we come to the 8 o'clock service every week, but it is good to see you and good to be with you.

I want to begin by revisiting last week. You know, Fred started the message. He said, what do unbelievers think about those of us in the church?

And their attitude often is that we're negative. We're mad at everybody. We're against everything. And he went ahead and preached a sermon, a good sermon. And he said, in our Christian life, in our living out the gospel, we need to balance the truth without ever compromising it.

But we need to balance it with grace and mercy and compassion without compromising those so that the gospel can be lived through us.

[0 : 59] And we need to do it with a positive attitude. And as I said in the pew, I could not help but remember the story of a woman. It was, she lived alone and she was older.

And it was early evening and she got a call from her daughter. And the daughter said, Mama, Emily's sick. And she's not doing it all well.

I just called the doctor. Something is going around. He cannot see her this evening. But he says he's pretty sure he knows what it is. And he's called in a prescription. And he says if the medicine, she starts it tonight.

If it doesn't work, to bring her in tomorrow afternoon. But Mama, I don't want to leave her. Can you go to the drugstore and pick up the medicine? Now you know what Grandma said.

Yes, I'll do that. And so she rushes down to the pharmacy and she goes in and goes to the counter and she gets the medication, goes back to her car and suddenly realizes what she's done in her excitement and her anxiety and her nervousness.

[2 : 04] She had locked her keys out of her car. She has the medicine. But she can't get to her grandbaby. And she doesn't know what to do.

And so she remembers something she's seen on TV. So she went to a dumpster over there on the side of the parking lot and she found an old rusty coat hanger. And she knew she had seen something about how they used a coat hanger to open the door.

And she went over there and she had no idea how to do it. And so she just stopped. And she did what came naturally. She prayed.

She said, Lord, you know this grandbaby needs the medicine. I've been foolish. I've locked myself out. Please send somebody to help. Please.

And the words were almost not out of her mouth before she heard this rumble. And up rolled this guy on a motorcycle. Now, it was our Harley Davidson chopper.

[3 : 03] It had those eight bars where you ride around with your hands like this. He had a leather vest on with Hell's Angels on the back. And he had this new rag with skull and crossbones and everything.

And he says, something wrong, lady? She said, I've got this medicine for my grandbaby. And the baby needs the medicine. And I've locked myself out of the car and I can't get in.

No problem. He steps off his bike, walks over there. Ten seconds later, the door's open. She's amazed. She stops and does what came natural to her.

She put her hand on his arm and said, Lord, I ask you to send somebody to help. I want to thank you for sending this nice young man. He's a good man.

Thank you for what you've done. And as soon as she said it, the guy said, hold it, lady. I'm not a good person. I got out of prison yesterday.

[4 : 10] What were you in prison for? I served eight years for jacking cars. But she stopped. And she did what came natural.

She put her hand on his arm and said, Lord, thank you for sending this nice young man. He's a good man. But Lord, thank you for being so kind as to send a professional. You know, that's the type of person I'd like to spend time with. What about you? You know, that's the type of person that does your heart good. Well, I want us to look this morning at a biblical character that has that type of personality, that has that type of spirit.

And we're going to begin by going to John chapter 1, begin with verse 35. John chapter 1, begin with verse 35.

The next day, John, that's John the Baptist, was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, look, the Lamb of God.

[5 : 18] When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, what do you want? They said, Rabbi, which means teacher, where are you staying?

Come, he replied, and you will see. So they went and saw where he was staying and spent that day with him. It was about the 10th hour. 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.

Jesus looked at him and said, you are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas, which when translated is Peter.

As Jesus dealt with people, he always went to the deepest level of their lives and dealt with the spiritual issues. We sometimes forget that first and foremost, we're spiritual beings.

[6 : 32] We focus on the physical body, the mind, the emotions. But before that, we are spiritual beings. That's what's going to be in eternity. The average university today, you have a stadium that will seat, say, 50,000 people.

You have classrooms that will accommodate 15,000 students. And they'll build a chapel that will seat 500 to 1,000. We have forgotten that we're spiritual beings.

Jesus didn't. He could look into the heart of an individual and know what was there. And he knew there was two things that was true about every man, woman, and child.

Every one of us is a sinner. And every one of us is savable. That is illustrated so well by the man we're going to look at this morning, the man named Andrew.

Andrew. The name Andrew means manly. And I believe Andrew was a manly man. But Andrew was also an average man, an ordinary kind of a person.

[7 : 43] There are some biblical characters I could never be. I could never preach a Pentecostal sermon like Simon Peter. Never.

I could not write a book of the Bible like the Apostle Paul. I can't even write one Psalm like the King David.

I couldn't be one of those characters. But when I read the story of Andrew, an ordinary man, I begin to have reason for hope.

You see, we have an idea today that in order to truly be used by God, you have to be spectacular or sensational. Andrew destroys that myth altogether.

As far as we know, Andrew never preached a sermon. Never wrote a book. Andrew never influenced the masses.

[8 : 43] Yet the Lord found something in this man, Andrew, that caused Jesus to want to spend time with him. And so this morning, there are three things I want us to know about Andrew.

The first is his possessions. We find it in John 1.41. We read it a moment ago. Andrew told his brother Simon Peter, We have found the Messiah.

That works closely akin to Eureka. Andrew was really saying, I've made it the greatest discovery in life that I've ever made. I have found what I've always been looking for.

I have found the one that can change my eternity. And as we look at that discovery, that revelation to Andrew, we realize it came because he was on a search.

We read that a moment ago. Verses 37 and 38. When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turn around, Jesus saw them following and asked, What do you want?

[9 : 48] Andrew had left his fishing nets. In that day, fishing was a very lucrative occupation. It was one of the better paying jobs. Jesus was noting that Andrew had left a very well paying job to be there.

Andrew, what are you looking for? And psychiatrists tell us that we're all looking for something. And they name four things.

First thing everybody's looking for. How to be useful. Now we know that's true. You take an older person living alone, put a dog or a cat in that house, what will happen?

They will live longer. That has been proven time and time again. You say, well, the companionship and so forth. Yes, that's part of it. But they're needed by that dog and cat.

They need to take care of that animal. They feel useful. That's number one. The second one is one we don't like to talk about or even think about. We try to sweep it under the rug, suppress it.

[11:03] But psychiatrists tell us that the greatest thing that we're looking for is how to get rid of guilt. You know, this world does not offer even one solution to guilt.

Not one. And people are carrying huge amounts of guilt and don't know how to deal with it. The third one is how to love.

And the fourth one is how to have security. What are you searching for? Everybody, every one of us is searching for something.

What is it you're looking for? Jesus asked, what do you want? And Andrew and his friend answered that question in a very peculiar way.

They said, teacher, rabbi, where are you staying? Now, I don't believe for one minute that Andrew was saying, are you staying on this block or that block or the next block?

[12:07] I think Andrew was saying this. Where are you going? Because I want to go with you. You've looked into me. You've seen something.

You know I want something. I need time to talk to you about that. Where can we go and sit down and talk for a while? And then Jesus made a remarkable claim.

He said, come and you will see. Come and you will see. Now, I don't think Jesus was saying, I'm staying at 103 South Elm Street. I don't think that at all. I think Jesus was saying, Andrew, you're looking for something.

If you come and spend time with me today, you're going to find what you're looking for. You're going to see what it is you need. I don't know what you need.

I don't know what your needs are. But I do know that on that day, Jesus said to Andrew, come and you will see. Now, I do know on a day long ago, Jesus said to me, Paul, come and you will see.

[13:13] And I know he's willing to say to anybody here today, come and you will see. That what you're looking for, that what you're seeking, that's what you're needing. You come and spend time with me and you'll find what you're looking for.

Secondly, I want us to notice Andrew's position. John 1.40. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.

Now, did you notice how I read that? Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. You know, almost every single time that Andrew is mentioned in the New Testament, that's how he's referred to.

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He lived in sort of a secondary position in life in the shadow of his more famous brother.

You know, of all the times the disciples are listed, he's never listed higher than fourth. He was not part of the inner circle. He was not there at the transfiguration. He was just one of the other guys.

[14:19] A rather ordinary, mundane position in life. And I can identify that and I suspect some of you can identify with that. And when I studied the life of this ordinary man, I get the idea that Andrew had learned some things about his position in life.

He had learned the secret of capacity. The secret of capacity. He had learned what his abilities were. And he was satisfied with that.

You know, the Bible says in Romans 12, 3, do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

So many people go through life wanting more ability. Wanting to be used in a greater way by God. Andrew, I don't think went through life wanting more ability.

I think he wanted just to use the ability he had more effectively at all times. He was content already with what God had given him.

[15:25] And he just wanted to use it for him. You see, Andrew had that gift of contentment. Are you content? Are you content? Are you content with the way your face looks?

Are you content with the shape of your body? If you were to ask me that question, I would tell you no.

Absolutely not. I don't know why. I think it's common. But when I was growing up, I always thought I would age more gracefully than I have.

You know? Now, I'm not kidding. I've settled for what I am. Yeah, I've done that all right. But I wouldn't say I'm content with it. I wish it were different. I've settled for what I am.

You know, there's not one iota of evidence that Andrew was ever discontented with his secondary position in life or with his gifts and talents.

[16:33] He just wanted to be used by God at every opportunity. And that brings us to the third thing about Andrew, his passion in life.

But let me set this up. I want to do a couple of things. Remember, years ago in Sunday school, you had those envelopes with the little blocks. Did you read your Bible every day?

Did you pray every day? Did you attend worship? Did you tithe? And then way back then, it was, did you witness? And then they watered that down.

Did you make a contact, you know? You know where that began? Again, years ago with John Wesley. John Wesley believed that you could measure spiritual growth.

And I do too. I agree with him there. And those blocks represented stages of spiritual growth. Now, all of them are important, but two of them are very important.

[17:37] Because those two blocks represent the spiritual ceilings that we face when we grow spiritually. That is, until those two blocks are checked, we can grow this far, but we're not going to go any further until that block is checked.

Now, the first one is tithing. It's tithing. Now, why is that so important?

Well, we all know that some people it's hard to tithe. Because what happens if something happens in a rainy day? What happens if the wrong person is elected?

What happens if the economy goes south? I need to make sure that I'm taken care of. I'm taken care of my family. And so, we hedge our bets rather than trusting God for tomorrow.

And here's the secret of tithing. Tithing is only about 5% money. The rest of it, 95%, is about trusting God for tomorrow.

[18:43] Now, let me illustrate that if I could. I want to give you three numbers. And I'd like for you to plant these numbers in your mind if you would. The first number, \$871,320.

\$871,320. The second number, \$93,170. \$93,170.

And the third number is \$4,210. \$4,210. You know what those numbers represent?

Let me ask you to do something before I tell you. I want you to figure out your net worth. You own a house? How much equity do you have in that house?

If you own it outright, it's all equity. You own cars, jewelry, bank account, savings, stocks and bond, motorcycle, a boat, lawnmower, whatever you got.

[19:56] Clothes, everything. Extra land, rental property, whatever you got. What is your net worth? Take it for a moment and figure it out. Now, if your net worth equals \$871,320, everything you have, if it would be worth that much, did you know that you are among the world's 1% of wealthiest people?

1%. And there are a number of people here this morning who are worth that or more. You're in the top 1% of wealthy people in the world.

If it comes to \$93,170, you're still in the top 10% of the wealthiest people in the world.

And if it's \$4,210, you're still in the top 50%. That comes from the 2018 Global Wealth Report by the Credit Suisse Research Institute.

If I'm in that top 10%, and we all are, don't tell me that you're in that \$4,000, because if you are, I'll tell you what, I'll give you \$4,210 for the car you drove here this morning.

[21:29] All right. I don't think I'm going to have many offers. But we're all in that top 10%. God has blessed us.

We're in the top 10% of the wealthiest people in the world. And we don't feel like we can trust Him for tomorrow. What does that say? If a person doesn't trust his wife or his wife doesn't trust him to be faithful, they're not going to put down many roots for a permanent marriage.

If you have a friend, but you can't trust that person enough to tell them something that's going on in your heart without them going out and blabbing it all over the place, you're not going to put down roots in that friendship.

And if we can't trust God for tomorrow, do you understand that? Why that puts a spiritual ceiling on our growth?

We're only going to go so far and no further. But when you break through that and you start trusting God for tomorrow, it really opens up a lot of stuff. But then there's that second ceiling.

[22 : 44] And that has to do with Andrew's passion in life. And it was a passion that ruled and motivated him unbelievably. In Matthew 4, 19, Jesus said to Andrew, come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

He was a fisherman already. But this time instead of fish, he's going to fish for men. And I want you to notice how Andrew did it. Now this is remarkable. He never used the Roman road.

He never gave the faith presentation. You know what he did? Went home to Simon. He said, I need to tell you what Jesus did for me.

I want you to come and meet him. That's all he was. An introducer. This is what he did for me. I want to introduce you to him.

That was Andrew. If you take this stage area and just fill it with bottles, there are two ways I can fill all those bottles. I could take big tubs of water, buckets, and just pour over them and everything.

[23 : 52] Of course, water's going to flow everywhere, but I can fill the bottles eventually. Or I can take those bottles and fill them one by one. Well, to be honest, if you take those big buckets of water and pour them, that's sort of like preaching.

It goes everywhere. But nothing will improve on that one by one filling of bottles. And that's what Andrew did. First thing he did was went and find his brother, Simon, Simon Peter.

Now, my image of Simon is he was just one tough fisherman. And I can just see Andrew walking in and say, Brother, I need to talk to you.

What is it, baby brother? And he tells about what happened that day. I've just found someone that's changed my eternity. Come, I want you to meet him. And that big tough fisherman was tamed that day.

That was the greatest day's work Andrew ever did. On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached that sermon.

[24 : 59] 3,000 people were added to the church. And I can just see Andrew standing over here, and he is just, he is beaming with pride. Peter may have been the spiritual father of those 3,000.

Andrew was the spiritual grandfather. And there was a joy that he experienced that day because he introduced Peter to the Lord, and he saw what was coming of that.

That is the joy of sharing our faith. It brings a happiness and a joy to our life that we cannot get any other way. Second one he brought to Jesus was a boy.

They'd gone out into the wilderness. They were preaching. Jesus was teaching. And 5,000 men plus the women and children, maybe 10,000 in all, had followed him. There was no food.

And here comes Andrew. He's got a boy. And he said, here, here's this boy. He's got five barley loaves and two fish. Now, you would have thought that he would have brought one of the movers and shakers in society, a government official, a businessman, a civic leader, a clergy somebody.

[26 : 11] No, he brings a boy because Andrew saw something in a boy. Remember the name D.L. Moody?

Used to be a great evangelist in his time. Tremendous. He came home one night. His wife said, did you have any converse tonight? He said, yes, two and a half. Oh, two adults and a boy and a child. No, I had two children and an adult. You know, it's hard for a Sunday school teacher to look in the eyes of that person that's teaching and see the next Billy Graham or William Wallace or Lottie Moon.

And I can guarantee you, I can guarantee you, I never had a Sunday school teacher that looked into my eyes and ever once entertained the thought that boy would be in the ministry one day.

But we don't know what happens when we introduce people to Jesus and what Jesus is going to do. And then the third time he appears is in the 12th chapter of John.

[27 : 23] In John 12, 21, some Greeks come to Philip and they say, sir, we would like to see Jesus. Now, these Greeks were from the land of philosophy and religion.

It wasn't the true religion, but it was religion. And they had studied and learned their whole life, and yet there was an emptiness in them, a searching, a frustration. They knew they didn't have the answer yet.

And they heard about Jesus, and they said, we will see Jesus. And what did Philip do? He immediately went and found Andrew because Andrew had been on that same search. And together, they told Jesus about these people, introducers. Now, that's what Andrew did time and again.

Let me tell you why it's relevant to today. This COVID has hit everything in society pretty hard, including church attendance.

[28 : 32] Across the board, we see attendance down 30, 40%. And I've talked to a number of pastors, haven't talked to Fred, but I've talked to a number of pastors, and I haven't talked to a pastor yet that is optimistic about those people coming back.

And let me tell you, it's not the first thing that time has happened. That's what we need to remember. It's not the first time it's happened.

The first time it happened was with Jesus. Oh, who left Jesus? There was a mass exodus from Jesus. In John, chapter 6, beginning with verse 66. From this time, many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him.

Jesus had been given some hard teachings. They went through some hard times. Bye-bye, they were out the door. Oh, but not that many people would leave Jesus.

[29 : 44] He was the perfect pastor. He was the perfect teacher. He was the perfect leader. Not many would leave Him. Oh, yeah, they did. I tell you what, enough people asked that as they were going out the door, Jesus turned to the 12 disciples and said, are y'all going too?

It was enough of an exodus that He turned to the 12. Are y'all leaving too? And listen, Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that You are the Holy One of God. And I can just see the disciples sitting there and every one of them nodding.

Yes, yes. But I can see Andrew over here and I'll tell you what, he's thinking, yes, that's true.

But I introduced Peter to Jesus. He heard the words and He agreed with them. But there was a joy that flooded his soul because of what he had done before in introducing his brother to Jesus.

[31 : 07] There is something about introducing people to Jesus that change our whole Christian perspective. Let's put it this way.

When you have a grandbaby, it changes things. I visited in a home one day and they had a sign over the door. Children by appointment.

Grandchildren, welcome anytime. That's just the way life is. When you become an introducer, it changes things.

Now let me tell you something else. You know when those people went out the door and left Jesus and Jesus turned to the disciples and said, are y'all leaving too? Listen. There was no panic in heaven that day.

Not one bit of panic. God knew what was going to happen. The day would come when Jesus would go to a cross.

[32 : 10] He would die. He'd be resurrected. And that remnant that was left would go out into the world and have the responsibility to change the world with their commitment despite being persecuted.

And God knew that those that went away because of those hard teachings or because of COVID or anything else were not the type of people that were going to change the world. There was no panic in heaven. But there was that consistent sharing of faith and introducing people to Jesus and they grew from within again just like every church is going to have to grow from within.

But here's the thing. When churches start doing that it brings a greater joy into our lives and a fuller understanding of what it means to be a follower and a closer relationship to Jesus Christ.

It changes us. And that is the blessing of being an average man like Andrew. So I encourage you that person just tell them what Jesus did for you.

That's all it is. Let them know how He changed your life and what He can bless and He can be to their life. Will you pray with me? Father, we thank You for these moments together.

[33 : 36] for Your Word, for the truth of Your Word, for the mercy in Your Word and the grace that is presented.

And Lord, we thank You for the opportunity to break through those spiritual ceilings and to grow in our faith and our spiritual journey. But Lord, we also look forward to that day when we will experience the joy that Andrew knew of introducing somebody to Jesus Christ and seeing them

grow in the Lord just like we see our grandchildren grow.
That is a tremendous blessing. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.