



## Week 6: Evangelism

### Day 1 – Andrew

#### John 1:39-42

<sup>35</sup> The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, <sup>36</sup> and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” <sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> 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?” <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. <sup>41</sup> He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed). <sup>42</sup> 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).

#### Understanding the Passage:

Every time someone she knows moves to town, our friend, Anne hosts a party and invites all of her friends so that they are able to meet the newcomer. It is her great joy to find commonalities or shared interests between her friends and help them get to know one another. Unlike some people who think that keeping their friends separate will keep their friendships more secure, Anne shows us that introducing people actually deepens the relationship each person has with her. She’s an inviter.

I have another friend who knows how much I love cheese and she is constantly telling me about new cheeses she finds. She’s even brought me cheese from one of her vacations before! She knows that it will bring me joy. So instead of keeping the new discovery for herself, she can’t wait to tell me about it. She’s a sharer.

There are a few things we can learn from this passage. Andrew, one of Jesus’ first disciples, was an inviter and a sharer as well. Not long after he started following Jesus, he went to his

brother Simon and basically said, “you’ve got to come meet this guy – he’s the one we’ve been waiting for!” In Acts 4:20, Peter and John declare, “For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” In the same way, Andrew didn’t want to keep Jesus for himself—he knew that his brother needed to meet him as well.

A second lesson for us is that we can’t give something we don’t already possess. We can’t invite people into a relationship with Jesus without already being in a relationship with Jesus. Notice that in verse 37, Andrew heard John identify Jesus as the Lamb of God and he followed him. He went to see where Jesus was staying and remained with him. Only after being with Jesus and beginning his own relationship with him did Andrew invite his brother to come along.

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion:**

1. What are the three steps that Andrew took?
2. What can we learn from Andrew’s example?
3. Who is the first person that invited you to know Jesus?
4. How many people were impacted by Andrew’s invitation? How many people might you impact with an invitation?

## **Day 2 – Philip**

### **Acts 8:26-40**

<sup>26</sup> Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) <sup>27</sup> So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship <sup>28</sup> and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup> Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” <sup>30</sup> So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” <sup>31</sup> He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. <sup>32</sup> Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,  
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,  
so he does not open his mouth.

<sup>33</sup> In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.”

<sup>34</sup> The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” <sup>35</sup> Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup> As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” <sup>38</sup> He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. <sup>39</sup> When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him

no more, and went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup> But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

### **Understanding the Passage:**

There is a 1967 film called *The Gospel Blimp* about some folks that want to share the message about Jesus and as they are strategizing about how to do it, a blimp flies over their heads. They get this idea that they need to buy a blimp and use it to spread the gospel. It's not that simple though: they end up having to raise money for the blimp and the hangar in which it will be stored; they start an incorporated organization and create a board of directors to manage it; one of the guys quits his full time job to run the show. They use the blimp to drop pamphlets about Jesus all over the city, which just annoys the residents, and then they switch to shouting about Jesus over a PA system. In the meantime, one of the original guys that was involved quits out of frustration with the group. The blimp guys see him hanging out with a "beer-drinking neighbor" at the beach and get worried about him. But the irony is that his friendship with his neighbor allows him to lead his neighbors to Christ, while the blimp is a bust and doesn't actually result in any converts.

It takes personal, one-on-one interactions with folks to help them understand the gospel. People are less likely to decide to follow Jesus after seeing something on TV or getting a flyer in their mailbox than they are if someone takes the time to talk to them individually.

Though the Ethiopian has an important place in the court of the queen as her money-handler, which means he'd be in the inner circle and have the ability to influence many others after his conversion, he is never named. On the other hand, Philip's name is mentioned nine times in this passage. Why is that? The author is clearly trying to impress upon the reader that this story is about Philip and his endeavor to share the gospel of Jesus. The conversion story is secondary. The author wants us to relate to Philip's efforts.

In this passage, Philip takes the time to have a one-on-one conversation with the Ethiopian eunuch so that he can help him better understand what he's reading (Isaiah 53:7-8 – a prophecy fulfilled by Jesus). But note that Philip doesn't just start interpreting the scripture for the eunuch without first asking him, "do you understand what you're reading?" Philip doesn't presume to already know what this man comprehends or believes. We get into trouble when we are trying to share the gospel with people, and we make assumptions about their preconceived notions and beliefs. The old adage about catching more flies with honey than vinegar is true—if we sit down and have conversations with people without predetermined and prejudiced assumptions, we are likely to accomplish more.

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion:**

1. What prevents you from having one-on-one conversations with people about Jesus?
2. What can we learn from Philip's humble approach?
3. Who has guided you in your understanding of scripture? What might you have missed if they didn't help explain it to you?

## Day 3 – Mary Magdalene

### John 20:11-18

<sup>11</sup> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; <sup>12</sup> and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. <sup>13</sup> They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>14</sup> When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” <sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

### Understanding the Passage:

As soon as Mary recognized the man in front of her as Jesus, not the gardener, she must have grabbed on to him. It’s a natural reaction: she thought she’d lost him but here he was! Though she clearly longed to stay with Jesus, he gave her marching orders right away. She had work to do! Mary’s declaration in verse 18 is the very first time that the gospel—the good news of the resurrection of Jesus Christ—was ever proclaimed.

Jesus chose the most unlikely person to share this news—he chose a woman. Women were not allowed to testify in court trials in first century Palestine because they were thought to be unreliable. Jesus not only chose a woman to tell his story, but a woman who had battled demons. Mary is first mentioned in Luke 8 in a passage that lists Jesus’ followers:

“The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod’s household; Susanna; and many others.”

Jesus chose an “unreliable” witness because he wanted to make the point that no one is unworthy of sharing the good news. Every single person who affirms Jesus as their Lord and savior is meant to share that message—regardless of what society or people in power tell them.

The way that Mary chose to share the good news is notable. She didn’t offer a complex theology of atonement or preach about the fulfillment of Hebrew prophecies. She shared her lived experience—“I have seen the Lord!” Too often, we are reticent to share the good news because we think that we aren’t the right people for the job or that we don’t have the right theological words to say. But this story teaches us that Jesus has called and empowered all of us, and that simply sharing our own experience is the best way to tell other people about Jesus.

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Have you ever felt unfit to tell people about Jesus? Why? Does this story about Mary help you see yourself as an evangelist differently?
2. When have you “seen the Lord”?
3. How is God working in your life right now? How can you share that with people?

## **Day 4 – John the Baptist**

### **Luke 1:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

### **John 1:19-23**

<sup>19</sup> This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” <sup>20</sup> He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” <sup>22</sup> Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” <sup>23</sup> He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said.

### **Mark 1:4-8**

<sup>4</sup> John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

### **Understanding the Passage:**

The purpose of John the Baptist’s ministry, as outlined in Luke 1:16-17, is to prepare the way for Jesus. When he was pressed by the priests and Levites about who he was, he did not hesitate to acknowledge that he was not Jesus and to clarify that he was meant to prepare the people for Jesus.

Part of the reason that people began to follow John is that he did not make himself grand. He was humble in his proclamations that the Messiah is coming. There are times in our lives that we get caught up in acting like we are Jesus. We may never consciously recognize this, but our actions imply that we think that we must be equal to God because we stop acknowledging God, stop submitting to God, and stop pointing other people to God. Even

with a plethora of followers, John the Baptist was always aware that he was not the Messiah. He had a clarity of call and knew that it was his task to point people to Jesus.

Maybe you have someone that you hope will come to know Jesus and follow him. I am guessing that you pray for that person and talk about Jesus to that person. That is good. That is your work to do! We know that it is only the Holy Spirit that does the converting, but we cannot act as if we don't have a role in paving the way for people to get to know Jesus. Through our lives, our daily actions, our responses to situations, and our words, we have the opportunity to pave the way for people to know Jesus. From the way we treat the cashier at the grocery store to the way we react to our kids or spouse pushing our buttons to the way we manage a tough crisis at work, we are representing Jesus to those who don't know him. Our actions either pave the way for people to follow him or they create a stumbling block that people will trip over.

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion:**

1. How do our acts witness to and prepare the way for Jesus?
2. What is one thing you do that might get in the way of other people knowing Jesus? What can you do differently?

## **Day 5 – Friends of the Crippled Man**

### **Mark 2:1-6**

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. <sup>2</sup> So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. <sup>3</sup> Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. <sup>4</sup> And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." <sup>6</sup> Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts,

### **Understanding the Passage:**

Be honest: when you have a friend who is struggling, what is your reaction? Do you retreat and hope they will work it out on their own? Do you offer to pray for them and then faithfully do it? Do you go to them and offer your physical presence?

In this passage, we see a picture of four men who would do anything to bring their friend to Jesus. When they realize they cannot get into the home where Jesus was staying, they are not deterred. They decide to climb up and dig through the roof and lower their friend down into the house. But think about what that would require: they'd have to somehow get a paralyzed man onto the roof, which means someone would have to carry him as they climbed up the side of the house. And then they had to pull apart the mud and thatch that made up the roof. Then they had to carefully lower their friend into the house. This is a

monumental task for these four men. But they knew their friend needed Jesus and they were determined to get their friend to him.

We need to be the kind of friends that would do anything to bring people to Jesus. It probably won't look like physically carrying someone up the side of a building and digging through the roof, but it might take that same amount of effort.

There will be times that your friends who are followers of Christ struggle deeply in their faith. In those times, the most faithful thing you can do is carry their prayers. For a myriad of reasons, they may not want to pray or talk to God, and you cannot force them to pray. But you can bring their struggles to God in your own prayers, lifting them up and petitioning for them.

After all, we are not told anything about the faith of the paralyzed man. It is the faith of the friends that Jesus recognizes and that brings healing. The scripture says that Jesus *saw* their faith. He didn't hear about it; he witnessed it in their actions.

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Has someone ever had to carry you to Jesus? What was that like? How did their faith encourage you?
2. How do you carry your friends to Jesus?
3. How does your actionable faith share the gospel with others?

### **Video questions:**

1. Which of the characters that we studied this week most resonated with you? Which one did you relate to the least? Why?
2. What does the word evangelism mean to you?
3. How does evangelism relate to discipleship?
4. What motivates you to share your faith in Jesus?
5. What are the things that hold you back from sharing your faith with other people?
6. Have you ever considered yourself an "unreliable witness"?
7. What would it take to move out of your comfort zone so you can be an evangelist?
8. When was the last time you had a conversation with a non-believing friend about God? What was it like?