

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

So today, we have two stories of Jesus inviting Peter & Andrew (and James and John) to follow Him. We just heard in today's appointed Gospel how He called Peter while in the boat to be a fisher of men and when they got to shore the two sets of brothers "**left everything and followed Him.**" And in just a moment, we will hear how these 4 followed after Him on another occasion. These aren't contradictory stories. They are both true. One just happened before the other.

The events we are about to hear from St. John connect Jesus' invitation to follow Him to His baptism and His return from the 40 days of temptations in the wilderness.

In a matter of days, St. John will report that Jesus performed His first miracle at Cana's wedding. So our text happened before Jesus called Peter and the others on the Sea of Galilee.

Our text for meditation... as follows in Jesus' name:

The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to Him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are You staying?" He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found His own brother Simon and said to Him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter). (ESV)

*This is Your Word, heavenly Father; **sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth.** Amen.* (John 17:17)

It would seem to be the case that Andrew, Peter, James, and John had all been disciples of John the Bapt. They had been some of the people who went out to the Jordan wilderness to hear him preach and to be baptized by him, and even decided to tag along with him as his disciples, his followers.

As the calling of St. Peter to be a "fisher of men" makes clear, their following John the Baptist wasn't a permanent career change.

Did they follow him during the off season, or take an extended vacation from fishing?

We won't know that, but what is clear is that they followed this man of God when they could.

Just two days before our text, John the Baptist had made it very clear

that he was not the promised Christ, but that He was sent to point Him out.

And it was the very next day, 1 day before our text that John the Baptist actually did point Jesus out, saying, "**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world...**

And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

But it appears that no one caught on right away, because it wasn't until the next day,

when John again said, "**Behold the Lamb of God,**" ^{John 1:29, 34} that Sts. Andrew & John ^(the unnamed disciple) began literally to follow after Jesus.

As Jesus noticed their following Him, He opened the conversation asking, "**What do you seek?**"

Obviously, they were seeking Him, but to what purpose?

Their request to know where He was staying wasn't simply to know where the place was, it was like asking if they might have more time to speak with privately. Jesus' "**Come and see**," was an invitation to do just that. And John reports that they spent the rest of the day with Him, listening and asking questions of Him.

It was a fruitful conversation. We know this because of what happened the next day, in our text. Both St. Andrew and St. John went and found their brothers. And what is interesting is that they were completely assured, both by John the Baptist's declaration and by their conversation with Jesus, that they had **found the Messiah**, the long expected Son of God come to save God's people. And not only did Peter and James come and see who this Jesus was, but they followed Him too, believing as Andrew and John had.

What is intriguing to me is that these were not learned men. They weren't religious scribes or lawyers or rabbis in their day. Later on, in Acts 4^[13] the Sanhedrin will be astonished with Sts. Peter and John, noting "**that that they were uneducated, common men.**" We know that at least, Peter, Andrew, James and John were blue collar workers. They were partners along with Zebedee, James' and John's father, in a fishing business. But, they were zealous for their Jewish faith. They sought out John the Baptist and stayed with him, followed him, learned from him, and waited for the Messiah to come.

What we see here too in these 2 sets of brothers is also a closeness, not only in family & friendship, but also in their faith. They were zealous to know the Truth and sought Him out and were eager to share the good news. Sometime later, on the boat on the Sea of Galilee, the Lord would call all of these men to be Apostles. They would leave everything behind to follow Jesus full-time.

But where does that zeal come from? How is it that these brothers and co-workers were so eager? No doubt, it started in the homes of their fathers, as they sanctified each day w/ God's Word & prayer. No doubt, it continued each week as they regularly went to synagog every Sabbath to gladly hear the preaching of God's Word and learn it... And afterwards at the dinner table to chew on what the sermon was about and how it applied to life. No doubt, it continued in the boat each night and on the shore while they were mending their nets. No doubt, it grew during the Passover, Pentecost, and Day of Atonement festivals in Jerusalem. Their zeal came as the supernatural, God-given product of lives wrapped up in God's Word. And the wonderful thing is that this God-given zeal to receive His grace, forgiveness, and Truth, is possible in every home and every congregation....

...

When I was in college, I remember one of my classmates' dad owned a construction company. During the summer a number of young men would go down to northern Iowa and work for him. I was always so envious of that opportunity because while these Christian men worked together, building houses, they had the opportunity to "**sharpen iron**," as Solomon called it. Proverbs 27:17 It wasn't the usual rough language that one might hear on the construction site. They would talk about a wide range of topics, as we all do with our co-workers,

but they were able to do it from the same Christian worldview.
Their conversations weren't just about politics or world events,
they were about Jesus' hand in politics and world events, or personal situations, or whatever...
To my knowledge, only a handful of these men went on to seminary and became pastors,
but how many families and congregations has the Lord used those men to influence over the years,
how many houses have been built up by these ordinary, though zealous men?

...
Can you imagine the excitement that Peter, James, John & Andrew all had as they eventually returned
to their boats for a time after following Jesus to the wedding of Cana?
Do you suppose their conversations became a little more bold, a little more sure, as their normal banter
was overheard by those buying their fish, by their servants, by the tax collectors, by their children?
Do you suppose more conversations were had at their local synagog about this Jesus fellow?

This is what naturally happens when we know our Savior better;
when you know Him as the "**Lamb of God who has taken away your sins;**"
when you know Him as your Good Shepherd who as laid down His life for you to take it up again;
when we hear Him regularly speak to you His words of forgiveness, mercy, and care.
This is what happens when you have heard those words and teachings so often and regularly
that they become part of you, who you are, and the foundation of your identity.

On the other hand, if we fail to *hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them* or take them to heart, ELH, p. 86
if you *despise preaching and His Word*, (Explanation to the 3rd Commandment)
or **neglect to meet together as is the habit of some**, as Hebrews 10:25 tells us,
if children are never brought to church or they learn by our example that it is merely an option,
then why are we surprised when the faith we once had is shipwrecked,
or when we are swallowed up in the cares and fears or pleasures of this life,
or that the church is aging out with only few of the next generations in the pews,
or that we have a dearth of young men to take up the mantle of the pastoral office?
Would that God, in His grace, would preserve us and our families and our churches from this fate.

But we know this to be the case. God would preserve us from this.
He would love to strengthen our faith so that our zeal may grow and our love for all increase.
He loves to change our hearts and lead us in repentance to confess our sins of negligence.
He lives to forgive those who call upon the name of Jesus,
trusting in His death to be the all-sufficient payment for our sins
and His life to be the righteousness that God demands of us.
He desires to teach us to amend our sinful lives so that we may live in peace with Him
and not further burden our consciences.
This is His good and gracious will for you and all people, your family and friends (far and near),
your neighbors, your co-workers.
You don't need to be a pastor or a teacher to have zeal for your Christian faith,
to speak about it in your everyday conversations, as you comfort or console those who are hurting.
As a baptized Child of Christ, His doors are always opened to you,
to continue to receive His grace offered regularly and often in His house,
and to bring it to yours, so that you and your family may continue to grow as His forgiven disciples.
In Jesus' name. **Amen.** *Soli Deo Gloria*