

I would like to start by asking a question. There isn't a right or a wrong answer to the question. I am new in returning to this community and I am just trying to get a feel for things. How many of you know someone who is unchurched – that is someone who doesn't belong to a church, is dechurched and by that I mean isn't hearing God's Word. This can be a relative, friend, neighbor, or associate of some kind. How many of you know at least one person just raise your hand. I am going to make a big jump here – how many of you know five people that fit into that category?

We believe that a person only has a relationship with the Lord now and the certain hope of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. God makes it clear that one only comes into this relationship with the Lord and is kept in that relationship through Word and Sacrament. Those are the means that God uses to speak to us, draws and keeps us in a relationship with him.

We know these things. We believe them because God's Word says it. In addition we sense it – what kind of a husband wife relation would exist if a spouse only listened to other a couple of times a year – what kind of relationship with God does someone have if they only listen to God in his Word a couple of times a year. We get all of that – so how we be used by God to share spiritual blessings with people around us by bringing them the Word?

Let's be honest. Our sinful natures can fill us with fear at the thought of sharing God's Word with someone. We can be paralyzed because we are afraid that we will say the wrong thing. Fear that they will ask a question we don't know the answer to. We can try to sidestep it by thinking that is pastor's job – not mine. That is his calling. But then we hear Jesus say to his disciples, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." He has called us to go with his word.

I was asked to preach today on the subject of sharing your faith because of an upcoming seminar. So let's take a look at these two incidences and see what we can learn from them. COME AND SEE.

Both of these incidents occur at the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry. The Holy Spirit wanted us to know the initial ways that the Lord started to gather his 12 apostles. John the Baptist ministry was in full swing. The day before the first incident with Andrew, John had said, "Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Then in our text it said, "The next day John was there again with two of his disciples". They start walking after Jesus, perhaps not sure exactly how to proceed from there. Jesus lets them follow a ways and then turns and asks, "What do you want?"

Notice he doesn't ask who are you looking for? But what do you want from me? What are you looking for in me? The two answer, "Rabbi where are you staying?" They weren't asking, "We would like to see your campsite. What kind of tent do you have?" They were saying – we liked to be able to sit down and talk with you – listen to what you have to say. They didn't know exactly who Jesus was and what he was all about. Do you see the request in that for more information? What does the Lord of Lord, the king of the universe say, "Come and you will see." John was the other disciple beside Andrew, Then John writes o they went..and spent the day with him. It was about the tenth hour." 10 in the morning – spent the day with him. Hours in conversation just the three of them. What did they talk about? It is pretty clear from Andrews words when he spoke to his brother Peter, "We have found the Messiah." From that conversation he was convinced Jesus was the promised Messiah. The fulfillment of the OT prophecies. The Savior who was going to rescue them had come.

In the second incident Philip went to his friend Nathanael and said, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Do you see that both independent of each other became convinced of the same thing, believed the same thing – Jesus is the Messiah the promised Savior. Philip probably more through the word of God spoken by John the Baptist and then Jesus invitation come and follow me. Andrew through John's

word and then the Lord's own word but each brought to faith. Messiah had been revealed to both of them through the Word.

The Lord has said to you, Come and See. For many of you it was through the waters of baptism that he invited you into a relationship with him through the forgiveness of sin. For some it may have been later in life and through the word spoken, read, studied he brought you to faith. For some of you perhaps you drifted away from the Lord – you experienced the emptiness of living, the pointlessness of everything if there is nothing greater than you and he invited you through his word to a renewed connection – there is more, it is significant he reinvited you to come and see.

No matter what our life story – each one of ours is different isn't it – Andrew's and Philip's were different but they were both centered on the Messiah. They were both as a result intent of sharing the Messiah.

We are told about Andrew, "The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah.' And he brought him to Jesus" He bought Peter doesn't mean he brought Peter to faith. He simply invited and accompanied Peter to Jesus. That was his role. He didn't convert his brother. Jesus would do that through the Word. He was an instrument that Jesus used in his kingdom work. Notice something else – this was the first thing Andrew did.

You as a couple are officially informed by the doctor – you are pregnant. You suspected, but now you are convinced. What do you do? If your husband didn't accompany you, you probably send a message, "We are pregnant!" Probably that night or very soon future grandparents are informed. Andrew and Philip went to those closest to them. When Philip shared what he now believed – Nathanael's response wasn't exactly positive was it? "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" There is doubt. There is skepticism. Andrew doesn't argue he just says, "Come and see." He doesn't become defensive, irritated just invites him come and see.

According to a poll – quoted on our Synod's web site, which confirms again what the statistics have said for over a decade already. Unchurched people were asked what would prompt them to decide to attend a particular church and try it out. 15% said they might respond to a newspaper ad. 25% said they might respond to a direct mail ad. 51% might try a church because of a church sponsored community event. 74% said they might most likely to come to a church if a friend invited them to the church. None of this means that 74% of the people will come to church if you invite them. It does tell us what an unchurched person says would have the biggest impact on them. It also emphasizes the tremendous impact and potential that a personal invitation can have and be used by the Lord.

The seminar being offered is to share ideas of how we can go about sharing our faith. It is not about talking to total strangers about Jesus – that is legitimate but that isn't what this is all about. This is about connecting with someone you know. This is about being a friend with someone or a close relative with someone before you share and being just as close after you share it whether they believe or not. This isn't what I would describe as 2x4 evangelism – you know you pound somebody over the head with it. That hurts. This is lovingly asking permission to share with someone what has brought you tremendous hope, joy and security in life.

Let's back away a little and put this in the bigger context of life. As a believer in Jesus – why does God let you here? Why doesn't he simply take us immediately to heaven when we come to faith. We would avoid the possibility of falling away from faith. We would avoid all temptations. Everything that we can do here to serve the Lord – we can do better in heaven. Here we can serve him with our life but there we can do it perfectly. We can worship him here but there we can do it perfectly there. So why let us here. Someone has said there are only two things as a believer that you can do here that you can't do in heaven. One is sin but we know God hasn't left us here to sin. That is obvious. The other is share your faith – we can't do that in heaven because everybody there is a believer. Now we get to a central

part of why we are here in the first place. So Jesus words to his assembled followers on Easter eve – I am sending you.

See your life mission, your church's mission to equip disciples to share the message. Invite you to come and see at the seminar – not the way – but ideas of how we can share Jesus with important people in our lives.