



Festival of St. Andrew
November 30, 2025
John 1:35-42

What Do You Want?

Over the next month, I bet I know the most popular question that's going to be asked. Any guesses? I'm thinking it's going to be, "What do you want for Christmas?" I wrote this sermon two weeks ago, and right on cue, my daughter called me while I was writing asked me that very question. In our lesson today, we hear Jesus ask a similar question, "What do you want?" Not what do you want for Christmas, but what do you want from Christ? If Jesus was standing right here today and asked you that question, what would you say?

I've heard many sermons warn, "Don't treat Jesus like a vending machine." I believe Pastor W said that very thing not too long ago. Lord, give me money to pay for Christmas gifts. Lord, heal my loved one. Lord, give me safe travels for the holidays. Gimme, gimme, gimme. Don't get me wrong, God wants us to bring all our requests to him – no matter how big or small. But Satan can twist that generous invitation from God into selfish motives. That was a huge temptation for the crowds that followed Jesus early on. They wanted a "bread king" – someone who filled their bellies and their billfolds. Many wanted a political hero who would overthrow the Romans. But instead of talking about how not to answer this question, how could we answer it positively? If Jesus stood here right now and asked, "What do you want," what would you say? Write down your answer in your brain. Now let's hear how Andrew answered that question.

We don't know a lot about Andrew from Scripture. Church history has provided a bunch of information, some of it verifiable, some not. There's a whole fascinating thing about how Scotland adopted St. Andrew as their saint so they could receive favors from the pope. Scotland has St. Andrew's golf course, the oldest golf course in the world. The Scottish flag has an "X" on it because tradition says Andrew was crucified on an x-shaped cross. Today, Scots are celebrating St. Andrew day with music and dancing and eating. But from the Bible, we know about this much: Andrew's the brother of Peter (more about that later), he's from Bethsaida, a city on the Sea of Galilee, where he fished, he found the boy with 2 fish and 5 loaves that Jesus used to feed 5000 people, and we know that before he was a disciple of Jesus, he was a disciple of John the Baptist.

And that's where our lesson picks up today. As a student of John, Andrew would have heard John preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is near." He would have witnessed baptisms. He would have heard that John's job was to make straight the path for the Lord. Someone was coming after John that was much greater than John. Then one day, Andrew heard John say, "Look, there's the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." I wonder what that meant to Andrew. If he's a student of John, what do students do? They take notes, mental or written. At night, they review those notes. Maybe talk it over with classmates. "Lamb of God." Lambs were a big part of their worship life, but what did this mean, "Look the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." Isaiah 53 says something about a person being a lamb taking on our sins. Hmm... interesting. And then the next day is déjà vu. John says, "Look, the Lamb of God." And this time, Andrew and his cohort get the hint. 'John wants us to follow that guy.' And sometimes that's how it works. We don't always jump at that chance to follow Jesus. Sometimes, it takes a lot of pointing or prodding. Think about what it involved for Andrew. He was used to following John. He knew the routine. He knew the rhetoric. He knew the relationship he had with John. There was risk to leave John and follow this "Lamb." And maybe that's how you feel today. You're just here tiptoeing behind Jesus. Staying at a safe distance. Not quite sure what it means, what it entails.

For Andrew, the risk became real when Jesus turned around and said, "What do you want?" You might picture Andrew sweating, but understand the tone. Jesus wasn't mad at them for tailing him. This wasn't a snap, "What do you want?" Rather, it was a probing question. What are you seeking? What are you inquiring about by following me? What are you hoping to get out of this? Again, imagine those same questions coming your way. What are you seeking? What are you hoping to get out of this following Jesus thing? I'm not going to answer that for you, but I love Andrew's answer. They answered Jesus' question with a question. "What do you want?" "Where are you staying?" It sounds like they're avoiding the question, but they were just being honest. "We don't know yet... but we'd like to spend some time with you to find out." And that's when they heard the beautiful invitation, "Come and see."

That invitation says a whole lot about our Savior. It says a whole lot about our God. In about a month, we're going to celebrate Christmas. What is Christmas all about? Yes, a baby being born. But it's more than a baby. It's about God making himself known to this world. We have a God who wants us to come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing. Fast forward to Jesus' last evening before he dies. In a chapter-long beautiful prayer to his Father, Jesus concludes, "I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them" (John 17:26). And how does he continue to make himself known to us? The gift of his Word. If Jesus would not have written his Word down, we would never know him and we'd never be saved. But he wrote it down so we could know who he is and all that he's done on our behalf. You may not know exactly what you want from Christ, but Christ knows what he wants you to know. He wants you to come and see. He wants you to spend time with him in his Word and at his table. Not just for brief, occasional pop in. He wants you to spend the day with him because he wants you to know that he's the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One.

We don't know what Jesus all taught Andrew and the other disciple on that day that they spent together. But when they left at four in the afternoon, we know the result. Spending time with Jesus turned him from being a teacher in their eyes to being Savior in their hearts. Rabbi to Messiah. That's what this Word does.

But it didn't just affect them internally, it affected them externally. As Jesus' "Come and see," turned into a "Go and share." *"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."* There are a few things to note with these closing words of our lesson. First of all, notice the priority. *"The **first** thing Andrew did was to find his brother."* I used to serve with a pastor who consistently preached, "Outreach is job #1." Now I understand, numbers are completely dependent on God's blessing. But I don't think it's a coincidence that during those eleven years in which he served, that congregation had 366 adult confirmations. What about us, is outreach job #1 for our congregation? I'll admit, that's a little fear of mine. Our congregation is seven years old. When we started off, no doubt outreach was job #1. It needed to be, otherwise we wouldn't survive. But if you're part of the Light of the Valleys family, do you still see yourself as missionary? Mary and I used to look at our Facebook page after church, "Oooh, we have a new follower." Or I'd work at Starbucks, trying to start up conversations. You would check-in when you'd come to worship to help people know where we were located. You looked for ways to connect to the community. And in many ways we've kept that emphasis. You're great at welcoming first-time guests who attend worship. I'm pumped that we've had 104 first time worshipers in 2025. My favorite names in our database are the people's last names whom we don't know, but we know whom their connected to. Susan Dorafriend. Maria Dylanfriend. Brownhair Kennedyfriend2. That's awesome! Let's never lose that! The *first* thing Andrew did was to find his brother.

The second thing to note about this response is Andrew's message. It wasn't some special outreach presentation with corresponding powerpoint. Notice the simplicity. "We have found the Messiah.... And he brought him to Jesus." I wonder how many times our goal is to bring people to our church. We want to grow our church. But that's not the goal. The goal isn't increased membership or worship attendance. The goal is to bring people to Jesus. If they come to this church because that's where they continue to hear about Jesus, great! But if you bring them to Jesus in your home or at the coffee shop, that too, is great. Our goal, Christ's goal, is not about saving a visible institution, it's about saving the soul. And just note what Jesus says about the people that we bring to him. When Andrew brought his brother to Jesus, what did Jesus do? He looked at him and said, "You are Simon of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter). Point? The people that you love that you want to bring to Jesus, Jesus already knows them. Jesus knows your brother, your sister, your neighbor, your aunt, etc. He already knows them by name. He knows them as people for whom he was willing to die, just like he was willing to die for you. He wants to spend time with them, just like he wants to spend time with you. He has plans for them, just like he has plans for you. He doesn't need to be introduced to them, but he lets us introduce them to him.

What do you want? That was the question that was posed at the beginning of the sermon. There's many directions we can take that answer. But I pray, that whether it's where you live, what your Christmas plans are, how you spend your money, who you marry, where you go to school, or what you do for a living all weave together into a life that best puts you in position to come and see Jesus and to go and share him. Because more than anything else, that's what Jesus wants. He wants you and others to spend time with him so that you know that he is the Messiah. He is your Savior. And when you know that, you won't have to leave at 4PM because you'll spend an eternity with him where there will be nothing more we could want. Amen.