

MUCH BETTER THAN TRIP ADVISOR

John 1:35-42

I recently saw an article from Zagat, the restaurant and travel guide company, about some of the latest fads in food. A couple of them caught my attention. One of them is rainbow bagels. Apparently they are becoming all the rage. They are basically plain bagels with a splash of neon food dye mixed into the dough to create brightly colored bagels. Early sources of this fad are The Bagel Store in New York City and D. Z. Akins deli here in San Diego. I was pleased to see that another fad has to do with one of my favorite things, doughnuts. At least I was pleased until I read about the doughnuts in question. One is a luxury doughnut that originated in Brooklyn's Manila Social Club. It costs \$100 and is called the Golden Donut. That's because it is dusted with 24 karat pure gold dust. Who eats something like that? That's bad enough, but The Doughnut Project in New York has a new bizarre doughnut that is more affordable, but definitely not more appealing to me. It only costs \$5.25. It is filled with chocolate pastry cream whipped with bone marrow.

How do fads like that get started? In his book, *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell explored the question of why some ideas, products and messages seem to spread like wildfire. He has some fascinating analysis, but in the end it always comes down to key people telling other people. This morning we are going to see the very beginning of one of the largest viral social movements the world has ever known and will see that there was one man who played an important role in the beginning of this viral fad. He is not the most famous player on the world's stage, and yet he had a pivotal role in shaping history. We may not do something as significant as this guy, but we can be game changers who make a difference in this world by affecting other people. We can learn about how we can do that by observing this one important incident in the life of this man. His name was Andrew, and we catch a glimpse of him in John 1:35-42.

JESUS INVITED ANDREW TO COME AND SEE

This is at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. He has been baptized by John, who is his forerunner. John said of Jesus in verse 32 "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him." Then in verse 34 he said, "I testify that this is God's Chosen One." John was dramatically pointing out Jesus as the Messiah, the Savior of not just the Jews but the whole world.

John was something of a wild man. He lived out in the boondocks not too far from Jerusalem. Matthew 3:4 tells us he wore clothes of camel's hair. Oh, so the dude was stylish. He wore a \$700 Brooks Brothers camel hair blazer? Uh, no, not exactly. He wore clothes made of actual camel hair. This was not a highly prized material. It was not real comfy. As a fashion statement it was a complete flop. That verse goes on to say his diet consisted of locusts and wild honey. Let me repeat, he ate grasshoppers. I realize that there are cultures where fried grasshoppers are considered delicious, but that was not true of John's culture, and it absolutely is not true in the Myatt family home. This guy was a sight to behold. He made modern day survivalists, who are sure the world is about to end and live totally off the grid out in the woods, look like pampered wusses.

John was leading what was essentially a protest movement against the shallowness and hypocrisy of the religious establishment of first century Israel. He was out in uninhabited areas because the religious leaders wanted no part of him spreading his message in the city. Not surprising since he called them a "brood of vipers." Few leaders, religious or otherwise, take well to being called a bunch of snakes.

However, John was winning over a lot of the common people. They were flocking out into the wilderness to listen to him because they saw the shortcomings of the prevailing religious system, and they were painfully aware of their own personal failings. He was getting a large audience and was gaining quite a few disciples. Verses 35-36 tell us, "The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by he said, 'Look, the Lamb of God.'" John wasn't interested in merely building an audience. He wasn't about creating a group of disciples who were devoted to him and his message. Instead, he pointed people toward Jesus. He was all about Jesus because he knew Jesus was God's solution to the religious problem John was highlighting. He was in fact the solution to the fundamental issues of human life.

The result was that the two of his disciples that day started following Jesus. If he was the one John claimed was the chosen one of God, the Lamb of God, then they needed to learn what he was all about. One of those two disciples was Andrew, a man from a family of fishermen who had a great heart for God. John never tells us who the other disciple was. Many scholars think it was John himself. He never refers to himself by name in his book. It would be reasonable to think that John was witness to the events that he describes in this section.

When Jesus saw the two following him he turned around and asked, "What do you want?" One of the unfortunate facts about a written account like this is you can't

read tone of voice. Was this said kind of like a New Yorker asking, “What’re you lookin’ at?” Was it more along the lines of Jesus politely asking, “May I help you?” I think Jesus already is starting the teaching process. He knew why they were following him. Jesus was beginning his ministry, and it would be silly to think he didn't want people to listen to him and learn from him. I think the question he asked them had an obvious surface meaning, but also a deeper one. On the surface “what do you want?” is merely asking why they were following him but that was rather obvious. So I think there is a deeper significance to that question. What did they want in life? What were they looking for? They had been following John, so they obviously had a passion for spiritual things. They wanted something more than what their religious establishment was giving them. What was it that they were looking for?

Their response was just on the surface level. They ask, “Rabbi, where are you staying?” That actually means, could we follow you to where you are staying so we can spend some time with you and learn what’s so unique about you? The implication is maybe he has the answers they were longing for. Once again I think his response to them was deeper than the surface level. “Come and you will see” could mean, “Sure, come with me and I’ll show you where I’m staying. You’re welcome to come learn from me.” His response did mean that, but it also meant more. Jesus was telling them, “Come, learn from me and you will see the truth that you are looking for. You will see what you long to see.”

ANDREW TOLD PETER WHAT HE HAD FOUND

Andrew and the disciple not to be named later spent the day with Jesus. Apparently that was all it took. Andrew had a brother, another fisherman, whom you may have heard of. His name was Simon, although today he is much better known by the nickname Jesus gave him as soon as he met him. He called him Rocky, so he became Simon Rocky. We know by the Greek translation of the nickname “Rocky,” which was Petros, or Peter.

After spending a day with Jesus Andrew immediately went looking for his brother, Simon. What he told him is astounding. Verse 41 says Andrew told him, “We have found the Messiah.” Consider what that means. At that point Andrew hadn’t seen Jesus do any miracles. Andrew wasn't aware of how Jesus fulfilled prophecies. He had spent one day talking to Jesus, but that one day was life altering.

After conversation with Jesus for one day Andrew was so convinced that Jesus was the long prophesied Messiah that he immediately told his brother about him and insisted he come meet Jesus. This is remarkable. Whatever Jesus said to those two

disciples that day, it must have been astounding. Somehow, just on the basis of that interaction, Andrew was convinced that Jesus was the one prophesied for so many years, the hope of Israel. He was so certain of this that he brought Peter to meet him so he, too, could be convinced.

Andrew doesn't get a lot of notice. But he was a game changer. He certainly changed the game for Peter. Had it not been for Andrew, Peter might have never known Jesus. He might have finished his life as a fisherman that no one ever heard of. Peter's life was radically changed because after one day with Jesus Andrew brought Peter to meet him. Peter was changed by Jesus into a fisher of men and became one of the most important and famous people in history. By that action Andrew actually had a direct impact on human history. Peter was one of the two greatest leaders of the founding Jesus movement that has been the bedrock of western society and has brought hope to billions worldwide. Andrew actually had a hand in changing the entire world. I would definitely say that is the very definition of a game changer.

IMPLICATIONS

There are some things we can learn from Andrew about being a game changer. To be a game changer:

IT IS CRUCIAL TO KNOW WHAT WE WANT

The first thing Jesus said to Andrew and his colleague was "what do you want?" In the context it was a simple question, and yet it also asks something very deep of us. Why was Andrew following Jesus? He would only do so because he wanted something. There was a reason he was following Jesus, and the Lord wanted him to think about what that was. He was pushing on that point.

Andrew wanted something that would satisfy the desire he felt in his own heart for a deeper connection with God, a desire that had been stoked by his experience with the protest leader called John. Like all Jews of his day he longed for Messiah to come. To be a true game changer Andrew was going to have to find that he actually wanted something much greater than a political Messiah. His deepest need was to be forgiven, to be justified, accepted by God, to experience God's unconditional love and grace, and to have the hope of eternal life. He found Jesus could give him all that, and he could get it nowhere else. And he would find he wanted others to have those same needs met by what the Messiah Jesus has done for us all.

Andrew would need to care more for finding the answer to that longing in his heart than for anything else, including the very human desire to be noticed and be

important. When he told Simon about Jesus what happened? Jesus meets Simon and gives him a new nickname. The first time he met him he started calling him Rocky. He called him that Very quickly Rocky becomes Jesus' BFF. When Jesus goes up on a mountain to be transfigured he takes Rocky with him. It wasn't long before the chosen 12 are Rocky and the disciples. Rocky pretty much becomes the leader and spokesman. Hey, what about Andrew? What is he, chopped liver? Don't you wonder if he was thinking, "How come I don't get a cool nickname from Jesus? How come Simon gets to be Jesus' bestie? Jesus wouldn't even know him if it weren't for me."

In the *NIV Essentials Study Bible* the notes on this section of John say, "All of Andrew's appearances in the Gospels show him directing attention to someone else, not to himself." Andrew had the impact on the world that he did because he wasn't driven by a need for personal success or acclaim. He didn't care about getting notice, acclaim and position. That humility comes in part from knowing the answer to the question Jesus asked Andrew. What do you want? Do you want credit, approval, ease, pleasure, power, comfort? Or do you want to know God and rest in knowing you are accepted and loved by him? You can only really make an eternal difference if you choose the latter.

Whenever we go to a restaurant there is always that moment of truth. I've looked at the menu and now our server is waiting for my order. I'm facing the question, "what do you want?" That can be a troublesome moment for me. These days at fancier restaurants, which fortunately for me we don't frequent regularly for obvious economic reasons, I typically find myself looking at a menu that offers me no choices about which I can be confident. Because I have a rather discriminating palette I will see options that look good, but in the descriptions of them there will be something that causes me trepidation. Uh oh, I don't think I'm going to like that because they put this thing in it. I am frozen because I'm being asked what I want, and what I want is a meal I know I will enjoy. There's not a single item I am certain will provide that. On occasion I might see a menu full of items I think I will like and I can't decide which will be the best. Either way, at some point I have to make a choice. I have to commit and accept the results, or I end up with nothing. So it is in life.

In life, to make a difference we have to know what it is we want and then we have to commit to it. We must pursue it relentlessly. Life is a bit like going surfing. If you've ever tried surfing you will know that you have to be very clear about what you want and be committed to pursuing it. You get out in the water with that board and in order to actually surf you have to paddle out through the waves. It is

surprisingly hard, tiring work. If you go out there sort of thinking maybe you might like to get out there where you can catch some waves, as long as it's not too hard, then you are not going to make it. You will keep getting hammered by waves that knock you back, then you paddle some more, get hit by a wave again that pushes you right back where you were after the last one. If you are taking a “whatever” approach to the thing you’ll end up pushed back by the waves until you are in ankle deep water back on the beach. If somehow you do manage to get out to where the waves are breaking you might somehow catch one only to have it dump you into the water and break on top of you. Then you will say, “I thought I wanted to try surfing because it looked like fun, but it’s not, so I’m done.”

In his book, *Wild Goose Chase*, pastor and author Mark Batterson wrote, “What is it you want...I’m convinced that many of our problems are by-products of the fact that most of us cannot answer that question. We don’t know what we want.” What Batterson said was not true of Jesus. He had laser like focus on exactly what he wanted in life. In John 6 Jesus astounded everyone by miraculously providing a feast for thousands of people. Look at the reaction in John 6:14-15. “After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, ‘Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.’ Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.”

Jesus was at the height of his popularity. The massive crowd wanted to make him the king of Israel on the spot. And they weren’t going to take no for an answer. They were going to make him king by force. I’m not sure how you force someone to be your king. However, they were determined to make him king no matter what he said. So Jesus left. He went and hid.

What a heady moment. The crowd is going wild about you. You’ve won them over. They are totally convinced. And you are the Son of David, the rightful heir to the throne of Israel. Why not take it? Why back away? In fact in the follow up to this incident Jesus would say things that were downright offensive to the crowd and would purposely turn those same people off and cause them to reject him. Why did he do that?

In Mark 10:45 Jesus, after addressing the disciples’ argument about who was greatest by saying if they wanted to be great they had to become servants of all, said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” What did Jesus want? He didn’t want popularity. He didn’t want power. He wanted to serve people by giving his life to save the

human race from death. In Luke 19:10 Jesus said, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." That's what he wanted, and he never lost sight of that goal.

Jesus asks us the same question he asked Andrew. What do you want? Do you know? You need to be as clear as Jesus was about what he wanted. If you are not you will be like that surfer wannabe who gets shoved around by waves until he gives up and ends up back on the beach having accomplished nothing.

You are going to have to come to this conclusion and commitment for yourself, but the God has told you what we are really here for. It is to know Jesus and to make him known. We need laser like focus on that goal in life. Everything we do, and the way we do it, needs to be directed by that goal. Whatever we do if it is not directed by that goal will end up being an empty rabbit trail. We have a rabbit at our house right now. I've spent some time studying her. She eats and chews and tears up the cardboard box in her cage. She's cute, but I can assure you if you go down her trail you will end up with a life full of "what was that all about?"

RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS IS THE SOURCE

Jesus invited Andrew and his colleague to come be with him. They spent that day with him, and that was all it took. Being with Jesus changed Andrew's entire life from that point on. What he was and what he did, the effect he had on others from that point on, all happened because he was with Jesus.

We are not called to a set of doctrines, a philosophy, a worldview or a moral code. We are called to be with Jesus. Following Jesus, believing in him, means being in a relationship with him, a person. It is not a purely intellectual commitment to certain ideas. Living in relationship with Jesus will impact the doctrines we believe, our worldview, our philosophy of life and certainly our moral code. It is not possible to truly live with Jesus without it affecting our morality and beliefs. But at its core this life we have in Christ is a relationship. It is living each day knowing that Jesus is the Lord of all, he is the Lord of our lives, he loves us with an unfailing love, he relates to us with grace and kindness, and he is with us at every moment of every day.

What changed Andrew and resulted in him having a big impact on history was a relationship with a person, the person of Jesus Christ. I have always been an almost obsessed fan of college football. My interest was mostly centered on west coast teams like USC, UCLA and to a lesser degree, Washington because of my brother's passion for that team. Almost 15 years ago that all changed. I suddenly became a fanatical fan of the Oregon State Beavers. This was unusual because

prior to that time I had zero interest in that team. I had no connection to them whatsoever. I paid no attention to them except to occasionally notice how terrible they were. Then that changed dramatically. I watched their games whenever they were on. I traveled to a number of their games. I wore OSU sweats, shirts, hats and jackets. When their games were on TV at times I could barely watch because I cared so intensely. There was only one reason. A good friend became the football coach there. I cared because it mattered so much to my friend. My friendship changed what mattered to me and what I was interested in.

Doctrines, moral codes, worldviews are fine. We all need them and have them. But none of them can touch and change our hearts the way God wants them changed. It is a person, his unfathomable love and grace, that transforms our hearts. It is because we live in relationship with him that we start caring desperately about what he cares about.

If we are to be game changers it must be rooted in a real, dynamic, love for Jesus. It must stem from a powerful friendship with him that fills our hearts with peace and joy and goes on to be the controlling factor in everything we think, do and say. It must fill our hearts with enthusiasm for Jesus.

TELLING OTHERS IS THE PLAN

Andrew was a game changer because when he was blown away by Jesus he didn't sit on that news. He did the most natural thing in this world. He had a brother he loved, and he knew immediately he had to tell his bro about what he had found.

When Peter and John were threatened by the authorities and warned to stop talking about Jesus they answered in Acts 4:20, "As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." They had been so impacted by Jesus they couldn't stop talking about him even if they wanted to. They couldn't help it.

When you are excited about something the most natural thing to do is to tell others about it. In fact, C. S. Lewis maintained that our enjoyment of something is not complete until we are able to talk about it. Before our kids got married one year they took a vacation together. They went to Disney World in Orlando. Disney has been big in our family so it seemed obvious to make a trek to Disney Mecca. When they got home from their trip they raved about it. They had a seemingly endless stream of reports about the different parks and the many rides they had been on and how fabulous it was. They told us repeatedly, "You have to go." Laurie and I have been to Disneyland so often it's like a second home, so we really hadn't been much tempted by Disney World, until then. The kids made it sound so terrific. We felt

like we were missing out on something wonderful. We couldn't get that out of our minds. So finally 6 years ago we took the plunge. We went with our then single kids to Orlando for a 6 day long Disney orgy. We had a terrific time. It would be hard to imagine how it could have been better. But the reason it happened is we had been infected by our kids' joy and enthusiasm for the place. Their joy was made greater by sharing it.

When you are truly excited about something you're not going to be able to keep from talking about it. Jesus has a brilliant strategy. He has good news for the entire human race. He came to bring us peace, joy, love and the hope of eternal life. He came that we might have life to the fullest, beginning with being connected to the God we were all created to know. He has a kingdom that is a place of true joy and love and peace and wants us all to be in it. How do you spread the news? How do you grow that kingdom?

One strategy for doing that is to have mass audience events where he could share the news with thousands of people at one time. That's a common strategy today. Reach the masses with your news as often as you can, as many at one time as possible. The problem with this approach is it is limited both geographically and chronologically. He could only have done that in places he physically visited, and for as long as he was on the planet.

The other approach, for lack of a better term, is word of mouth. Start with a few people and have them tell others what they have found, and then those others can also tell others. It doesn't require a mathematician to figure out that this method has unlimited potential. As one tells another, who tells others, and so on, multiplication starts to occur. It goes viral. There are no geographical or chronological limits.

It turns out this is far and away more effective. I hear lots of advertising aimed at masses of people. It might catch my interest, but I always wonder whether it's true and doubt that it is. They're trying to sell me something, so their message is slanted at best. I learned early on as a kid that those things you see advertised on TV that look so wondrous and almost magical prove to be disappointing in real life. But consider the potential of word of mouth.

Think for a moment of the problem of reviews on the Internet. Consider, for instance, these reviews of the same resort on Trip Advisor. Here is one: "I was overwhelmed at the beauty of the grand hotel lobby area which leads out to views of the resort and ocean. Being greeted with a fresh lei was a warm welcome and we

were taken to our BEAUTIFUL room with an ocean view...I was very impressed with the room. It was spacious with a huge bed and lovely bathroom area...The resort itself is stunning. I was pinching myself from the beauty.”

That sounds terrific, doesn't it? Here is another review of the exact same resort: “I was incredibly disappointed in our room...The bathroom was cramped with the toilet in close proximity to the door...Guest rooms and the hotel are dated. The room had a very strong musty odor...Grounds on the property are showing their age as well...I would love to come back to this area but I certainly won't be staying here.”

Those are for the same hotel! Which one is accurate? If you were looking to vacation in that area would you stay there? How would you know which to trust? You might see an ad for this resort claiming it's heaven on earth, but that second review gives you pause. But then a good friend whom you trust goes on vacation at that very resort. When your friend comes back you ask how the place was. He waxes eloquent, singing its praises and tells you it couldn't have been better, that he would love to go there again. Now how do you feel? Now you are confident in booking a room at that resort because you trust your friend. That friend is not trying to convince you of anything or sell you anything. He is just telling what he experienced, and that's the most effective message on earth.

When we live in relationship with Jesus and experience a whole new way of life as a result, a life of peace, love, joy and hope, we don't need to sell anyone on anything. All we need to do is talk about what has happened to us. It's the most natural thing in the world. So the key for us is to actually experience that relationship with the most exciting person this world has ever known, to actually experience true peace, joy and love. If we do we will be eager to talk about it to anyone and everyone.

One caveat is that as we share our excitement over Jesus with others we must do that with love and sensitivity. I was recently at a social event where I encountered an acquaintance whom I had not seen in a long time. This person proceeded to tell me at great length about something important to him. I listened with polite interest. However, after some time I hit the limit of my interest. He blew through that limit without even pausing. He continued on to the point where I was at the limit of my tolerance. I began looking around desperately for some excuse to get out of the conversation. What a relief when I was finally provided one by some other people distracting his attention. We never want to do that to people. So we should share our passion for Jesus, but always with sensitivity to others.

The one weak link in Jesus' kingdom strategy is it can be short circuited if Jesus' friends simply keep their mouths shut. To sum up, the message of Andrew's life is being a game changer starts with a living, life-changing, on-going encounter with Jesus, the Lord of all. It means wanting that more than anything else, and having such a dynamic relationship with him that you cannot help but talk about it.