**Faith begins and grows by the Word**

From today’s Gospel we hear the following, “*Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who had heard what John had said and began to follow Jesus. Andrew first found his brother Simon and told him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated as “the Christ”). He brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked straight at him and said, “You are Simon, the son of John*” (John 1:40-42). One of the two disciples was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Who was the other one? Perhaps the unnamed disciple was John, the writer of this gospel. Notice how John took for granted that his readers would recognise who Andrew and Simon Peter were. John consistently wrote with the assumption that his readers would have a working knowledge of the other, earlier gospels.

Andrew had heard John the Baptist’s testimony of Jesus. Then he listened for a long time to the words of Jesus. The Word of Christ convinced Andrew, and he immediately went out to tell his brother Simon, “*We have found the Messiah*.” Not only did Andrew tell Simon, but he brought him to Jesus.

So it is when God’s Word tells us who Jesus is. Faith begins and grows by the Word (Romans 10:17), and the disciple who has “found the Messiah” can hardly wait to share the Good News with someone else. Even today we see this scene replayed frequently, particularly in the lives of those who have newly learned of Jesus as the Saviour. For those of us who may have lost some of that spirit, a good visit with Jesus through the Word will go a long way to restoring it.

Once again John remembered to translate the Aramaic term for his Greek readers. Andrew had found the “Messiah,” which is the “Christ.” In English both words mean “the Anointed One.” This Jesus was the one anointed to be our Prophet, Priest, and King, the one promised for our salvation.

We are told that finding his brother was “the first thing” Andrew did after hearing Jesus. This passage, however, allows for other possibilities of the meaning of the word “first,” one of which deserves mention in passing. The word “first” may mean that “first” Andrew went and got his brother Simon, implying that the other disciple, John, then went and got his brother James.

When Jesus saw Simon, He called him by name and prophetically announced that his name would be called “Cephas,” which in the Greek is “Peter” and means “rock.” We know enough about Simon Peter, however, to conclude that Jesus was not saying that Simon would earn his new name with his rocklike character. Too often this rock would waver and crumble, as when he denied the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, Peter was to become one of the twelve apostles and a foundation stone of the church. Peter through faith in Christ would, by the grace of God, be made rocklike in and through Christ the Rock.