

“Words That Changed Lives”

January 27, 2013

Text: John 1:35-42

Words have great power to do either good/evil.

Our words can do great good, and bring great joy/blessing.

Prov 25=> *“Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a **word** spoken in right circumstances” (25:11).*

By our words we can comfort those in pain, encourage those who are downhearted, strengthen fellow Xns’ faith, or give the gospel to the unsaved.

Eph 4:29=> *“Let no unwholesome **word** proceed from your mouth, but only such a **word** as is **good for edification** according to the need of the moment, that it may **give grace** to those who hear.”*

On the other hand, words can be very destructive.

Prov 15=> *“A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a **harsh word** stirs up anger” (15:1).*

It’s not true that sticks/stones may break our bones, but that words can’t hurt us—they can hurt us deeply.

So Jesus said=> *“Every careless **word** that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. / For by your **words** you shall be justified, and by your **words** you shall be condemned” (Mt 12:37).*

When God’s books are opened as men stand before Him someday, not only their deeds, but also their words will be examined as proof that the H.S. has regenerated their hearts/lives, or as proof that He has not.

In today's text, we find a few words spoken by 3 men, that had life-changing impact then, & still do today...

The impact of John the Baptist's words, the impact of Jesus' words, and the impact of Andrew's words.

*** The Impact of John's Words**

[John 1:35]=> *“Again the next day [the day after Jesus was baptized and John the Baptist announced that Jesus is the Lamb of God] John was standing with two of his disciples,”*

In verse 40, we will learn that one of those 2 disciples of the Baptist, was Andrew (the brother of Peter).

But we won't be told who the other one was.

You soon discover in this Gospel that whenever there's an obvious attempt to withhold the identity of a key person, it's usually John, refraining from naming himself. He's a humble man who avoids doing that, and who hides himself in the text.

He will call himself *“the other disciple”* & in John 20:2, *“the other disciple whom Jesus loved.”*

In Jn 21, he'll refer to *“the sons of Zebedee”* (John himself being one of them).

But John will never identify himself by name.

There is a clear sequence of 4 days indicated in this part of John's Gospel, marked by the words *“the next day.”*

On the first day, the delegation from the Sanhedrin had come to John, asking who he was (verses 19-28).

* Then in verse 29 we read=> “*The **next day** he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’*”

It was on this 2nd day that Jesus was baptized.

* Now in verse 35, we clearly come to a third day=>

“*Again the **next day** John was standing with two of his disciples.*”

* A week from now we’ll consider the 4th day in vs 43=>

“*The **next day** He [Jesus] purposed to go forth into Galilee.*”

Our own text takes place on the 3rd day—again, w/ Jesus present.

[Verse 36]=> “*and he [the Baptist] looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said [addressing a few of his disciples], ‘Behold, the Lamb of God!’*”

Surprisingly, Jesus just seems to be walking unnoticed at the site where John had baptized Him, the day before.

As you’ll remember, Jesus had come out of the water after being baptized, & had stood on the riverbank, praying.

Suddenly, the sky had opened up, the H.S. flew from heaven in the bodily form of a dove, & God the Father’s voice was heard booming out of heaven.

Now (the next day) Jesus returns to the scene of yesterday’s baptism, and you would expect to read that He received a standing ovation, & everyone there started following Him. Instead, He appears to be walking around alone.

This is why many scholars believe the sky's opening, the dove, and the voice of God were all a vision—seen only by Jesus and by John, not witnessed by everyone at the baptism site. And that's why no one else was paying much attention to Jesus this next day.

That seems like a strong argument, but remember also that John had publicly declared to the whole crowd that Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. That alone should have gotten people's attention, and gained Jesus a following.

But it doesn't seem to have had much effect at all.

Verse 36 says John “*looked at Jesus*” as He walked.

There are quite a few words that can be translated “look”/“see,” each one having its own special nuance/connotation.

This particular word combines the ideas of looking & “in.” John was looking at Jesus, w/ an attentive/penetrating look, fixing his gaze on X, trying to truly understand His inward nature, by studying Him and contemplating Him.

That's how John was looking at this One who had been the subject of all those spectacular phenomena he had witnessed the day before.

John may still have been filled w/ wonder that so humble a man, who had no stately form or outward majesty, could actually be Messiah—the Son of God.

Remember that outwardly Jesus was unrecognizable as Messiah.

Even John hadn't recognized Jesus as Messiah, until God personally revealed that truth to him.

Now he may be trying to mentally assimilate it, as he commits himself to it, in a conclusion/decision based on faith, not on sight.

Speaking privately to 2 of his disciples (John/Andrew), the Baptist repeats to them what he had stated publicly the day before=> “Behold, the Lamb of God!”

Good teachers understand that their students need individualized teaching, a/w/a preaching/lecture.

And they don't always learn an idea the 1st time they hear it.

When they meet w/ a teacher individually, and they hear him repeat in private what he said in a large group, they know he really believes/means what he is saying.

They find it easier to fully accept.

Paul told the Ephesians=> *“I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and **teaching** you **publicly and from house to house** [i.e., individually and in small groups] (Acts 20:20).*

Most of Jesus' own teaching was done w/ small groups.

This is one of the reasons I enjoy meeting with my weekly discipleship group so much.

This is also one of the reasons an adult S.S. class is so important a/w/a men's/women's Bible studies.

You may not have an opportunity to teach large groups of people, but you can reinforce truths that have been preached in a worship service like this, through individual conversations.

And frankly, the chances are better that people will really learn those truths from you, than from me, because the individualized situation often has greater impact.

Andrew/John prob. both heard John preach the day before that Jesus was the Lamb of God, but it didn't cause them to follow Jesus.

Now, hearing it again from John, face to face, it impacted them, & they sought Jesus out=>

[Verse 37]=> *“And the two disciples heard him [the Baptist] speak, and they **followed** Jesus.”*

“Followed” refers to a 1-time event—they decided to follow.

This could mean that they decided right then to stop following John, & to follow Jesus instead, from then on.

They may have believed everything John had preached about Jesus the day before=> That He is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

That He is also eternal God, the Baptizer in H.S., and the Son of God.

And they may have decided then/there, to become followers of Jesus.

On the other hand, this could mean they were simply following Jesus at that moment, in order to ask Him a question.

Most likely, their response was something in between these 2=> Following Jesus, hoping to talk w/ Him alone, giving Him an opportunity to convince them that He truly was everything John had said He was.

At the same time, taking an initial step that might ultimately lead to becoming true disciples of Jesus.

However, there was a spiritual dynamic operating here that they were prob. unaware of.

Jesus would later tell them that He had chosen them, they hadn't chosen Him.

In John 6, Jesus will teach that=> *"No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him"* (6:44).

Whether Andrew/John knew it or not, they were being irresistibly drawn to X.

The same is true of you/me, both as we form a saving relationship w/ Jesus, and as we progressively grow into deeper/deeper commitment to our Lord.

What starts out as simply learning facts about Jesus, possibly even as a child in a S.S. class, grows into a committed/personal relationship w/ Him.

And at some point along the way, a threshold is crossed, and we actively seek Jesus as our own personal Savior/Lord.

Then we start growing in X.

And at every step along the way, the unseen hand of God is guiding & moving the process along.

John the Baptist's words were basically the same words he had spoken before, about Jesus' being the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world—this time, spoken personally to 2 of his own disciples.

But now they took effect in the hearts of Andrew/John, moving them in the direction of true discipleship.

In a few hours, they would go out, bring their brothers (Peter/James) to Jesus, and these 4 men together would eventually become the core of Jesus' 12 Apostles.

A few words by John the Baptist about Jesus being the Lamb of God, spoken quietly to 2 of his followers, had major impact on Xnity, & ultimately on our world as a whole.

We are reading John's Gospel today because he was pointed to X, by a man who didn't become an Apostle=> John the Baptist.

Who knows what impact some little comment you/I make to someone, might have for the Kingdom of God, when used by the H.S.

*** The Impact of Jesus' Words**

Andrew/John have now caught up with Jesus as He is walking, apparently alone.

[Verse 38]=> *“And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ And they said to Him, ‘Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?’”*

Those words, “Jesus turned, and beheld them” really excited me when I first thought about them.

Here is this man who looks so lowly/unimpressive, but the Baptist says He is the eternal Son of God, who takes away sin.

Andrew/John owe it to John the Baptist to at least talk to Jesus, & give Him a chance.

As the 2 men catch up with Jesus, and He turns toward them, they look right into His eyes.

Those same eyes that will later weep w/ compassion at the death of Lazarus.

And those same eyes which are *“a flame of fire”* by which He will judge/wage-war in Rev 19 (verse 11).

I think that what Andrew/James discovered in Jesus, was far different from what they had expected to find.

At that same moment, He looked at them very attentively (the meaning of *“beheld them”*), & He saw right through them.

In the next chapter we’ll read=> *“He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man” (2:25).*

What a surprising/disturbing moment of discovery this must have been for both Andrew/John.

They must have realized there was far more to this humble, seemingly forgettable Man than they had understood.

Jesus then asked them a question=> “*What do you seek?*”

Was He merely asking why they had been following Him?

Or was He asking them about the basic desires/longings of their hearts?

They had prob. hoped to simply ease into a conversation w/ Jesus maintaining some control over its direction/subject-matter.

But Jesus always bypassed such niceties, took control of every conversation and went right to the heart of the real issues at hand.

If the issue was a question you wanted to have answered but were afraid to ask, Jesus answered it w/o waiting for you to ask it.

E.g. in Jn 3, Nicodemus began a conversation w/ X, by flattering Him as a Teacher.

Jesus just sidestepped all that, & said=> “*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*” (Jn 3:3).

Nicodemus wanted to ask how to get into the Kingdom of God.

But he was considered the great teacher of Israel, and he didn't want to look stupid, so he hesitated.

Instead of waiting for him to get his question out, Jesus just went ahead and answered it.

Jesus knows your questions too, before you ask them.

Here too, Jesus asked a question intended to deal w/ the fundamental values of the 2 disciples' hearts=> *"What do you seek?"*

He was undoubtedly prepared to discuss such a question right there on the road, just as He will w/ 2 other men on the way to Emmaus, after His resurrection (Lk 24:13).

But when Andrew/John answered Jesus' question by asking a rather mundane question of their own, He humored/obliged them.

They asked where He was staying, prob. hoping for an extended/uninterrupted interview w/ Him.

They were politely seeking such an invitation from Him.

They called Him by a title of honor—*"Rabbi."*

[Verse 39]=> *"He said to them, 'Come, and you will see.' They came therefore and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour."*

Now John draws a curtain across the scene, so that we never hear what Jesus actually said to him/Andrew at X's lodging.

But what John does want us to know, is that Jesus' immediate response was=> *"Come, and you will see."*

That's how Jesus operates=>

No waiting. No need to make an appointment.

If you have a real need, and sincerely seek His answer to your need, He's ready to serve you right now.

If you'd like to know Him yourself, or are thinking about forming a personal/committed relationship w/ Him, but you have unanswered questions, He says to you too=>
"Come, and you will see."

He invites you to consider the gospel thoughtfully—to examine it, to weigh it, to prove it, asking God to open your spiritual eyes to understand it and to appraise its true value.

He throws open the door to you, encouraging you to ponder the gospel's promises that X can provide forgiveness of sin, transformation of heart, & freedom from guilt.

He even pleads w/ you to examine His claim to be God incarnate, come from heaven in human flesh, to die for people's sin, that He might take them back to heaven w/ Him, forever.

**Someone: I can't ask Jesus questions as Andrew and John did, because He's no longer here in the flesh;
No, but you can find His answers in God's Word.**

Get into God's Word, and as you do, talk it over w/ Jesus in prayer, who says to you also, *"Come, & you will see."*

Heb 4=> *"The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart"* (4:12).

When I say “Get into God’s Word,” I mean approach it, w/ an unbiased attitude, and read it w/ diligence.

Not just a verse here/there when you have a few minutes, but thoughtfully meditating on whole chapters at a time—whole Gospels/Epistles, whole books of the OT—seeking God’s help to understand them.

But if you approach Scripture, or if you come to worship services w/o feeling any real interest such as Andrew/John felt, don’t expect to get answers that will mean much to you.

If you don’t expect to understand what you read/hear, because you don’t really care whether/not it’s true, you should start by praying that God will awaken your spirit, & give you a longing to know the truth.

I believe that a Xn can also go to X in prayer and lay out before Him questions that are on his heart.

He should then prepare himself to wait on the Lord to provide the answer, whenever, and by whatever means, He may choose.

Andrew/John came to where Jesus was staying and spent the rest of the day w/ Him, prob. asking Him questions.

His answers had such a major impact on their lives, that they believed in Him that day, & were spiritually regenerated.

John notes=> *“It was about the tenth hour.”*

We ask, Why is John including that trivial/meaningless detail?

John might answer, Because it's not meaningless to me.

That's the hour I became born again, and my whole
life started over, as I placed my faith in Jesus,
at about the 10th hour.

Not every Xn can remember the exact hour of his salvation,
and that's OK.

But John could; & I can too.

The important point that you really must understand in all this, is
that Jesus always says to people who sincerely come to
Him for salvation from sin=> *"Come, and you [too] will
see."*

He adds=> *"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-
laden, and I will give you rest"* (Mt 11:28).

Those who honestly seek Him will find Him, and they will
find eternal life for their souls as well.

He says to us what He said to Israel=> *"Then you will call
upon Me & come & pray to Me, & I will listen to you.
/ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search
for Me with all your heart"* (Jer 29:12-13).

How can we be sure Jesus' words impacted the 2 men's lives?

Because they shot out of there, went out and found their brothers,
& brought them back to Jesus, so they too could hear His
wonderful words of life.

That brings us to=>

*** The Impact of Andrew's Words**

[Verses 40-41]=> *"One of the two who heard John speak, and
followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. / He*

found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which translated means Christ)."

John also went out, to find his brother, James.

But he is again humbly hiding himself behind the word "*first*."

If Andrew found his brother first, guess who found his own brother second—John.

Andrew told Peter that they had found the Messiah.

Because "*Messiah*" is a Heb. word meaning "Anointed One," and because John's readers spoke only Gk, he translated it into the Gk word for "Anointed One"—"*Christ*."

Anointing, in the Jewish culture, represented consecration to God's service in some particular office.

* E.g. Aaron was anointed w/ oil as a priest (Ex 29:7).

* David was anointed/set-apart as a king (I Sam 16:13).

* Elisha was anointed as a prophet (I Kn 19:16).

But the supreme "Anointed One" in Israel was to be the One they called the "Coming One"—He would be the Messiah.

This was the One they had awaited, for so long, & the One to whom they attached all their hopes as a nation.

Jews in general, including Andrew/John, harbored serious misconceptions about Messiah's true nature/mission.

We will see that, throughout our study of John, as the Apostles' understanding of X's Messiahship grows, along w/ their commitment to Him, as Messiah.

But these 2 ex-disciples of John the Baptist knew well, that Messiah's presence on earth, & the fact that they had actually spoken w/ Him, could only be very good news.

Though Andrew didn't fully understand Jesus' Messiahship, he declared it to his brother Peter, & that changed Peter's life.

[Verse 42]=> *"He [Andrew] brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, 'You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter)."*

The same word "looked at [or into]" used earlier of the Baptist, is now used of Jesus.

Jesus looked at/into Simon w/ that same intense/attentive/penetrating gaze.

But because X knows what is in the heart of man, He saw much more than John was able to see.

Jesus looked into the very soul of Simon, and sized him up.

Then He told him what He planned to do for/to him=> change him spiritually from Simon into a Cephas—a rock.

"Cephas" is the Aramaic word for rock, & it became his name.

"Peter" is simply the Gk translation of that same word "rock."

When we think of a rock, we tend to think of stability, & Simon was a man of impulsiveness, the opposite of stability.

But Jesus looked at Simon & said, in essence, “I know all about you, Son of John, & I’m going to change your life, turning you into a man of rock-like stability/commitment.

And still today Jesus continues to transform the lives of men/women who place their faith in Him.

Peter would become the first of the Apostles to truly recognize who Jesus was=> *“The Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

As a result, Jesus will respond, *“I also say to you that you are Peter, & upon this rock I will build My church; & the gates of Hades shall not overpower it”*
(Mt 16:18).

In I Pet 2:5, Peter will tell all believers=> *“You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house.”*

The Church would be built of living stones, all resting on the foundation stones of Apostles/prophets (E. 2:20).

Peter (the Rock) would become the 1st of those stones to be set in place by X, who is Himself, the corner stone.

And it all started w/ a few life-changing words from

Andrew=> “We have found the Messiah!”

He would never display the same brilliance of character & leadership as Peter, nor do any remarkable deeds like him, such as trying to walk on water.

But he brought Peter to Jesus, & Peter brought 1000’s of people to faith in X, 3000 on the Day of Pentecost alone.

Andrew made redemptive history in his own little way
because he had accepted Jesus' invitation to
"come"/"see."

I hope the same will be true of each one of us.

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Text: John 1:35-42

1. Words have great power to do either [10 good] or evil.

Prov 25:11; 15:1; Mt 12:37

In today’s text we find a few words spoken by three men that had life changing impact then and still do today...

*** The Impact of John’s Words**

[John 1:35]

2. In this Gospel whenever there’s an obvious attempt to withhold the identity of a key person, it’s usually [10 John] refraining from naming himself.

Jn 20:2; 21:2; Jn 1:19-28, 29, 35, 43

[Verse 36]

3. Surprisingly, Jesus just seems to be walking unnoticed at the site where John had [18 baptized] Him the day before.
4. John may still have been filled with wonder that so humble a man, who had no stately form or outward majesty, could actually be [16 Messiah], the Son of God.

Acts 20:20

5. Andrew and John probably both heard John preach the day before that Jesus was the Lamb of God; hearing it again from John face to face, it impacted them, and they [14 sought] Jesus out.

[Verse 37]

Jn 6:44

6. A few words by John the Baptist about Jesus being the Lamb of God, spoken quietly to two of his followers, had major [14 impact] on Christianity and ultimately on our world.

*** The Impact of Jesus’ Words**

[Verse 38]

Rev 19:11; Jn 2:25

7. What a surprising, disturbing moment of discovery for both Andrew and John; they must have realized there was far [10 more] to this humble Man than they had understood.

Jn 3:3; Lk 24:13

8. Andrew and John asked where He was staying, probably hoping for an extended, uninterrupted [20 interview] with Him.

[Verse 39]

9. Someone: I can't ask Jesus questions as Andrew and John did; no, but you can find His answers in God's [10 Word].

Heb 4:12

10. Andrew and John came to where Jesus was staying and spent the rest of the day with Him; His answers had such a major impact on their lives that they [18 believed] in Him.

Mt 11:28; Jer 29:12-13

11. How can we be sure Jesus' words impacted the two men's lives? Because they went out, found their brothers, and [16 brought] them to Jesus too.

*** The Impact of Andrew's Words**

[Verses 40-41]

Ex 29:7; I Sam 16:13; I Kn 19:16

12. Though Andrew didn't fully understand Jesus' Messiahship, he declared it to his brother Peter, and that [16 changed] Peter's life.

[Verse 42]

Mt 16:16, 18; I Pet 2:5; Eph 2:20

13. Andrew would never display the same brilliance of character and leadership as Peter; but he brought Peter to Jesus, and Peter brought thousands of people to [12 faith] in Christ.