

Treasure

The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ) (John 1:41).

Scripture: John 1:37-42

Song: “More Precious than Silver”

As I swung my metal detector across the ground on a hot summer day, it began beeping. My brother and I had been in the yard of an old home for a couple of hours, but we hadn't found anything interesting. Before giving up for the day, I decided to dig one last hole where the detector had indicated. Happily, I unearthed a gold class ring from 1922! Right away I showed my brother the treasure I'd found.

After spending the day with Jesus, the first thing Andrew did was to tell his brother, Simon, that he had found the Messiah. Andrew had found what he'd been looking for, and he didn't hesitate to share the news. In fact, he did more than just tell Simon *about* Jesus. He took Simon *to* Jesus. It seems that Andrew realized there was no one and nothing more valuable than the Christ.

When we're excited about something, we want to tell others about it right away. For followers of Jesus, it's natural to look for opportunities to tell others about Him. We can find and share no greater treasure than Jesus, the Messiah!

Father, I want to always be ready to tell others about Your precious Son. In Jesus' name, amen.

April 1–7. **Jake Follis** is a minister living in Oklahoma with his wife and daughter. He is an award-winning storyteller and enjoys reading and writing.

Who's on the Throne?

A glorious throne, exalted from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary (Jeremiah 17:12).

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:12-17

Song: “Before the Throne of God Above”

Built around 200 AD near Hadrian's Wall in northern England, the Temple of Mithras was a place for Roman soldiers and civilians to worship the pagan god known for killing a sacred bull and feasting with the god of the sun. Sometimes Mithras and other pagan gods were portrayed as sitting on thrones engraved with imagery of power and dominion.

In today's passage, the prophet Jeremiah describes a very different kind of throne: the Lord's throne is “glorious” and “exalted from the beginning.” It is not a throne fashioned by craftsmen at some point in history. It is not a throne carved by human hands. In fact, the prophet Isaiah wrote, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool’” (Isaiah 66:1).

The one who occupies the throne of Heaven is the one of whom Jeremiah says, “Heal me, LORD, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise” (Jeremiah 17:14). No one who has cried out to Mithras has ever been saved or healed. In fact, you can stand in the ruins of the Temple of Mithras today. But the throne of our Lord “is the place of our sanctuary” (v. 12), and it will stand for eternity to comfort and bless God's people.

Father, forgive me for turning to what cannot save me. You are my King and my God! In Jesus' name, amen.

Thirst Quencher

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst” (John 4:13-14).

Scripture: John 4:4-18

Song: “Springs of Living Water”

After experiencing some health problems, I realized that I needed to drink more water and fewer soft drinks and coffee. I knew it was going to be a struggle for me to drink the amount of water that I should, so I bought a water bottle that used Bluetooth technology to communicate with my phone. It tracked how much water I was drinking every day, and it helped me stay hydrated. The bottle would even light up to alert me that it was time to take a drink!

The Samaritan woman was at the well because she needed water to quench her physical thirst. When Jesus offered her living water, she was excited about the idea of never being thirsty again. She thought she would no longer need to come to the well! But Jesus was offering something that was even better than that. He was offering to quench her soul's thirst.

Throughout the day, no matter how often I drank water, eventually my high-tech bottle would light up again. I've noticed, too, that no matter how much I try to quench the thirst of my soul with anything other than Jesus, I remain spiritually thirsty. But the living water Jesus offers is really what I need. Only He can give the abundant and eternal life that my soul needs.

Father, I don't want my soul to be thirsty. Thank You for Your living water. In Jesus' name, amen.

See for Yourself

[The Samaritan people] said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world” (John 4:42).

Scripture: John 4:19-29, 39-42

Song: “I Will Sing the Wondrous Story”

A friend invited me to go to a concert with him. I wasn't familiar with the band, and the music genre wasn't my favorite, so I wasn't particularly excited about attending. But based on my friend's testimony, I decided to go. I ended up loving the show! In fact over the next few years, I convinced others to see the band perform. Once others witnessed the live concert for themselves, they became fans too.

The Samaritan woman didn't keep her encounter with Jesus to herself, and her testimony about Him made a big impact. She invited others to come and know for themselves what she had experienced. John's Gospel tells us that once the other townsfolk heard Jesus, they believed in Him as well. Because there was something so incredible about His teaching, these people from Samaria understood that they were hearing the very words of the Messiah.

Our testimony about the difference Jesus has made in our lives has the power to draw others to Christ. But this won't happen if we keep our story a secret. Like the Samaritan woman, we must be willing to share what Jesus has done in our lives and then invite others to come and see for themselves.

Father, help me to make the most of every opportunity to share my testimony with others. In Jesus' name, amen.

Story Time

Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me (Psalm 66:16).

Scripture: Psalm 66:1-5, 13-20

Song: “I Love to Tell the Story”

I was once asked to share some storytelling tips and tricks with 8th-grade students at a local public school. I was concerned that the students might not be very interested in what I had to say, so I decided to begin by helping them realize the significant role that stories play in their lives. After that, they'd be more likely to appreciate the importance of storytelling. Sure enough, once they recognized that they encounter stories everywhere and that they all have stories to tell, they were open to learning about how to tell a good story.

The author of Psalm 66 had an important story to tell. It was a story of God's glory, power, and provision. The psalmist urged the audience to listen, for God had done many amazing things throughout history and throughout the psalmist's life. This story was one that must be told!

We can be thankful that we get to read about the tremendous stories of redemption recorded throughout God's Word. But we also need to remember that we are a part of His bigger story. When we tell others the story of what God has done for us, we are telling more than just a *good* story. We are telling the *greatest* story!

Father, I know that I have a life-giving story to tell. Give me opportunities to tell the story of what You've done for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

Uncharted Territory

I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8).

Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-8

Song: “Here Am I, Send Me”

A World War II veteran was considering whether to move into a facility that could provide all the care she would need long-term. It was a difficult decision. Her mind was still sharp. She was fairly mobile. Moving into a facility would change everything about her life. As she considered all these things, she was reminded that God is in control and that in the facility, God could use her to accomplish His purpose.

The Lord revealed His glory to Isaiah in an astounding way. What the prophet saw was so overwhelming that he cried out, “Woe to me! . . . I am ruined!” (Isaiah 6:5). But when the Lord needed a messenger, Isaiah did not hesitate to volunteer. Isaiah knew that the one who was seated on the throne had a plan and a purpose for him. When the moment came for Isaiah to be used for that purpose, he exclaimed, “Here am I. Send me!” (v. 8).

When we feel reluctant to go into uncharted territory, it is important to remember who is on the throne. We can be sure that God has a purpose for each of us, and He does not expect us to accomplish that purpose on our own. When we say, “Send me,” Jesus says, “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20).

Father, I know You are on the throne and in control. I will go where You send me. In Jesus' name, amen.

Dumpsters and Sunsets

Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today” (Luke 5:26).

Scripture: Luke 5:17-26

Song: “Indescribable”

I was on a walk with my family on a beautiful October evening. Looking west, I noticed a dumpster overflowing with garbage in the parking lot of a business. There was trash everywhere. “Look at that *disgusting* parking lot,” I commented. “Look at that *awesome* sunset,” my wife said at the exact same time. Although we had both been looking the same direction, I saw something completely different than what my wife saw. I was focused on the negative, while she was focused on the remarkable.

A crowd of people had gathered in a house as Jesus healed the sick and taught. Because the house was so full, one group of men lowered their paralyzed friend down into the house from the roof. They believed that Jesus could heal him, and they were willing to do whatever it took to get their friend to the Messiah. Jesus forgave the man’s sins *and* healed him. Some called Jesus a blasphemer. Others were filled with awe.

The Pharisees failed to see the remarkable, even when it was right in front of them. We can be guilty of that also. If we’re not careful, we can miss what God is doing because we are focused on the wrong things. Instead, at the end of each day, may we be able to say, “We have seen remarkable things today!”

Father, despite all the negative in this world, help me to be filled with awe at Your remarkable work. In Jesus’ name, amen.