

## Look to the Lamb

Text: John 1:29-41 for 1/19/2020 by Pastor Bolwerk

<sup>29</sup>The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" <sup>30</sup>This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'The one coming after me outranks me because he existed before me.' <sup>31</sup>I myself did not know who he was, but I came baptizing with water so that he would be revealed to Israel." <sup>32</sup>John also testified, "I saw the Spirit descend like a dove from heaven and remain on him. <sup>33</sup>I myself did not recognize him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup>I saw this myself and have testified that this is the Son of God." <sup>35</sup>The next day, John was standing there again with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup>When John saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look! The Lamb of God!" <sup>37</sup>The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup>When Jesus turned around and saw them following him, he asked, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" <sup>39</sup>He told them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying. They stayed with him that day. It was about the tenth hour. <sup>40</sup>Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. <sup>41</sup>The first thing Andrew did was to find his own brother Simon and say to him, "We have found the Messiah!" (which is translated "the Christ").

Imagine you were going to meet a friend at the University Park Mall down in Granger, Indiana. So you know who you are going to meet and what they look like, but what other piece of information do you need so you can meet up with them? You need to know where in the mall to look for them. University Park Mall has over a dozen entrances and more than 100 shops and restaurants. Unless you know where to start looking it might take you all day to find your friend. When looking for something you not only need to know what to look for, you need to know where to start looking for it.

The same is true when it comes to being in a right relationship with God. Many people in this world believe there is a God, and they want to be on God's good side. But they are not sure how to get on God's good side. They are not sure where to start looking. Some people look to making sacrifices to try and please God. Others try to use "good deeds" as a way of getting God to like them. Still others look to burning incense or making on long pilgrimages to try and persuade God to let them into heaven. But these people are all looking in the wrong place.

In the scriptures God tells us exactly where to look if we to be in a right relationship with him. In this word of God that is before us John the Baptist tells us to ...

Theme: Look to the Lamb

1. To learn of salvation
2. To lead others to the Savior

As John the Baptist was baptizing people, he suddenly points them to what they really needed to be right with God. One day as John was with a crowd of people by the Jordan River Jesus walked by, and John pointed to him and said, "**Look, the Lamb of God, who**

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**takes away the sin of the world!"** (v. 29). The very next day as Jesus was walking by that same area, John says to two of his disciples, **"Look, the Lamb of God!"** (v. 36). This is John's way of telling them, "You want to be looking to Jesus if you want to be right with God."

So those men left John and followed Jesus. When Jesus sees these men following him, he stops and asks them: **"What are you looking for"** (v. 38a)? A simple yet powerful question. What were these men looking for? What were they expecting to find in Jesus? Were they hoping Jesus would lead them to worldly wealth, or help them to be part of the "in" group? Were they looking for political power? Maybe they were hoping this Messiah would deliver them from the Roman occupation? These two men didn't think too long about Jesus question. They simply asked Jesus, **"where are you staying"** (v. 38b)? What these men were looking for was to spend some time with Jesus. They wanted to get to know him. They wanted to learn from him. They wanted to find out what this Messiah was really all about. They needed to learn of Jesus' salvation. In the end they simply wanted to be with the Lamb of God. What more could any disciple want?

Other than Jesus, what more could you want? How many different answers does our sinful nature come up with in response to that question? What do we want more than Jesus? Do we want money more than Jesus? Let's be honest, money not only pays the bills, but it gives us the ability to get the things we want. Or maybe what we want more than Jesus is that person who makes us feel special; makes us feel good. Maybe what we want more than Jesus is just a little peace and quiet. Maybe we want no more aches and pains. Perhaps we want a life of leisure, a life where we can do whatever we want whenever we want. Maybe we just want to be happy or satisfied. Maybe we want all of these things, and we want them more than the Lamb of God.

There is nothing necessarily wrong with wanting any of those things. The problem with those things we may want more than Jesus is that not one of those things can save us from our sins. Not one of those things can keep us from the hell our sins deserve. How shortsighted we can be. No one lives forever in this world, yet so often we look to the things of this world as if they can somehow bring us eternal peace and happiness. In the end those things only lead to death. We need God's Holy Spirit to open our minds and our eyes so that we can correctly understand what we really need from the Lamb. We need, **"The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world"** (v.29)!

The Son of God did not remove this world's sin by using worldly power and might. Instead Jesus came into this world as innocent and humble as a lamb. His innocent life became the substitute for our guilty lives. His life became the fulfillment of the words of the prophet Isaiah: **"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth"** (Isaiah 53:7).

Jesus allowed the lies and slander of the Chief Priest to stand in a mock court of justice

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so that the promises of God could be fulfilled for you and for me. The Lamb allowed himself to be sheared of his dignity and his holiness, so instead of glory Christ was wrapped in the sins and hatred of this entire human race. He allowed himself to be slaughtered so that his precious blood could wash away our rebellious desires; so that we could be cleansed of every moment we longed for something more than the Lamb. In his sacrifice we are saved, freed from our guilt and unburdened of our sins.

And in this good news of Christ's salvation we are changed. Our dead, sinful hearts are alive through faith in the holy Lamb of God. And what do our hearts of faith really want? They want to become lost in the wonder of the Lamb of God. Our hearts want to be amazed at the Lamb every day, understanding that the sins the Lamb took away were our sins. Every Day our faith looks to the Lamb of God, so it can continue being filled with the knowledge of his saving grace. We look to the Lamb to learn of salvation.

That salvation fills us with gratitude. If someone pulled you from a burning building wouldn't you be grateful to that person for saving your life? How much more grateful are we to Jesus for pulling our souls out of the fires of hell? The saving work of Christ does not just affect our lives here in this world, the effects of his work last for all eternity. His saving work fills us with an eternal gratefulness. That desire to thank our Lord fills our hearts with the desire to share our Lord. So we look to the Lamb to lead others to the Savior.

As we look to the Lamb, we want to keep in mind that he is not just the Savior for us, or for a few people. This is, "**The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world**" (v.29)! That simple message comes with the incredible power to change hearts and lives. That change starts with our hearts and lives.

Only the gospel can work in us self-forgetfulness. Knowing the Lamb of God means knowing that our *greatest* need is taken care of: the need of being in a right relationship with God. Jesus perfectly filled that need. That means we don't have to worry about any of our needs. If Jesus was willing to give up everything to save us from our sins, we can be certain he will continue to care for our bodies and our lives.

Like those first two disciples, the gospel gives us the desire to want to spend time with Jesus. And the more time we spend with the Lamb of God the more his gospel strengthens our trust in his care for us. The gospel gives us the strength we need to use every gift God has given us.

The gospel gives us the strength we need to lead others to the Lamb who takes away their sin too. How do we do that? We could follow Andrew's example: **Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his own brother Simon and say to him, "We have found the Messiah!" (which is translated "the Christ")** (vs. 40-41). We can share that same simple, life changing message with someone in our family, and then lead them to Jesus. And we lead people to Jesus by leading them into his word. We can do that by inviting them to

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church or inviting them to a Bible study. Or we could simply open the Bible and share it with them one-on-one.

And it does not have to be a relative who we lead to Jesus. It could be anyone we know, anyone who crosses our path in life. Like John the Baptist we can redirect the eyes of others, pointing them to Jesus and saying, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

While the message is certainly simple, the task may not always seem so simple. It's not always easy to share our faith. We can feel uncomfortable talking about Jesus and what he's done for us because we are afraid of how people might respond. That is why we continue looking to the Lamb. Daily we turn in faith to Jesus asking for his forgiveness and then asking for the strength of faith to share his love with others. Every day we look to the Lamb so that we are able to lead others to the Savior.

If you are looking for your friend at the mall it would be best to talk to them ahead of time so that you can know where to start looking. If you are looking for forgiveness for your sins all you need to do is look to the Lamb. Jesus, the Lamb of God, has taken away the sins of the entire world. You don't need to look any further than Jesus' saving Word to know that you have salvation, and to be certain that you have waiting for you a place with the Lamb in his heavenly home. Amen.