

Second Sunday After Epiphany – January 15, 2017  
Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church

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**John 1:29-41 (NIV)**

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30) This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' 31) I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel." 32) Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33) And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34) I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One." 35) The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36) When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" 37) When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38) Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" 39) "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon. 40) Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41) The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Step right up – see the world's largest horse only \$5. That was the invitation my wife and I heard a number of years ago when we went to the Sheboygan County Fair. We walked right by, along with most of the other people in the crowd. It wasn't that we weren't curious – it was that we just didn't want to spend the money.

John the baptist had a message he wanted to share. He wanted people to see something – something special – and even though there was no charge – yet many people refuse to follow his pleading. Look the Lamb of God, John says in our text.

Today the Scriptures still call out with that same invitation:

**Theme:** Look the Lamb of God!

1. See What He Has Done
2. Listen to What He Says
3. Share What You Have Learned

Although many are willing to ignore this plea – I pray that you are hear today because you want to see Jesus!

Look the Lamb of God! See what he has done. Our text says: **"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"**

Jesus came toward John so that John could identify him for the crowd. John's introduction is really a summary of the Gospel message. I'm not sure what images come to mind for you when you think of a lamb – but for the Jews who heard John speaking of the lamb of God – there was one thought which would stand out in their minds. They would associate the lamb with the sacrifices for sin which were made at the celebration of the Passover. The blood of the lamb spared the homes of their ancestors from death in ancient Egypt when the Lord delivered his people from their slavery in that land.

Those who are familiar with the Scriptures will likely make a connection between John's words and the words of the prophet Isaiah concerning the Lord's servant who would bring salvation – **"He was lead like a lamb to the slaughter."** Now that our minds have been pointed in this direction we might even recall the words we sing in conjunction with our preparations to receive the Lord's Supper: **O Christ Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us – grant us your peace."**

Jesus is God's lamb – sent by him to take away the sin of the world. To take away the sin of the world suggests a couple of thoughts. 1) Jesus came to take up and carry our sins for us as we hear in (2 Corinthians 5:21) **God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.** Secondly, Jesus carried off our sins in the sense of removing our guilt and punishment as we read in (1 John 2:2) **He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.**

Martin Luther once made the comment: "There's only two places where sin can be: on the sinner or on Christ." The law places sin on the sinner – on you and on me. We are the ones who lie, cheat, steal, lust, hate, hurt, defame our neighbor, neglect the word, misuse God's name and break each and every one of God's commands by our sins of action, neglect, thought word and deed. For just a single one of those sins we deserve only God's wrath anger and punishment. I wonder if at times you and I don't have a tendency to skip right over the Law because we see something else better before us. Maybe we tend to treat the law the same way some we treat vegetables – we'd rather set them aside to enjoy the desert of the Gospel.

We do that to the harm of our spiritual health. Not only does the law make the Gospel sweeter to us but it puts sin in the proper perspective for us so that we do not treat it lightly. Our sin angers God. Let's not forget that or ignore that as we look to the Lamb of God who takes our sin away from us and places it on his shoulders. In doing that, he places himself under God's anger and allows God to look at us with his favor!

See what Jesus has done. He has taken away our sin. But he has also given up his place in heaven to take our place under God's law. In our text John says: **I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One.** Jesus tells us why it is important for us to believe this. (John 3:36) **Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them. (John 6:40) ... my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.**

John also spoke of Jesus as the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Jesus has poured out the Holy Spirit upon us. That Spirit has worked faith in our hearts enabling us to look to the Son and believe in him. The Spirit comforts us through the Gospel in word and sacrament so that when we are trouble by our sins we can also have the confidence that Jesus has taken them all away.

Look the Lamb of God: See what he has done for you. Listen to what he says to you. Two days in a row Jesus passed by the place where John was with his disciples. Our text tells us that once again John told his disciples. **"Look the Lamb of God."** His words were really an encouragement to his disciples to follow Jesus and to learn from him. **When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38) Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"**

We are also encouraged to follow Jesus. Jesus asked the men who were following him a question. "What do you want?" That's an important question for us to ask ourselves too. What do we want from Jesus? Do you want help coping with daily burdens? Do you want life made easy? Do you want to know how to shape up your life? Do you want forgiveness of sins and eternal life? What do you want with Jesus?

Before we answer let's learn the answer that John's disciples gave. **They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"** They addressed Jesus as Rabbi or teacher – the word literally means

“my great one.” Where are you staying they asked? They directed their focus not on their wants but on Jesus and what he could give them. They wanted to be with Jesus, to get to know Jesus, to learn of him. And that is what our interest in Jesus should be also. Rather than coming to Jesus with our pre-conceived notions and ideas Jesus says: (Matthew 11:28-29) **"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29) Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**

Jesus will teach us about sin. He'll teach us about forgiveness. He'll teach us about his love for us. He'll show us how to love each other. He'll explain that we must through much difficulty enter the kingdom of heaven. He'll point out the dangers of false doctrine and teaching. He'll tell us of the growing evils that are signs of his ultimate return. He'll tell us of the new life he offers us and the place he is preparing for us in heaven. He'll give a meaning and purpose to our lives and he'll provide us with the tools we need to carry out that mission. Behold the lamb of God listen to what he says.

Share what you have learned. That is really the mission that Jesus has given to us. (Acts 1:8) **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**

Our text provides some examples of this. First there is John's repeated announcement: Look the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We can point others to Jesus and tell them what he has done. But what if we don't know God's word as well as we might like? Don't let that stop you. It didn't stop John. Our text tells us:

**Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33) And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34) I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."**

Although John was related to Jesus – John is able to say that he wouldn't have known the lamb of God unless the Father revealed him to him. We don't have details about how or when the Father told John that the one on whom the Spirit would descend would be the promised Savior. But we do know that John listened to the Father and after seeing the events of Jesus' baptism – was convinced that Jesus was the Son of God and he testified to that fact. He pointed his disciples to Jesus so they could see what he had done for them, so they could learn from him, so they could share what they learned.

How does this apply to us. All of us knows something about Jesus. We can tell what we know. We can tell what we learned from our parents. We can tell what we learned in Sunday School or Christian Day School. We can tell we learned in Sunday sermons. We can tell what we learned in our home devotions or our personal reading of the Scriptures. We may not know it all – no one will ever know it all – but we can tell what we know.

There's another way that this applies to us. A sales person continually is learning more and more about the product he sells. Most of us who have a job have had to increase our skills learning as we worked to become better and better at our jobs. In a similar way, we need to continue to grow in our understanding of the Lord's grace and in our knowledge of him so that we can become better equipped to share what we have learned. We need to be life-long students of the word – students who are using what they know as they gain more knowledge. Let God's word be your companion for life. Behold the Lamb of God. See what he has done for you; listen to what he says to you, share what you have learned. Amen.