

Sermon: John 1.29-42 (The Lamb of God!)

19.1.2020

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John is the wild man in the desert, eating locusts and honey, wearing a camel skin tunic.

When John the Baptist sees Jesus, he shouts out:

“Look, here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Does that seem a little weird to you? That words? I think, that’s not exactly the kind of greeting or proclamation you would want in public.

Imagine, you are on some pre-election meeting, and you are hearing the words someone shouted out: “Oh look, there’s our candidate, the cute, bunny, who’s going to make everything unicorns again.”

But these words (not about cute candidates, but Jesus) we are saying immediately prior to the reception of Holy Communion in this short dialogue:

“This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper.”

Our answer to this is: “Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.”

I think, John the Evangelist is the master of crafting brief scenes that include whole Christology’s! That’s true also about this scene in which John the Baptist introduces us to Jesus as the Lamb of God.

In our culture, that’s kind of image of Jesus as a lamb is quite weird.

But let’s find out, why does John call Jesus a lamb?

The lamb was a significant symbol for the nation of Israel.

The lamb became for them a symbol of God’s faithfulness and deliverance. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God told the people to take the blood of a lamb and spread it on their doorposts.

So, when the death angel came through the land to kill the firstborn son, when he saw the lamb’s blood on the doorposts, he spares the child.

Other example: every morning and evening, a lamb was sacrificed in the temple for the sins of the people (Exodus 29:38-42).

What is really interesting about this is that when John the Baptist spoke, he actually spoke the Aramaic language. The word for lamb in that language meant both lamb and servant.

As we know, when Israel had become exiled in Babylon, the prophet Isaiah said that God would raise up a servant to deliver the people. He would be a suffering servant.

So, the words: "Look! Here is the Lamb of God!" are three key aspects of Jesus' identity.

- He is the paschal lamb who takes away our sins and leads us from bondage to liberation.
- He is the Suffering Servant willing to give his life for the redemption of his people.
- He is the apocalyptic lamb who destroys evil.

So, when John the Baptist said that Jesus was the lamb of God, he was touching a core desire in the people’s hearts in Israel.

"Look! Here is the Lamb of God!"

That message was enough for two of John's disciples to begin to follow behind Jesus.

When they did so, Jesus turned around and asked them "What are you looking for?"

This question should make us stop and think. What is our motive in following Jesus? We may have several answers to this question but Jesus says that we must deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow Him (Luke 9:23). It's not an easy road to follow. It's a small gate and narrow road but it leads to life (Matthew 7:14). Yet whatever our motives are, only Jesus can fill the deepest needs of our heart and promises to be with us to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20).

"What are you looking for?"

This is really the fundamental question that we need to ask ourselves.

The disciples don't give Jesus an answer. They ask him a question.

"Teacher, where do you stay?" (it is the word "meno" it means abide, dwell, remain). They wanted to know Him and hoped for an opportunity to do just that. The two disciples approach Jesus with a desire to know where Jesus dwells.

Jesus' answer is a simple but wonderful invitation. "Come and see!"

The same combination of words is used at the end of the John's gospel: Mary comes and sees that the stone has been removed from the tomb (20:1). Peter and the other disciple come to the tomb and look in and see. The one sees and believes (20:3-8).

I think, Jesus words are proper answer for the question: "What's Christian Life?"

Because, as we are hearing that question, we should be able to answer: "Come and see."

But before that, we should ask ourselves: what will people "come and see" in our congregations, in our church? Will they see that we are Jesus' disciples by the way we love one another? Will they see that we have heard Jesus' word so that his joy is in us and our joy is complete? Will they see us as sinners who confess our imperfections and unholiness, and receive new life from Christ? We know, that through our prayers, our hospitality, our acts of service and our love and compassion for others, Christ is here.

Christianity has always been personal, but never private. Salvation is a gift from God that is meant for the whole world. If we don't tell the world that, how will they know?

As we can see, Andrew has told Simon, "We have found the Messiah"

Andrew was invited by Jesus to come and see, and he did what he was told. And he understood that the initiative for their presence with Jesus and his understanding of Jesus does not belong to him. This is why Andrew decided to go and tell others about Jesus.

Andrew chose to tell that news to someone close to him, to his brother, Simon. Like any news that we receive, we look to tell those who are closest to us first. We want them to celebrate with us or come alongside us through our trials.

And Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Andrew didn't just talk the talk; he walked his brother to Jesus. It's like saying "Don't take my word for it, let me show you." What a beautiful picture of coming alongside someone and going on a journey with them to see Jesus for themselves.

And the last one very important message from today's gospel: when Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus, Simon was given a new name, Cephas, which, when translated, is Peter. Peter means 'rock'.

As believers in Jesus, we have a new life. We are partakers in God's mission plan for the world. In Christ we are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). When we believe in Jesus, we become

children of God (John 1:12). We are adopted as sons and daughters in Christ because of what He did on the cross. This is why Simon was given a new name.