

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Des Moines, WA
June 6, 2010
Trinity Sunday**

John 1:19-41

“Look, The Lamb of God!”

- 1. We want to learn about him***
- 2. We want to tell about him***

All Scripture quotations from the NIV

John 1:29-41

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”

“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ)

Have you ever seen something truly amazing? Something truly unique? With all the amazing things that happen now-a-days, it takes a lot to impress us. I wonder how impressive we would find a homeless, ragged preacher on the street corner. In Seattle there are enough beggars and pan-handlers that I’m not sure I’d be impressed. But a little over 2,000 years ago, God sent someone who was ragged looking, homeless, and

to our eyes – completely unimpressive. The only thing that made John the Baptist impressive was that he preached with authority and with power. And so when we come to our reading today, it was even more impressive to the Israelites around John when this authoritative preacher pointed out a person he said was greater than he. Jesus had to have looked even more interesting in the eyes of the Israelites when John called him the Lamb of God. With such an interesting title, how can that not be our focus for today. Today we too want to focus on the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We want to learn about him and we want to tell about him.

This section of John chronologically fits into the life of Jesus after his baptism. After Jesus was baptized at the Jordan River, he immediately went out into the desert and was tempted by the Devil. After he overcame the temptation, he comes back out of the desert and comes by the Jordan River where John is baptizing people and John sees him and shouts: **“Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”**

The Lamb of God. A curious title to us, but in the ears of an Israelite, it brought several images to mind. Every day there were hundreds of sacrifices for sins and uncleanness in the temple. The sacrifice of choice? A lamb without defect. The prophet Isaiah prophesied about the coming Savior saying he would be led like a lamb to the slaughter. There were plenty other pictures that would pop up in the head of an Israelite when Jesus was called the Lamb of God.

Well why did John call Jesus the Lamb of God? His work called to mind the picture of a lamb in a couple ways. All those lambs that were sacrificed pictured Jesus. They had to be lambs without defect. Jesus was perfect. He was born without sin. But he wasn’t just born without sin, he lived a completely perfect life. He was actively without sin whenever he obeyed his parents and took out the trash, whenever he paid his taxes, or went to the synagogue. He was actively taking your sins away.

Jesus was also our substitute. Lambs were sacrificed to show the Israelites that their guilt and punishment needed to be paid for by blood and that they needed someone to pay it for them. On the cross, God took your guilt and punishment and laid it squarely on Jesus. Martin Luther once wrote that there are only two places our guilt and punishment can be – either on us or on Jesus. So God placed it on Jesus on the cross.

Then John describes Jesus’ baptism to those around him, how as Jesus came out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended on him as a dove and a voice came from heaven and said this is my son with whom I am well pleased. The apostle John who wrote this book takes your knowledge of Jesus’ baptism for granted because he wrote his book later than the other gospels. So John the

Baptist describes all this to those around him and affirms that Jesus is the Savior – he says God told me so. And just to make sure they got it, the next day he repeats himself. So if you ever get tired of things Pastor or I repeat too often – hey, we’re just trying to be like John the Baptist.

I’d like to focus you on Jesus’ question “What do you want?” What do we want from Jesus? Many people in Jesus’ time wanted a bread king. They wanted to make him king because, well come on, a guy who can use five loaves of bread and two fish to feed over 5,000 people – that guy’s pretty handy to have around. We can laugh at this but isn’t that how we often treat Jesus? When times are good we don’t need God, we don’t need prayer, we’d rather have a little extra sleep on Sunday, watch the pre-game, or go have fun than go to church. It’s sometimes only when times are rough that we finally turn back to God and prayer. We have many sins that make us guilty and make you and me deserving of God’s eternal punishment. We have this declaration of “guilty” holding over our heads. There’s nothing we can do there’s nothing an earthly king could do for us. Thank God that Jesus is not just a bread king.

There are only two places our guilt can be. And God took your guilt from you and placed it solely on Jesus. Psalm 103 says your sin, your guilt is removed from you as far as the east is from the west. That’s what I mean if I say God has the last word. I’m going to repeat myself like John because this can’t be said too many times – God has the last word over sin and guilt by placing your sin on Christ. That guilt has no power over you anymore.

Now that your guilt is removed, you no longer ask “what do we want from God?” In thanks you can ask “what does God want of us?” Well, this reading has some great examples of what God wants from us. First, verse 39 records that when John pointed Andrew and the other disciple who was probably John, the author, they immediately followed Jesus. God wants you to follow him by being faithful to him. One way you can follow him is by doing the things you are doing right now to the best of your abilities. Are you in business? When you do your job to the best of your ability, you are following Christ, you are letting your light shine. Do you work hard to provide for your family? You are following Christ. Teachers, computer analysts, homemakers, spouses, single people – whenever you live to the best of your ability, you are living to God’s glory. You are following Jesus.

Another answer to the question “what does God want of me” is answered for us by the actions of both John the Baptist and Andrew. John believes in Jesus, he tells everyone around him that Jesus is the Lamb of God, spreading the good news. As soon as Andrew hears the good news and God works faith in him, the first thing he does is he rushes to Peter and tells him he has found the

Messiah and he brings him to Jesus. You’re following the will of God – doing what he wants when you’re sharing God’s Word with others.

What does that mean on this Recruitment Sunday? I’m sure it is very easy to tune out the WELS’ Connection if it ever talks about the need for pastors and teachers. The fact is the need is very real. Young people, I’m talking specifically to you here too. You may think you’re too young to think about being a pastor or teacher, but it’s never too soon to think about it. We will always need young men and women willing to serve their Lord in public ministry. You might say you’re too young for me to encourage you. But I’m standing here before you because someone encouraged me to think about becoming a pastor when I was in second grade.

Even though this is recruitment Sunday, the public ministry isn’t the only way to tell others about Christ. You can tell those around you about Christ. I’m not saying you need to go around telling people about Jesus before you even get to know them. But those with whom you do have a relationship and connection with – by all means whenever you have a chance in your daily lives share God’s Word. I can go from door to door throughout the Seattle area telling everyone I meet about Jesus but it wouldn’t do even a fraction of the good that you are able to do by sharing your faith with your family and friends. If you’re wondering how in the world to do this, there’s a simple and straight forward method called God’s great exchange that walks a person through the fact that they are a sinner in need of a Savior and that Christ lived and died for them. If you’re interested in learning more, I’m sure Pastor would be happy to teach you it and we can get some helping material to you. It can be a simple thing to share your faith and we are here to help you. That’s why we come together here – to see the Lamb of God, to learn about him, and to tell others about him. Amen.