

Look! The Lamb of God

John 1:29-41

2nd Sunday after the Epiphany & Series A

Parallel Texts: None

Companion Texts: Isaiah 49:1-6, Psalm 89, 1st Corinthians 1:1-9

Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (1st Timothy 1:2)

Our Gospel Lesson today once again places us in the company of John the Baptist. The specific setting of our Gospel text is the little town of Bethany, just beyond the Jordan River. This is not the Bethany just outside of the city of Jerusalem where Mary Martha, and Lazarus lived, but another --- close to the eastern shore of the Jordan River. It is in this town where --- just the day before -- - John had been confronted by the priests and Levites with the question of who he was.

Jesus has already been Baptized by John, spent 40 days in the wilderness being tempted by Satan, and has now returned to begin the process of calling His disciples.

Our text actually covers the events of two days. Like the script of a movie, our text puts these significant events in sequence for us.

This is the Epiphany season --- the season of the appearing. Last Sunday we witnessed the appearing of Jesus as both Messiah and God. Today He makes another appearance --- this time as the Lamb of God. Like a guest of honor arriving at a formal state reception, the Baptizer announces the arrival of Jesus. That announcement is made to us, also.

The picture in our text is simple and straightforward. Jesus arrives at the place where the Baptist was. John looks up, and recognizes Jesus ... and that interrupts what he is doing.

The Lamb of God is here!

The announcement is dramatic. All eyes are riveted on the approaching Jesus. John's identification of Him conveys the meaning of being without blemish, sinless, and having the purpose of substitution. This is the One for whom the world has been waiting! The air fairly bristled with excitement and anticipation of the arrival of the Anointed One.

Put yourself in that crowd. Who do you see approaching? Who is this man that John is pointing out to you?

John knew! There was no doubt in his mind. God had told him in advance what sign would identify the Messiah. John had seen the Holy Spirit descending in the form like a dove. John had heard the voice of God!

Can you take John's word for it this morning? Can you accept the proclamation of the Baptizer as he directs your attention away from himself to Jesus?

Some had thought that John the Baptist was the Promised One to follow. In the verses just preceding our text today, John --- once again --- had to remind the people that he was NOT the One they were expecting. He was only preparing the way.

It is almost as if the people were ready to follow anybody.

Yet, when Jesus came, He was rejected. He received the ultimate rejection: Execution by crucifixion. It would be hard to imagine a more complete rejection! Even when Jesus rose from the dead on Easter morning, people still rejected Him.

People continue to reject Him today.

Are you one of them? Do you turn your back on Jesus because He demands too much change in your lifestyle? Do the words of John's identification fall on deaf ears because you are enjoying the wages of the sinful world too much to notice?

Our text continues: It is now the next day. John is with two of his disciples - -- Andrew and an un-named one --- when Jesus passes by. Once again John directs our attention to the Messiah: "Look! The Lamb of God!"

But the people did not recognize Him. He did not fit their idea of how things would be done. They expected someone a bit more flashy. They expected a different kind of Messiah.

Jesus was here to begin His work. He is beginning the process of calling His disciples. It is almost as if He were shopping.

Picture it in your mind: Jesus has been mingling with the Baptizer's disciples for about a day and a half now. At least twice, John has pointed Him out with the words, "Behold, the Lamb of God." It now registers with two of the men. Something clicks. This time the lights come on! They follow Jesus. By faith, they recognize in Him the long-awaited Messiah.

Jesus sees them following and asks what they want. What a question! "What do you want?"

How does a person answer such a question? Did they even know what they wanted? They were simply following Jesus because they accepted --- by faith --- who He was. It is not logical. There was no weighing of evidence to the possibilities and probabilities.

There is a message here for us.

In this season of the appearing, Jesus is here for us to see. The message is directed at us: "Behold the Lamb of God."

How do we respond? Do we sit around gathering evidence? Do we need proof before we act? Do we have to sort it out logically or scientifically first?

How would you answer the question of Jesus, "What do you want?"

What are you doing here? Why DID you come to church this morning? What were you expecting to find here today? How do you expect to get it? Would you recognize it if you received it?

Take a personal inventory of your spiritual condition. As you hear the Baptist telling you to "Behold the Lamb of God," take a look at your life and see how you have responded to God touching you.

Have you been resisting Him? Have you been rejecting His message because it does not seem fit what you want and expect? Have you turned your back on God because you want something different? Do you just give God token "lip service" by acknowledging His existence once in a while --- when it's convenient?

Or has Satan tricked you into thinking you don't need a Savior? Has he twisted the truth around in your mind so that you rationalize your sin by comparing yourself to others whom you perceive as being worse? Have you perfected the art of rejecting God's call to you?

We do have the ability to reject God. Man is created with a free will. God does not force Himself on anyone.

The Holy Spirit works in our hearts to create faith. Like Andrew in our text today, we hear the word of God, and then take possession the joy of salvation only by faith.

Take a look at where you are in your personal walk of faith. The word of God is at work here. The Holy Spirit has created faith in your heart. Are you --- like Andrew and his friend --- following Jesus without reservation?

Jesus has called you to be His disciple. Jesus has called you to do His work on earth. How are you responding to His call?

Perhaps it is just not convenient right now. Perhaps you will catch Him the next time He comes around. Perhaps the image of being a disciple is not glamorous and exciting enough to meet your needs right now. Perhaps the disciple role does not give the power and influence you want right now.

How much time do you have? How many more chances will you have? Does anybody here know when they will be called for an accounting of their life? Are you willing to “play the odds” with your eternity at stake?

We can not escape the facts: Jesus has called each of us to be His disciples right now. We are told to "Behold, the Lamb of God." Over and over the message is driven home.

Can you continue to ignore it? Can you continue to turn a cold shoulder to the realities of life and death --- and judgment?

The Holy Spirit continues to work in our heart. The spark of faith is there. It is fanned into flames. It expands. It wants to be shared.

Each of you has been called as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Each of you has been singled out --- by name --- at your Baptism --- to be His disciple. With that call, you have been given a responsibility to be His instrument and vehicle to spread His Word to others.

What are you doing about it? Has the appearing of Jesus this Epiphany season made any difference in your life? Can you say that you know your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and keep that news bottled up --- not sharing it with those around you?

What was hidden, God has revealed to you. God has made Himself known to His people. He has called each of us to be His disciples. In so doing, He has made us His messengers.

That is what Epiphany is all about. Jesus has made an appearance in your life today. The Baptist has directed your attention to your Savior.

As a disciple, God works through you to claim everyone as His own. God will use you --- where He places you --- to point the world to Him. God has put you where you are for His purpose. There is someone who is near you to whom you can say: "Look, here is the Lamb of God." When they find Him, they will tell someone else.

Recognize the Lamb of God that the Baptizer is pointing out to you this morning. Recognize the epiphany that is being made in your life today. Let the recognition of who Jesus is be reflected in your words and actions. Respond with Andrew: "We have found the Messiah!"

Amen. May the peace of God, which passes all [human] understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen (Philippians 4:7)