



## Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

January 20, 2008

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

John 1:29-41

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: Isaiah 49:1-6

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 89

Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Gospel: John 1:29-41

### **Look, the Lamb of God!**

“Come here and take a look at this” can mean a lot of different things at a lot of different times, right? It’s early in the morning before school and the sports and their top ten plays are on. I’m in the other room and one of the kids say “Come look at this.” It’s probably some sporting thing. If they are outside playing and someone comes in crying and someone says “Come and look at this,” there is probably some more urgency to go take a look at it. And if they happen to be eating their meal and say to me “Come and look at this,” I’m not looking. “Come and take a look at this” means a lot of different things at a lot of different times, right?

As we meet Jesus this morning in our reading, we see someone saying “Come and look at Jesus,” but he immediately tells the people he is talking to why it’s so important that they look because he is the Lamb of God, the One who takes away the sin of the world. He leaves no mystery for his listeners, but it still seems to take a couple of days for them to get the hint and then follow Jesus themselves and then also go and find other people to say “Come here and look. Here is the Lamb of God.”

It’s not the same way for you and me. We are here this morning because we know the Lamb of God. We love the Lamb of God. We rejoice that our sins have been taken away by the Lamb of God. Yet for us to say to other people “Come and take a look at him,” we still need to learn about him first so that we can then go and tell others about him just like we see happening in the Word of God this morning.

We do know what that phrase means “Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” We rejoice in that phrase and yet, for those who first heard it, it probably had a little bit more ringing in their ears than for you and me. The Lamb of God—what do you think of when you hear the phrase “Lamb of God” besides Jesus? We see the lamb on our cross. We see the lamb in the painting above the sanctuary in the front. But Lamb of God—maybe you also think about the Passover Lamb whose blood was put on the doorposts so that the Angel of Death passed over. Maybe you connect that to Jesus. Jesus is the perfect Passover Lamb is what the Holy Spirit tells us.

But for those people that John the Baptist was speaking to, they also would have thought of the evening and the morning sacrifices. If you have ever been to Thursday worship, one of the psalms we sing every Thursday at evening prayer is Psalm 141— Let my prayer rise before you as incense and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. There was a morning sacrifice and an evening sacrifice every day in the temple and in the tabernacle before the temple, and it was always a lamb. So when

those guys hear Lamb of God that takes away sin, their minds probably would have flashed immediately to the morning and the evening sacrifice. So in essence, John the Baptist is telling them that this is the sacrifice that takes away the sin of the world. That you and I can understand. That is what we rejoice in about Jesus.

However, I wonder sometimes if we truly appreciate the depth of the phrase “takes away the sin of the world.” I wonder if we always appreciate the depth and the nature of sin. That thought came to me this week in very vivid colors at chapel on Wednesday morning for the school. The chapel leader, Mr. Humann, was asking the children to list sins. And the kids came up with a list of sins you would expect kids to come up with, right? Lying, fighting, stealing, things like that you would expect kids to come up with. But the one thing I thought was kind of striking to me as I sat in the back and listened to this is that the kids were almost kind of giggling as they listed some of the sins. Kind of like “yeah, I’ve done that. Yeah, I fight with my sister all the time. That’s pretty funny.” Can you picture someone saying to you, “I remember when I was a kid and I took a rock and cracked someone’s skull open and the brains splattered all over”—and if they were laughing about it, how would you react? Or if someone said to you, “Yeah, I know, I molested children, but I was never caught. It’s no big deal. It’s kind of funny, isn’t it?” How would you react?

It would turn your stomach, wouldn’t it? Can you imagine how much that would turn your stomach and what you would want to do to that person that was saying that? That’s God when we giggle about our sins. I thought more about the kids doing that and I wondered if my own kids are imitating what they hear me do at times when talking about things that we did when we were younger and then laughing about them. Do you think we have set up our children to think some sins aren’t that bad just by the way we talk about them? I have to admit that I’m sure I have. And that just isn’t right, is it?

Takes away the sins of the world—not the big sins, he takes away all the sins because each and every one of them means that you and I should go to hell. It doesn’t matter if you think it’s a big sin or if the state thinks it’s a big sin or if society thinks it’s a big terrible thing. God says, “If you don’t love me with all your heart, if you don’t love me so that you fight with your brother or sister, you deserve to go to hell, not just for a weekend, but forever.”

I don’t think we always appreciate the true nature of sin and what it deserves. Because of that, I asked the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in confirmation class to find me six passages that tell me what sin deserves. All but three of them couldn’t find me six that actually talked about what sins deserved. So then I had them write an essay to tell me what sin deserves. I haven’t sat down and read them yet, but I think it will be interesting to see what they have picked up.

Sin is a horrible thing in God’s eyes. That is why it is so incredibly thrilling that we can hear John the Baptist say, “Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” That’s why it is so incredibly thrilling that we can say to ourselves each night when we lay our head on the pillow, “Look, the Lamb of God who took away my sins that I committed today.” That’s why it is so incredibly wonderful that we could say to our children when they fight and they steal and they hit and they kick and whatever they do,

“Look, Jesus takes away your sin. Not your excuses, not ‘but he started it,’ Jesus takes away your sin.”

John tells us he came to know that because God revealed it to him, right? He showed him the dove and told him to look out for the guy that has the dove coming down on him. He is the Son of God. He is the Messiah. Andrew knew it because John the Baptist pointed it out to him. They both were told by someone else “Here is the One that is the answer to your sins. Here is the One to put your trust in that your sins have been completely and absolutely removed. Here is the One that makes you perfect in the eyes of God.”

When they learned of him, do you notice how they both went and told others about him? John the Baptist two days in a row saying to his disciples, “That guy, right there, look at him. That is the Lamb of God.” The second day, he comes around again, “Look, the Lamb of God. Would you guys get it through your head? You are supposed to stop following me. I am here to point you to him. Go follow him. I can continue my work with others. I don’t need you as disciples. Go learn from him.” And so Andrew, and more than likely the other one that is not named is John because he says it was about the 10<sup>th</sup> hour, it kind of tells you that he was there, the apostle John, right? It was about 4 o’clock in the afternoon and they went and spent the day with him. They learned from him.

We are told that Andrew, the first thing he did after this afternoon encounter with his Savior, was to go find his brother, Simon Peter, and say, “We have found the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior of the world. We have found him! Come and take a look.” Now tell me everything you know about Andrew. In your mind list everything you know about Andrew besides he was Simon Peter’s brother. He went and found Simon Peter. Everything we just read here. What else do you know about him from Scripture?

I think he is the guy that said “Jesus, here is a guy with some bread and some fish, but how far is that going to go amongst so many?” Other than that, Scripture doesn’t tell us about his great sermons on Pentecost like Peter. It doesn’t tell us about how he walked on water like Peter did. It doesn’t tell us about all the things that he did after Jesus ascended into heaven like it tells us about Peter or about Paul. I think it is safe to say that he served his Lord. But God didn’t see fit to record great things about Andrew, did he? But if Andrew doesn’t go and say to Peter, “Come and take a look. We have found the One,” there would be no Simon Peter, humanly speaking. Andrew is the one God used to call Simon Peter to come and see and learn.

We know a lot about Peter. Peter we know must have had athlete’s tongue because his foot was in his mouth so often before Jesus ascended into heaven, before Pentecost. “All these guys will deny you Jesus, but I never will.” Then he goes out and denies Jesus the same night. “I can walk on water. Tell me to walk on water and I will.” Then he looks around and sees he is walking on water and starts to sink. But then after Pentecost, when he was baptized with the Spirit by Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we see Peter do some incredible things. Read his sermon in Acts 2. He weaves the Old Testament together with his testimony about Jesus in such a powerful way that the Spirit uses that message to bring 3,000 people to faith that day. Peter did

a lot of things to serve the Lord, and it all came because someone like Andrew was willing to talk about the Savior.

The church history books, even the history of this congregation, might never mention you by name when it is written 30 or 40 or 50 years from now, but you may well be the Andrew that shares Christ with someone who touches many, many lives—many more than you can. I look around in our congregation, I looked around last week at our Youth Group when we were talking about Called Workers and supporting them and considering being them, and I see a bunch of kids that have the gifts and the abilities to be full-time gospel ministers. Maybe you will be the one who prods that young “Peter” into service and says “You have the gifts and ability. Consider being a pastor. Consider being a teacher.” And then through your saying “Come and see and go and tell,” you might touch countless lives that you will never see. But God has put you here to say “Come and see,” and to point people to Jesus to teach people about Jesus. So how are you doing?

Think about it. There is a big football game today, right? The Giants are playing. Since the last Super Bowl last February or whenever it was, how many people have you talked to about Jesus? Just think about it in your mind. How many people have you talked to in the past year about your Savior? Now think about how many people you have talked to about the Packers in the last week? Which way is the scale tilting? If it is tilting a little bit more than you would like in the direction of talking about the Packers, then the answer is “Look, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.”

God has called you to be his witness and if you haven’t seized every opportunity, if you haven’t been as faithful as you would like and if at times you have changed the subject, know that Christ forgives you even though he calls you to be his witness. He has taken away your sin. And then, because he has shown that love to you, because he loves you in spite of your shortcomings, in spite of the times that you and I fail to do what he has called us to do, be moved by that love to serve him more faithfully in the future.