



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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March 28, 2013  
Maundy Thursday  
Sermon Text: [Revelation 5:6-10](#)  
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)  
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 116](#)  
Second Lesson: [Hebrews 10:15-25](#)  
Gospel Lesson: [Luke 22:7-20](#)

### The Lamb

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

It doesn't really matter if you're a child that grew up in the city or in the country. It doesn't matter if you take care of them every day or if you've never even seen one. But it seems like all little kids, for some reason, like lambs, right? They have little stuffed animals as lambs. A lot of them never touched a real lamb. They carry it and hold it tight to their chest when they go to bed at night. They sleep with it. Some of them, when they get older and there is an ear missing and eyes missing and all that, they may not take it to bed anymore, but maybe it still sits on the top of their dresser as that reminder of their childhood friend. I don't know why. What is it about lambs that kids seem to like so much? Beats me. I can't figure kids out. I can't figure a lot of things out, but I'm not going to worry a whole lot about that one.

But there is one for us to think about today as we look at these Names of Wondrous Love that we've been looking at all through Lent. Hopefully you picked it out from what I read to you from Revelation. The Lamb. We as God's kids, the children of God, connected to God by faith, we're thrilled about a Lamb, aren't we? Especially on this day...the day that Jesus, at the Passover meal, instituted the gift of the Lord's Supper. Since 1500 BC, this day has always focused on a Lamb for God's people. Today we see its fulfillment in the Name of Wondrous Love for Jesus...the Lamb.

The first thing we see about this Lamb, you see it right in what I read to you. It's a Lamb that was slain for us. About 20 times in the Revelation given to St. John, John calls Jesus "the Lamb." This Lamb doesn't look quite so cuddly when you look at the picture John depicts. He says, "I saw a Lamb looking as if it had been slain." That's not such a pretty picture, right? A Lamb that was slain. A Lamb that was slaughtered. A Lamb that was bloody. Yet it's kind of an interesting picture when you stop and think about it. It had to be a fascinating picture for John when he sees this vision of heaven with Jesus as the Lamb. It had to take him back probably some 70 years earlier in his life when his teacher, John the Baptist, pointed at Jesus and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." It had to take this man John, who lived to a ripe old age, back to all of the Passover meals he had celebrated. The Lamb that was sacrificed and the blood painted on the doorposts so that the Angel of Death would pass over the Israelites when they were in Egypt. All those Passover meals that he would have celebrated where the lamb was present, the spotless lamb, the lamb

without defect, and the questions were asked and answered that reminded them of God's promise and God's deliverance. That was also supposed to point them ahead to the Messiah who would come.

Here is the picture in the Passover, right? The blood of someone else covers you and you are spared death. Substitution is the picture again and again in the Old Testament. The Lamb is the picture of a substitute who takes our place and whose blood is shed instead of ours.

Now, as he views heaven, he sees a Lamb who looks like he was slain. Think about it a minute. It says the Lamb was "standing" at the center of the throne. Doesn't that sound a little goofy? A Lamb that was slain is standing? Shouldn't it be sprawled in the dust? But it's standing. It died and it's alive again. Isn't that the picture? Now it's on the throne and the four living creatures and everyone else is focused upon it. This is the picture.

But it doesn't stop there. It pictures for us something that should comfort us. First of all, you have a dead Lamb that is standing. That's odd. You have a Lamb that has seven horns and seven eyes. That looks like some kind of freaky lamb that grew up near Chernobyl or something, doesn't it? The picture isn't there to say this is a disfigured lamb. The picture is there to tell us something about the Lamb who rules, who is on the throne.

Seven horns...horn in Scripture always depicts strength. Seven is the number of perfection. This is the all-powerful Lamb who allowed himself to be slain even though he has all power from all eternity. Seven eyes...he sees everything. Seven...perfection. The all-knowing Lamb who is watching over us. This is a beautiful picture of who our Savior is. He has all power and all knowledge, yet he allows himself to die.

All through our Lenten preparation we've been focusing on the history of our Savior's suffering and death from the Gospel of Luke. This is what we've seen. The One who said, "Let there be light," and there was light allows nails to pierce his hands and his feet. The One who has all this kind of power sets it aside and actually dies for the sins of the entire world.

Hopefully by now we've seen that and we've figured that out as we've gone through Lent, and we are focused on how God took away the sins of the world. But don't stop there. If you stop there, you're kind of in trouble. Someone once said, "To say Christ died is history. To say Christ died for all sinners is theology. But to say Christ died for me is salvation." This isn't just a mental exercise to learn history about who Jesus is and what he has done. Hopefully we've taken the time to see what sinners we are. Hopefully we've taken the time to reflect on just how much we don't deserve what Jesus went through. And hopefully we've taken the time to have our eyes opened to this glorious amazing truth that what Jesus did for the world, he did for me personally. That we say this is "my" Lamb that was slain.

I always tell you guys, don't look at the walls, right? Look at the walls up above me. Look at the symbols across there. Do you see a Lamb? Do you see a Lamb anywhere? There is a Lamb there, right? Doesn't it have a little banner behind it or something like that? It's the victorious Lamb...the Lamb that was slain. That picture is to depict what is here in what I just read to you. Christ was slain, but he's victorious. He has the banner of victory that goes along with him. He took away the sins of the world. He won the victory, and he did it for you personally. That's what that picture should remind you of. That's your banner. That's your pennant. That's your victorious king who lowered himself to take the form of a lamb, who let himself be slain like the Passover lamb was so that you might be forgiven.

This is the day he gave us this incredible meal where he says, "Here it is. If you doubt that or ever want to doubt that, here it is." Here is the very body that was pierced for you. Here is the very blood that flowed down and fell off his forehead onto the ground in front of the cross. Here it is. It's for you. It's for your sins. Those sins you don't even know you've committed. Those sins that you pooh pooh and think aren't that big a deal. It's for those sins. It's for the sins that still trouble you and keep you awake at night at times as you deal with guilt that you recognize and for whatever reason we at times fail to admit that Christ has taken away.

He puts his hands on your shoulders. He looks you in the eye and he says, "For you." That's what this meal is all about. Then he says, "Depart in peace. Your sin has been washed away." This is the New Covenant that we are going to hear about in our readings. You don't do anything. God does it all. So quit trying to think it's up to you. "It's all about me" is what our Lamb says to us boldly and loudly.

That's why we want to praise him. That's why we want to be a part of what John describes here. He says, "The 24 elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense." We want our praises for the Lamb to be part of that golden bowl full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. Prayer doesn't just include "Lord give me, Lord do this for me." It includes "Lord, you are incredible. I thank you that you have taken away my sin." Prayer includes praise. We want our life to be praise.

So not only is this the Lamb who was slain for us, the picture that John shows us of this Lamb is that this is the Lamb who we now serve. What did we talk about last Sunday? "Let's fix our eyes on Jesus so we will not grow weary and give up." When it comes to serving the Lamb, we have to keep our eyes focused on him. We will grow weary and give up. Whether it's in our own life, our congregational life, our family life, this kind of service to the Lamb, to do what he has asked us to do, is hard. It's difficult. It puts yourself on the line at times. When you have to go to a loved one and say "What you are doing is wrong before God. Turn from that sin and repent," that's not easy work. That's something that we are quick to give up because we say we don't want to rock the boat, right? That's hard. It's easy to give up.

Congregational living. It seems like there are always more opportunities that the Lord puts in front of us to spread the Gospel and to praise our God and to serve our Savior, to serve that Lamb, than there are people willing to do it, right? There is much work, and it seems like the workers are often very few. If you are one of those workers, it becomes pretty easy at times to get frustrated and say, "Where's everyone else? Why isn't anyone else doing it? I guess I'll do it because no one else seems to want to." When those attitudes creep into our minds, we're not coming out of love for Christ anymore. We're coming out of obligation to the Law. That's why our God tells us to keep our eyes focused on Jesus. Keep your eyes focused on the Lamb who is at the center of the throne.

When you focus on him and what he has done for us, you're not so worried about what other people are doing or not doing. You're just so thrilled that the Lamb loves you that much that you want to serve him and if someone else doesn't, that's a them problem. But you, with your eyes focused on Jesus, know what incredible love he has shown to you, and you want to fill up these golden bowls of incense, which is the praise of God's people. It doesn't matter who is doing it or who isn't doing it. It's about me and my relationship with my Savior.

The more we focus on who the Lamb is, who we are, and we see this love, and we focus on it, and we revel in it, and we get it again in the Sacrament, we hear it in the Word, and we keep it in front of us all the time, then we want to serve him. It's not a "have to." It's not an "ought to." It's not "if no one else does it, I guess I'll do it." It's a "let me at it. I want to serve my Savior."

Look at what he says he's made us. "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God." Not everyone can be a priest. Not everyone could do these things. Now he's telling us that we are all priests of God. We all represent God to other people. That's kind of a "get up and at em" passage, isn't it? That's not a "sit on your thumbs." That's a get up and get going. You're a kingdom, and you're priests. He wants you to be serving. And you'll want to be serving when you are focused on the Name of Wondrous Love...that Lamb who is at the center of the throne. Amen.