

## Sermon for January 19, 2014 – Epiphany 2

John 1:29-41 (HCSB)

Theme: “Look, the Lamb of God!”

- 1) *Revealed to you*
- 2) *Whom you follow*
- 3) *Whom you share*

<sup>29</sup> *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* <sup>30</sup> *This is the One I told you about: ‘After me comes a man who has surpassed me, because He existed before me.’* <sup>31</sup> *I didn’t know Him, but I came baptizing with water so He might be revealed to Israel.”* <sup>32</sup> *And John testified, “I watched the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He rested on Him.”* <sup>33</sup> *I didn’t know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The One you see the Spirit descending and resting on—He is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’* <sup>34</sup> *I have seen and testified that He is the Son of God!”* <sup>35</sup> *Again the next day, John was standing with two of his disciples.* <sup>36</sup> *When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look! The Lamb of God!”* <sup>37</sup> *The two disciples heard him say this and followed Jesus.* <sup>38</sup> *When Jesus turned and noticed them following Him, He asked them, “What are you looking for?” They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are You staying?”* <sup>39</sup> *“Come and you’ll see,” He replied. So they went and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day. It was about 10 in the morning.* <sup>40</sup> *Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed Him.* <sup>41</sup> *He first found his own brother Simon and told him, “We have found the Messiah!” (which means “Anointed One”).*

“What are you looking for?” In our sermon text, Jesus posed this question to two of John’s disciples who started to follow him and it is a good question to consider. What are you looking for? Why do you follow Jesus? Is it because your family followed him, and it is merely tradition to do so? Is it because you have heard that by following Jesus you will be blessed? Do you follow him because there is something you want, or because of how people talk about him?

People have many reasons for following Jesus, but there is only one right reason, one exemplified by two disciples of John the Baptist. Let us also find the right reason to follow Jesus as we listen to John the Baptist tell us who He is, under the theme: **Look, the Lamb of God!** 1) *Revealed to you*, 2) *Whom you follow*, 3) *Whom you share*.

Part One: Revealed To You.

Our text took place about a month or so after Jesus’ baptism – shortly after Jesus returned from His 40 days of temptation in the wilderness.

We read: <sup>29</sup> *The next day* [that is, the day after John had a confrontation with the Pharisees and told them that the Christ was already in the World – standing among them] *John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”*

Using just one sentence, John preaches a wonderful sermon and fulfills his entire ministry of pointing people to the Christ. “Look, here he is: our promised Savior! Here is the one we’ve been waiting for – the one all the thousands of lambs sacrificed every year pointed to. Here is God’s lamb – God’s Son – who will be sacrificed for this sins of the entire world. He will carry all our guilt and shame, all our sins of thought, word and deed and be killed for them. He will suffer God’s just wrath and anger for us, so that we might live.

How wonderful John’s words are to those of us who realize our need for salvation. We all like sheep have gone astray – we all have sinned against God and deserve hell. Is this hard to believe? Do you think that you are a pretty good person, and in no way deserve hell? Then listen to what Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount: <sup>21</sup>“*You have heard that it was said to people long ago, ‘You shall not murder,’ and ‘Whoever murders will be subject to judgment.’*” <sup>22</sup> *But I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause will be subject to judgment, . . . whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of hell fire. (Matthew 5:21-22, WP).* <sup>27</sup> “*You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’*” <sup>28</sup> *but I tell you that everyone who stares at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28, WP).* <sup>48</sup> *So then, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48, WP).* Can any of us claim that we have never been angry or lusted after another person in our minds? Can any of us claim perfection? No, we can’t. And what does Jesus say we deserve for this? Judgment and hell fire.

Hearing this, our initial response might be: “What God demands is impossible! God can’t be serious, can He?” You are right in one regard: what God demands is impossible. But, God is deadly serious. Every sin, even if it’s merely looking at a man or woman lustfully or calling someone a name in anger, is deserving of hell fire. And hell needed to be paid out for every sin.

Now, look at Jesus, the Lamb of God. God placed all your sins on Him. He is going to the cross to pay for them all.

Having pointed Jesus out, John continues: <sup>30</sup> *This is the One I told you about: ‘After me comes a man who has surpassed me, because He existed before me.’* <sup>31</sup> *I didn’t know Him, but I came baptizing with water so He might be revealed to Israel.”* <sup>32</sup> *And John testified, “I watched the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He rested on Him.*” <sup>33</sup> *I didn’t know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The One you see the Spirit descending and resting on—He is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’* <sup>34</sup> *I have seen and testified that He is the Son of God!”*

Considering the fact that St. John and Jesus were related, it seems strange to hear John say: “*I didn’t know Him.*” Didn’t Jesus and John meet after their birth? It seems not. But even if they did, John would not have known that Jesus was the Messiah without God the Father revealing it to him. Why not? Because, even though Jesus was true God, he was also true man – so much a man that the Scriptures say: *He didn’t have an impressive form or majesty that we should look at Him, no appearance that we should desire Him. (Isa 53:2 HCSB)*

John the Baptist could not know or believe Jesus to be the Messiah without God the Father sending the Holy Spirit to reveal this truth to him. And what is true of John the Baptist is certainly true of

us! There is no way we could know that Jesus is the Messiah unless the Holy Spirit revealed it to us. And thank God He has. How? Through the pages of Holy Scripture! Through the preaching of His Word, the Holy Spirit called us to come and see Jesus. His Word convicted us of our sins and moved us to repent. God's Word pointed to Jesus and said: "*Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!* Believe in Him and be saved."

### Part Two: Whom you follow

<sup>35</sup> *Again the next day, John was standing with two of his disciples.* <sup>36</sup> *When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look! The Lamb of God!"* <sup>37</sup> *The two disciples heard him say this and followed Jesus.* The Holy Spirit working through John's testimony is what motivated two of his beloved disciples to leave their wonderful teacher to follow Jesus. Something similar has happened with us, as we have already said.

<sup>38</sup> *When Jesus turned and noticed them following Him, He asked them, "What are you looking for?"* Why did those disciples start following Jesus? Were they looking for earthly blessings? Did they follow Jesus for tradition's sake? Were they seeking honor and prestige?

*They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are You staying?"* Now, please understand their response correctly: They did not merely want to see *where* Jesus lived. Notice that they called him "Rabbi," which means "my teacher." These disciples wanted to go where Jesus lived so that they could listen to Him. They were looking for the Messiah, and if Jesus was He, then these disciples wanted nothing more than to spend time with their Savior and learn from Him.

Jesus was pleased with their response: <sup>39</sup> *"Come and you'll see," He replied. So they went and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day. It was about 10 in the morning.*

Jesus was very happy that the disciples wanted to spend time with him to learn more about the LORD and His work of saving us. The same is true today: Jesus is very happy when we ask him to teach us. He loves sitting down with us in order to tell us all about the kingdom of God and our salvation. He loves spending personal time with us and we are always welcome to do so. But how and where can we do this? I'll tell you where: we spend time with Jesus whenever we gather to hear his Word in worship and study it in Bible class. He comes to spend time with us every time we sit down in front of the Bible and, having prayed, "Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening," start reading it. Jesus loves it when we sit down to listen to him. He, himself speaks to us – giving us grace and every blessing as we meditate on His Gospel.

And yet, how foolish we are not to take every opportunity to sit down and study His word together. How much we hurt ourselves by not gathering together for worship or Bible study. You know how often I encourage everyone to come to church and Bible class in order to have the privilege of listening to Jesus speak to us personally, as he did with the two disciples in our text. It is a wonderful blessing! And yet many still do not make use of the opportunities God has so graciously given us to do so. If you aren't following Jesus to listen to him, then why are you following him? Please understand me correctly: I don't mean to lay a guilt trip on anyone. I merely want to point out that if everyone truly understood the blessing of studying God's Word in Church and at home,

you would be knocking down my door, and dragging me over to church to teach you the Bible every day! Ah, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Lord, forgive us and increase our love for you and your word!

The more we study the Word - the more we listen to Jesus speak to us - the greater our love for Jesus grows. We will want to share him with others, as is demonstrated by what happens next in our text.

### Part Three: Whom you share

<sup>40</sup> *Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed Him. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah!" (which means "Anointed One").*

Andrew was so happy with what he heard and experienced from Jesus that he couldn't keep this experience to himself. He had to tell his brother: "We have found the Messiah! We have found the one who is our hope and salvation. We have found the one who will carry away all our sins, and reunite us with God."

Andrew's excitement reminds me of the zeal new Christians have for the Gospel. How wonderful it is! They want to tell the world about their Savior. They reflect God's love with a greater brilliance than a full moon reflects the light of the sun to the earth. But then, life seems to catch up with us, people drag us down by not being receptive to the Gospel. The excitement seems to fade. Sometimes we lament over ourselves: Where is my zeal that I used to have to share the Gospel? Where can I get it again?

We can rekindle our joyful zeal to witness the Gospel by sitting down with Jesus more often and listening to Him speak to us through His Word. The more we grow in our relationship with Jesus, the more we will become like Andrew - full of excitement - and say to our family, friends and neighbors: "We have found the Messiah!"

Jesus asks you: "*What are you looking for?*" May our answer to His question ever be: "We are looking for you, dearest Jesus: the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." May this realization of who Jesus is, awakened in us by God himself, move us to follow him, listen to him, and share His saving love with the world. Amen.