

Here's Jesus: The Lamb of God!

John 1:29-34,40-41

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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. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."

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). (John 1:29-34,40-41 NIV)

In the name of Jesus, the Christ, the Lamb of God, dear fellow disciples:

It was a packed house for the concert. The singer was feeling the vibes, drawing lots of energy from the crowd and the applause. He and his backup band were really rocking. "I could keep going all night," he started to think. But then his eye caught the stage manager who was signaling that the headliner was approaching the stage. The singer remembered that the crowd wasn't there for him—he was just the warm-up act. So he cut the song short and then announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, the one you've been waiting for is here! Please welcome....Taylor Swift!"

John the Baptist was something like the warm-up act. He attracted large crowds who came to him in the desert of Judea, as he was preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. But when John saw Jesus coming toward him, John didn't say, "Hold on, Jesus—I still have more preaching I want to do." John knew that the focus wasn't on him, but on Jesus. May we learn from John also to say, "**Here's Jesus: The Lamb of God!**"

John identified Jesus with this paradox: "A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me." His audience could see that, timewise, John came first and then came Jesus. But there was more than meets the eye. Jesus was also before John in time. Another time, when Jesus was discussing Abraham with the crowd, he told them, "Before Abraham was born, I am!" (John 8:58). Abraham lived 2,000 years before Christ. How could this be—a person who comes after also comes before? It's because Jesus is more than a human being. He is true God, and was "with God in the beginning," as John's gospel points out (John 1:1,2).

Jesus was before John in time, and so John put Jesus before him in rank. He put him first. A question for us: Do we always put Jesus, put God, first? When it's time for church do we always put God first, or do we think, "I've got to work—my job comes first," or, "my family comes first," or "my interests come first, I'm going to watch my favorite team play football even though it's church time"? If we don't put God first, we are breaking the first commandment which tells us, "You shall have no other gods before me." Nothing is to come before God!

How thankful we are that John introduced Jesus this way: “Here’s Jesus, the Lamb of God!” John’s audience knew what lambs were for. God told the Israelites at the time of Moses to each “take a lamb for his family” (Ex. 12:3), a year-old male without defect, slaughter them and use the blood on their doorframes and sides as a sacrifice to allow them to escape the death of the firstborn—and escape slavery in Egypt. Years later, the Lord promised that his servant, the Messiah, would be “led like a lamb to the slaughter” (Isa. 53:7). John was announcing that Jesus was that Lamb, the one who would be slaughtered and whose blood would free us from our slavery to sin and deliver us from death. He’s the one who “takes away the sin of the world.” Whatever sins you and I have done, they’ve been taken away by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God!

John gave more testimony about Jesus. “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.” That was the Father’s signal that this man Jesus was the Chosen One, with the Spirit on him. And while John baptized with water, this man with the Spirit “is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.” We use the earthly means, water, when we baptize; Jesus does something far greater as we baptize: He pours out his Holy Spirit on the baptized person, so that we believe in Christ and receive the forgiveness of all our sins!

In our lives, let’s always say: “Here’s Jesus: The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world—and my sin too.” Definitely we will put him first in our lives. And our text also teaches us to share him first.

John gave his testimony to the crowds, and also to two of his disciples the next day. “When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God!’” (John 1:36). The two disciples started following Jesus and spent the day with him, all because John shared Jesus with them.

The sharing continued. We’re told about Andrew, the brother of the more well-known disciple Simon Peter. At this point Simon Peter wasn’t aware of Jesus. Andrew was one of the two disciples who heard John and followed Jesus that day. “The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (the Christ, the Anointed One).” Notice that this was the *first* thing Andrew did. He saw sharing this good news with his brother as a priority. There was no, “Let me enjoy Jesus on my own, and if I get around to it I’ll let Simon know.” Why keep it to yourself? Andrew knew he had to share Jesus, right away!

Sharing Jesus needs to be a priority in our lives. After all, Jesus is the Lamb of God to take away everyone’s sins. And how will they believe that if they haven’t heard about it? Now, maybe everyone in your family already knows about Jesus and, we pray, is following Jesus. But maybe not. Don’t take it for granted that they know; keep talking about Christ with them. Perhaps it’s your neighbor or someone else close to you who has questions, or needs some comfort, or needs a friend to talk to. You can be that friend! You can be that good neighbor who says, “I know someone who’s always there for us and gets us through life’s problems. Let me introduce you to Jesus!”

You can share some personal touches of how Christ helped you in different times and blessed you. But remember, you and I are just the warm-up act. We pastors need to remember that too: It’s not about us, it’s all about Jesus. So let’s always put the spotlight on Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Amen.