

Sermon John 1 29 41 2nd S aft Ep

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

Text: John 1: 29-41

Theme: The Lamb of God and our witness to others about Him.

Goal: To be sure of Christ as the Lamb of God and to share this Good News with others.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: My four years as pastor in Kenya gave me a better understanding of and a better approach to the style of life of people in the biblical time. To see the Maasai shepherds with their goats and sheep in the savannas, some rituals that we heard about and watched on TV, to see the way that some people dress themselves... all of these took my mind back to the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as I had seen Biblical Portraits in my childhood, and to the time of Jesus and the beginning of the Christian Church.

As I read the Gospel for today, I can really imagine better now that before John the Baptist on the bank of the Jordan River, surrounded by a crowd of people and pointing at Jesus, saying: “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

## **I – To look**

John the Baptist had just described his mission in the verses before our Gospel. He said that he was just a voice in the desert, calling people to repentance and waiting for the right time to announce the promised Messiah. And now, among all those people who came to John, Jesus was there. And John recognized Him by the grace of God and pointed at Him, saying: “Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” – This is the man whom I was speaking about.”

The way John described Jesus is related to all Old Testament prophecies. The sacrifice of a lamb goes through the entire Old Testament, from the sacrifice that Abel brought to God, going through the sacrifice Noah offered to God after the flood, the goat that was offered on behalf of Isaac by Abraham on Mont Moriah, and especially the lamb that was offered on the day that the Israelites were delivered from slavery in Egypt as God commanded to Moses. Since then, the sacrifice of a lamb was part of the daily service in the tabernacle and after this in the temple. People used to bring lambs to be sacrificed on their behalf according to God's law. This was to show that atonement was necessary to remove the sins and to give access to God. This was also to remind people of the promise of God that sometimes in the future He would send His Son to be sacrificed as a Lamb on behalf of all humankind. And now the time had come: Jesus, the Lamb of God, was there to accomplish God's promises!

John the Baptist was the last of the prophets and he had the privilege to announce to the people that the Messiah had come: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Look, open your eyes; don't miss the opportunity! The Lamb of God is among us! He still comes to us in His Word and in the Sacraments. We can hear Him speaking to us when we listen to the Bible and when we receive the Absolution at the beginning of the regular Service. We can see Him taking the children in His arms in the Holy baptism and saying: "Let the little children come to me!" We can see, touch and taste the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world in the Lord's Supper, where Jesus Himself comes to us with grace and forgiveness to take away our individual sins and to give us relief and life. Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, is still among us! Look and see Him with the eyes of your faith!

## **II – To follow**

Looking to Jesus, recognizing Him by faith that He is the Lamb of God, believing that He takes away our sin, leads us to action. Two of the disciples of John follow Jesus and spend that day with Him. They were nevermore the same people after that meeting with Jesus. They followed Him all their lives as His disciples.

To look to Jesus and to meet Him personally changes lives. Relieved from our sins, Jesus gives us a new purpose of life, full of hope and meaning. We feel alone, by ourselves, but Jesus goes ahead of us, always pointing at the goal of our lives: To reach the house of the Father. And we follow Him surrounded by a crowd of followers and this gives us strength on the way. This is the Holy Christian Church, the communion of the saints, cleansed by the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

## **III – To tell**

When we look to Jesus and believe in Him as the Lamb of God, our Savior, who takes away our sin, we cannot be quiet and to keep this Good News inside us as a secret. One of the disciples who “heard what John had said and had followed Jesus” was Andrew. “The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him: We have found the Messiah, that is, the Christ.”

A Christian cannot keep the truth and the faith in his own heart without sharing it with others. The truth flows from the heart through the mouth and we tell others about our exciting discovery. Like when we find a good doctor, we tell others about him and how he helped me in my illness; so we tell others about our Savior and friend Jesus, the Lamb of God who took away my sins. This is the Good News to be shared with the entire world, as Jesus said “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15). This is one of the reasons while I came from my home country to Africa, first to Kenya and now to South Africa, to share the Gospel of Jesus with as many people as possible.

#### **IV – To bring**

There is a detail about the testimony Andrew gave to his brother I want to highlight. He didn't only **tell** Peter about the Messiah, but he **brought** his brother to Jesus. And Peter became the leader of the apostles.

Some people listen to what we say, but still remain in their own place. They need to be brought to Jesus, they need to see our good example of life, they need to be urged (ördgd). Invite your friends and relatives and encourage them to come to Jesus. In Him, and only in Him, we have life and eternal hope. He is the only one who takes away the sin of the world and our sins as well. No other person is able to do this. He is the only one!

Conclusion: When we sing in the Lord's Supper liturgy: *“Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us... have mercy on us... grant us peace...”* we go back to the same faith of our biblical forefathers and to the testimony of John the Baptist, joined with the Christians all over the world, praising and proclaiming that Jesus is our Savior and Friend, the reason of our lives. “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle,  
Cape Town, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2011