

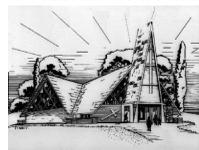


Free Evangelical Lutheran  
Synod in South Africa

## Sermon for Second Sunday after Epiphany

*God's Glory is revealed in Christ as  
the Lamb of God!*

St. John's Lutheran Parish



Shelly Beach



• [The Word of God for this Sermon is written in John 1,29-42a:](#)

• <sup>9</sup> **ESV** The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

• <sup>30</sup> This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' <sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." <sup>32</sup> And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.

• <sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain,

this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

• <sup>34</sup> And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

• <sup>35</sup> The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples,

• <sup>36</sup> and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

• <sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

• <sup>38</sup> Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?"

And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"

• <sup>39</sup> He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

• <sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). <sup>42</sup> He brought him to Jesus.

• *Let us pray: Come Holy Spirit, open our ears and our hearts of faith so that we will see the Glory of God in the Word become flesh! Amen.*

• **Dear Israel of God!**

• "What do you seek" - the first words Jesus spoke to the two disciples of John who now started to follow Jesus! What do you seek? I don't want to question any of the things you have learned in your life about Jesus. I know that most of you would probably answer that you came to hear the Word of Jesus. That is a good answer, because the Word of Christ is going to answer this question and it will give proof of its truth and it will do something with you!

- This question is important not only for those who are being lead to Christ for the first time, but also for all those who participate in His Body. It is good for many reasons, one being to make sure that we are still on course, that we didn't drift off course by all the winds of change flung around our ears constantly through the media. The world and the devil also preach a Jesus. Satan does not preach himself openly amongst the Christians. He is not stupid. He also preaches a Jesus, but a confusing one, a false Jesus. And that makes it so dangerous, so confusing. And his idea of Jesus coincides, matches what our old Adam wants to hear and feel, and experience. We have to realise this in all sober-mindedness, a part of us, our old nature, our former Self leans towards Satan's teaching of Christ!
- Satan proclaims a Christ who comes to restore the old Adam! The old Adam gets another chance to work out its own salvation with God. Jesus did the first part, now you have to come to the party. That is why his version of Jesus is so widespread. And he knows, that last part, namely that you have to do the last bit to complete it, will eventually kill you, if you are honest. Satan knows this drives you first into pride and then eventually into despair or complete dishonesty. Therefore, let us hear this question of Jesus, *what do you seek* and follow Him through hearing His Word.
- Jesus invites you and says, "*come and you will see!*" So, come along, hear Him and you will see!
- To proof that nobody, but nobody saw or understood who Jesus really was, although He had been living amongst His own people for some thirty years, John gives witness about his blindness! He said, "*Also I did not recognize Him.*" John was born to point to Jesus, but he did not recognise Him. Until the baptism of Jesus! At the Baptism of Jesus John saw that the Spirit descended out of heaven as a dove, and the Spirit remained upon Him. God the Father had told Him, on whom he sees the Spirit descend and remain, this is the one who baptises with the Holy Spirit.
- He saw it and gave witness. The Word became flesh and now the Spirit had joined the Word become flesh. He, the Word become flesh would baptise with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit attached Himself to the Word made flesh. And the Father's Word confirmed it. He is the Son of God.
- As a side-note, it is interesting to note that most modern scholars confirm that there was a person like John the Baptist and that he baptised Jesus.
- Then on the next day, as John saw Jesus coming towards him, he said to his own

followers, to his own disciples, [29] *“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* This call, this insight is absolutely crucial to understand the rest of the Gospel. John had seen the Holy Spirit come down on Jesus in the shape of a dove. What did a dove signify? Noah sent out a dove to find out if the waters of the flood had receded. Then doves were used for sacrifices like lambs. Both doves and lambs were vulnerable animals. In any case this call of John connects Jesus baptism with water and the Spirit with Jesus’ humble sacrifice on the cross. So, Word, flesh, water, Spirit and blood are connected in Jesus’ ministry who, as Lamb of God, takes away the sin of the world and baptises with the Spirit.

- Notice, how John says THE Lamb of God and how He joins this with the Son of God! What OT Scriptures did He allude to? Isaac was brought to the altar as burnt-offering, the only son of His father, the Paschal lamb which had to be slaughtered and eaten and the servant of Isaiah 53,7 is compared to a lamb brought to slaughter.
- If we put these together we have Jesus being the Son of God and the Lamb of God who serves God and the world by being led to slaughter to take away the sin of the world.
- The “sin” of the world? Why not sin<sub>2</sub>? Jesus is the Light that shines in the darkness. John gave witness of the Light. But the world did not recognise Jesus as the Light. Sin, according to the Gospel of John, is to remain in darkness, to reject the witness of John and the Scriptures. Sin is to not believe John who proclaims Jesus as being the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Sin is, therefore, not so much an ethical category, but rather “spiritual blindness towards God and Jesus”.
- Jesus takes away the sin of the world, that is, people will be enlightened. They will recognise Jesus as the Lamb of God. They will trust the Word of God that Jesus is the Son of God and that He continues to take away the blindness of the world.
- But, how did it all start? John was the first one to see. How did this carry on?
- John the Baptist pointed his own disciples to follow Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God.” Andrew was one of them and he pointed His brother Simon and said, ‘we have found the Messiah’. The next day Jesus found Philip and said to him, follow Me. Philip found Nathanæel. Nathanæel was a true sceptic, he needed an extra miracle of Jesus to convince him, but he also began to follow Jesus. And this is still carrying on, and on and on. From person to person. Jesus still calls people

through His disciples and baptises them with water and the Spirit. That is, He takes away their blindness and gives them a new heart, a new mind, a new desire and trust to see what Jesus says. The Light enters through their ears and creates new hearts that see and live.

• So, we come back to the question of Jesus, what do you seek? If you seek the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, here, amongst His disciples gathered in His temple, His Body, then you have come to the right place. That is whom you will find in His Body. Here He takes away your blindness. He crucifies your own ideas of Jesus and those which come from the world. Here He gives you His Spirit who gives you new insight concerning the Baptism and Death of Christ! He reveals to you that God's highest Glory is revealed at the cross of Christ.

• From the Lamb's death on the Cross, flows forth water, blood and the right Spirit of Love and mercy and compassion, insight and wisdom. From the death on the cross of Christ Baptism is coming to us as God's Gift of Life. The Word of Christ, the whole Bible only makes sense, if the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world remains central to the whole book. If this is whom you are seeking here, you will find Him proclaimed in the Liturgy, in the Readings, in the sermons in the Sacraments- the means of the Holy Spirit. You should find Him proclaimed in the hymns in the prayers in everything we say and do, even in the art and building we use!

• However, should you seek anyone else or anything else from your visit here on Sundays, you will be disappointed and find it boring.

• Those who seek the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world will find Him here. How can we be so certain about it? Because the Spirit of God is united and remains with the Word of God and is given wherever this Word is proclaimed and handed out together with the water, bread and wine.

• Where this happens the Glory of God is revealed and handed out to you. The heavens of God are opened. His reign reaches right here to you, for you. So it is also true for us: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."* You are part of this, you have received something which not many people know, in our day and age, in our community, and therefore go and tell others where the Glory of God is to be found, for certain. **Amen.**

• *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. [Phil 4,7].*

*Kurt Schnackenberg- Tel.: 039 315 0261*