

Look at the Lamb! John 1:29-41
2nd Sunday after the Epiphany 1/23/2005 Pastor Jon Bergemann

Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! Amen. The Word of God for our consideration this morning is found in John chapter 1. (Read text). In the name of Jesus, the Lamb of God, dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

When you look out of your window and see snow falling, what is your reaction? Are you excited? Are you giddy? Do you exclaim, "Look! It's snowing! It's snowing! Let's go make a snowman! Let's have a snowball fight! Look at the snow!" Or are you a little less enthusiastic? Do you mumble, "Look. It's snowing. I better go shovel. I better go clean off the car. I better check that we have enough toilet paper to make it through if we get snowed in. Look at the snow."

For some of you, to look and see snow may be a blast, for others of you it's a bummer. But isn't that the situation with many things in life? We each tend to look at life's events in different perspectives. What's an insurmountable challenge for some is an opportunity for others. What's a partly cloudy day to one is a partly sunny day to another. What looks good to eat to one looks gross to another. What looks good to wear to one looks tacky to another. Different people tend to look at life, its events, and its contents in very different ways.

How do you look at Jesus? Many people look at him in many different ways. For some he looks like the Savior, for others a sham. For some he looks like the only God, for others merely a great prophet or teacher. So who is he? What does he do? How are we to look at him? Those are penetrating questions that our text asks of us today. Indeed, in our text John the Baptizer instructs us to take a good, long look at Jesus and realize who he is.

"Sounds good", you might say. "In fact, that's easy. I like to look at Jesus. In fact, I own or have seen some nice pictures of him with little children, or a big smile. It's easy to look at him."

But in reality? To look at Jesus is one of the hardest things we could do by nature. That is, to look at him and realize who he truly is and what he has truly done for us. To look at him and contemplate who he is – the Savior of the world. That's hard for us to do by nature. No, that's impossible for us to do by nature.

Why? Because by nature we are dead in our transgressions and sins. By nature we have no inclination to look at God. Instead, we have every desire to look at ourselves alone.

We have a sinful nature that looks in detail at what we need, what we want, what's best for ourselves, while failing to look anywhere near as closely at what is best for our neighbor, brother, sister, spouse.

We have a sinful nature that is good at looking at every detail of other people's sin in shock and terror, while looking past our own failures and faults.

We have a sinful nature that doesn't want to look at Jesus, that can't look at Jesus on its own. Why? Because to truly look at Jesus as God would have us is to admit our sin, is to admit that he is God – not ourselves. It is to admit that he is #1, not ourselves. It is to admit that we have pathetically fallen short of the perfection that he demands to get into heaven on our own. It is to admit that he alone is our Savior.

Our sinful nature doesn't want to do that. It can't. It's spiritually dead. It's spiritually blind. Indeed, it would take a miracle to open up our dead, blind spiritual eyes and look at who Jesus really is.

It would take a Savior who would come to this earth and live perfectly in our place for all of our spiritual blindness. It would take a Savior who would sacrifice his own life on the cross, as an innocent lamb at the slaughter, to pay for all of our sins. It would take a Savior to rise again from the dead to prove that we are forgiven. And then it would take a Savior, working through the powerful Word of God, to create faith in our dead hearts that sees who he is. That's what it would take. Did it happen?

Listen to what John shouts to you in our text, **“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”** That miracle did happen! Jesus has come! He has taken away your sin! Look at Jesus! Look at Jesus!

Who is he again? He is the Lamb of God. That means that he did sacrifice himself to pay for your sins. And does he forgive you and make you look perfect in God's sight? Look again at what John says: he's the Lamb of God who **“takes away the sin of the world!”** Pinch yourself. Are you in the world? If you are, that means that Jesus has taken away your sin! It means that you stand before God as spotless, as white as snow.

And look at what else he has done for you! He has worked a faith in your heart to believe it. He promises to lead you, his own lamb, throughout life. He guides you and comforts you. He is your Lamb. He is your Lord. He is your Savior.

Now look at what that means for your life. When you find yourself overwhelmed while looking at the pressures and challenges of this dying world, your eyes may look to the Lamb of God – Jesus – who holds this whole world and every day of your life, in his hands. Look at him!

And when you find yourself looking at all the sins and disappointments of those around you, your eyes may look to the Lamb of God – Jesus – who takes away the sins of those around you. Who forgives them. Who looks at your neighbor, brother, sister, spouse, enemy, boss, children as souls that he has died for. Who reaches out to them with unconditional love, and urges you to do the same.

And when you find yourself looking at all the sins and disappointments in your own life, your eyes may look to the Lamb of God – Jesus. He looks at you in your ugliest moments and sees you as his beautiful, forgiven child.

And when life's worries and wonders seem to be piling up so high on your shoulders that you don't know where to look next, your eyes may look to the Lamb of God – Jesus – who is always looking out for you. In fact, he's also looking ahead for you. He's looking already at each and every moment of your life and knowing how he will carry you through, how he will give you strength. Yes, ultimately, he is looking to the day when he will take you out of the momentary troubles of this brief world and take you into the timeless joy of heaven.

Who is Jesus? He's the One who loves you perfectly. He's the one who died for your sins. He's the One who rose to life. He's the One who walks with you each day and watches over you each night. He's the One who will take you home to heaven.

Rain or shine. Sunny or snowy. In life's greatest joys and grimmest jolts. Look at Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, and takes you to be his own. Amen.

Trinity Lutheran Church
Woodbridge, Virginia

Pastor Jon Bergemann: Office – (703) 897-7373, ext. 309., JonBergemann@hotmail.com
Church website: <http://www.tlc.org>

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod