

You know it's interesting that no one went looking for an actual lamb. Certainly someone hearing the information John the Baptist shouted for the first time might think that a cute, fuzzy, four legged animal would be walking by. But John's message about the Lamb of God was clear. A Lamb was walking by, but a way more important Lamb than a fuzzy soft animal.

The people John preached to and people today all need reminding. All those bloody sacrifices in the temple kept them reminded of it. Isaiah and others prophesied about it. The people were sinful and nothing was taking it away. Either they could think their sins weren't that bad, they could figure the animal sacrifices were sufficient, or they could listen to every prophet speaking about the Messiah. One day a greater lamb would come, one who would be able to remove the stain of sin from the people forever.

John the Baptist started out not knowing who it was. We start out our lives not knowing who it is either. But the gospel for today makes it abundantly clear. There can be no doubt when John starts pointing out the Lamb everyone had been waiting for. He does it for us as well so that Jesus is revealed for who he really is...

**He's revealed as the Lamb of God
For you to follow
For you to share**

We like expert opinions. We watch TV shows for investment advice. We listen to the radio for help with our gardens. We attend presentations on how to manage our time, money, or just about anything else. But if the expert isn't following their own advice or using their own product we get suspicious. John the Baptist was a leader of people. He had attracted quite a following out in the desert daily proclaiming things about the Messiah. **"Make straight the way for the Lord. Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near. Among you stands one you do not know."** But he knew his days were numbered as a leader. **"A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me."** John expected someone else, and when that person arrived John would throw his support behind him. As the skies parted and the Holy Spirit rested on Jesus, John knew he had found the one to follow.

The time for questioning and doubting was over. **"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"** This confession was John's life's work. His purpose had been fulfilled. He pointed out the Savior from God. John was saying to all those around him, "Here's the one to follow. Believe in him, trust in him, and learn from him. Why follow me anymore, I can't give you what he can. You need Jesus, not me."

John clearly pointed out what this Lamb came to deal with. Pile up all the sins of all the people who have ever lived including yours and mine and that's what Jesus was dealing with. A pile that includes faithful work for seven hours but one hour of internet checking and talking with coworkers. A pile that includes controlling yourself most of the time, but when others aren't watching you feel compelled to break laws. A pile that can include stealing pens, taunting the teacher, or intentionally hurting others. These are sins because they miss the mark God sets. And they bring guilt. Neither goes away until the sin is dealt with.

Every day of the Old Testament untold numbers of lambs lost their lives as sacrifices. These young lambs were without blemish. They were sinless. They were substitutes. Being without blemish and sinless pictured the Lamb of God who would one day be sacrificed also without any blemish and without sin. It was the people that these blemish free lambs were sacrificed for. Every human being deserved to die because of their sin, but the lamb died instead. Animals alone were never enough but they pictured the greater Lamb of God to come. He would be sin free and would substitute himself for all sinful human beings. The cross of Christ is where the Lamb of God died to carry away your sin and mine as our substitute. This Lamb removed the sin and took away the guilt. He's a Lamb worth following.

The Scriptures reveal Jesus as the Lamb of God. John testified about this Savior. Jesus had people following him who believed he was the Christ. These lead us to put our trust in Christ as well. We come to learn from him. We align our lives with his. Not in some way to save ourselves, but rather to follow the one who leads us home. Being with Jesus is all we want. Receiving from him what he wants us to have, that's all we can ask for because we know from our Savior it will always be for our eternal good. We follow the one revealed as the Lamb of God.

Business runs on referrals. If you find a coffee bar you think is neat you invite a couple of friends the next time. When you like a particular school you share that with your friends with kids the same age. You share with others plumbers, electricians, and computer technicians you've used and liked. When Andrew started following Jesus and spent the day with him he knew without thinking he had to share. We follow Jesus but this Lamb of God is revealed for us to share.

Andrew only needed to spend an afternoon with Jesus and he knew. He knew his life was completely different. He knew the way he looked at everything, the job he did, the places he spent his time would completely change. But this monumental change was too good to keep quiet. Good news about finding the long awaited Messiah needed to be shared. John the Baptist was sharing too. He was called especially to share the good news of Jesus with the world. But notice his simple task. He pointed. He called out the one who was the Lamb of God. He told people that he had seen, that he knew, and that he was a witness. He shared Christ with others.

We get so used to the idea that great things are kept under lock and key. Personal documents go in a safe. Equipment needs a pad lock. Our homes get alarms. The good news about Jesus shouldn't be stored behind some password. Put the good news in plain sight. John points the way, Andrew leads the way, and the Bible beckons you to follow the way. By grace Christ is revealed as the Lamb of God. Your heart can never be the same because it's changed by God himself. The one who takes all your sins away is worthy of your honor and glory. He's worthy of you giving up everything to sit at his feet and listen to him. He's worthy of you sharing him.

Andrew didn't go to the strangers on the street corner or the houses in the neighborhood next to his. He went to someone who needed Jesus just as much. Once he found his brother he let the joy in his heart spill over. **"We have found the Messiah (that is, the Christ)."** You have family that you know best. Let the joy of Christ spill over to them. Show what Jesus means for you by bringing them to their Savior. Or follow John the Baptist and his example. He preached and baptized but when it came time to share the Savior he pointed. You've seen with your eyes what the Word of God says. You believe in your heart that Jesus is the Christ because God revealed him. Now you can do the easy thing and simply point out Jesus for the Lamb of God that he is.

Martin Luther once wrote **"Sin has but two places where it may be; either it may be with you, so that it lies upon your neck, or upon Christ, the Lamb of God. If now it lies upon your neck, you are lost; if, however, it lies upon Christ, you are free and will be saved. Take now whichever you prefer."** God provided the substitute in Christ. We follow because he's been revealed as our Savior who took away our sins. We share because Christ is also revealed as the one who saves our loved ones from sin too. A heart brought to faith in Christ cannot help but reveal the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.