

2008#2 GOSPEL OF JOHN –THE MESSAGE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

John 1:19-34

Have you found that it is very difficult to create or begin something new?
 When we decided to build on our CLC,
 We had plans and dreams 10 years earlier.
 We had meetings with consultants, architects,
 Capital fund raisers, and Construction engineers.
 That was before we voted to begin.
 Well, in God's economy, when he wanted to create a New Covenant with his people,
 God sent John to prepare the way for Jesus.
 He was the new covenant "engineer"
 The mediator between the Old Covenant and the New.
 It is unique that John was also the cousin of Jesus

John and Jesus had met before within the womb of their mothers.
 You remember that John jumped inside Elizabeth's womb
 in recognition of Jesus in Mary's womb
 Every child in a mother's womb is born for special purpose and is sacred to God.
 And Jesus and John demonstrate this moral principle without exception.
 And later this fall every South Dakotan will have a chance to stand up for this Biblically
 moral principle as well. I'm not talking about a political issue, but a moral and Biblical
 issue.

John was a unique prophet in that

John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. Matthew 3:4

The only significance of this is that as a prophet, he was an outsider of Jerusalem,
 And the politics of the Pharisees.

He was preaching and baptizing in the Jordan River

What caught their attention was that Jews never baptized or circumcised
 any new member, unless by an ordinance of the Sanhedrin

In the presence of three magistrates,

Or commissioned by the prophet in charge, Elijah, or the Messiah himself.

In their view John had no authority to baptize.

So the Jerusalem Jews from the grand Sanhedrin,

wanted to know who this man thought he was- so

¹⁹Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. John 1:19-20

In the "Peanuts" comic strip of Charles Schultz's. We

see the television is on but there is no one in the room listening to
 it. A golf tournament is on and the announcer says:

"Smith has to make this putt to win the championship. There will

be no tomorrow." And just as he says, "There will be no tomorrow," in

walks Lucy. She immediately goes into a panic and starts running around

and yelling to the other children: "The world is coming to an end. They

just announced it on television". Her panic quickly spreads and

we see all children wildly screaming about. Finally in the last

square we see all of the children huddled on top of Snoopy's doghouse

waiting for the end of the world. And Charlie Brown finally speaks up with

a puzzled voice: "I thought that Elijah was supposed to come back first."
Well Charlie Brown knew his Bible.
Elijah was supposed to come back before the end time.

The Old Jewish Rabbis knew their Scripture as well
So they came to ask John:

²¹They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not." ²³John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.' "^[b] John 1:21,23

I. JOHN PREPARES THE WAY FOR JESUS.

As I read that I was made more aware of how human Jesus really was.
That even Jesus just like every man, woman, or child here this morning,
Needs someone to encourage them, to support them, affirm them.
To be there for them.
Little children understand this.

Laurie was three years old, and one night she asked for help in getting undressed.
Her mother said: "You know how to undress yourself," Little Laurie with her hand on her hips said: "Yes, but sometimes people need people anyway, even if they do know how to do things by themselves."

Because we live in a world that will discourage us,
And beat us down,
try to sidetrack us,
and dishearten us.
Everyone needs encouragement for their life.

Outside a small town in New Mexico is a sign that reads as follows:

"Welcome to Portales, New Mexico, home of 12,000 friendly people and 3 or 4 old grouches."

Isn't that the way it is everywhere? In Aberdeen and even in our church!
There are always a few negative folks
around to tell you that Murphy's law will ruin everything.

Will Rogers said,
We can't all be heroes because someone has to sit on the curb and clap as they go by.

John the Baptist was on the curb and clapping as Jesus came by. He said:

²⁶"I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know... The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit." ³⁴I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." John 1:26, 33-34

John's calling was to set up the ministry of Jesus.
To prepare the way so Jesus could feel the full confidence
Of being in the will of his Heavenly father.
Because up to this time, there had been no miracles,
There had been no sign from above.
Only temptation in the wilderness by Satan.

Who is in your life that is counting on your encouragement?
 Is it your spouse, your children, an employee, perhaps a schoolmate, a friend?
 Does your presence with them bring them up or down?
 Does it bring a frown or a smile.
 Do we realize that our words can help a child to greatness?
 They can even help someone acquire faith and
 Move them to prepare for the Lord?

John purpose was to prepare the way for Jesus
 Second John was to introduces us to Jesus

II. JOHN INTRODUCES THE LAMB OF GOD

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

What is the significance of John's statement for us?
 John is introducing a new beginning for everyone.
 Up to this time, all the sacrificial lambs had been furnished by men
 They had huge flocks just outside of Jerusalem, big business.
 John is saying, "This lamb is provided by God.
 And he is the only lamb sufficient to take away the sins of the world".

Why is this so important?
 Animal sacrifices were only substitutes lambs.
 They had to be sacrificed every day, every week, to maintain this blood covering for sin.
And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Hebrews 9:22

The lambs and bulls did not remove the curse of sin,
 They just covered it for a short time
 The old Jewish law offered-- hope to cope.
 But John new covenant-- offered hope to cure.
 Jesus the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world.
 Jesus revoked the curse of the sin of Adam forever.

Apostle Paul writes

¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13

There were three essential differences in this sacrificial lamb.
 1st. Jesus WAS the *Lamb of God*; the most *excellent*, without sin, and *available*.
 2nd. Jesus made an *atonement* for SIN: He carried sin away in *reality*, the others only *representatively*.
 3rd. Jesus carried away the *sin* of the WORLD, whereas the other only offered it in behalf of the *Jewish people*.

The Sacrificial Lamb no longer just covered Jerusalem, or the Jewish people,
 But it extended to the whole world.
Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the World. John 1:29
 And aren't we glad.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which he lavished upon us. Ephesians 1:7-8 rsv

There is no other God who can forgive sins,
 There is not other God who can redeem sinners.
 There is no other God who can remove the curse
 There is no other God here this morning that can set us free.
 Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

How did he do it?

He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. Hebrews 9:12

What is the advantage of this for us today?
 The sins of this world, can no longer make us its slave.
 The sins of our life, can no longer bind us.
 Christ has broken the curse.
 To set us free.

John's purpose was to prepare the way for Jesus
 Second John was to introduce us to Jesus as the Lamb.
 Third:

III. JOHN ENCOURAGES US TO FOLLOW JESUS

³⁵The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. John 1:33-36

John pointed at the Lamb of God,
 And his two disciples turned and followed Jesus

What would it take for you to turn from your old life,
 From your old attitudes and habits to really follow Jesus
 in your living and your giving?

How long will we as a nation believe that secularism and materialism
 Can give us more than Christ?
 That Allah can offer us more that the Almighty?
 That Buddha can cure us better than the Baptism of the cross?

John said: "Look, the Lamb of God."
 And we turned in the opposite direction.
 And instead of obedience we look for another option.

Two US government officials were sent to interview an old Sioux Indian chief who sat in his reservation hut, smoking the ceremonial pipe, Finally one official began, "Chief Two Eagles, you have observed the white man for many generations, you have seen his wars and his products, you have seen his progress, and his problems." The chief nodded. The official continued, "Considering recent events in New York, in your opinion, where

has the white man gone wrong?" The chief still smoking stared at the government officials and replied: "When white man found this land, Indians were running it. No taxes. No debt. No house payments. No Daycare. No pay medicine man. Plenty buffalo. Women did all the cooking. Indian men hunted and fished all the time." The chief smiled, and added quietly, "White man dumb enough to think he could improve a system like that."

John says: "Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world."
And we still have people today who think that they can improve on
A system like that.

God has done a new thing.
And the old ways of the animal sacrifice are gone,
And the old ways of our sin, guilt, shame, are gone,
And the residue of sin its remorse and blame are gone,
We are all covered in the Blood of Christ at the cross.

What would it take for God to get you to believe and receive it?
You too have to take action,
like John the Baptist disciples,
Jesus can't just break into your life.
He can't override your will.
He simply asks us:
"What do you want?
What do you need for your life?
What are you looking for?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"

In other words they were asking:
Master can we come and spend time with you, discover who you are?
Jesus invitation to them is the same to us:
³⁹"Come," he replied, "and you will see." John 1:38-39

It is my prayer that as we study the Gospel of John this fall
that you too will join this invitation to
"Come and see" and be filled with purpose and direction for you life.

Lord Jesus, I ask that you would open our ears to hear, our eyes to see, who you are, so
that our hearts can come and comprehend all that you have done for us as the Lamb of
God who takes away the sin of the world. That we can be set free from our own guilt and
remorse shame and grief of our sin. I ask this of the Father in Your name. Amen.