

Sunday Sermon: January 19, 2020

Sermon Text: John 1:29-41

Sermon Theme: The Lamb Takes Sin Away

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" ³⁰ This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

³² Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³ I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

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

³⁹ "Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).

Have you ever said, "Everybody's doing it?" This is phrase we usually use when we are trying to convince ourselves to try something new. But, what did you mean when you said that? Did you literally mean that everybody in the whole world was doing it? Did you mean that everybody in the country was doing it? State? City? Class? Group of Friends? When you said, "Everybody's doing it?" whom did you mean? When we use this phrase it is usually an exaggeration or an overstatement. Not everybody is doing something, but we want to think they are.

The main passage of our sermon text for this morning contains a statement that is very similar to "Everybody's doing it." It sounds like an exaggeration or an overstatement. In that passage we hear John the Baptist proclaim and exclaim, "Look the Lamb of God".... and here's the statement.... "who takes away the sin of the world."

When we hear that statement it is important that we know and believe what John means when he says Jesus takes away the sins of the world. It is more than just important, it is a matter of our complete forgiveness and eternal salvation.

This morning as we look at that very important phrase we see the hope, comfort and confidence that we can take from those words. We will see that Jesus does take away sin, the sins of the whole world, which include all sins, including yours and mine.

John the Baptist had come as the forerunner of Christ. It was John's job to prepare the way for the Savior by preaching that the time was near, the Messiah was coming and the people should prepare their hearts by repenting of their sins to greet him properly.

John faithfully preached this message of preparation. He was blessed by God with a powerful message. Because Jesus had not yet been revealed as the Son of God and Messiah, John had to remind the people that he was not the Messiah and that they needed to continue to watch.

Think about when you were little. Maybe you went out with your grandpa or grandma, mom or dad and they told you to look up and watch for a shooting star. When you got bored and looked away, what did they say? "Watch. Keep Watching. Don't stop watching." This is what John was doing. He was getting the people to keep watching.

Then Jesus was revealed as the Son of God and the Messiah before John the Baptist and all the people during this baptism at the Jordan River. Do you remember what happened during that wonderful revelation of God?

Heaven opened. The Holy Spirit descended like a dove and the voice from heaven pronounced, "This is my Son, whom I love. With him I am well-pleased."

Now that Jesus had been revealed, John's life and ministry was going to change. He no longer was preparing the people for the Savior to be born. Now he would be pointing people to believe in Jesus.

After you had stood or sat there for an hour or so and then a shooting star did go across the sky, bright enough for everyone to see, what did they say? "Look! Do you see it? It's right there!"

We see him do that very thing in our sermon text. One day, when John was preaching, Jesus passed by. Listen to John's testimony. ³⁰ **This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'** ³¹ **I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."**

³² **Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³ I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'** ³⁴ **I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."**

John tells the people that Jesus is the Messiah. "This is the man that I was telling you to prepare for. This is the man I told you to look for." He also provides the proof. "How do I know this. I saw heaven open and God told me that this was the Messiah." This is the one who will be the sacrifice that will take away the sin of the world.

When John says that Jesus is going to take away the sins of the whole world, he is not using an overstatement or an exaggeration like, "Everyone is doing it." When John says he would take away all sin, every single one of the sins of the world, that is what he meant.

John the uses the picture of the Lamb to make his point. The blood of lambs and other animals were used regularly in the religious sacrifices. The blood was used to show how terrible sin is and the consequences that sin brings. The death of the animal and the blood that was spilled was not pleasant. This death and blood showed that sin brings death. The only answer for that death was to believe that God would send his Messiah, as he had promised to, to take away sins.

The lamb had an extra special significance. The Lamb was so special because what happened on the night of the Passover. The night that God delivered his people from the hands of the Egyptians.

The blood of the lamb was special because it was a symbol of God's deliverance. God had promised that those who believed his promise and placed the blood on their doorframes would be covered, they would be spared from the plague of death. The blood of the lamb was a lasting remembrance of the deliverance and salvation that God brought to his people.

When John said, "Look here is the Lamb that will take away sin", he is using all of the background that the Jews have about the deliverance that the blood of lamb would bring. He is using every Passover meal they have ever celebrated, every sacrifice they have ever witnessed, every prophesy they have ever heard. He is using those things to reveal Jesus as the one who will sacrifice himself to take away sins.

Still one might ask, whose sin is John talking about? The sin of the Jewish people? The sin of the righteous? The sin of the good? The sin of the faithful? Does he really mean the sin of the world?

That's exactly what John means. Jesus is the Lamb of God and his job is to be sacrificed not just for one group of people, or these or those sins, but for the sins of the entire world.

There are many passages that show us that. The apostle Peter tells us in 1 Peter 3:18. ¹⁸ **For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.** The apostle John says in 1 John 1:7. **The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.** and again in 1 John 2:2. **He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.** Paul tells us in Romans 3:23 places us all under the curse of sin, while also freeing us from that curse through Jesus. **"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption, the buying with blood, that came through Christ Jesus.**

It should comfort us and give us hope to know that when Jesus, the Lamb, went to the cross to sacrifice himself he was pierced, crushed, and punished not just for the sins of some, but for the sins of the whole world. It should comfort us even more to know and believe that that means that he had taken away every one of your sins as well.

Have you ever felt like God couldn't or wouldn't forgive you? Have you ever done something so bad, or maybe you are caught in a sin that you just can't shake and you think that it is beyond God's mercy to save you?

We have all felt the weight of the Law pressing down on us. Maybe the thought has gone through our minds that God cannot or will not forgive us. I pray that if you have felt that God's love doesn't extend to you, that it didn't last long, because it is not true.

When we look in the Bible we see that the mercy and love of God can and does extend to many who have repented of some great and terrible sins. God can and does announce forgiveness to the adulterer and murderer David, he can and does announce forgiveness to the sexually immoral woman at the well and the one caught in the sin of adultery, he announced forgiveness to the persecutor and murderer of Christians, Paul, he announced forgiveness to the thief on the cross next to him. Jesus even asked God to forgive those who were celebrating his crucifixion.

These words of John the Baptist are words of comfort and hope for us because through the work of the Holy Spirit, we receive the benefit of what Jesus has done. When we have sins of sexual immorality, adultery, anger, hatred, murder, greed, or any other sin, our Savior whispers to us the words from the cross, "It is finished."

In those three words we hear the same thing that John exclaimed. Your sins are taken away, fully and freely now and forever.

My dear Christian friends, John didn't leave anything to chance. He showed us God's plan of salvation for you and me in one little verse. Look the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. As God's children and heirs of eternal life, have comfort, have hope in what Jesus has already done for you. He has taken away your sins, you are forgiven for his sake. Amen.