

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Aitkin, Minnesota
January 15, 2023
Second Sunday after the Epiphany
ONLINE ORDER OF WORSHIP

- P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C **Amen.**
- P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.
- P Our help is in the name of the Lord,
C **who made heaven and earth.**
- P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,
C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**
- P O almighty God, merciful Father,
C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**
- P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C **Amen.**

Introit

Introit

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable | in your sight, *

O LORD, my rock and my re- | deemer.

The heavens declare the glo- | ry of God, *

and the sky above proclaims his | handiwork.

Day to day | pours out speech, *

and night to night reveals | knowledge.

There is no speech, nor | are there words, *

whose voice | is not heard.

Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end | of the world. *

In them he has set a tent | for the sun.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;**

as it was in the be- | ginning, *

is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable | in your sight, *

O LORD, my rock and my re- | deemer.

Collect of the Day

P Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who governs all things in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the prayers of Your people and grant us Your peace through all our days; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 49:1–7

Listen to me, O coastlands,
and give attention, you peoples from afar.
The LORD called me from the womb,
from the body of my mother he named my name.
He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow;
in his quiver he hid me away.
And he said to me, “You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”
But I said, “I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my right is with the LORD,
and my recompense with my God.”
And now the LORD says,
he who formed me from the womb to be his
servant,
to bring Jacob back to him;
and that Israel might be gathered to him—
for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD,
and my God has become my strength—
he says:
“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
I will make you as a light for the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the
earth.”
Thus says the LORD,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,

to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation,
the servant of rulers:

“Kings shall see and arise;
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves;
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle

1 Corinthians 1:1–9

Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of
Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those
sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together
with all those who in every place call upon the name of
our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the
Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of
the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus,
that in every way you were enriched in him in all
speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony
about Christ was confirmed among you—so that you
are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the
revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you
to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
God is faithful, by whom you were called into the
fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel

John 1:29–42a

The next day [John] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 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.’ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 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?” 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. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.

- P This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

Apostles' Creed

**C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

**and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.**

**From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Sermon Text – John 1:29

Theme – “The Lamb of God Who Takes Away Sin

Way back when I was a senior in High School, I had a class in physics. I don't remember much of what I learned back then. One thing I do remember is a formula which one could call “a building block of physics.” It could be called that because if you don't know this formula you won't understand some of the other concepts of physics. The formula is this $F=ma$.

The “F” stands for “force.” The “m” stands for “mass” and the “a” stands for acceleration. This is the formula you would use to figure out how much force is being exerted by one object onto another. You figure that out by multiplying the mass of the object that is causing the force times how fast the object is accelerating.

Today, in our text, we have a sentence that could be called “a building block of faith.” If you believe what this sentence says, you will have all the faith you need to go to heaven. The sentence is these words of John the Baptizer: **“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”** (John 1:29).

“Behold” is a good word for the season of Epiphany. In the season of Epiphany we talk about how Jesus is true God who was made manifest to the world. The Greek word $\epsilon\phi\alpha\upsilon\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\iota$ means “to make manifest.” In classical Greek it is the word that was used when the gods of Greek mythology would make an appearance in one of their stories.

When John the Baptizer says in our text, **“Behold,”** that fits right into this season of the church year which we call “Epiphany.” John is essentially saying “Look here! I want you to see how the one true God is making an appearance here on earth.

Last week, we heard how the fact that Jesus is true God was made manifest to John when Jesus was baptized. You might say it was an “epiphany” for John when the heavens were opened up and the Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven declared, **“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased”** (Matthew 3:17).

Now John was proclaiming this epiphany to others. He was doing the work of a prophet, pointing people to what God was doing, bringing forgiveness and salvation to the world.

John was doing this by proclaiming, **“Behold, the Lamb.”** In Old Testament times, a variety of animals were sacrificed: bulls, goats, and even birds. But it seems as though the lamb was the preferred sacrifice. In the temple there were regular sacrifices, morning and evening sacrifices, sin and guilt offerings, festival sacrifices for the Feast of Booths, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of the Passover. So, when John the Baptizer points to Jesus and says, **“Behold, the Lamb”** he wants people to think of all these sacrifices.

All those lambs that were sacrificed were really substitute sacrifices. Devote Jews knew that they were the ones who should be sacrificed. They knew that they were the ones who deserved to suffer and die for sin. The sacrificial lambs were really taking their place. So, the fact that John points to Jesus and says, **“Behold, the Lamb,”** should help us to remember that Jesus came to take our place.

John, not only points to Jesus and says, **“Behold, the Lamb,** he points to Jesus and says, **“Behold, the Lamb of God.”** Old Testament sacrificial lambs were not supposed to have any blemishes. There were to be as close to perfect as they could be. That was all pointing ahead to the day when God was going to send His Lamb who was really going to be perfect. That would be His Son who is God Himself.

Because Jesus was perfect through His suffering and death the rest of what John says about Him could be true: **“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”** That word “sin” points to all that is evil: the murders, rapes, and thefts. That word “sin” points to all the thoughts, words, and deeds which go against God’s commandments. That word “sin” includes all our gossip, grumbling, and worry. That word “sin” includes every lie we have ever told. That word “sin” includes all the things that we were supposed to do according to God’s Word that we haven’t done. For all our sin, we deserve eternal damnation.

John says, **“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”** The Greek word that is translated **“world”** is the word from which we get the English word “cosmos.” Jesus is the Savior of all creation. Jesus is the **“Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”** He takes away the sin of everyone, old and young, rich and poor, people from all times and all places.

The Greek word translated “take away” means to lift something up and carry it away to another place. That’s what Jesus, the Lamb, came to do. He came to take the load, the curse, the damnation we deserve and carry it away from us. He lifts the awful burden from us and carries it to the cross. The Lamb was crucified for our sin.

Because Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, we have the forgiveness of sin. Because Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, we can go to heaven.

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” This sentence will stand forever, long after the world is gone, long after that physics formula “ $F=ma$ ” no longer is valid because God has created a new heaven and a new earth, when we will gather in heaven and say, **“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing”** (Revelation 5:12).

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” When John said those words, he said more than I can explain this morning. AMEN

- P The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
- C **Amen.**

Prayer of the Church

O Lord, let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to You, for You are our Rock and our Redeemer. Answer us according to Your promises and for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Merciful God, You formed Your Son in the womb of Your servant Mary to be a light for the nations. Preserve that light among Your people. Gather us around Your Word and Sacraments, enlighten and strengthen us by Your grace, and grant that we might reflect the light of Christ to those around us.

God of glory, the heavens declare Your handiwork, and each day and night testify to Your majesty. Bless all teachers and students, that in their explorations of the arts and sciences they may see Your creativity and glorify You.

Almighty God, You watched over the tribes of Jacob, providing them both daily bread and redemption in abundant measure. Watch over the homes of Your people. Bless them with all that they need for this body and life, and preserve them in the glad confidence that Christ is their strength and their salvation.

Holy God, Your Son consented to be the servant of rulers and to be abhorred by the nations so that He might redeem the world. Fortify all in authority with courage and wisdom to govern justly, and cultivate penitent hearts among them so that they may gladly prostrate themselves before their Redeemer on the Last Day.

Holy God, Your Son became the Lamb of God to take away all of our sins and infirmities by His death and resurrection. Remember all who are in need of Your help and healing [*especially* _____]. Deliver them according to Your merciful will, and preserve them in the certainty that their sins are taken away.

Grant that we who have celebrated the incarnation of our Lord, Jesus Christ, may die to sin and rise to new life, that we may treasure up and ponder in our hearts the Christ announced by Your forerunner; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

LSB 196

- C Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive
those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the
glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Benediction

LSB 202

- P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be
gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and T
give you peace.**
- C Amen, amen, amen.**

Acknowledgments

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