

Do You Know Me?

January 19, 2020

[Scripture Focus: John 1: 29 - 42]

SCRIPTURE

Let's take a closer look at the text from John 1 that Ray read earlier. We'll listen for God's Word again. This morning, I'll be reading from the Contemporary English Version...

The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said: Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He is the one I told you about when I said, "Someone else will come. He is greater than I am, because he was alive before I was born." I didn't know who he was. But I came to baptize you with water, so that everyone in Israel would see him.

I was there and saw the Spirit come down on him like a dove from heaven. And the Spirit stayed on him. Before this I didn't know who he was. But the one who sent me to baptize with water had told me, "You will see the Spirit come down and stay on someone. Then you will know that he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit." I saw this happen, and I tell you that he is the Son of God.

The next day, John was there again, and two of his followers were with him. When he saw Jesus walking by, he said, "Here is the Lamb of God!" John's two followers heard him, and they went with Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them, he asked, "What do you want?" They answered, "Rabbi, where do you live?" The Hebrew word "Rabbi" means "Teacher."

Jesus replied, "Come and see!" It was already about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him and saw where he lived. So they stayed on for the rest of the day. One of the two men who had heard John and had gone with Jesus was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother and tell him, "We have found the Messiah!"

The Hebrew word "Messiah" means the same as the Greek word "Christ." Andrew brought his brother to Jesus. And when Jesus saw him, he said,

“Simon, son of John, you will be called Cephas.” This name can be translated as “Peter.”

So, there was a time when folks only had a single (a first) name. Most folks lived in small farming villages. They only needed to use a single name because folks actually knew each other! As the population grew, there was suddenly a need to differentiate between two people who had the same name. This is how last names started.

Last names (or surnames) were not tied to an entire family and passed from generation to generation. Last names were used to *describe* someone. In the middle ages, a small village in Great Britain could include multiple men named “John.” John (the shoemaker) may have been called “John the Cobbler” or “John Cobbler.”

Another John might have been the son of the town’s blacksmith. He might have been known as “John Smithson.” This process (where surnames were attached to family’s vocations) continued until it was no longer applicable (no one remembered John Smithson’s father, the blacksmith) or it just didn’t make sense any more.

The Chinese have been using last names (family or surnames) since approximately 2,800 BC. In Europe and subsequently in America, adjectives were used as surnames. This was especially true if the adjectives referred to size (like Miss Little, Richard Short or Tom Long) or hair or complexion color (White, Black, Red). Sometimes the adjective was combined with a noun to form Longfellow or Blackbeard.

As I mentioned earlier, Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus or Jesus the Christ all work and are a good indicator of who Jesus is. For Christians, Jesus is the Christ; the Messiah; the Anointed One.

SO WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

In today’s lesson, the Christ is referred to as “the Lamb of God.”

Did you see the poster that I showed to the kids? Why do we have to have ANOTHER name for Jesus?

Because names can help us understand who someone really is. We are convinced that Jesus is the Christ; the Messiah; the Anointed One. But there’s this reality that He is also the “Lamb of God.” What does that mean to me?

During Old Testament times, animal sacrifices were commonplace. The purpose of animal sacrifice was sanctification, right standing with God and forgiveness. In fact, nearly everything was purified with blood.

Folks believed that without bloodshed, there was no forgiveness. Unfortunately for lambs, they had white coats which were a symbol of purity and cleanliness. Jesus was stainless, perfect, free of sin - completely pure. The perfect sacrifice...

God did what the law could not do by sending his own son to deal with sin.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, was our once and for all sacrifice that fulfilled the need for a blood offering. He was the perfect sacrifice of love that brought the possibility of perpetual change to the world. The reference to Christ being the “Lamb” of God is because Jesus was a perfect offering of purity and cleanliness. He did nothing outside of the Father and was sinless despite being a man.

SO WHAT?

I have grown up in the Presbyterian church. Intellectually, I got it or at least I thought that I did - until I turned 40. I got the God part of the Trinity but didn't see the big deal about Jesus. I looked at the Trinity as a hierarchy (According to Webster: A system or organization in which people are ranked one above another according to status or authority).

I believed in the Big Guy (the God who created the world) but didn't see the importance of the Messiah; the Christ; the Anointed One; the Lamb of God. Until one Good Friday service years ago when I realized that without the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Christ, I had nothing...

Just like folks thousands of years ago, I believed in God - a god. Could have been a Greek god; a Roman god; an Egyptian god; or a Norse god... It wouldn't have made any difference! *But it was only through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God (Jesus the Christ) that we are able to come and see what this really meant to us, personally.* It was only through Christ's death on the cross that I receive eternal life if I believe in Him.

So, what's at stake? EVERYTHING! I can't, for even a second, imagine living a life, dying and having it all be over. Close the book; I'm done. What's the point? If there was no heaven, why not party like it's 1999? Why not just do what I want? I prefer the option that has me believing that God has overseen every bit of my life and offered me eternal life, if I simply believe in Him.

I know that it can be hard for some of us to use the J-word (Jesus) even in church but Christ's sacrifice is foundational to our faith. Folks who see God only as a far away God who controls everything, miss the point. Without this personal relationship with the Christ, this god that we follow could be Greek, Roman, Egyptian or Norse. It wouldn't make a ton of difference. *It's the birth, the life, the death and the resurrection of the Christ; the Messiah; the Anointed One; the Lamb of God that has made a difference for all in eternity.*

So, if you were in Heaven and ran into Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus and he said (stealing Floyd's line) "Do you know me?" What would you say? Are you convinced that he's the Messiah; the Christ; the Anointed One; the Lamb of God?

Please don't miss the opportunity that we've all been given to accept this gift; the offer and the future made possible only by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Come and see what God has made available to you through the sacrifice of His Son, The Lamb of God. Trust him! Amen...