

13 January 2016
Epiphany 1 Midweek

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church
Vienna, VA

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“Look!”

Text: John 1:29-42a; Isaiah 49:1-7

My family and I like looking at the wildlife in our yard. When a woodpecker comes to our birdfeeder, or a fox or a deer happen through our yard, you'll often hear one of us call out and point: Look!

But if you're not in the room, you probably missed it. They don't stay long. By the time you get into the room and ask where - they've flown or run away. And all you get is disappointment.

Well, that's kind of what John the Baptist did today. He saw an animal, of sorts, that he wanted everyone else to see. And so when he sees Jesus, he points and calls out: ***Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!***

But unlike the animals that visit my yard and pass quickly through, Jesus wants to be seen. He came to be seen. He wants all the world to know who He is and what He has come to do. That's why John was there - to prepare the way for Him. And that's why John saw the Holy Spirit descend like a dove upon Jesus - to identify Him as ***God's Chosen One, the Lamb of God.***

And so when Andrew and another disciple of John heard John excitedly call out what he had seen, they want to see and be with Jesus. And Jesus wants to stay with them. When they ask ***where He is staying***, He invites them to ***come and see*** and stay with Him. And they are not disappointed. In fact, so excited is Andrew that the first thing he does after that is find his brother Simon and call out to him: ***We have found the Messiah!*** Come and see. And Andrew and Peter spent the rest of their lives doing that as apostles as well.

And someone did that for you. Maybe a parent or a friend. They pointed to Jesus and said: ***Look, the Lamb of God!*** When we do that at my house, looking out the window, it is for a moment of pleasure and enjoyment, seeing part of God's wonderful creation. But when someone pointed you to Jesus, or when you point someone to Him, it is for a gift far greater than that - not a moment of satisfaction, but a lifetime of forgiveness. For Jesus is not just the Lamb of God, but ***the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*** He is the One we may or may not want to see, but the One we need to see.

For we may not want to see Him on the cross. Many Christians prefer a cross without a Jesus on it, without the gore and shame, without the blood and crown of thorns, without

the nails and open wounds. Many do not want to see Him as the one who, Isaiah said, *was despised and abhorred by the nation*. We prefer a victorious Jesus, glorious Jesus.

And while He certainly is victorious and glorious now, we need to see Him the other way too - to see crucified and gory Jesus. To see our sin upon Him. To see our condemnation and judgment upon Him. To see Him enter into our death. To see that all those sins we shrug off or consider normal, are horrid. *There they are! Take a good look.*

Because once you do, they you also realize the enormity of God's love for you. That the Father sent His Son to do that for you. That the Father offered up His Son in your place, to save you. That the Son *wanted* to come and do that for you, and take all that from you. And that the Spirit who descended upon Jesus in His baptism, played a part in this, too. Not just to save Israel, but to save the world. To save you.

So look! Jesus wants you to see Him there; to see Him *like that*. Because if all your sin is on Him, if all your condemnation and judgment is on Him, if He dies your death, **then all that is no longer yours**. If your sin is on Him it's no longer on you. If your condemnation and judgment are on Him, they're no longer on you. If He dies your death, then your death is conquered in His resurrection. **Look!** He has taken all that, that you may have life. His life. Eternal life. That just like Andrew, you may be with Him and stay with Him. Not a moment of pleasure, but an eternity of joy.

But we're not there yet, to an eternity of joy. Now there are troubles and hardships. There is the sin others inflict on us and we inflict on others. There is fear and worry and pain. And sometimes, in the midst of it all, we wonder: *Where are you now, Jesus? We see you on the cross - that's good news; but what about now? In my pain now? With my crosses now? With life now?*

Where are you staying? That's what Andrew and the other disciple asked. Maybe that's what our question is too: *Where are you staying for me now?* The good news is that He is still here for us, in His Word and Sacraments. He is here, speaking to us, washing us, feeding us, forgiving us. He is here, helping us and strengthening us. Which doesn't mean it's gonna be easy - I don't think this life ever will be, and satan certainly isn't going to rest.

But the Lord is faithful. He has chosen you. He will not leave you or forsake you. And He who came through the darkness of the cross to life again, will be with you in your darkness, too, and to life again. The prince of this world may have his day, but eternity belongs to the Lamb. And in Him, to you.

So look! Instead of looking at your sins or dwelling on the sins of others; instead of looking at your life and feeling regret or despair; instead of wishing things were different . . . **Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!** The Lamb of God

who gives forgiveness for sin, joy for sorrow, hope for despair, and life for death. Look to Him, for as the psalmist said: *Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust* (Psalm 40:4).

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.