

The Rev. Dr. David K. McIntosh
Jan. 19, 2020- 2nd Sunday after Epiphany
Given at St. Mark's Church, Bridgewater

Isaiah 49: 1-7; Psalm 40; 1 Cor 1: 1-9; John 1:29-42

"Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." †

Those words are something we are used to singing or saying at Communion every week- *Agnus Dei, qui tollos peccata mundi... Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.* They are beautiful... and if we let the words sink in, they capture a belief that is the essence of Christianity. God has come, humbly, as one of us, into our world, to take away sin and save all.

In John's Gospel, we are told that the disciples (Andrew and Philip) upon meeting Jesus, called him *Rabbi, teacher.* And he was a great teacher, perhaps the ultimate teacher. By his life, death, and resurrection, he taught/ teaches us how to live... how to die... how to return home again to God. We are told by John the Baptist about Jesus "here is the Lamb of God!" Not that Jesus is sort of like the Lamb of God, he IS the Lamb of God, the one on whom salvation depends. And as Christians, His mission in this world becomes our mission. And we can't just be *sort of like* Christians, we must **be** Christians in the world. That's not easy.

There's a wonderful poem I'd like to share with you from St. Teresa of Avila, a wonderful 16th Century mystic writer:

 "Christ has no body now on earth but yours,
 no hands but yours,
 no feet but yours,
Yours are the eyes through which to look out
 Christ's compassion to the world;
Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing
 good;
Yours are the hands with which he is to bless men now."

Its true, as Christians, we are the Body of Christ... his hands, feet, mouth in this world. And yet, there is the great temptation, because we are human, to turn what John the Baptist says all around. There is a clear line between- proclaiming that the Messiah, the Lamb of God has come and is here with us, and how we must *work with him* to do his will... versus deciding that if we are Christ's Body in the world, and if the world is going to be saved, then **we** have to do it. The Messiah has come... The Lamb of God is here! And I hate to tell you, *you are not him.*

Remember that old phrase, "What would Jesus do?" that was so popular in the 80's? Perhaps it's more helpful to ask what would John the Baptist do? Recall the wonderful testimony John the Baptist gives later in the Gospel (John 3:30), "**He must increase, but I must decrease.**" John always pointed to Jesus... John always showed people Jesus— "There is the Lamb of God... He must increase, and I must decrease." To me, that hits it right on the head.

Perhaps what we are called to do in this world is not try to save it, but call attention to Jesus Christ and say to everyone who is within hearing distance, “Hey look, here is the Lamb of God. See, God is alive! God is in our midst.” For the Holy Spirit is at work in us and through us, even in spite of us. If we can only recognize, as John did, The Lamb of God in our midst— “Look, here is the Lamb of God.”
We are forgiven, we are saved... we are loved! †