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The Second Sunday after the Epiphany
19 January 2014
Grace-Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wichita
Jn 1:29-42a

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

Last night, how many bullets were shot into the back of some innocent passerby for a few measly bucks?

How many sixteen-year-olds conceived babies that will soon fall prey to the abortionist's knife?

How many children finally fell asleep after listening to the screams of their battered mothers?

How many lonely wives wept with tears of anger, wondering where their husbands were sleeping, and with whom?

How many porn sites were visited last night?

How many families ripped apart?

How many nursing homes neglected and how many elderly were mistreated?

How many drowned their sorrows in whiskey?

And how many pulled the trigger?

And worse yet—how many of you really care?

Who can even stomach the evening news—it's all robberies and car accidents and murders.

You've got your own problems—who's got time for the problems of this horribly sinful world?

You lose sleep over dwindling bank accounts and whether you got a good deal on that sofa;

but you yawn through the number of murdered children here and around the world.

We throw pity-parties for slight inconveniences

and temper-tantrums when things don't go our way.

It's not to say that we don't have problems, or that they're somehow less real or less weighty.

But it is to say how quickly we lose perspective and how little love we have for those around us.

Behold, the sin of the world, that takes away the Lamb of God!

Murder and indifference—side by side—are the piercing nails driven into His innocent wrists.

We've woven a crown of thorns: hatred and jealousy and a quick cover up, so no one knows.

Our pride that says we're not like other men is the spear that strikes His side.

Our lusts are lashes upon His back.

And our bourbon is the vinegar He's given to drink.

Behold, the sin of the world—your own sin—that takes away the Lamb of God!

That's the mess we're in.

But don't behold Him as One who wants your pity.

He doesn't want you to feel bad for Him; He doesn't desire your sympathy—

what He wants is *you*.

He wants your repentance, your faith, your trust in Him as the Lamb of God.

That's why He came.

He came *for you*...

and for the thief and murder,

the abortionist and the adulteress,

the holier-than-thous and all who look down on them.

Behold, John says, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Look at Him!

Have your eyes fixed on Him!

Look at His hands and feet, covered in the blood of your forgiveness.

Follow John's pointing finger, and rest your eyes on the Lamb who takes your sin away.

None is so bad as to be left out.

And none is too good for it to matter.

[Even little Jonah here gets washed in the blood of this Lamb of God.]

And notice that He's not a Lamb, among a whole flock of others—

but He is in fact *the* Lamb of God.

Every lamb offered on the altars of old pointed to this Lamb, just as John the Baptizer today.

He is the one whose blood is shed for you.

He takes on your sin and your shame, your hidden desires and your judgmental glances.

He takes your fears and your lusts, your desires to run away and your stubborn refusal to budge.

He takes it all: sin, death, and the devil.

And in return, He gives you what's His: forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

John the Baptizer knew who He was and simply got out of the way.

All we need from John is his finger and His words:

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

While it's our sin that takes this Christ, this Messiah away.

It's in His being taken away—His suffering the shame of the cross—that takes our sin from us.

And if He takes it away, it's not yours anymore.

What's yours is Christ, and all that comes with Him.

Listening to John's simple sermon and following Jesus,

Andrew realizes Who it is that stands before him.

And realizing that, he can't stay still.

He gets up.

He runs.

He calls his brother, Simon—who'd later be called *Peter*,

"We have found the Messiah."

And he brought him to Jesus. (Jn 1:41-42a)

That's what we're about today as well.

Beholding the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world—yours, and mine—
and bringing others to Him as well.¹

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

¹ Much of this sermon is adapted from *Christ Crucified: Lutheran Sermons* by Chad L. Bird (Grand Rapids: Emmanuel Press, 2005), pp.132-134.