

Look, the Lamb of God!

- ✧ Surpassing the best of the best (vv.29-34)
- ✧ Inviting all to “Come and see!” (vv.35-41)

In the name of Jesus, **the Lamb of God**, dear fellow disciples of **the Lamb**:

You don't know me, at least not as well as you know my brother. We grew up as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, more of a lake by your standards. We had partners who you also probably know better than you know me. One of them actually wrote this Gospel account. I'm glad he did. Matthew, Mark and Luke all wrote about the time Jesus called us all to be “*fishers of men.*” (Luke 5:1-11) Remember that one? Jesus taught the people from our boat then asked my brother Peter to go out on the deep water and fish – after we'd fished all night and caught nothing. That catch nearly sank our boat and our partner brothers James and John who helped us haul it in. Feeling so guilty, Peter asked Jesus to go away. But Jesus showed us God's kindness and why John the Baptist said, **Look, the Lamb of God!**

✧ Surpassing the best of the best (vv.29-34)

My fishing partner will never mention his own name in his Gospel account, always so humble. Just calls himself, “*the disciple whom Jesus loved.*” (John 13:23; 19:26) Such a special bond between them. When you hear this, think of John the Baptist: “*The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him.*”

We were there, my brother and I, because everyone was talking about John the Baptist. It was as if our whole nation of Israel was starving for a prophet. Your Old Testament reading was from Isaiah, but that was 700 years before us. Isaiah talked about the Messiah who would display God's glory and “*be a light for the nations, so that [God's] salvation [would] be known to the end of the earth.*” (49:1-6) Other prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel came, then finally Malachi. But then silence! 400 years of silence without a prophet. You can't imagine how excited everyone was to hear about a prophet in the desert dressed like old Elijah in camel's skin and eating locusts and wild honey. This John was baptizing along the desert shore of the Jordan River. We all left our boats in Galilee, the four of us, and went to hear him.

Best business decision of our lives! Most guys would think about how many catches of fish they'd be missing. But skip the fish! We wanted something better. After listening to John a few days as his disciples, what a shock to see him point to a man in the crowd and say it. Oh, say it with me! “*Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” We all remembered things we did wrong when we were kids, things we should have said better, the way we should have been kinder to each other, our families, should have helped our neighbor. God's law told us to love God and our neighbor. We felt the guilt of failure. But here was **the Lamb of God** like our scapegoat on the Day of Atonement. The priest would lay the sins of the nation on that lamb and another Levite would lead it into the desert. We got to see it once when our father took us to Jerusalem for Yom Kippur. Word came back from the watch towers along the way until the last one said our sins were gone forever in the desert. Now here was **the Lamb!**

Later Jesus would tell us that “*among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.*” (Luke 7:28 NIV84) That's why we were amazed when John said, “*Look!...This is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘The one coming after me outranks me because he existed before me.’*” John was **the best of the best**. He said Jesus was surpassingly greater than he because of his eternal existence. **The Lamb** is the eternal God!

We fishermen could never have picked Jesus out of the crowd. As Isaiah had predicted seven centuries earlier, “*He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we*

should desire him.” (Isaiah 53:2 NIV84) Jesus looked like everyone else in the crowd. John the Baptist admitted to us, *“I myself did not recognize him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I saw this myself and have testified that this is the Son of God.”* Jesus received the Holy Spirit in His baptism and promised to send the Holy Spirit to us too. You remember Pentecost. We all received that miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit that enabled us to speak in other languages as we travel around preaching like this. Always in Christ’s *“one baptism”* (Ephesians 4:5) the Holy Spirit is joined to the water to give you power to believe and speak up for Jesus **the Lamb of God.**

☆ Inviting all to **“Come and see!”** (vv.35-41)

“The next day, John was standing there again....” He preached to the crowds fearlessly. Even the ultra religious Scribes and Pharisees John would blister saying things like, *“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”* (Matthew 3:7–10 NIV84)

On this day John saw Jesus passing by again and said again: *“Look! The Lamb of God.”* It was as if John was saying to us, “I never came to gather my own disciples for myself. Why are you standing here with me? My work is ending. I must decrease; he must increase. You need to be done with me and get on with Jesus.” So we followed Jesus. Maybe you guessed that the disciple John was with me.

I’ll never forget how Jesus turned around and asked us a question you should all ask yourselves today. *“What are you looking for?”* What is it you want from Jesus, coming to Sunday School, Bible Class and worship? Help with life’s problems? Do you want Jesus to make your life easy? Are you trying to “get your act together”? Maybe want a sign for a major decision? If you come with your own agenda, you’ll miss the blessings **the Lamb of God** alone can bring. Later Jesus told all of us to pick up our cross and follow him. All but John would die a martyr’s death. We learned from Jesus what we were really *looking for*, what our hearts and souls needed more than anything: **the Lamb of God.** Isaiah had foretold it in words of promise sure: *“...a light for the nations...salvation...to the end of the earth.”*

We just wanted to stay with Jesus, to bring all our sins and guilt to **the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!** Were there ever sweeter words than what Jesus said to us then? *“Come, and you will see.”* We spent the day with Him. Later when Jesus called us away from our fishing boats, we spent three years with him – listening, growing, grieving when He died. Easter and Pentecost were our epiphany. We spent our lives for Him to the last breath calling everyone: **Look! The Lamb of God.**

By now you know my name is Andrew, the brother of Peter. My fishing partner and fellow disciple John got it right as the Holy Spirit inspired him. The first thing I did after spending that day with Jesus was to tell my brother Simon Peter, *“We have found the Messiah!”* Really it was the other way around. Jesus found us! Just as He has found you with His Holy Word. Everything we need for time and eternity is right here. Through you and me, Jesus still keeps **Inviting all to “Come and see!”**

It’s okay if you forget my name. Nothing really lost there. But if you ever forget the name of Jesus, you’ve lost everything. Let Him set the agenda, and you will find how steadfastly, how skillfully God can work out everything else for your good too. *“The LORD is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?”* (Psalm 27:1 NIV84) *“Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.”* (Psalm 37:4–6 NIV84) *“Come, and you will see...”* **the Lamb of God!** Amen.