

Walk with the Lamb of God

☆ Buried with Christ in Baptism (vv.6-12)

☆ Raised with Christ to a new life of victory (vv.12-15)

In the name of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, God's **Lamb** to substitute for sinners, dearly redeemed:

It was probably a shock for people who heard my Granddad, an insurance man and sales trainer, telling them, "There are a million ways for people to go to hell, but there's only one Way to heaven." He'd encourage guests to come for at least three years to check out God's one Way through Jesus, God's own Son. For the last 2,000 years this is still our greatest need: **Walk with the Lamb of God**. See how God takes away our fear of hell? Who would run away from a **Lamb**? We'll all be buried eventually, but there's a burial everyone needs first because right on the other side is this **new life of victory**. Stop driving all over creation looking for some other way. Come and **Walk with the Lamb of God**.

☆ Buried with Christ in Baptism (vv.6-12)

Does anyone else remember when a certain computer company named after a fruit decided to offer maps on GPS? They bought data from other mapping companies and combined all that information into their own maps. Problem was that there was conflicting information. One new maps user claimed that their maps led him into a restricted area on a military runway in Washington D.C. We tried to find a family reunion with their maps and ended up eight miles away from everyone else. Were we better off with the old spiral notebook maps? Sure, until a new road was built or the print too small to see!

Down through the Old Testament ages God was using His prophets like the voice on GPS. *Turn here...merge there...keep going until....* Personally, I don't find it helpful in a neighborhood for the voice to stop with, "Your destination is on the right." It's helpful if she adds the location: "111 Joy Road."

That's what John the Baptist was doing. When he saw Jesus, the One on whom the Holy Spirit landed like a dove, John pointed to the exact location for God's one Way to heaven: "**Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**" (John 1:29 EHV) Don't keep driving. Stop here!

Now the Lord's Apostle Paul is speaking to you who have arrived at your destination in Christ. You're not home to heaven yet, but Jesus is the One Way in. God does not want this to be complicated. So, stop and take a breath like someone who just arrived home in a snowstorm. The roads weren't plowed. People were in the ditch, but you had to get someone to the airport then find your way back. Safe and warm, breathe! **Overflow in faith**: "Thank-you! Thank-you! Thank-you! God."

You don't need someone to take you back out in the cold. That's a captivity of human philosophy like modern environmentalism worshipping "Mother Earth." Storms don't come because "Mother Earth" is angry. Some celebrities sound like ancient Baal worshipers. But the "**empty deceit**" of some churches with their rationalism isn't any better. It's as if "science" is their God and doctors are their priests and abortion is their sacrament of death claiming freedom. It's so easy to get wrapped up in the emotion of religion like Lutheran pietists or Pentecostals – all pointing to the person. They're like your GPS saying, "You've arrived inside yourself," while you shout, "That's not helping me!"

The Holy Spirit through Paul patiently advises, **Walk with the Lamb of God**. Don't leave your GPS tracker loose and rattling around in the car. Anchor it to Christ. Set your roots down deeply in God's Word like Christians who are not content with church only once a month. Don't you know the grass is still growing under the snow? The weeds are still rooting deeply to spring up in the salt and sand

as soon as the sun warms the earth. Get to work with the right data and don't get lost in the airports of *human tradition...the basic principles of the world [that] are not in accord with Christ.*

When you come to Jesus, you have already arrived at the heart of God. *“For all the fullness of God’s being dwells bodily in Christ. And you have been brought to fullness in him.”* You don't need or want anyone to lead you away from Christ like a lousy GPS lost on the highways of life. *“Christ is the head over every ruler and authority.”* In fact, He is *the author and perfecter of our faith.* (Hebrews 12:2 NIV84) He fulfilled all the Old Testament laws of sacrifice by becoming God's Sacrifice in our place. Even the circumcision of Jewish baby boys was fulfilled by Christ. All along the Lord said through Moses and the prophets that He wanted His people to have their hearts circumcise. (Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4) God wants human pride cut away in order for us to have a heartfelt relationship with God.

We would never guess how this works unless God revealed it. But here it is! *“You were also circumcised in him, with a circumcision not done by human hands, in the putting off of the body of flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, ¹² when you were buried with Christ in baptism.”* Paul goes into more detail in Romans 6, but simply put, the burial this body needs to get rid of sin already happened in Christian Baptism. In that Word-powered water we are connected to Christ, **the Lamb of God**, who was buried after He died on the cross for all our sins. We are **Buried with Christ in Baptism** so that our burial of this body in death need no longer scare us. God describes it as a planting of a seed that will blossom and bloom in beautiful flowers for all eternity. (1 Corinthians 15) Better yet, the baptized are...

✧ **Raised with Christ to a new life of victory (vv.12-15)**

The threat of hiring 87,000 new I.R.S. agents and arming them has many Americans rattled. Some officials are pushing back to defund the threat. Even if you're innocent, an audit is distressing. One I.R.S. agent at a neighborhood block party agreed the best you can do is hire a conservative tax preparer and keep a paper trail to justify yourself. He stated that no one in their building understood the tax code.

Now imagine being hauled into God's courtroom. The list of charges goes on and on for every second from conception to your last breath. The fines result in millions that you could never pay. But the Judge steps down from the bench, comes around to your side and smiles while he lays all your debt fully paid on the bench and vacates all the charges against you. Seated again, He smiles and says, “Your debt is paid. No charges remain. You're free to go.” You'd leave that day with a whole new life!

“And in baptism you were also raised with him through the faith worked by the God who raised Christ from the dead. ¹³ Even when you were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ by forgiving us all our trespasses. ¹⁴ God erased the record of our debt brought against us by his legal demands. This record stood against us, but he took it away by nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ After disarming the rulers and authorities, he made a public display of them by triumphing over them in Christ.” Easter morning Jesus descended into hell to proclaim His victory over the devil, sin and death. **Walk with the Lamb of God in victory**, and don't put guilt back on your fellow Christians by complaining. So much goes on behind the scenes here. Thank God for each other too!

In Christ you are set free from all the anxiety of this present age. You did not evolve from slime. You are no accident. Our gracious God *created them male and female.* (Genesis 1:27) You are free to glory in your womanhood or marvel in your masculinity as God has given it to you. Young man, use your strength to clear a neighbor's driveway. Lend a hand to a young woman stepping off the bleachers. Young lady, take the hand and enjoy the beauty God gives you now. This is only the beginning of the

beautiful sweetness God plants in your heart, made lovely by Christ living there. Physical beauty comes and goes. Some classmates and students are better looking now than in high school. And God has given them men in their lives who finally realize what a treasure Christian women really are. Their support as we live life together is priceless. You are **Raised with Christ to a new life of victory** over this mass confusion which is quickly passing away. **Walk with the Lamb of God.** His **victory** is yours. Amen.