

Agnus Dei The Lamb of God

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2-6 Tony: Harvest Festival. Peru. Married Couples. Night of Hope opp. The Stir.
- B. Slide7 Fall Church Baptism: Today for those who have gone through the class.
- C. Slide8 Children at Risk. Next Sun. Debbie Martis from *Rebirth Homes* update on the long-term residential program they've opened in our County. [partner with/help support]

II. Slide9 **Intro: *Agnus Dei*** The Lamb of God

- A. Once an old **ewe** went bounding across the road, followed by the strangest looking **lamb**. It apparently had 6 legs, and the skin seemed to be partially torn from its body in a way that made me feel the poor little creature must be suffering terribly. **But** when one of the herders caught the lamb and brought it over to me, the mystery was explained. **That lamb** did not originally belong to **that ewe**. She had a **lamb** which was *bitten by a rattlesnake* and **died**. **This lamb that I saw was an orphan and needed a mother's care**. But at first the **bereft ewe** refused to have anything to do with it. She **sniffed at it**, then **pushed it away**. So the herders *skinned the lamb that had died* and very carefully drew the fleece over the **living lamb**. This left the hind-leg coverings dragging loose. Thus **covered**, the lamb was brought again to the **ewe**. She smelled it once more and this time seemed thoroughly satisfied and adopted it as her own.
 1. What a beautiful picture of *the grace of God* to sinners. We are all outcasts and have no claim upon His love. But God's own Son, *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World*, has died for us **and now we who believe are dressed up in the fleece of the Lamb who died**.
 2. This morning we will be introduced to, I think the most important metaphor of Jesus...as ***the Lamb of God***.
- B. Last week we were introduced to Jesus as **the Word**.
 1. We know words are to express ourselves. *Jesus is God expressing Himself*.
- C. We were also introduced to Jesus as **the Light**.
 1. Jesus offers Himself to everyone w/o exception, though His light is shunned by many (9,10).

2. If you come out of a dark theater into the bright sunlight you have 2 choices:
 - (1) Go back into the darkness
 - (2) Stand in the light till your eyes adjust.
 - a) Many refuse to *step into the light* of Christ.

III. Slide10 REVEALING THE FATHER (14-18)

- A. Slide11 And the **Word** become **flesh** - *Jesus' flesh, the new localization of God's presence on earth. The replacement of the old tabernacle.*
 1. **Incarnation**: deity funneled itself into humanity.
 2. Like taking the finest of wines & pouring it into *an ordinary earthenware vessel*.
 - a) Jesus traveled through the country as a common, unglazed earthenware bottle, corked until those special occasions when His glory was manifested & the fragrant beauty of deity filled the air with its aromatic presence. *Chuck Swindoll*
For a few years, the worlds parched lips tasted of the kingdom of God.
- B. This depiction of the *logos* as a *personal* being in human flesh is a reversal of the philosophical concept of the *logos* as *an impersonal principle or force*.
 1. The emphasis on the **flesh**. Probably an attempt to correct misunderstandings about the humanity of Jesus present in the early church.
 2. One of the earliest heresies from the 2nd century ad was **Docetism** [L. *dokein*, to seem, appear] (Jesus was fully divine & only **appeared** human & only **appeared** to die on the cross).
 3. The idea that **divine beings could appear in human form** was common in the ancient world, so John seems to take extra care to emphasize that **Jesus was human**, not that He merely *appeared* in human form.
 4. The later heresy of **Arianism** emphasized Jesus' **humanity** at the expense of His **divinity**, claiming He was **a created being**.
- C. Slide12 **Dwelt amongst us** - to pitch one's tent. Or, *to dwell in a tent*.
 1. Rev.21:3 *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle (tent/skenay) of God is with men, and He will dwell (skeno) with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.* To pitch one's tent.

- D. Slide13 And we beheld His **glory** - refers to the **unique splendor** and **honor** seen in Jesus' *life, miracles, death, and resurrection.*
- E. Slide14 The glory as **of the only** begotten of the Father - the Greek term *monogenēs*, meaning *one and only* carries the sense of **uniqueness** and special beloved status.
1. Same as in 3:16, **His only begotten son**. (also vs.18 **the only begotten Son**)
- F. Slide15 He came with **grace & truth** not **law & judgment** [2 central attributes of divine character]
1. **Does that reflect your Christianity? your marriage? your friendships? your parenting?**
- G. Full of grace and truth - it was *a gracious and truthful revelation.*
- H. Slide16 (16) And of His **fullness** we have all received - I picture the children in Haiti, coming to the well. **Who didn't leave till each & every one of their containers were full.**
1. So **Jesus** fills us from His *bottomless reservoir* of **grace & truth**, **until our cup overflows.**
- I. Slide17 Grace for grace - *grace in place of grace* comes to Christians **like waves** continue to lap on the shore.
1. The Christian's **total life** is the **constant & continual receiving**, **one after another after another**, **of God's grace.**
- J. Slide18 (17) **Moses** gave the Law that reveals **sin & condemns**. **Christ** reveals the **truth** that redeems.
- K. Slide19 (18) He ends his **prologue** on this climatic note *the divine sculpture became human clay.*
1. He has **declared Him** - **He has explained Him** (NASB). **He has made Him known** (ESV). **He has revealed God to us** (NLT).
 - a) Literally *He has exegeted Him*, *to draw out, to expound, to explain.*
 2. He carefully presented Jesus to be none other than: Eternal (1,2). The Creator (3). The source of life (4-13). God's manifested glory (14-17). And the unique expression of God (18).

- L. Things to ponder so far: *Can you define grace? Why is grace better than law? Did the law have limits? Does grace have limits? Who has best described God?*

IV. Slide20 **PLAYING SECOND FIDDLE WELL (19-34)**

- A. John's Gospel is cut in 1/2. **1st half** deals with *Jesus' signs* (i.e. His miracles are proof that He is the Son of God). **2nd half** focuses on *the last week of Jesus' life*.
- B. Slide21a **JOHN'S TESTIMONY OF JESUS** (19-28)
- C. We see a **3-fold purpose** for John's Testimony:
1. To fulfill the **prophecy** of Is.40:3 **a voice crying in the wilderness**.
 2. To call people to **repentance**.
 3. To draw people's **attention** toward Jesus.
- D. Slide21b John earlier explained...He was a **lamp** but not the **light**. A **wick** but not the **flame**.
1. He was simply **a beggar telling other beggars where to find bread**.
 2. **Illustration:** We all have different lamps in our home. Desk lamps, chandeliers, some fancy, some pretty, some plain (white porcelain, keyless).
 - a) The important thing though is **the light** not the **lamp**. [**story:** sold 2 lamps.]
 - b) It's **the glow of the bulb that lights the room**, not the **shine** of the **brass**.
 - c) **Are you exhibiting Jesus** in your life, **or** do people only see **you**, the lamp?
 - d) Is **light** radiating from your life, **or** is it **blocked** by a **bulky lampshade of sin**?
- E. Slide21c (23) John was **a voice** not *the Word*.
1. Like the difference between **a singer's voice** & the song's lyrics.
- F. Slide21d Why did John have to **make straight the way**?
1. Imagery was taken from the days (Isaiah, 700 yrs earlier) when there were no paved roads, only tracks across the fields. **If the king** were to travel, the road must be built & smoothed out, that the royal chariot might not find the traveling unduly rough, **nor** swamped in the mire.
 - a) John was **paving the path** **or** **razing the road** for the Messiah.
- G. **Wilderness?** Isaiah chose this metaphor to describe **Israel's spiritual condition**.

1. **i.e.** desolate, dry, & barren.
 2. *The highway to heaven is paved over prepared hearts.*
 - a) Repentant hearts. Soft hearts. Fertile hearts.
 3. Quoting Is.40:3(LXX) Using metaphor, Isaiah called the people to smooth a highway in the desert. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight, And the rough places smooth.*
 - a) These words demand **a spiritual renewal** in preparation for Messiah's advent.
 - b) John's 1st words in Mt.3:2 *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*
 4. It is the picture of John & us **making a Highway for God**, along which He will move toward His ultimate accomplishment.
 5. **Our highway system seeks to do the same thing as vs.4.**
 - a) Get on the **I-15 South**. Just south of Temecula. **Part of the valley is filled in**, think Lawrence Welk Resort, **and then through the great arc bridge** where the hill is **cutaway** for the road to go through.
 6. **App:** Rough terrain in our hearts needs to be smoothed before the Lord can come near.
 - a) When you read your bible & pray, **first clear** the way for the Lord.
 - b) When you worship, **first smooth** the desert path for God.
 - c) When God seems distant, do a little **roadwork of repentance** in order to prepare the way for Him.
- H. **Slide21e** (24-28) John's **humility** summed up in vs.27. (3 times: vs.15,27,30)
1. Jewish tradition taught that **a disciple** must serve his teacher in every task that a slave would perform **except for removing his shoe** - a task deemed too menial for a disciple.
 2. John was willing to stoop to the lowest level of servanthood to defer to his Messiah. *Are you, in your life today?*

- I. **Slide22 THE LAMB OF GOD** (29-34)
- J. John's baptism of Jesus marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry.
- K. **Slide23b** (29) **The Lamb of God** - the message of the Bible can be summed up in this title.
- Slide23c** The question in the OT is, *Where is the lamb?* Isaac said, *Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?* Gen. 22:7
 - In the 4 Gospels, the emphasis is **Behold the Lamb of God. Here He is!**
- L. What other offices Jesus holds, He is first & foremost *the lamb of God*.
- He is** the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. **He is** the True Vine. **He is** the Wonderful Counselor. & many others, **but** before everything else, from Gen-Rev, He is the *the Lamb of God*.
 - He is Prophet, Priest & King:** Prophet to teach; Priest to pray; King to rule. **But** before all else He became incarnate as the **the Lamb** to save us!
 - Jesus is the Savior.** So we, like John, need to point to Him as our substitutionary guilt-bearer. *He took our place. He bore our sentence. He was offered for our sakes.*
- M. **Slide23d** The blood of **lambs covered** the sins of the Jews.
- Ps.32:1 *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.*
- N. The blood of **Jesus takes away** the sins of the world.
- Heb.10:4 *it is not possible that the blood of bulls & goats could take away sin.*
- O. Isaiah uses the terms of a sacrificial lamb in Is.53 *he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, & as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.*
- John is declaring then, **Jesus is the true sacrificial lamb for the Passover.**
 - 1 Cor. 5:7 *For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*
- P. Jesus didn't go to Calvary because it was *the only way to show the love of God*. **No**, it was because *God hates sin*. Alan Redpath
- It **didn't** say, **Behold the Lamb of God who shows the Love of God**. (though it did)
 - No**, our sin has a **cost** to it.
 - Slide22e** Sin always **takes you farther than you wanted to go. Keeps you longer than you wanted to stay. And costs you more than you wanted to pay.**

- Q. Slide23f How startled was this crowd, when John pointed to Jesus & shouted from the edge of the Jordan river, *Behold the Lamb of God.*
- Slide24 The Jews standing their must have immediately thought of: Abel & his propitiatory lamb. Of Abraham & his memorable word, *God will provide Himself a Lamb.* Of the Passover Lamb on the dinner table in Egypt. Of the Levitical sacrificial Lamb & the Tabernacle. And of the great prophecy in Isaiah, *He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.*
 - Yes, they would have immediately thought of these things, & then gasped that John was identifying *Jesus* as the type & fulfillment.
- R. (33) John would not have known Jesus, except by the Spirit. [same for all of us]
- John's baptism **motivated** people to change. Christ's baptism **brought the power** to change.
 - Power to change our lives. Power to leave our sins. Power to enjoy fullness of life.**
 - Cleansing by water is one thing, but the cleansing produced by the Spirit is of another all together. Later at Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus' resurrection, **the baptism with the Holy Spirit brought in a new Age** (Acts 1:5 *for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*).
- S. End: **Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne** (Father), **and to the Lamb, forever and ever.** Rev. 5:13
- Worthy is the Agnus Dei, the Lamb who was slain.** Rev. 5:12