

Behold the lamb of God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Kenneth I.Macleod

- [0 : 0 0] Let us turn again to the chapter that we read in John's Gospel, John chapter 1. John chapter 1.
- And I want this fairly lengthy section from verse 35 to the end, but just to look at it very kind of by way of overview. I'm not going to read it again, but we find at the beginning there at verse 35, the next day John was there again with two of his disciples.
- When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, look, the Lamb of God, and so on. Now, I think one of the things that really strikes you, we read that from verse 29, but you'll see there in verse 29, the next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.
- But then it tells us in verse 35, the next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, look, the Lamb of God.
- And I find that very encouraging because the result of this is verse 37. When the two disciples, now these were two disciples, two followers of John the Baptist.
- [1 : 2 3] Remember, John the Baptist was this tremendous man, missionary type person. And it tells us that the whole of Jerusalem and Judea went out after him.
- He was quite sensational. He was causing so much interest amongst the people. And we find that John the Baptist had followers.
- There were those who were following him. And we find that two of the followers who had been disciples of John the Baptist, when they heard what John said regarding Jesus, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- It tells us that two of the disciples heard this. They followed Jesus. Now, we know that these two men that began to follow Jesus, one of them was Andrew. And he was the one who was responsible for taking his brother Peter to Jesus.
- And the other, we believe, was John, the author, the writer of this gospel. And so, some people may say, well, that's a bit unfair, surely.
- [2 : 2 6] Surely John must have felt a bit put out. Here he is with this great following all these people around. And he points to Jesus and two of his closest followers turn from following John and begin to follow Jesus.
- So, people may say, well, were they not very loyal there? John must have felt upset, not at all. John was not in the business of building up his own following, although people were following.
- John was there as a signpost to Jesus. And that's what we should all be. That's what all preaching is about. That's what all witnessing is about. We're never in this for our own interests, for our own glory, for any building up of any following of anything at all.
- All the time, everything that we're involved in is in order to point people to Jesus. And that was John's great aim. He was pointing people to Jesus. And I'm sure at one level, while John would have missed the company of John and Andrew, he would have been delighted that they went on to follow Jesus.

But the other thing that really strikes me here is that you find in verse 29, John saw Jesus coming and he said, look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[3 : 46] The next day, verse 35, John was there again. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, look, the Lamb of God. Exact same thing. The first time he said it, we don't read of any response.

We don't read that anybody began to follow Jesus. But it's the second day that he says it, that these two men began to follow Jesus. And that's also a great encouragement because quite often we can easily become discouraged because we may witness to people, we may speak to people, we may encourage people, we may talk to people.

And it doesn't seem to be going anywhere. Maybe you can think of people that you've spoken to and it's just, it's had absolutely no impact, no effect, whatever, or so it appears.

But we don't know. Because maybe, John, that first day when he said, behold the Lamb of God, and nobody reacted, he might have said, oh, well, what's the point in me saying that anymore?

But he said it again the next time and then there was the response of these people. And that's what we've got to be. We've got to be faithful to where we're at. And we don't know.

[5 : 00] You know, we're all just links in a chain. We've all got our own little part to play. We are where God has set us. And we don't know what the Lord will take and what the Lord will use and what the Lord will bless.

So this is what happened. And when you think about it, when John said, if you were to trace, if you were to see a line of what happened.

And when John said these words, behold the Lamb of God. And these two men got up and went to follow Jesus. One of them was Andrew. Andrew went, we'll see that in a moment, and he got his brother Peter.

Brought Peter to Jesus. Three years down the line, we see this Peter, who was brought by Andrew, who heard the words of John the Baptist, preached at Pentecost.

And 3,000 people were converted. There was massive revival as Peter preached. So if you took, and there were many, many more, if you took every individual person who was converted under the preaching of Peter, and you linked it all, you bring it all back to Andrew, who brought Peter to Jesus.

[6 : 13] And you put it back then to John the Baptist, who just said these words, behold the Lamb of God, takes away the sin of the world. And you see the link. It's wonderful. Wonderful. And that is still going on to this day, where all, as we say, links in a chain.

Wonderful. I believe it would be one of the wonderful things of glory. Where we will see what we can't see now. Where we'll understand what's impossible for us to lay hold of.

Where the picture will be opened up for us. And we will see things that we just never knew anything about. It's one of the great pictures given to us in Matthew.

When Jesus will say to his people. And he'll say, well done. And he'll tell them the things they did for him. And his people are going to say, but when?

When did we see you hungry? When did we see you thirsty? When did we see this? When did we see that? And he's going to say, as much as you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren.

[7 : 15] You did it unto me. You did these things that you did. And maybe you never saw anything, any result. You might be praying for somebody for years and years.

You may have witnessed to somebody for years and years. You may have spoken a word here and there. And as far as you can see, you can't see any result from it. There'll be a result.

That's going to be one of the wonderful things that will be opened up. And we'll see that all, remember what it tells us. That no labour in the Lord is in vain.

That's hard for us to understand sometimes. Because we can labour and labour and labour and labour. And sometimes we do feel it's in vain. The Lord says it's not. And one day we will see just the fullness, the wonder, the return of what the Lord is showing.

So anyway, we find these two disciples. They get up and they go to follow Jesus. And Jesus turning around, saw them following and he said, what do you want? They said, Rabbi, where are you staying?

[8 : 21] Now that question that Jesus asks is one of the most pertinent questions that anybody can ask. What do you want? These are about the first, nearly the first recorded words of Jesus.

That's when Jesus spoke in the temple to his parents and such like. But in the start of his ministry. And these words are so powerful because Jesus addresses these words to us as well.

And he's asking us tonight, what is it you want? What do you want? I think that's one of the really important things that we often have to ask ourselves. What do we want in life?

What is it that motivates us? What is it that drives us? What is it that gives us the impetus to go on? Where are our goals? What is number one in our life?

Because sometimes what we think is number one in our life isn't. See, our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. One of the greatest sins that we're prone to is idolatry.

[9 : 26] We may say to ourselves, oh, I don't think so. But we can have loads of idols in the heart we're not really aware of. Covetousness is idolatry, we're told. Lots of things that when you strip it all down, it's idolatry.

And so we've always got to ask ourselves, what is it that, what is really at the center of our lives? Because so often, even although as Christians and we can be following the Lord and engaged in work for the Lord, there are often things that every so often will rise up and will say, ah, maybe this has too much place in my life.

Anyway, Jesus is asking them this question, what is it that you want? What do you want? So we have to be, it's a question I think we always have to turn back in on ourselves.

What do I really want? And so we find Jesus asking this question. They said, teacher, where are you staying? And he said to them, come and you will see.

And so that was one of the great things they went with. And I love what Jesus says, come and you will see. So they went and saw where he was staying and spent that day with him.

[10 : 43] It was about the tenth hour. Come and see is the invitation that Jesus is giving to everybody tonight. Come. You know, I find it very illogical and sometimes difficult to understand when people will not just reject the Christian faith, but they pour scorn upon it and they belittle it.

And you sometimes will speak to people and you realise that it's just such an inbuilt prejudice and it's so unfair. Because these people don't know Jesus.

And you can't condemn or put down or belittle somebody that you don't know. Somebody that you've never met. But that's what so many people do.

And if people only came to meet with Jesus, if people only came to understand a wee bit about who he is, if people could only come to a place where they would have him and meet with him personally in a relationship, it would be so different.

That's why Jesus says to us all, come, come you shall come and see, come and taste and see that God is good. And so we find that they go and they spend the day with him.

[12 : 03] And then we find that Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, who was one of the two who heard John, that he went. First thing, that's the first thing Andrew did, was to find his brother Simon and tell him.

The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him. Now, what I love about Andrew, Andrew I think is one of the unsung heroes in the Bible.

I think he's one of the great disciples. He wasn't part of the inner three. But when you think about it, with regard to being called by Jesus, he's up there at the very front.

And yet he doesn't get into the inner circle. Remember how Jesus used to take Peter, James and John on occasion, like to the Mount of Transfiguration, the raising of Jairus' daughter into the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus went aside to pray.

He took these three. But he didn't take Andrew. Now, Andrew, I would say, was the approachable disciple.

[13 : 11] Andrew might have not, it's obvious Andrew didn't have the fire in his belly that Peter had. He was a different type of person. But one of the wonderful things about Andrew is, he was obviously a wonderful Christian.

Because the hardest place, and I'm sure you'll all know this, the hardest place to witness is in your own home. So, if you are in a home that there are people that aren't believers, you know the hardest place to witness is in your own home.

Why? Because people know you best. They know who you really are, in a way that others don't. They know the real you. And that's why it's often difficult to witness in your own home.

But here's Andrew, and that's the great thing about him. He went straight home, and he got his brother. And he witnessed to his brother, and he said, hey, we've found the Messiah.

We've found Jesus Christ. And Andrew, when we look at him in the Bible, is the one that, for instance, remember when there were Greeks wanting to see Jesus.

[14 : 23] They went to Philip first, who had a Greek name. And we believe there was some connection to the Greek. But Philip went straight for Andrew. Andrew seemed to be the patient who could get alongside.

Remember when Jesus had the miracle with the loaves and the fish? It was Andrew who brought the boy to Jesus with the loaves and the fish.

So you see that Andrew must have been one of these people. As we say, he might not have been so spiritual as John or as impetuous as Peter. But he was the one who could get alongside.

He was the approachable one. And that's, people like that in the kingdom are so important. Where you're there for others. So that people will feel it easy to talk to you.

You know, it's one of the most important things. If you have that ability, that's a wonderful, God has given you a great ability. Because you know, there are a lot of people. A lot of people in this town and in their communities.

[15 : 25] That have an interest in the gospel. But they can't come to church. But if they know a Christian who they can approach. And just open up a wee bit to.

That is one of the most wonderful things that can happen. And if you're such a patient. God has given you a wonderful gift. Where you are like a kind of a go between.

Where you're somebody that people can feel that they can come up to. And they can speak. And they can open up a wee bit. And tell people, tell you how they feel.

A wonderful thing. Well, I would say that Andrew was a disciple. Who was a bit like that. So he finds Peter. And he takes Peter to Jesus. And then we have this lovely meeting of Jesus with Peter.

Simon. Jesus looked at him and said, You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas. Which when translated is Peter. And it's quite interesting that often when the Lord does that really something.

[16 : 25] Really specific. Some great work for a person. There's a name change. Like Abram became Abraham. Jacob became Israel. And here Simon.

He has been called Cephas. Or called Peter. Then we find that the next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip. He said to him.

Follow me. Now do you notice what's happening here? This is one of the things I love about this narrative. We're finding different people coming to Jesus.

And each one, it's different. John and Andrew came on the testimony of John the Baptist. Who just said, Behold the Lamb of God.

He didn't say it specifically to them. He said it in a general way. They heard. They listened. And they responded. The next one. We find that it's Andrew.

[17 : 25] Who goes and he takes his brother. To meet with Jesus. And now we find the third. Is that Jesus himself comes.

And approaches Philip. And says, Follow me. Every one is different. And if I was tonight. To say right. I'm going to ask 30 people.

In here tonight. To tell how. Just in 2 or 3 minutes. How you came to faith in Jesus Christ. Do you know. While there might be similarities. Everybody.

Would be different. Our experiences. Are different. Yes. There's always. The end result is always the same. Coming into a personal. Relationship.

And union with Jesus. By faith. But the road we take. The experiences we have. They're all different. And that's.

[18 : 19] That's very important. For us to understand. Because sometimes. When we hear a testimony. And particularly. If it's a dramatic testimony. We may say. Oh. I've never been converted. If that's what it is.

To be a Christian. Oh. I'm afraid. I'm not. But it's all. So personal. So individual. So unique.

To you. The way. That God. Works. In your life. And that's one of the things. That is. Opened up for us here. The variety of.

Ways. In where people come. To faith. In Jesus Christ. And so he says to Philip. Very simply. That's what he says. Follow me.

He said. That's all. These words. He came with power. And then we find. Philip. He was of the same place. As Andrew and Peter. And again. Philip does. Exactly the same thing.

[19 : 15] He goes off. And he finds his friend. Nathaniel. God doesn't just give us family. He gives us friends. I think it's one of the great. These are the.

There are so many enriching things in life. But. Two of the greatest enriching factors. Factors we have in life. Are family and friends. And God hasn't given us family and friends.

Just in a random way. To a purpose. To a plan. To everything. And. It's very important. That we. Involve. And engage.

With our friends. In spiritual things as well. In witnessing. And in everything. And so. This is what we find. That Jesus. Philip says to. To Nathaniel. We found.

We have found. He says. The. The. Messiah. The one that the. The law. And the prophets. Were all about. Jesus of Nazareth.

[20 : 09] The son of Joseph. We have found. The one. Moses wrote about. In the law. And about whom. The prophets. Also wrote. Jesus of Nazareth. The son of Joseph.

And then we find. This. Bias. Coming in. This prejudice. Because. Nazareth. Was kind of. Looked down on. By. Many of the Jews. Because. There was. In Nazareth. Quite a lot of.

Mixed race. And you know. How the Jews. Were very. Particular. About. Their. Racial. Heritage. And so. There was this. Sometimes. Looking down.

At Nazareth. And that's why. Nathaniel. Asked. And he said. Can any good thing. Can anything. Good. Come out of. Nazareth. And see the wisdom.

Of Philip. He doesn't. Stand there. And say. All right. Here we go again. Here's Nathaniel. He's always putting down. On Nazareth.

[21 : 04] And start a big argument. And start debating. And saying. Right. I'm going to give you. Ten reasons. No. He says. The wisest thing of all. Come and see. Come. And see.

For yourself. And that's. I think. One of the things. We've got to do. With people. If you're saying. To. If you're meeting people. Who don't come to church. Say to them.

Look. I'm going to give you. A little. Even if it's. Like daily bread. Or something. You're saying. That you don't know. Anything about. Jesus. You're. You're belittling. The gospel. Well please. Before you belittle.

The gospel. Will you do one thing. For me. Will you promise me. That every night. You just read. A wee bit of the bible. Maybe. Matthew's gospel. Luke's gospel. Or John's gospel. And take this daily bread.

Just. Five. Minutes. A night. God. Because you can't belittle. When you. When you don't know. Because so many. So many people do that. They. They pour scorn.

[21 : 59] Upon the gospel. They have this. Inbuilt. Prejudice. Ah. Jesus Christ. And Christians. And they. Pushing it away. And you're saying. It's so unfair. Come.

And see. And I think that's what we've got to do. With people. And say. Will you do one. Right. Here's your challenge. And so many people. They don't know.

Give them a message. Say. Give them like. A little of the daily bread readings. Or something like that. And say. Here's your challenge. For a month. Come back. And see me after a month. And while they have that.

Pray for them. Pray for them. Well that's what. What. Philip has done. With Nathaniel. He's not going to argue the case. But he says. Right. Okay. Come.

And see. So. On they go. And. Jesus. Of course. When. When. They come and see. Jesus said. I saw you.

[22 : 53] How do you know me? Nathaniel asked. And of course. This is in response. Because it says in verse 47. When Jesus saw Nathaniel approaching. He said of him. Here is a true Israelite.

In whom. There is nothing false. Here is. Here's a man who's the real deal. He's absolutely genuine. There's an integrity about him. A genuineness about him.

He's. He is. Who he appears to be. And. When we say. And this. Is. I suppose. One of the things.

I remember. In. Oh. You. I can't remember. It was a good number of years ago. I was on this sponsored cycle. In the Holy Land. I remember this man. Speaking to us. He was a.

A. Back. And he said. You don't think. The way that we do. We. Think. Differently. To you. The way.

[23 : 51] Something to do with it. They're very. Very shrewd. They operate. In a. In a very shrewd. Manner. And. He was highlighting. That this. This. Was kind of natural. To them.

Well Jesus. Is saying. Here. Here. Here. Here. Is an Israelite. Indeed. In whom. There's no guile. There's no deception. This is. Somebody. Who is. Absolutely.

True. and William. Nathaniel asked, how do you know me? Jesus answered, I saw you while you were under the fig tree before Philip called you.

And then Nathaniel gives one of the greatest confessions that you'll ever find anywhere. You are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel. And Jesus goes on then to say, I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. And it's very interesting how Jesus ties in when he says to Nathaniel, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. It's like he goes right back to the one who was first called Israel, who was Jacob, whose name was Israel.

Because he brings this reference back to the dream that Jacob had. Remember that amazing dream he had when he was on the run from home.

[25 : 13] Had him to run from his brother Esau. And if any man was ever lonely and homesick that night, it was Jacob. He felt so alone.

And yet he wasn't alone. Because he had the most amazing experience where he saw heaven open. And he saw this ladder from heaven to earth. And he saw the angels ascending and descending.

And as many people will highlight, it wasn't that the angels were descending and ascending. They were ascending and descending, which means that they were already there.

They weren't descending in order to be with him. They were ascending because they were already around him. And that's such a beautiful picture to know that the angels, remember, are ministering spirits.

and everywhere we go, there is protection. You know, we often talk about the devil. Oh, it's the devil. Do you know the devil got at me? The devil made me do this. I ended up and I'm sure it was Satan.

[26 : 15] We're always talking about the devil did this and the devil did that. I wonder how often do we stop and say, you know, I think an angel prevented, an angel protected.

Because we are experiencing over and over again that we don't realize it. divine deliverance through, I believe, angelic ministry.

And so, Jacob was given this great picture, this great scene. Jacob, you thought you were on your own. You're not. And of course, Jesus is now showing that he himself is that ladder.

As this ladder ascended from heaven to the earth. This ladder that was coming all the way from heaven all the way down to the earth. This is God linking heaven to earth and Jesus is that ladder.

Jesus is the one who has come down to us to make a way back to God. The question we have to ask ourselves is this.

[27 : 20] Have we, if we're going to use the picture of the ladder? Have we begun to climb that ladder? Have we put our feet upon the ladder? You know, if you're going to go up a ladder, it's no use looking at it and thinking about it.

It's not enough even to put one foot on the rung. You've got to put both feet on the rung, get your both feet on the rung of the first rung of the ladder and then begin to climb.

And that's what we do with Jesus. We say, this is where we're going. We're going with him. And we begin our ascent because that's where we're going to glory.

But we begin it with him. And he'll take us home. And you know the wonderful thing is that once we begin to go with him, he will never, ever, ever let us go. He has a hand that is so strong that it cannot be prized open.

There has an arm that's full of power. Thy hand is great and mine. That's what we're singing. This is the hand that Jesus has. In John's Gospel in chapter 10, Jesus is saying there about eternal life and he says, you know something?

[28 : 26] He said, you're in God's hand and you're in my hand. And nobody can open that hand. That's one of the wonderful things. And that is why even as Christians, if we slip, if we fall, we will not be utterly cast down.

Remember how it says in Psalm 37, the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. even although he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down. Why? Because the Lord upholds him with his hand.

Those of you who are parents who are little children and you're walking with the children and you're holding their hand, if they stumble and they fall, they don't go all the way down.

They may swing a bit. They might be going this way and that way, but they don't hit the ground because you have a hold of them. They stumble, they fall, but they don't fall all the way down.

So it is for the believer because we are in the hand of the Lord and it is his great work to take every single one of us home to glory.

[29 : 32] And what Jesus said to Nathaniel here is going to be true for all of us. You shall see greater things than that.

That's always going to be how it is with us. It doesn't matter how great or how wonderful a thing has been already that you've experienced in the Christian faith, you're going to see even greater.

It's going to be like, you remember when the Queen of Sheba, she came, she heard about Solomon, she came up to sea. And it tells us two things about her. One was when she saw the grandeur, the splendor, the majesty, the glory, of his kingdom and his wisdom, it tells us there was no strength in her.

It was like, it was too awesome for her. And she said the half was not told me. Well, that's what it's going to be like for us when we arrive in glory.

Not that there will be no strength in us, but it's just we will be overwhelmed with the greatness, with the glory, with the grandeur of what he has provided for us.

[30 : 42] It's a wonderful concept, a wonderful thought. You shall see greater things than these. you shall see, Similarly, to take