

*Christ Church New
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

15 January 2023

Welcome

Song: Our God is a great big God
Our God is a great big God
Our God is a great big God
And He holds us in His hands

He's higher than a skyscraper
He's deeper than a submarine
He's wider than the universe
And beyond my wildest dreams
He's known me and He's loved me
Since before the world began
How wonderful to be a part of
God's amazing plan

Prayer

Song: He's coming on the clouds
Kings and kingdoms will bow down
And every chain will break
As broken hearts declare His praise
For who can stop the Lord Almighty?

And our God is the lion
The Lion of Judah
He's roaring with power
And fighting our battles
And every knee will bow before Him

*Our God is the lamb
The Lamb that was slain
For the sins of the world
His blood breaks the chains
And every knee will bow before the Lion and the
Lamb
Every knee will bow before Him, yeah!*

Oh, oh
So open up the gates
So open up the gates
Make way before the King of kings
The God who comes to save
Is here to set the captives free
For who can stop the Lord Almighty?

Reading: John 1.29-32 read by Allen Mukasa

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "There is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'A man is coming after me, but he is greater than I am, because he existed before I was born.' ³¹I did not know who he would be, but I came baptizing with water in order to make him known to the people of Israel." ³²And John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and stay on him. ³³I still did not know that he was the one, but God, who sent me to baptize with water, had said to me, 'You will see the Spirit come down and stay on a man; he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴I have seen it," said John, "and I tell you that he is the Son of God." ³⁵The next day John was standing there again with two of his disciples, ³⁶when he saw Jesus walking by. "There is the Lamb of God!" he said. ³⁷The two disciples heard him say this and went with Jesus. ³⁸Jesus turned, saw them following him, and asked, "What are you looking for?" They answered, "Where do you live, Rabbi?" (This word means "Teacher.") ³⁹"Come and see," he answered. (It was then about four o'clock in the afternoon.) So they went with him and saw where he lived, and spent the rest of that day with him. ⁴⁰One of them was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹At once he found his brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah." (This word means "Christ.") ⁴²Then he took Simon to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, “Your name is Simon son of John, but you will be called Cephas.” (This is the same as Peter and means “a rock.”)

All age activity

1 Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways;
re clothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence, praise.

2 In simple trust like theirs who heard
beside the Syrian sea
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee.

3 O Sabbath rest by Galilee,
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity,
interpreted by love!

4 Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace.

5 Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and
fire,
O still, small voice of calm!

Sermon: The lamb of God

This summer on holiday, we had a lovely relaxing time until we discovered we were being bitten. Every day we were covered in bites like mosquito bites, itchy, throbbing and angry yet I had not heard one mosquito. You know that high pitch whiney noise they normally make? We then learnt that last year, the mosquito of the moment, was the tiger

mosquito. Had we missed the mosquito the size of a tiger? No. We had not heard it, for the tiger mosquito attacks silently, like a tiger creeping silently through the grass. The name of the mosquito told us something that we already knew, the tiger mosquito was silent.

Here in John’s gospel, we meet another animal description – lamb of God. What does this mean? Does it mean that Jesus looked like a lamb? Fluffy ears and chewing grass? No, this name describes something of his character and the way in which he exists in the world.

Let’s take a closer look at v29, who is calling Jesus the lamb of God? John. Which John? John the Baptist. Where is he? What is the context? Take a look back one to verse 28 – John is at Bethany baptising people the day before. We assume he hasn’t moved far. Who is he talking to? Well take a look at v 19 the Jewish authorities sent some priests and Levites to John to check him out. John the Baptist is baptising people from all around in the water at Bethany and this has attracted the attention of the local religious leaders who come to take a look. So we think then that John is talking to his followers and possibly these religious leaders if they had a sleepover because we know v29 it’s the next day.

John the Baptist gives us his explanation of what the lamb of God means, v29 – who takes away the sin of the world.

What might the phrase lamb of God mean to the people listening to John? There are lambs all over the bible aren’t there? In Genesis 22, Abraham sacrifices a lamb to God, in Exodus 12 the blood of the lamb is painted on the doors of the Israelites to protect them from the final plague of death in Egypt. Lambs were routinely sacrificed in the temple as an offering to God. But here John is not talking about an actual lamb, he’s talking about a man he can see walking nearby. A man who he has baptised in the river. A man for whom he

has had the most amazing revelations from God about his identity. He saw the spirit rest on Jesus, remember in the other gospels this is only seen by Jesus. And John has had a word from God directly – remember he is a prophet, so that's his job – God has told him about the Spirit on Jesus at his baptism, and that Jesus is the son of God. So what does it mean for John the Baptist to see Jesus and say – look there is the lamb of God.

Isaiah the prophet also wrote about a lamb in chapter 53.4-12. This part of Isaiah talks about a suffering servant to come to the people of God. V7

He was treated harshly but endured it humbly, he never said a word. Like a lamb about to be slaughtered, like a sheep about to be sheared, he never said a word.

Reading this passage now, as we know how Jesus went to the cross, we can see a link, can't we? And maybe John did too.

What does this little phrase mean now?

Have you noticed that when a football team is losing, their team try and cheer them on? Have you noticed that when a football team keeps losing, the blame is laid on the manager, and they are sacked – sometimes even mid-season? Sometimes it is the managers fault, but sometimes, it would appear to be the players fault. But what we all like to do is to find a scapegoat, someone to blame for a problem who is then removed, exiled or worse still just forgotten about.

One way we can understand Jesus as the lamb of God, is to understand his death on the cross as the way God takes away the sin of the world. Jesus atones for our sins. Jesus becomes a sacrificial lamb for us, just like in the temple days – an animal was sacrificed to apologise to God for a sinful act.

Another way to understand Jesus as the lamb of God is to also think about how the title speaks of the character of Jesus. Jesus came into the world in a vulnerable position and Jesus dies in a vulnerable position. Jesus the servant king, serves us by bearing the sins of many. Through his death, all can now receive new life.

There is a story at my old college, that might be true. It goes like this. The college were looking for a new principal. They had not had the interviews yet, but one day a large wooden desk was delivered to the front door. It had a note which said – 'the job is mine' It was signed by a man with an inflated sense of importance. Rather annoyingly he did actually get the job, but it was a different time to now.

The title lamb of God is the first time given to Jesus on this gospel, and it is striking, isn't it? John could have opened with a bigger animal, huh? Lion, eagle, bear. Or a title like Saviour, Messiah, King. But he sees Jesus and says there goes the lamb of God.

What kind of Jesus do you see? How do you see Jesus at work in your life, in our church, in our community and in our world? John chooses lamb. For Jesus is sent by God, creator of all and provider of all. Jesus is anointed by the Spirit who stays on him, and we see Jesus not acting like the King of Kings, even though he is, not grasping power, not acting out of service to himself, but submitting himself to the world, and walking in the path of obedience and humbly walking to the cross. Here is the lamb of God, the very son of God who walked among us and is present with us now. Here is the lamb of God who willingly offers his life as a sacrifice for us. Here is the lamb of God who is vulnerable first and to the last. And this is the lamb of God who takes away our sin.

Maybe the first thing he could take is our pride and inflated sense of importance, and allow the Spirit to help us to see Jesus for who

he really is. Maybe he would help us to be vulnerable. In his vulnerability, the Spirit anointed him. In our vulnerability, the Spirit does the same, he stays with us and helps us and heals us. Maybe then we could testify, just as John did to say I have seen the lamb of God.

Song: Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away,
Slain for us: and we remember:
The promise made that all who come in faith
Find forgiveness at the cross.

*So we share in this Bread of life,
And we drink of His sacrifice,
As a sign of our bonds of peace
Around the table of the King.*

The body of our Saviour, Jesus Christ,
Torn for you: eat and remember
The wounds that heal, the death that brings us life,
Paid the price to make us one.

The blood that cleanses every stain of sin,
Shed for you: drink and remember
He drained death's cup that all may enter in
To receive the life of God.

And so with thankfulness and faith
We rise to respond: and to remember
Our call to follow in the steps of Christ
As His body here on earth.

*As we share in His suffering,
We proclaim: Christ will come again!
And we'll join in the feast of heaven
Around the table of the King.*
Welcoming Patricia Balogun into
membership

Communion

Song: I cast my mind to Calvary
Where Jesus bled and died for me

I see His wounds, His hands, His feet
My Saviour on that cursed tree

His body bound and drenched in tears
They laid Him down in Joseph's tomb
The entrance sealed by heavy stone
Messiah still and all alone

*O praise the Name of the Lord our God
O praise His Name forevermore
For endless days we will sing Your praise*

Oh Lord, oh Lord our God
Then on the third at break of dawn
The Son of heaven rose again
O trampled death where is your sting?
The angels roar for Christ the King

Oh Lord, oh Lord our God
He shall return in robes of white
The blazing sun shall pierce the night
And I will rise among the saints
My gaze transfixed on Jesus' face

Blessing