

Message 41 -- JOHN 1:35-42

Passage:

35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

Exposition:

Last time, I spoke on John 1:29-34; and there we found verse 29:

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

And today I am speaking on the next verses, John 1:35-42. And here in verse 36 we find:

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

Twice in the space of 7 verses we encounter this simple and yet profound command, "Behold the Lamb of God!" If God says it twice in this short space, we would be wise to consider it a very important command indeed.

Behold the Lamb of God!

To behold the Lamb of God means more than to just look at him -- it means to accept what God has said about the Lamb and to rely on the promises God has made to us in and through the Lamb. Promises like John 3:18 --

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

and John 3:36 --

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Behold the Lamb of God!

The imagery here sends us back to the time when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt and God was about to deliver them out of Pharaoh's hand. Remember how God rained plague after plague upon the Egyptians, but Pharaoh continually hardened his heart and would not let the Israelites go?

But then God declared one final plague that would be so awful that Pharaoh would practically throw the Israelites out of Egypt himself; the death of the firstborn.

God provided the procedure of killing the Passover Lamb to protect the Israelites from this terrible plague. In the same way, He provided the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, our Lamb of God, to protect us from eternal death for sin.

Exodus 12:21-27 contains God's instructions for the passover:

21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.

22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts

with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

23 For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.

25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

Those who obeyed God's command; those who killed the Passover Lamb and relied on God's promise: they were saved from the plague of the death of the firstborn. Those who ignored God's command suffered the same fate as the Egyptians.

Numbers 21:5-9 records another such salvation by grace through faith, of those who obeyed God's command. The Israelites were now on their way from Egypt to the land God had promised them. But they found the way hard and despised the manna that God provided every day to feed them:

5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Those who obeyed God's command; those who looked upon the brass serpent that was lifted up and relied on God's promise: they were saved from death. Those who ignored God's command died.

Just as the brass serpent was lifted up on the pole and all who looked upon it were saved from death, so Jesus was lifted up on the cross so that all who look to Him and trust God's promise will be saved from eternal death and the Lake of Fire. Remember John 3:16 --

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

In Deuteronomy 18:15,18-19, Moses predicted the coming of Jesus:

15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; ...

18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

Here again, God makes it perfectly plain: those who accept His promise and rely upon it will be saved; those who don't will be damned.

Isaiah 53:7 described the Lamb of God's suffering by saying:

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Philip used this passage from Isaiah to describe Jesus when he witnessed to the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:26-39:

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

And I Peter 1:18-19 confirms that our redemption was accomplished through the blood of the Lamb of God:

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Behold the Lamb of God!

Acts 16:31 essentially says the same thing:

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

And Romans 10:9 --

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Throughout the entire Bible, the same message appears time after time after time: Obey God's command to accept his promise and to trust that promise, and He will shower you with all the riches and blessings of Heaven!

Behold the Lamb of God!

Hallelujah!

Amen!