

A Voice in the Wilderness, Part 3

John 1:29-34

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Good to see you. So good to open God's word together this morning. Turn to John chapter 1 if you would in your bible. John 1, we will be in verses 29 to 34. As we continue our journey through this wonderful gospel.

This week as I was preparing I was thinking about the discovery of the drug insulin. I was reading an article in the American Diabetes Association website explaining that insulin wasn't discovered until the year 1921. Now just think about that for a moment. What that means that for all of human history prior to 1921, which if you're a young person that may sound like a long time ago, but on the scope of world history that's the blink of an eye.

All of world history had no access to this life-saving medication that our bodies so desperately need, those dealing with diabetes. And before this was discovered the only real treatment was a very harsh and strict diet that honestly killed many patients by starvation before they died from diabetes. It essentially was a death sentence if you were diagnosed with this terrible disease.

Now don't misunderstand me, even today I understand it's life-altering to have diabetes, but just imagine being given this diagnosis prior to the invention of insulin, prior to 1921. Insulin has completely changed the prognosis of a person with this disease. Today diabetics in fact often are in such good shape that they go on to be professional athletes. We've had Olympians and professional football players who are diabetics.

Now imagine what you would think of a doctor today who prescribed the same low-carb diet that was used in the year 1900 to a modern-day patient who was a diabetic. It's really unthinkable. It's unthinkable because the discovery of insulin is so revolutionary that it's impossible to go on living the way we did before. We simply can't go back. We can't unknow what we know now that that discovery has been made.

And in a similar but much greater way the world was forever changed when the Lord Jesus Christ was revealed to be the Messiah. There are those who love Him and there are those who hate Him but all must admit that the world has fundamentally changed the moment that Jesus Christ came into the world and was declared to be the Messiah.

In our passage today we have the privilege of studying the defining historical moment when John the Baptist, the chosen witness of God, points his finger at Jesus and testifies this indeed is the long-awaited Messiah.

And what I want us to see this morning is that this must continue to impact our lives today. There is no going back to the time prior to the Messiah's coming. It has changed everything about world history and it's changed everything about our personal lives.

Remember the **theme of the letter** itself is **John is the Son of God**. We've already finished the prologue the first 18 verses of chapter 1 and now for the last couple of weeks we've

been looking at the ministry of John the Baptist. The **theme** that we've been unfolding will be the same this morning that we are to **heed God's messenger, prepare for his master, and follow his example.**

And there are three observations given to us about the ministry of John the Baptist. The first two we've already seen together. Today we'll see the third.

The **first observation** was **John's Identity** in verses 19 to 23. Remember that John the Apostle chooses a scene near the end of John the Baptist's ministry. This is really the climax of his ministry. He is the most well-known that he will be. His message has reached as far as it will reach across the area there in Jerusalem and beyond. There are three consecutive days that are highlighted in the verses that we are studying.

The first day was the conversation that we've studied over the past couple of Sundays together. Today is the second day in verses 29 to 34, and then next week Lord willing, we'll see a third day in the ministry of John. But these events provide for us the transition point from the messenger preparing the way for Messiah to the coming of Messiah Himself.

At this point, remember the baptism of Jesus has already taken place. Jesus has already been tempted in the wilderness. He's coming out of that time, and He's about to come on the scene even in our passage today.

In the verses that we have studied so far, we have seen this interaction with a delegation sent from Jerusalem to John the Baptist in verses 19 to 24. They want to know who he claims to be. Who are you, John? And his answer, remember, is to quote from the prophet Isaiah in chapter 40. Let me just read that for you again. He says, this is who he is.

3 A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. 4 "Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; 5 Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

The **second observation** that we looked at together last time is **John's Purpose** in verses 24 to 28. There, the question really centered on the issue of authority. What gave John the right? The Jews wanted to know, the Pharisees specifically. What gave him the right to baptize Jews and to call them to repentance? And remember, there we saw the humility of John as he points not to himself, but to the One coming after him and says, the One coming after him is so great, in fact, he's not even worthy to untie His sandals. He's not even worthy, in other words, to be the lowest slave in His house. And there we, in seeing his humility, were convicted ourselves to serve with humility as we seek to serve our Lord as well.

But the **third observation** where we'll be today in verses 29 to 34 is **John's Testimony**. John's testimony. This is our passage. Let's read together beginning in verse 29.

*29 The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a*

Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' 31 I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water." 32 John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. 33 I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' 34 I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

Now the exciting news of course is that in this scene for the first time Jesus comes into the picture. He doesn't speak yet in this passage, but it's important for us to keep in mind that He's there. He's there. As John is making this testimony, Jesus physically is present for this scene. And so that should be in the back of our minds. And in this third and final observation, really, it's broken down into two parts.

And each part gives us a different title for the Lord Jesus Christ and His significance. Part one focuses on **the title, Jesus the Lamb of God**. Jesus the Lamb of God, verses 29 to 31. Notice the text opens the next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said. The next day meaning of course, the next day after the conversation that we've been studying with this delegation from the Jews. This is a new scene, a new day. And of course as I said, the exciting news is he looks up and he sees Jesus walking towards him.

We can almost picture it in our minds. Just picture John there going through his normal ministry process. Perhaps he's standing in the Jordan River. Perhaps he's baptizing. Maybe he's preaching. But whatever he's doing, there's a crowd gathered around and he sees Jesus walking towards him and he stops everything that he's doing to make one of the most important statements in human history.

It's time for Jesus' ministry of course to begin. He's recovered from His 40 days of fasting and being tempted in the wilderness. Now He comes on the scene and instead of just starting His ministry on His own in order to fulfill the prophecies of scripture, He comes to John the Baptist specifically for this to take place.

Remember, where John is ministering is not a place that you just happen upon. He's out in the wilderness. This is not on the way to the store. This is not on the way home. Jesus goes to this place intentionally so that this can happen in the way it happens and that the testifier can give testimony to the Messiah.

And that's exactly what John does. And he begins by giving this significant title to Jesus. Notice he says, *Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*

Now just picture yourself again standing there in that crowd and as John is in the middle of whatever he's doing, he stops and says, Behold. Now that's a word of course even now that we don't use it often that arrests the attention of those standing there. It's meant to say, pay attention. What I'm about to say to you now is of extreme importance.

We can almost picture John motioning in some way in the direction of Jesus as he says, Behold. And he calls Him the Lamb of God. After calling Him the Lamb of God, he explains the significance of that title with this descriptive phrase. He's the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. So, the meaning of the title Lamb of God combined with that

phrase who takes away the sin of the world really makes it crystal clear what John is proclaiming to be true about this man Jesus.

Of course, the Jewish people would have been very familiar with the idea of a lamb for sacrifice. Every morning and evening there was a sacrifice. Of course, at the heart of Passover was the sacrifice of a lamb that millions would come in obedience to Scripture to celebrate Passover.

This going all the way back to the Exodus from Egypt, the illustration is not hard to understand of a sacrificial lamb, but John's particular statement here is curious in a couple of ways. First of all, when John says, Behold the Lamb of God and points in this direction he's not pointing at an animal. He's not pointing at a lamb. He's pointing at a man that's walking towards them. Now that's different.

Secondly, the second curious thing here is the word "world". He says this Lamb of God has come to take away the sin of the world. Now we have to stop for a moment and think about that. What does John mean when he says that Jesus has come to take away the sin of the world? The word "world" actually is going to be used frequently in the Gospel of John. In fact, some of the most famous verses in Scripture contain that word in the Gospel of John. And we need to understand what it means and what it doesn't mean. And of course it can mean different things depending on the context in which it's used.

So, what does John mean here when he uses the word "world" and says that Jesus has come to take away the sin of the world? Well clearly if we just back up and think about the context of chapter 1, this cannot mean that John is saying that Jesus has come to take away the sins of every human being universally without exception. This would be the doctrine of universalism. That all people of all times are simply saved. That Jesus' sacrifice just applies to them whether they come to know Him or not. Or believe in Him or not. This is not what the Bible teaches.

It's not what John teaches in fact. We know that because of the verses earlier in John chapter 1. Just look back up a few verses at verses 11 to 13 and John says this:

11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Clearly then, John is not teaching here just a few verses later something in contradiction to what he has said. So, what does it mean when he says that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world?

D.A. Carson says it this way. I think this is helpful. He says "this Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world, that is, of all human beings without distinction, though not, as the prologue has already made clear, of all without exception." All without distinction, but not all without exception.

To say that He takes away the sins of all without exception is that idea of universalism, that all people are just automatically saved because of the death of Jesus. But to say that He takes away the sins of the world without distinction is to say that what God is doing is redeeming for Himself a people from every nation, tribe, and tongue. That is, there is no people group or nation that is not included in what Jesus came to accomplish on the cross.

Of course, remember the context as well. Who is John the Baptist talking to? He's talking to a group of Jews. And so, he points to this Lamb of God and says, this one comes not just for us, not just for Israel, for the whole world. Not just for the Jews, but every nation, tribe, and tongue. He's the Lamb of God for all the world.

As we think about Jesus as the Lamb of God, of course, our mind ought to be drawn back to key Old Testament passages that spoke of His suffering for sin. Perhaps these passages even came to the minds of the people that day. Passages like Isaiah 53, of course, verses 5 and 6:

5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

Now imagine how shocking this statement must have been to the group of people that are there listening to John. John's ministry has been focused on the Jews. This is what got him into trouble with the Pharisees last week.

He's baptizing Jews, and yet he says to the Jews that this one walking towards them is none other than the Lamb of God, and He has come not just for this group, not just for this nation, but for the world.

Now as they are digesting the significance of that statement, John goes on and he says this. He says:

This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'

Now here John speaks of something that's already been mentioned back in verse 15 of chapter 1, this statement that the One coming after him is greater than he is or has a higher rank than he has because He existed before him. This apparently was a key part of his prophetic ministry as he prophesied that this One was coming after him, and remember as we said then that this points to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ because as we explained, Jesus and John obviously were cousins. John chronologically from a human standpoint was born prior to the birth of Jesus and so when he says He existed before me, this is clearly an affirmation of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, that as the divine God, Son of God, He existed prior to John. Therefore He is higher. He is higher in rank. He is supreme and superior to John.

But what's interesting here is that John's no longer speaking in the future tense. So far, his whole ministry has been to say One is coming after me, but now he stands there flat footed in front of these people and says there He is, in the flesh, in the present tense. Just put yourself there again for a moment.

You've been listening to John the Baptist preach for months likely. You maybe even yourself have been baptized, responding to his call for repentance. You've heard him talk about this One who's coming after him, whose sandals he's not worthy to untie. And now as you're sitting there, perhaps enthralled in his preaching, he stops and says behold, there He is. The One that I've been doing all this for. He's walking to us right now.

Imagine the anticipation and the feeling and the excitement that at least it should be there for the people. This is a monumental moment. What I want you to understand is that this is a crucial turning point in the history of humanity, of the world, of God's plan of redemption.

If you were here for our mission series you remember we tracked the promised seed from Genesis 3 all the way through to the birth of Christ. This is that historical moment as John the Baptist is saying, all of our expectations and our hopes of this Redeemer, the one that's been promised all the way back in the garden, He's here and He's walking towards us right now. That should be overwhelming.

But how can John be so sure? How does he know definitively that Jesus is the one that he's to testify to? He goes on to explain that his conclusion that Jesus is in fact the Messiah is not just an opinion and it's not just based on his own wisdom or intuition. Let's look at what John continues to say as he describes how he knows this to be true. He says:

I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.

Now John admits that initially he didn't recognize Jesus as the Messiah. When he says he didn't recognize Him, it doesn't mean he didn't know who he was from a human standpoint. Again, they were cousins. He knew who Jesus was. In fact, we know from the other gospel accounts, not only did John know who Jesus was, but he had the highest respect and regard for Jesus, recognizing that Jesus was a more righteous man than he was. We know that because of Matthew's account of the baptism of Jesus in Matthew chapter 3. Just listen to how John responds when Jesus comes to be baptized:

*13 Then Jesus *arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him.
14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" 15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he *permitted Him.*

Now there's several key theological aspects of what happens there in the scene we just read, but just for the sake of time, let me make the point that I'm trying to make, which is that John clearly knew who Jesus was from a human standpoint. So when he says I didn't recognize Him, he's not meaning I never met Him before. What does he mean then? When he says I initially didn't know who He was, he means he had not yet officially heard from God that Jesus in fact was the Messiah that he was sent to testify to.

That is until something very significant took place. Now, notice something interesting also, another aspect of what John says here. He reveals to us one of the primary purposes, actually the primary purpose, that he had a baptismal ministry at all.

Why did John come baptizing of all things? Now we've already talked about this at length, but we've focused our attention primarily on the first of two reasons that John had a baptismal ministry. The first reason was that he would prepare the hearts of the people. It was a baptism of repentance. He was preparing them to be ready for the Messiah.

But the second reason for his ministry was really the primary reason, and that is because it would be through the ministry of baptism that the Father would testify to the Son as Messiah. That somehow God was going to use this baptismal ministry to accomplish that definitively.

Notice he says that it was through this, or because of this, that Jesus might be manifested to Israel, that I came baptizing in water. We've already seen that this Lamb of God is for the world, and yet He came to Israel in fulfillment of the Scriptures.

The whole world was to be, as we've already studied in previous messages, watching Israel because it was through Israel that the Messiah would come. And so it makes perfect sense that John would say the Messiah would be manifested to Israel and then from there to the world.

Now, how exactly was the baptism of John connected to the revelation of Jesus as Messiah? Well, that brings us to the second part of John's testimony, part number two, and a second title that he gives to Jesus.

Title number two, part number two, **Jesus the Son of God**. Jesus the Son of God, verses 32-34. Notice in verse 32 he says:

John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.

Notice the Apostle John, in writing this, intentionally changes the verb here to the verb testified. Not just, John didn't just say this, he's testifying as he says this. Why is that important? It's because this is that monumental moment when John says this, he's not just speaking truth, he is also testifying to the world and fulfilling the ministry he was sent to do.

This is the accomplishment of John's ministry. Literally, John was born for this moment. This is why he's on the planet, is to say what he's about to say and to give the testimony that he's about to give.

But the testimony here, as he describes, is not based only on his opinion. In fact, as we look at this more in depth, what we're going to see is that John's testimony is actually a testimony to the fact that God the Father and God the Spirit have already testified to the fact that Jesus is Messiah. John simply is testifying to the world that he has seen the sign of that divine testimony.

That's what he's explaining here. What was that sign? Well, he says, I saw a dove, the Spirit coming down as a dove out of heaven and remaining on Jesus. So that brings up the question, when did this happen? And what's the significance of this event, of a dove, of the Spirit coming in some way, the form of a dove, to land on Jesus?

Before I unpack that, let's keep reading just a little bit to see what John says next, because he goes on to describe it himself. He says:

I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'

So now we get the picture. John reveals that when he received the divine calling to go out into the wilderness and to preach and to baptize, that God told him, through your baptismal ministry, at some point when you see the Spirit descending and remaining on one, that's the One. That's the One that you're to testify to. So this was a sign given to John by God, and God was the one who would fulfill the sign. John was simply to fulfill his ministry and wait until that was made clear to him.

This is why he says, initially, I didn't recognize him. Notice also he says, this is the One. When this happens, you will know that *this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.* If you were here last time, we talked about John's previous preaching ministry, and that he spoke of this, that the one coming after him would also have a ministry of baptism, but His baptism would not be with water, but rather with the Holy Spirit. And we talked about what that meant last time. This is what John is looking for, and this is why John says this and preaches this. It's because God had told him that this is what it would be.

But what's the significance of this sign of the Holy Spirit descending and remaining on the Messiah? Why is that important? Well, I believe it's connected to a specific passage of prophecy again in Isaiah's prophecy, Isaiah 42, specifically verse 1, which says this:

"Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations."

Now, throughout Isaiah, this servant is speaking of the coming Messiah, and it came to be understood that one of the things that would characterize the Messiah, which literally is the anointed one, one of the things that would characterize Him is that the Spirit would rest upon Him and empower His ministry and His preaching in a unique way.

We see this in other places as well. Isaiah 11:1-2:

*Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.
2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.*

Isaiah 61:1:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;

So these types of prophecies in Isaiah rightly help the people understand that the Messiah would be characterized as being One upon whom the Spirit would rest. And so this sign of the Spirit coming down upon Jesus clearly identified Him as the one who was the fulfillment of these prophecies that had been made of the coming Messiah.

Now, that does bring up a question that may be in your mind. If Jesus is God, why does He need to be anointed with the Spirit? Why does the Holy Spirit need to come upon Jesus if after all He is God? It's a common question.

And we could really honestly do a message on that one idea and look at that together, but the answer is really not that complicated. The answer is that Jesus is the God-Man. There has never been a time in the divinity of Jesus that He has ever for a millisecond been separate from the Father or the Spirit. God is one God, three distinct persons in one, and He has eternally been so and will eternally be so.

So when we talk about the Spirit coming down upon Jesus, we're talking about a physical manifestation of the Spirit coming upon Jesus in His humanity, that He was led by the Spirit in His humanity, but not in His divinity as if somehow they were separated and came together in this moment in His baptism.

Now, with that in mind, what exactly did John see when he saw this testimony of the Father and the Spirit coming upon Jesus at the moment of His baptism? Well, let's read the account in Matthew 3. John does not include the baptism of Jesus in his gospel, but Matthew clearly does. And here is the moment that John's speaking of when this took place, Matthew 3:16-17:

After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

Now, this is the moment that John is saying, this was confirmed to me. And this is a wonderful scene. I wish we had more time to dive into it, but I want you to see a couple of things. First of all, notice somewhat as a side note, but an important side note, that the doctrine of the Trinity is highlighted and affirmed here in the baptism of Jesus. This debunks the heresy that is still around today of modalism, which is this idea that God simply appears as three persons at different times, but He's not all three persons at the same time. So here He's the Father, and now He's the Spirit, and now He's the Son, and He interchanges.

But here, what we have is Jesus standing in the water, God the Father speaking from heaven, and the Spirit descending on Jesus all at the same time. Clearly, one God, three distinct persons. It's important to get the doctrine of the Trinity right, and we see it affirmed here.

But secondly, what does this mean that the Spirit came down like a dove? There is some debate if you're interested. There's lots of commentators that will go round and round about this.

What did John see? Did he actually see a dove? Did the Spirit really take on the form of a literal dove and land on Jesus? Or did the Spirit take on some physical form that moved in such a way that it reminded John of a dove? We don't know. We weren't there. What we know is what John told us. John said specifically, he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on him. It either means that he moved like a dove or took on the form of a dove. But here's the point.

John saw the Spirit land upon Jesus. That's the point. We can't miss the point for debating these things like, what did the dove look like? The point that he's saying is, guys, He's here and God has testified to the fact.

Now, when we looked at that in Matthew, notice it's not just the Spirit that testifies to Jesus, but who else testified to Jesus? Who is speaking from heaven? God the Father is speaking. So, the Spirit is testifying to Jesus by landing on Him. The Father is testifying to Jesus by saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And so, it is this double divine affirmation that John is speaking of. And this is the point. Jesus Christ is Messiah.

He's saying, God gave me a sign when he sent me out that I would see the Spirit land on the Messiah. And I'm telling you, that guy that's walking towards us over there, that's Him. I saw the Spirit land on that man. That means He's the Messiah, and I am to testify to Him.

Now, with that, John introduces this second crucial title that, as you know, is really the crucial title for the book of John. He says:

I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

What an exciting moment. What it must have been like to be there, to hear Him, to look over and to see Jesus walking towards the crowd. Why do you think John says this so emphatically? Notice, he doesn't just say, I have seen. He says, I myself have seen and have testified. Why does he say that so emphatically? It's because John's not just a guy saying this. Who is John? John is the voice in the wilderness that Isaiah prophesied, that God sent to do this very ministry.

And so he is saying as the fulfillment of my prophetic ministry that I was sent to fulfill, I myself, John, the voice in the wilderness, say that this is the Son of God.

Let me remind you again of Isaiah 40 verse 3 on who John was to prepare the way for:
A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.

That's the first reason that John says, I have testified that He is the Son of God. But did you notice the other reason that he would have said that Jesus is the Son of God? In Matthew 3, when the father testifies to the son, what does He say? This is my beloved Son.

And so John simply repeats what he has heard from God Himself. That man is the Son of God. Notice also in this last sentence that John intentionally uses the perfect tense verb. Now I know this is grammar. I talk about the perfect tense often. It's because it's important.

The perfect tense is significant because it shows up in places just to give you another illustration, places like when Jesus will quote Scripture and say "it is written". What is He saying? He's saying something happened in the past tense that has great significance for you right now. It's a past tense event that is echoing on into the future.

So that's what John is doing here when he says, I myself have seen and I myself have testified that this is the Son of God. He's using the perfect tense. He's saying this was a one-time act, but it is not just significant for the crowd of people gathered here on this day.

I as the messenger of God have seen the testimony of God that this is the Messiah, and now I as the prophesied messenger of Messiah have testified to you that that is Him. That now echoes down the centuries to this room today. By using the perfect tense, it really is illustrating the ongoing eternal significance of this testimony to Jesus Christ as Messiah.

This is why when we began our message, I made the point that once this is known, we can't go back. It can't be unknown. If you think insulin was a wonderful transformative discovery, and it was, this trumps that and every other discovery in the world, because here's the manifestation of God's own Son sent to us in the flesh to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

There has never been a more significant moment in history than this. This is life-altering. It's eternity-altering. To go on after knowing that Messiah has come as if He hasn't is the height of foolishness. Just as Jesus would say, he who does not heed my words is like the man who built his house on the sand, but he who heeds my words is like the one who built his house on the rock.

In the same way, to act the same as you were before, to not respond at all to this wonderful announcement that Messiah has come, the Lamb of God, to take away the sin of the world, is the height of foolishness.

But to respond and heed the message of John the Baptist today is wisdom and salvation. And so this morning, as we consider how this ought to impact our own lives, I really want us to apply the two titles that John the Baptist gives to Jesus. I want us to consider, first of all, Jesus as the Lamb of God.

Consider Jesus as the Lamb of God. Now, hopefully, the first and most obvious response is clear to you, and that is, in recognizing Jesus as the Lamb of God, we now understand the primary reason that Jesus came. And this is important because it gets mixed up in our world all the time.

There are those who want to have some portion of Jesus. They like certain things about Him. They see some benefit in Jesus, so they'll say things about Him as if He was a great teacher, or He was a great moral example. You should listen to some of His moral teachings. They're good for society. But that is not why Jesus came.

John says Jesus came to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And what does that imply about the world? That the world needs a sacrifice for sin. This is the gospel on display.

The first and right response to Jesus as the Lamb of God is to understand that you and I are sinners separated from a holy God who have no hope of forgiveness for our sins unless a sacrifice is made for our sins, and that God has provided the sacrifice for our sins in the Lord Jesus Christ. And to rejoice in that fact, and to run to Jesus Christ in faith and repentance, and be saved. That's the first and right response to Jesus as the Lamb of God.

But what if you're a believer already in the Lord Jesus Christ? And you've already come to delight in the fact that He's the Lamb of God. Is there any further application of this title of Jesus as the Lamb of God? I believe there is. There's multiple.

But this week as I contemplated this from my own life, what really was jumping out to me was this idea of Jesus as the Savior who came for the world. Jesus as the Lamb of God reminds us that there are no people groups, or personality types, or people of a certain social status to whom we don't need to bring the gospel. But then in the fulfillment of the Great Commission, it is a worldwide commission.

It begins in our own homes, under our own roof, that we're faithful to share the gospel with those God's entrusted to us. And then it goes out the doors of our home to our neighborhood and our neighbors, and those that God has providentially placed us in the path of. And it goes into our workplace, and into our schools, and into our extended families, and into this region in which we live, and then into the world.

But we have to think about the fact that Jesus is the Lamb of God, personally first, yes, but then globally. And so let me ask you, do you believe that Jesus is the Lamb of God? And if so, would anyone know you believe that by observing the way that you seek to tell other people about it? Would anyone believe that you believe that Jesus is the Lamb of God if they listened to your private prayers for the salvation of lost souls?

You see, this is a turning point in world history, and we cannot leave here unimpacted by what John has said, both for ourselves, yes, but for all those that God would providentially give us opportunity to tell. This is why the Apostle John, he'll go on later to describe a scene from heaven that is glorious, and this is what he describes in Revelation 7: 9-10:

9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Jesus indeed is the Lamb of God, and He indeed will redeem a people for Himself from every nation, tribe, and tongue, and we have the opportunity by God's grace to not only be recipients of that salvation, but to tell the world, and through that proclamation He uses that as a tool to redeem His people.

Secondly, **consider Jesus as the Son of God.** Now, this is at the heart of the Gospel of John, so we're going to talk about Jesus as the Son of God really every week in some way, but we're not going to apply this holistically. We will do that continually as we work through the Gospel of John, but this morning I want us to focus on three implications of the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. How should this affect us? They are worship, trust, and obedience. Worship, trust, and obedience.

First of all, worship. When we really come to understand and believe that Jesus is in fact the Son of God, it ought to be worship-inducing. We're going to see that in the Gospel of John, that when people come to realize who Jesus really is, worship is the natural response. It's

the knee-jerk reaction to that understanding, and when I say worship, obviously that includes our corporate gathering that we're commanded to do week in and week out, but I mean worship as a way of life.

That we not only believe these things to be true, but we delight in them, and we meditate on them, and we declare back to God our delight in who He is and His character. That He is truly all-powerful, sovereign, holy, good, gracious, merciful, faithful, and loving. That we delight in these things, and we declare back to Him our delight in those things, and we give Him thanks for those things.

This is what I mean by a lifestyle of worship. Throughout the day, is that how you think? Are you caught up throughout the day as you have free moments to think about what you want to think about? How often do those thoughts turn back to your God, and do you give worship to Him and gratitude to Him for who He is? And the thing about that is that when we worship God as a way of life, trust and obedience naturally flow. Think about the natural progression.

When we recognize the glory of Jesus and that He's worthy of our praise, and we live our life as a life of worship, we're also now beginning to trust that He is who we've believed He is, and therefore we begin to act as if He is who we believe He is. Trust and obey. Obedience flows out of our knowledge and delight in who God is, therefore our trust in who God is, and so we do what God says, even when it brings us into difficulties and trials and trouble.

Worship, trust, and obey. Do our lives reflect what we say we believe about Jesus? Does our trust of God reflect that we truly believe Jesus is the Son of God? You see, this is a fundamental turning point. When John the Baptist pointed at Jesus and said, that's the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, that's the very Son of God, we cannot live as we lived before.

Now the truth is, none of us perfectly fulfill the Great Commission. None of us trust God as truly and purely as we should. None of us obey God as purely as we should, but this is a call this morning to press on still more, to excel still more in our faith, in our love for Christ, in our devotion to Him, and it's my prayer that we will not leave here the same because of the reminder of the great testimony of John the Baptist.

Let's pray. Lord God, we're thankful for the clarity of Your Word. We're thankful that You have truly testified to Jesus as the Messiah. We are grateful that for those in Christ this morning, we have already received the gift of the fact that He's the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We ask that You'd give us opportunity and boldness and faithfulness to share that truth with others that You would continue to save Your people. But God, help us to be faithful to You in all these things. We love You so much. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.