Epiphany 2 John 1:29-41
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What Does GOD Want for Us Here?
I. To believe that Jesus is the Lamb of God.
II. To believe that Jesus is the Son of God.
III. To believe that Jesus is our Teacher.

Dear Christian friends,

When I first started studying these verses I quickly thought I had the **sermon theme**. Jesus' question just POPPED RIGHT OUT – ***"What do you want?"***

People want ALL KINDS of things from Jesus. They ***"want"*** Jesus to solve all their **problems** – to take away all their **pains** – to give them an **easy, nice** life – to protect them from **anything bad** or **nasty**. They ***"want"*** Jesus as THEIR SERVANT doing whatever **they want** Him to do. Is that what YOU WANT from Jesus? Or do you want a Savior who **forgives** all your sins – who delivers you from death and the devil – who works all things for your eternal good – who takes you **straight** to heaven when you die? ***"What do you want?"*** from Jesus is a question EACH ONE of us **needs to answer**. So I thought I had this **sermon figured out**.

But then I kept noticing John the Baptist's comment, ***"the reason I came baptizing was so that He (Jesus) might be revealed."*** As good as ***"what do you want?"*** is I began asking, "What does GOD WANT for us here?" We certainly want to make sure that **what we want** LINES UP with **what God wants** for us.

So let's look at these verses guided by that question, "What Does GOD WANT for Us Here?" **God wants** us TO BELIEVE that 1)Jesus is the Lamb of God, 2)that Jesus is the Son of God and 2)that Jesus is our Teacher.

I. To believe that Jesus is the Lamb of God.

"The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" That truth NEEDS TO BE the main message of **every sermon** and **church service**. Every sermon needs to CLEARLY SHOW us Jesus as our SAVIOR ***"who takes away"*** all our sins.

That means we **must also take** a HARD LOOK at ourselves and see how much we REALLY NEED Jesus as our Savior. That word ***"sin"*** teaches that GOD DEFINES right and wrong for us – GOD determines how we are to live our lives – **God determines** our morals and values and priorities in life. God has done JUST THAT with His 10 Commandments, starting with that **very first** one that God ALWAYS comes first in our lives. God never gave **anyone** the OPTION to ignore or disobey Him. God doesn't make EXCEPTIONS for anyone. It's OBEY or pay the price. God promises to punish **any** sin with death and hell. GOD WANTS **each one** of us to realize THAT'S HOW SERIOUS He is about **our disobeying** Him. When we're honest about our **sin** and what we **really deserve** from God then there are NO SWEETER WORDS than those oh-so-familiar words, ***"Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."***

Just think what those words meant to **Andrew, John** and the **others** who heard John speak them. Our Christian churches have a BIG CROSS **front and center**. In OT worship it was the LAMB **front and center** – the lamb sacrificed – the lamb bloody and **dead**. And not just any lamb! You DIDN'T DARE give God some **sick** – **half-dead** – **worthless** lamb! It was nothing but the VERY BEST for God – a lamb perfect IN EVERY WAY – no **bumps, bruises, broken bones**.

With that background **hear John** now pointing people to Jesus, ***"Look! The Lamb of God"*** – the Lamb who was pictured by **all those other** lambs – the Lamb God Himself provided - the Lamb who really would ***"take away the sin of the world."***

Jesus is ***"the Lamb"*** PERFECT in **every way**. In our place – TO our credit – Jesus perfectly obeyed every commandment His whole life. Jesus lived for us that **perfect life we owed** God. ON the cross – BEARING the sin of the whole world – the innocent ***"Lamb of God"*** was be sacrificed to ***"take away the sin of the world"*** – to pay for **all** our sins IN FULL. There Jesus shed His precious blood to ***"cleanse us from all sin."*** But UNLIKE all **those other** OT lambs Jesus did not stay dead. On Easter morning Jesus came out of His grave ALIVE and TRIUMPHANT over death and the devil.

HOW GOD WANTS us to know and believe that Jesus is ***"the Lamb of God."*** With Jesus we can be ABSOLUTELY SURE that God has forgiven **all** our sins. **With Jesus** our forgiveness IS NOT a possibility or a **pretty** good chance but a BLESSED, HISTORICAL FACT. Luther **in a sermon** on these verses preached, "Sin has but two places where it may be; either it may be with you, so that it lies upon your neck, or upon Christ, the Lamb of God. If now it lies upon your neck, you are lost; if, however, it lies upon Christ you are free and will be saved. Take now whichever you prefer."

God has much more HE WANTS **for us** here. God also wants us to believe that…

II. Jesus is the Son of God.

Twice we hear John say, ***"I myself did not know Him – I would not have known Him."*** Does that sound WEIRD – STRANGE? We know John and Jesus were ***"relatives"*** – although we're not told HOW CLOSELY they were related. We do know that they grew up in DIFFERENT PARTS of the Holy Land – Jesus up north **in Nazareth** in Galilee – John down south ***"in the hill country of Judah."*** How much contact they had with each other **we're not told**. So IN A SENSE John ***"knew"*** Jesus – knew about Jesus – but DIDN'T REALLY know Him without any doubts or **questions**.

That's one thing God DOESN'T WANT us to have – us having any doubts – **questions** – uncertainties about WHO Jesus is or WHY He came. God wanted John to BE ABSOLUTELY SURE and convinced about Jesus **so** He gave John a sign to REMOVE ANY and **all** doubts about Jesus. That sign takes us back to Jesus' baptism about two months or so before this. ***"I myself did not recognize Him, but the One who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'The One on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, He is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I saw the Spirit descend like a dove from heaven and remain on Him. I saw this myself and have testified that this is the Son of God."*** So John was ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED and sure that Jesus is ***"the Son of God"*** – the long-promised Savior. GOD WANTS US to be just as sure and convinced.

"This is the One I was talking about when I said, 'The One coming after me outranks me because He existed before me.'" John was born BEFORE Jesus was born. John began his ministry BEFORE Jesus began His public ministry of preaching and teaching. John caused QUITE THE STIR – he drew a lot of **attention**. John said, "Don't look at me! I'm nothing COMPARED to the One who's coming. He's coming AFTER me **in time** but really He is ***"before"*** and ***"outranks"*** me." AS the eternal Son of God Jesus ***"existed (long) before"*** John and He certainly ***"outranks"*** John. John clearly understood his relationship with Jesus BOTH as a forgiven sinner AND AS a public servant of Jesus. John wanted ALL THE ATTENTION put where it **really belonged** – ON JESUS, **not** on him.

When John said, ***"Look! The Lamb of God!"*** – and all eyes turned to Jesus – people saw **just** your AVERAGE LOOKING Jewish man walking by. There was nothing special or SPECTACULAR about Jesus to catch **your eye**.

Yet God wanted John – God WANTS US – to be convinced and believe that **Jesus of Nazareth** ***"is the Son of God."*** God removed **John's doubts** with that special sign. ONLY BY **such** a divine

revelation could John BE SURE about Jesus. ONLY BY **divine revelation** can we be sure about Jesus. God removes **our doubts** with His Word – with the bold, clear, ***"This is what the Lord says."***

Two of **John's disciples** – Andrew and **John** – heard John say, ***"Look! The Lamb of God!"*** – ***"and they followed Jesus."*** THAT'S what John wanted them to do – what GOD WANTS US to do too. Andrew and John ***"follow"*** Jesus but they seem a bit HESITANT – they don't want to INTRUDE – BARGE IN – on Jesus. ***"When Jesus turned around and saw them following Him, He asked, 'What are you looking for?' They said to Him, 'Rabbi' (which means "Teacher"), 'where are You staying?'"*** God also wants us…

III. To believe Jesus is our Teacher.

"Jesus told them, 'Come, and you will see.' So they came and saw where He was staying. They stayed with Him that day." That DAY – that TIME with Jesus – made quite the impression on John. DECADES LATER John could still recall the **exact hour**, ***"It was about the tenth hour."*** The ***"tenth hour"*** was probably 10 AM or so.

"Teacher," they called Jesus. That day was the beginning of their **Teacher-student** relationship with Jesus. Jesus had MUCH TO TEACH them and they had **much to learn**. After three years with Jesus the PERFECT TEACHER they still had much to learn – more room to grow in their faith. Jesus promised them the help of the Holy Spirit, ***"He will teach you all things and REMIND you of everything I have said to you."***

HOW GOD WANTS us spending time with Jesu as our ***"Teacher*** – learning from Him – asking our questions – growing in our **faith** and our KNOWLEDGE of God's Word and will. HOW GOD WANTS us to see church – **Bible class** – **daily devotions** at home not as a WASTE of time but as PRECIOUS TIME spent with Jesus.

And not just growing in our faith but also sharing our faith. ***"The first thing Andrew did was to find his own brother Simon and say to him, 'We have found the Messiah!' (which is translated 'the Christ')."*** Could Andrew answer all Peter's question and doubts. OBVIOUSLY not. But he could share what he DID KNOW – what he had learned from Jesus. Andrew could – he DID! – ***"bring his brother to Jesus."*** HOW GOD WANTS us ***"bringing"*** others to meet Jesus.

"What do you want?" That's still a GOOD QUESTION **each one** of us needs to honestly consider. ***"What do you/I want"*** WITH Jesus – FROM Jesus. Before answering that please understand that GOD WANTS us **to believe** that Jesus is the Lamb of God – the Son of God – our Teacher. Amen.

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