

If you could go back in time and witness anything in history, what would you want to see? Would you want to witness the signing of the Declaration of Independence? Would you want to see when the light bulb was invented?

Maybe you are not thinking of secular history, but instead biblical history. The birth of Christ might be your choice of events to see. The creation of the world or any of the miracles performed might be popular. For me there are many events in the bible that I would love to have witnessed and one of them is found in the gospel lesson today. John pointing out Jesus as the Lamb of God.

I would just love to have seen everyone's expression, from John's, to the people, and even Jesus', as John is revealing him to the world as its Savior. While we weren't there and technology hasn't found a way for that to be possible, we can still imagine what that moment must have been like. That is because we do the same thing today. We reveal to the world the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Paul and Barnabas revealed Christ as the Lamb of God on their mission journey. Today we get to review one event on their journey. Paul and Barnabas are in the city of Pisidian Antioch. Paul and Barnabas had a specific call to teach the Gentiles or non-Jews about God's Word. One method Paul used to gain a hearing was to first go to the local synagogue and talk to the people there. Here he would find mostly Jews but also Gentiles who would be willing to listen to what Paul had to say which could then give him more opportunities to branch out to others through the invitation of others.

That is what Paul did here. He went to the synagogue service. Paul didn't need to strike up any conversations here because he was asked to preach. Paul then took this opportunity to preach about Christ. In his sermon, he traced the whole history of God's people from Abraham, to the Exodus, to King David, and all the way to Jesus. He did this to show everyone there that Jesus was the promised savior of the world, that he was the Lamb of God as John said.

Paul finished his message by explaining why we needed a savior from sin: ***"Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹ Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses."***

We needed a savior because we couldn't earn our salvation by being perfect. The law of Moses demanded perfect obedience, obedience we couldn't achieve. Therefore, we needed a savior to take our place and pay for our sins. That savior is Jesus Christ, just like John the Baptist said.

Paul's sermon resonated with many of the people and the word spread throughout town. Paul also used that week to teach anyone who would listen. This led to a much larger crowd attending the next service. The Jewish leaders were jealous of Paul's popularity but they also didn't like his message because they believed they could earn their salvation. That is why they chased Paul out.

Paul then gives us a wonderful reminder of why he and Barnabas were on their missionary journey and why you and I reach out to the rest of the world: ***⁴⁷ For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."*** These words are from the lesson in Isaiah. Isaiah was prophesying about Jesus. He was saying that Jesus is going to draw all nations to him because he didn't just come to save the Jews but the whole world. It was as Jesus said, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son..."* It is also just like John proclaimed, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*

Jesus came to save the world and so he would be a "light" for the Gentiles because he would show them that they were saved and therefore he would bring salvation or more precise "be salvation" for the ends of the earth.

But, here Paul quotes this passage as if it is talking about him and Barnabas and not Jesus. Why would Paul do that?

The reason is because God has made us apart of his work of salvation by being his messengers. Just like John, Paul and Barnabas, revealed to the world the Lamb of God by proclaiming God's Word to the world. The Lamb of God was revealed to the Jews as John pointed him out. The Lamb of God was revealed to the Gentiles when Paul pointed him out. As a result, people came to faith and were given eternal life through faith in Jesus' work of salvation.

We now continue the work of John, Paul, and Barnabas, and every Christians before us. The Lamb of God is revealed through us. When people see who their Savior is they will be drawn to him in faith and will receive eternal life. We reveal him through the proclamation of God's Word as we speak and act in our lives.

How well do we reveal to the world the Lamb of God? Oh, we have our moments, don't we? There are moments where we are brave and we talk about God to others. There are moments where we are willing to follow his will in front of others because we want to put God first. But then, we also have our failures.

We have those moments where we shy away from sharing our faith with someone and so then hide our God from the world. We have those moments where we fail to follow his will in the sight of others, thus causing them to not think much about our God because we don't by our actions as we hide him in our sins. We also have our moments where we question or get angry at our God for what is happening in our lives, instead of trusting and relying on him, thus hiding him in our anger. We sin, we become fearful and ashamed, we even lose our patience. Therefore, we find ourselves hiding our God instead of revealing him, thus, hiding salvation from others.

Yes, we are guilty of hiding our God, hiding the Lamb of God from the world. This isn't good because it risks the eternal life of others simply because we are more concerned about ourselves.

Why do you think Isaiah was willing to point people to a coming savior? Why do you think John so emphatically pointed out the Lamb of God? Why do you think Paul and Barnabas were willing to travel to foreign lands to share the message of salvation? The same reason why we wish we could stomp out our selfish ways and reach the lost every day: it is because the Lamb of God has taken away our sins.

We are forgiven of all our sins and that gives us peace and confidence to live our lives because we know we have heaven. This is a message that leads us to sing for joy. This is also a message that we want everyone to know because we don't want to see anyone suffer for all eternity.

How then can we get ourselves to get past our sinful desire to hide Christ and instead reveal the Lamb of God to the world? Paul helps us with the same passage from Isaiah: ***"I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."***

This is who are to the world and in eyes of your God when you spread God's saving message about Jesus. First you are a light. This world is filled with sinful darkness that just doesn't know that God has done something great for them. They are like people in a dark room trying to find their way. They are feeling their way around hoping find something good but mostly they are just grabbing air. But you have something they need a light to show them where they are and where they are going. In the light of Christ we are going to heaven.

We are also "salvation" to the world. We are considered saviors in the eyes of those we go to. That may seem odd to us but that is exactly what our God has made us by giving us this important work. Jesus did all the work in saving the world from sin. He lived perfectly and then died for us. When he rose from the dead he showed us that we now have a home in heaven. The people who don't know this message or are struggling to believe it they need someone to save them by giving them salvation through God's Word.

Because we have been given this calling from Christ we are so connected to him that we are given the same titles as he is given. Just as he is the true light and the true savior, we are also called the light of the world and savior of the world by the message we share about Christ. We are called to save the world. That means there is no time for us to be afraid or selfish or worried about what might happen to us bodily because our job is just too important.

We get to reveal the Lamb of God to the world and through that message we share, we get to play a part in the salvation of others. Praise God for this wonderful calling and opportunity to serve him in such a way that we get to share this work with him.

As we reveal the Lamb of God we will be blessed in our work because our God will be with us so that his word will never return to him empty. As cool as it would be to be there when John first expressed his joy in pointing out the Lamb of God, we get to feel that same rush and excitement today for we have been called to reveal the Lamb of God to the people around us. Amen.