

John 1:29-41 (Key verses 29 & 41): ²⁹ **The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!...."** ⁴¹ **The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).**

Dear Christians who have been given excellent spiritual vision:

What is the focus of worship, whether it's regular weekend worship, weddings, funerals, school chapel, etc.? That's a broad question, so let's narrow it down: Is a wedding, e.g., about the bride and groom, or about Jesus? Is a funeral about the person who went home to heaven, or about Jesus?

Of course, all true worship is *all* about Jesus. Every *Christian* worship service, properly put together, is meant to help people see Christ and understand his saving work for us! Any other worship focus falls short. All the arrows of worship need to point not here at me or any human person or institution, but to Jesus!

So if we come to church expecting a self-help session or emotional pep rally, we're going to be sorely disappointed. If we come expecting action-packed entertainment like a Star Wars movie, we are going to be disappointed. But if we come hoping to know Jesus better and be reassured of his beautiful, saving love, then we will not be disappointed at all.

John the Baptist knew this principle of worship. In all his preaching and baptizing, he pointed people to Jesus. That's one of the reasons Jesus said about John, "***Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist***" (Mt. 11:11).

When we were born, we were by nature spiritually blind. But now, by God's amazing grace, we can say together, "*I once was blind, but... Now I See!*" By God's grace, I see (1) ***Jesus...as Lamb/Messiah*** (2) ***Jesus...more clearly all the time***, and (3) ***Jesus...well enough to tell others***.

1

John the Baptist was a cousin of Jesus, about 6 months older. I'm sure John had other relatives, but Cousin Jesus was not just any other relative. He was the Savior! When John saw Jesus, he told others, "***Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!***" You and I don't normally call people names of farm animals. That could be insulting. But this was very relatable picture for the people of Israel. They knew that lambs were sacrificial animals, killed and burned on the altar. And now John is saying, "***Look, this is the Lamb God sent to be slaughtered for us, for our sins!***"

When Andrew heard John say this, he sat up and took notice! People had been waiting for the promised Savior for centuries, actually, millennia. Was now *really* the time? Was this *really* the person? So Andrew and a companion started to follow Jesus to find out. "***Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see."*** After spending a few hours with him, there was no doubt. Andrew went right to his brother, Simon Peter, and said, "***We have found the Messiah!***"

Jesus is the Messiah: the Christ, the Anointed One, the Chosen One, the One set apart from eternity to save humankind. All the promises and prophecies of antiquity had converged at this one person and one point in time: Jesus is *the One*! Those who were blind were now beginning to see that!

That same eureka moment Andrew experienced once happened to you and me, too. We were naturally blind from birth, but the Spirit opened our eyes (for most of us, on the day of our baptism) to see Jesus the Messiah as the Lamb who came to forgive us and bless with eternal life. If you and I never see anything else in our lives, we have seen enough if we have seen "Jesus, Jesus, only Jesus."

2

The Spirit gives us even more to see. When he brought us to faith, he turned on the light. Now he wants us to crank up the intensity (wattage). The more you look to Jesus, the more you will find out about him: his kindness, gentleness, power, strength, wisdom, and will.

Remember those old Burma Shave signs along the road? They'd have a message that revealed more & more as you drove along: **"Scruffy beard? / Does your wife rave? / Does she think / you belong in a cave? / Try Burma Shave!"** Well, the more you and I dig into the Scriptures, the more we will discover about Jesus. Each morsel of information is like a Burma Shave sign giving us a more complete, increasingly clearer picture of the Savior. It's kind of like holding up a diamond and turning it in our hands to see all its various facets. Or, it's like going to a buffet. There's so much to dig into and enjoy! I'm sure that you'll find that going to your Bible for some private meditation time won't cause indigestion at all. It will settle your heart and mind when you need it the most.

Friends, why settle for 20/400 spiritual vision when the Spirit can give us a clear 20/20. Why look at Jesus through cataracts when his teachings can be much less fuzzy? Why view the Messiah from the top row of the end zone when you can get a front row seat on the 50 yard line? The Bible improves our view.

3

Andrew kept following Jesus and learning. He didn't let his spiritual life stagnate (like we often do after confirmation). And of great significance is this: what Andrew learned about Jesus caused him to share it with others. *"I see Jesus. He's awesome! You need to see Jesus, too!"* ***"The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah!'"*** That's Simon Peter. The Apostle Peter had his eyes opened to Jesus by his brother Andrew. What a loving brother.

John the Baptist did the same as Andrew. He told everyone: ***"Look, the Lamb of God."*** We can do that too. We don't have to wear camel hair clothes and eat grasshoppers to tell others who Jesus is and what he lovingly did for them. All we need to do is say, ***"Look!"*** Turn the spotlight on Jesus. By God's grace, many people will believe and see him shine.

One more thing. If we do that, of course we'll want to make sure our lives don't bring shame on Jesus. If we have bumper stickers that say, *"Come to the WELS"* or *"WLA Vikings,"* we'll want to be sure we're driving as if Jesus himself were behind the wheel. If we are members of St. Paul's congregation, we'll want to be sure we aren't causing others to turn away in disgust because of our bad language, poor attitude, immoral choices, or embarrassing behavior. Our lives are loud, clear sermons to the world.

We once were blind, but now we see: Jesus! That's a miracle! And so we worship him. He's the focal point of our worship. And just like he was to John the Baptist and Andrew and Peter, so also Jesus is the focal point, the very heart and center of our lives.

Amen.