

Text: John 1:29

Theme: This We Sing Because This We Believe

January 15, 2017

How many teenagers know all the words to the songs they listen to on their smart phone, iPhone, or whatever other electronic device? In reality, most don't know all the words. They simply like the music. The words in our text are words we sing just before we begin the distribution of the Lord's Supper. Yet, do we merely sing the words or do we focus on what we believe as we sing? Today, we focus on what we sing because it's what we believe.

I. As we sing the Agnus Dei, we believe that Christ is the Lamb of God. A. But what does that mean to us? 1. As we sing, we believe that Christ was the perfect sacrifice. John's audience knew exactly what he meant as he said, "Behold the Lamb of God." John was claiming Jesus as the perfect sacrifice, the sacrifice to end the entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament. This was a very descriptive term that told all who heard it that this was the only One who could fulfill the Father's demand for perfection. Today, "Lamb of God," declares that Jesus is our perfect sacrifice, the only One who could save us from ourselves, who could enable us to see eternity.

2. As we sing, we remind ourselves that we were the lost sheep. As we hear the word, "Lamb," we almost automatically think of the Good Shepherd and His sheep. As we sing, we're saying, "I am Jesus' lamb, one of those lambs who wandered off, who chose not to follow, who deserved to be left in our predicament." With the words, "Lamb of God," our hearts say, "Look within. Look and believe you are one of the lost, one who would never become one of the found without the Shepherd stepping into your life." No matter what we've done in the past, we are one of the lost sheep. Claiming to be anything more is to diminish the Lamb of God.

II. As we continue to sing, we continue with the words from our Gospel, "who takes away the sin of the world." A. But why do we care? 1. We care because we were born in sin. John's audience understood sin. The entire sacrificial system kept them keenly aware of their sins. Today, we've almost swept sin under the rug permanently. But all our sweeping doesn't change reality. When you and I took our first breath, we were already sinners. Nothing we have ever or could ever do will change that reality. Because of that truth, it matters that the Lamb takes away the sin of the world because that guarantees that He takes away our sin.

2. We care because we are part of the world. As we sing, "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," we are part of that world. Because we are part of that world, we believe that that Lamb of God takes away your sin and my sin. That's the great news of this statement! You don't have to live with the guilt. You don't have to spend your life trying to fix what you messed up because the Lamb of God has come, because He has stepped into your heart and said, "_____, since I have taken away the sin of the entire world, I have taken your sin away. I've taken it off your shoulders. Stop walking as though you are still carrying it!"

3. We care that He takes away sin because He is our only solution. Those of you who are good at old school math, I need your assistance. How many different correct answers are there to $6 + 4$? Can it be 11 or 9 or 14 or 21? $6+4$ has only one answer, one solution. Likewise, there's only one solution for sin. As we sing, we believe that the only solution is the Lamb of God. So what does that tell us? Can

we earn it, be a good person and spend our lives doing good deeds in the hope that maybe we might just fix what's broken? Like 6+4, there's only one answer to sin, one answer to our arrival in heaven and that answer is the Lamb of God.

III. As we continue singing, we profess, "Have mercy on us." A. Why do we need God's mercy? 1. We need God's mercy because we are failures. Sounds a bit harsh, doesn't it? But it's true, nevertheless. If a basketball player missed one shot the entire season, did he have a perfect season? If the defensive end on missed one tackle, could he claim a perfect season? Anything except perfect results in failure. God doesn't grade us like test papers where a 70 percent is still passing. It's either pass or fail and we've failed. Because we've failed numerous times, we need God's mercy. We need God to step in as our substitute and say, "Here's how it's done!"

2. We need God's mercy because He is the only perfect Substitute. On a high school basketball team, how many times can you sub in another player? How often can you switch one player out and another in? As we sing, "Have mercy on us," we're asking God from a faith-filled heart to be our Substitute because He's the only perfect Substitute. Only Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, only He can fix your broken world. Only He can step in and say, "I'll take his place, her place. I'll take the punishment so they can live even though it will cost Me My life." On the court of life, only one person can sub for us and fix our brokenness.

IV. As we conclude the Agnus Dei, we believe that this Lamb of God will give us peace. A. Why do we believe He will give us peace? 1. We believe it because God said it. As Jesus prepares to ascend into heaven, He says to His disciples and to us, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you." As we ask God to grant us peace, we already have the answer before we ask the question! Remember Jesus' words, "Ask and it shall be given unto you. Seek and you shall find?" At this moment, no matter what is stirring in your mind or causing stress or running you ragged or causing you to lose sleep or whatever else, Jesus says, "Peace I give to you."

2. We believe He gives us peace because He is our only source of peace. How many places can you buy a hammer or a set of dishes or a coffee pot or a box of soap? Now, how many places can you find genuine peace? Can you name them all on one hand? Yes. You can name them all with one finger because there is only one place. As we sing, "Grant us peace," we're asking God to do what only God can do; we're asking God to do what He is already waiting to do for you if you will take what He offers. No need to search the internet because the peace that passes all understanding is only found in the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

3. Singing is one thing. Believing what we sing, that's something very different. When you sing the Agnus Dei in the future, you know what to do. Sing it because you believe it. Amen.