

Topic	The Lamb of God
Reference	John 1:19-51
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Speaker	Ps Massimo Gei

We will look at Jesus’s pre-ministry and this is the time of Jesus in his life before he was really publically known. It is like the precursor to his public life and it is a very interesting look that we can have in Jesus Christ because many times when you think of famous people, you want to know how did they behave and what they did do before they were really famous. How was their life like, how did people react to them before they were the big and famous people? Here we can see various people reacting to Jesus before Jesus was really publically known.

- *To truly know him you must follow Jesus Christ*
- *Truly knowing him changes you*

#### **PHILIP:**

*43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”*  
*44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*

#### **Who was Philip?**

We don’t learn about Philip in this text, all we know is that he was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter and that’s about it. He was like an average guy, who was going about his life and suddenly Jesus came upon him and found him. When Jesus approaches him and says, come follow me, the miraculous thing is he does. So I would like to call *Philip, the bystander*. He is somebody who is just standing around. He is somebody who is not concerning himself with Jesus and to be honest there are lots of people in this world right now who are just like Philip. They might have some basic knowledge religion or Christianity; we know that Philip had some information because later on we know once he follows Jesus he found out who Jesus was. He said, he is the one for which Moses and prophets talked about. He had some basic understanding but he was never really confronted with Jesus.

There are so many people around us that are just like Philip, who are standing there, who are not concerning themselves and who could potentially react like Philip did. All we have to do is to approach them, we can ask people to come to church, we can ask them to follow and they might just do it. Philip decided to follow Jesus right away and after he followed Jesus for a little bit, from somebody who had no idea who Jesus was, he suddenly knew that he is the man for which

the prophets talk about. He is the man that Moses talked about. He didn't know that before he followed Jesus, he followed Jesus first and then he started to understand who Jesus is.

### **NATHANAEL:**

The truth is nobody is going to be as easy like Jesus, we have skeptical around. We see a skeptical person in scripture, Nathanael. When he was confronted with Jesus, he said can anything good come from Nazareth? Can Christianity be any good, is Jesus really who he says is, is Jesus really good, is he really Lord, is he really savior and there might be many skeptics here today. You might have questions and you are not so sure about this Jesus and it is okay to be a skeptic. But the problem is that when most of us are involved in a discussion with a skeptic, we try to get in argument with them and all we try to do is win an argument. We get into this apologetic conversations and arguments with people and all we try to do is win arguments. God has been showing me not to win arguments, win people. The way Jesus treats Nathanael is amazing.

*47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"*

He approaches Nathanael with comfort. He goes there and welcomes him. He recognizes what is good about Nathanael. Nathanael just said what good will come from Nazareth and Jesus replies and says look at Nathanael, in whom there is no deceit. He connects with him on a level that they can be friends and talk to one another. Jesus never won Nathanael through a great apologetic argument. Jesus said something to him,

*48 Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." 49 Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"*

It is so often that when we come to church and listen to a sermon and felt that the preacher really knows you. Somehow the topic that he is talking about speaks directly to your heart. It resonates with your heart, that's the word of God and Holy Spirit doing it. That's Jesus searching you out and Jesus saying I know you, I know your problem, come to me, come follow me. The best thing we can do with skeptics is not try to answer all the questions to them but ask them and come alongside with them as they explore who Jesus is. Nathanael didn't follow him then he was confronted and seem to really know him right way but later on Jesus says,

*50 Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 51 And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."*

If you continue walking with Jesus, you will find out more about who Jesus is that will continue to change you.

### **SEEKERS:**

They have a good opinion about Jesus, not everybody is a skeptic, not everybody has a negative thought about Jesus. We have people who think that Jesus is a good moral teacher. They are very interested about Jesus because other people have been praising the name of Jesus and saying, hey I want to find out here more about Jesus and we see this here with Andrew and who we believe to probably be John.

*29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."*

After they followed him they realized that He is the Messiah. Now to be honest, from all kind of thoughts that we could have about Jesus, thinking that he is just a good moral teacher is probably the only not acceptable thought. It was introduced very early in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and later made famous by C.S. Lewis which is called the Trilemma of Jesus.

- If you follow Jesus and if you study who Jesus is, you can only have three thoughts about Jesus. It is either he is a liar, that's the first thought, that he is not who he says he is because he continues to say I am the son of God, I am the only way. We see throughout the gospels that there are many people who call him a liar.
- He is a lunatic. Somebody who has great thoughts about himself. He thinks he is God, he is so crazy and you see this as well here in the story. We will see later on two people of his family going up to him and saying you are crazy. You must be mad and they are trying to rest him and restrain him. So imagine, it is Mary and James, went up to Jesus and said, you are crazy, you are a lunatic.
- You just believe who he truly is. The way Jesus lived his life, the things that he said, the things that he did, did not leave us room to really think that he is just a good moral teacher.

C.S. Lewis writes in his book

*“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”*

If you think that Jesus is just a good moral teacher, may I suggest that you may not know Jesus. He did not leave us room to think that. You have to make a choice; either he is a liar or a lunatic or he is who he says he is. We can see here, the two people who thought that he was a good teacher, after following him for a little while they came back and said that he is the Messiah. After just spending one evening with him, they found out that he is the savior.

All three groups of people, regardless of where they were in life, regardless of what kind of preconceive notion they have, whether they were thinking of Jesus at all or whether they were skeptical or whether they were seeking, all of them once they started following Jesus for a while, get confronted with the real Jesus suddenly realized who he truly was.

The bystander said, *we have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*” The skeptics and rabbi, *you are the son of God, you are the king of Israel.* The seekers realized that they have found the Messiah. All three of them recognized who Jesus was once they started to follow him.

As we continue to read into the gospels, the disciples keep on getting wrong who Jesus is, but as they continued to follow him even though they didn’t truly understand everything yet, they got to know him more and more and they got to realize who he truly is and what he truly came to do and that to finish nothing is best defined in what John the Baptist called Jesus.

John the Baptist who had the Holy Spirit in him, we read that in Luke that from birth he had the Holy Spirit in him. So we can categorize him as a believer. When he came in contact with Jesus, when he saw Jesus, he said *behold the lamb of God.* It was a profound-profound statement. He probably did not even know how profound of statement that was but I am sure that John the evangelist when he captured this in the gospels knew how profound that statement was.

We see the lamb of God appearing first in Genesis 22. When Isaac and Abraham is being told by God to offer up his son and as Abraham was collecting wood and collecting all the things that he

needs to go up the mountain to do the offering, his son says, father where is the lamb? Abraham says, God will provide the lamb. We know the story, as just before he was about to kill his son God said, stop and the ram comes and God provides a substitute.

We continue seeing the lamb throughout the Bible in Exodus. Again we see it as the Passover Lamb. The blood of that lamb and the lamb being killed on behalf of others; the blood of the lamb being shed on behalf of others. We continue seeing the lamb as well in Leviticus and Numbers and in temple language as an offering for sin and a guilt offering. Something that you give and burnt offering, an unblemished lamb, to atone for your sin, so that something on behalf of you would die and take a place for you and make good and pay the price of your sin. These are all foreshadows, all pointing towards the true Lamb of God, Jesus, who came and then went on the cross as a substitute for us that by his blood we do not have to die the death, but rather he would die the death for us, that he would atone and take away our sin, but not just we see the lamb of God in that way. We also see the lamb in revelation, the victorious lamb, the lamb that overcame, the lamb that is worthy to be praised.

When you know Jesus, when you follow him and you really truly get to know who Jesus is, you would know that he is the one for which Moses and the prophets talked about. He is truly king, he is our savior and he is the lamb of God. He is the one who takes away our sin and when you know that, when you truly know who he is in your life and you understand it and you get in contact with him, you follow him and it changes you. All of these people here, as they came in contact with Jesus, it changes how they view Jesus and it also changed them. There are couple of ways in which it changes us, it changes our identity. John the Baptist is like the believer category here. John the Baptist says,

*26 John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, 27 even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."*

John understands that there is no worth in himself. When we get to know Jesus, we understand who he truly is, it kind of searches us out and we realize one thing that we are more sinful then we probably know that we are but we know a second thing that we are more loved then we can possibly comprehend and it creates that kind of tension in our lives that we are humble, knowing our place but yet we are confident. John the Baptist is not saying that I am such a pitiful person, I am such a terrible person, woe unto him I am just so lonely, I have no self-confidence. No he was confident. When he was being confronted by different kind of teachers, he knows who he was. He was able to stand up. He was a leader, he had a great following at that point of time. People asked him, who are you and he said I am not the Christ, even though that he was popular he knows that he is not the savior, he is not the primary object of worship, he is just merely a voice crying out and pointing out to somebody else, but he was confident, but he also knew his place, he knows his sinfulness, he knows that Jesus is much more greater. This is kind of a

humility. When he got confronted with Jesus, when he knew who Jesus was he was so consumed by Jesus that he forgot thinking about himself. True humility as C.S. Lewis has said, it is not thinking less of yourself but is thinking of yourself less. It is self-forgetfulness.

John the Baptist doesn't say, behold I am unworthy. He doesn't draw attention to himself, it is not false humility. He says I am unworthy, behold the lamb of God. He draws attention to Jesus. There is no worth in ourselves of what we do, but there is somebody who has all worth, who came and died for us and this gives us confidence and assurance to live our lives. So when we know who Jesus and what he came to do it changes us, it gives us an identity upon which we can stand.

There is a second thing, it changes not just what we think of ourselves, it changes what we do. Every single one of the above people once they started follow Jesus, they started shouting out his name, they were all shouting names of praise. They were praising Jesus, they couldn't but help to give praise to his name, to lift him up high. When we get to know who Jesus truly is, we will lift him up high in our lives, we will praise him. John Piper says that the primary purpose of the church is not mission, it is worship. Mission exists because worship doesn't.

When we know who Jesus is, he puts us back into the identity of who we truly are, worshippers. Coming and giving praise to his name is something that we would enjoy to do, something that would naturally come. Worship and mission are so closely related to one another. You will only go and tell somebody about stuff that you really think is really great as you realize how great Jesus was they couldn't but help go out and tell other people about it.

John the Baptist says, behold the lamb of God and then you see Andrew and John saying, because they heard him say that they went to Jesus and they said, can we come with you. Because they heard John says, behold the lamb of God, they wanted to follow Jesus. When we lift up the name of Jesus in our lives, when we praise the name of Jesus, people will be interested about Jesus. When people see us worshiping Jesus, they want to see who is this Jesus and they might just want to follow him too.

Everyone in this story here, as soon as they found out who Jesus was, they followed him for a while, they went out and they told somebody else about it. It was a natural affect.

We must go and share the gospel and Jesus with people. We came to Christ as somebody shared the good news with us. When we know who Jesus truly is and when we understand that he is the lamb of God, we can't help but just lift up his name and worship his name and give him praise and the direct effect of praise is mission. We want to tell other people about Jesus. We declare his name to him and we declare his name to ours. It just don't change our identity, not just gives us purpose, it gives us hope.

*51 And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”*

Jesus is the pathway to heaven.

- If you follow him, you will see heavens open.
- If you will follow him, you will know that he is the pathway.
- If you follow him, you will see greater things and he promises us that when we follow him closely that you will be in eternity with him and that gives us hope. Hope out of every situation that we are in life today that one day it will be gone and one day we will be with Jesus completely in heaven forever.

If we know Jesus, we are supposed to have this humility and this confidence, we are supposed to have this innate desire to worship and evangelize and we should have this hope in your life. If we have not experienced Jesus in such a way, if we don't have that desire to worship and share the good news with other people, if we don't have that confidence and we don't have that hope, we might not know who Jesus truly is.

Regardless of what you think about Jesus, I invite you to come and see who Jesus is, take some time out of your life and read scripture, do something to try to know him. The only way to see Jesus is to follow him closely, to walk with him, to see him, to think about him and you will realize who he truly is. If you just take that time, then you will see that he is the man whose shoes we are unworthy to tie. Even though we are unworthy to tie his shoes, he gets down on his knees and he washes the feet of his disciples. Even though he is king, his journey here did not come on a throne in power but his journey here went to a cross. He came in weakness. Come and see and you will see that he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. You will see that he was put on the cross and he died for you, while we were still sinners, while you are who you are right now he died for you.

If you know Jesus, go to somebody else and say follow me, take him along, ask them to come and see and share the good news of the lamb of God that came to take away the sin of the world.