

**Pollution**, became a household word in my generation. Whether it was **litter**, or **smog** or the defilement of the Chesapeake Bay... the environment seemed to be an even a hotter topic than it is today...

Being a **nature** lover (back then).....I remember **hating** all kinds of pollution with a passion.

When the Exxon Valdeez spill occurred in Alaska... I remember feeling so angry at the oil companies....

I just wanted SOMETHING to come in and purify... to restore what had been tainted...

That's natural isn't it?.... when things are ruined.....**stained**..... we like to see them **cleansed**...and restored....

What I did not know.... is that our most pressing environmental issue, is not **in** the ocean... the most polluted entity in creation is not the depletion of the ozone.... and can not be remedied by electric cars....

- The biggest pollution problem on the planet is the **stain** of sin within our own hearts.....

It is the **rebellious nature** we have inherited from our forefathers...which has sent its roots down into every aspect of our thoughts and actions..... and which we are doing our level best to spread around to each new generation after us....

The **perilous** effects of this stain have affected the whole of creation...

#### **Isaiah 24:5**

"The earth lies **defiled** under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant."

The problem is so **heinous**... and is such an epidemic.... that it is beyond human help....

We need nothing short of GOD sending us....a Divine **SIN REMOVER**.

I hope you feel that this morning..... because you need to.... if you are going to be able to rejoice in the good news that God **has done just that...** in Jesus Christ!

Already, in our study of the Good News according to John we have been taught that Jesus is the Word of God....

That He is Himself God.... who became flesh...

That through Him.... we can experience a full and ongoing supply of the grace of God.

And that by knowing Jesus... we know the Father.

Last week.... Corey showed us John the Baptist declaring that he was merely a **POINTER** to this Messiah...who is the Star of the show....

In our passage today.... John keeps on pointing to Him and declares that we should **LOOK** to Jesus as our **Sin Remover!**

#### John 1:29-34

" The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!** This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' *I myself did not know him*, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that **he might be revealed to Israel.**"

And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like **a dove**, and it remained on him. 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.**' And I have seen and have borne witness that **this is the Son of God.**"

What we have in Jn.1:19-> the end of chapter one is a chronology....an account of **4** successive days at the beginning of Jesus' ministry....

Jesus has already been baptized by John and this point....and is coming back from having been in the wilderness for 40 days to be tempted by the devil....

As He approaches... John declares: **LOOK!** Our Sin Remover!!!

When we get a stain on our clothes....all we need is some **Shout**... or Wisk... or a good dry cleaner....

But the stain on our soul is the type no launderer can clean... No amount of good deeds can cover up the **black marks** of our transgressions against God's law....

They are **permanent**....(at least in human terms)...

God says..... each one of them deserves the **DEATH** penalty.....

We don't tend to think about things we do that God has declared to be wrong in those terms..... we tend to **excuse** them... sweep them under the rug..... or rationalize them away as being a result of the circumstances we found ourselves in at the time....

God says.... The wages of sin....is **DEATH**... without the shedding of blood.... there is no forgiveness of sin....

We need nothing short of God's Sin Removing Sacrifice to atone for our sin....

As we apply this truth to our lives... I want to ask you to personally own the fact that...

## The Sin Remover

### 1. Was Sacrificed in **Your** Place

I want you to understand how NECESSARY it was that God's own LAMB had to DIE.... in order for you to be here today worshipping.... moreover... in order for you to live forever in God's presence... instead of bearing His wrath yourself in hell.

ALL of **OT** worship... points forward to this reality of the Lamb of God coming to take away our sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Since the fall of man into sin.....

WORSHIP of the One true God (by His own design) has always involved **SACRIFICE**....

So, early on...God prescribed that an animal (usually a lamb or a bull) would be slain.... and its blood shed....and then offered to God....as a substitution for the life of the worshiper.... (who is in fact the one who deserved to die because of his sin)...

We saw this with **Abel's** sacrifice being accepted because it was the firstborn of his flock.... **Noah** (who only had a limited supply of clean animals after the flood)... likewise built an altar and sacrificed what God required to the Lord... the Bible says

#### Genesis 8:21

"And when the LORD smelled the **pleasing aroma**, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done."

God's wrath.. (against sinful man) was appeased... through a **sacrifice**...

Israelites were shepherders..... They personally raised, protected and fed their flocks. So it **affected them at the heart level**.... to take the BEST lamb of that flock...the one without blemish... and have it killed.... in order to atone for **their** sin....

That was by design... that shedding of innocent blood... was supposed to pierce through the calluses of their hearts..... to remind them of how SERIOUS their sin is...

God took that a step further....(in showing what He would do for us)...

When He commanded **Abraham** to offer up his **only Son** Isaac on the altar.... (he was accustomed to a sheep....but now it was His beloved Son!

He put him on the altar..... just before the knife entered the boy.....the angel of the Lord said STOP! Now **I know** that you fear God.... through that event..... God revealed His Name.... **Jehovah Jireh** – the God who will PROVIDE....the lamb...

Hundreds of years later....when God delivered Israel from captivity in Egypt, He instituted the killing of the Passover Lamb.... it signified that while the Israelites **deserved** to be killed like the Egyptians... God instead called them to SACRIFICE a **spotless** Lamb in their place....and they were instructed to put the blood of that lamb over their doorposts as a covering...

So that when the angel of death came through Egypt... they would be spared (Passed Over) through their faith in that sacrifice....

During the Exodus... when God gave the Law to Moses.... He prescribed certain **ongoing** sacrifices to be made by the Levitical priests on behalf of the people... morning and evening....

**All of that**.....was pointing ... to what John the Baptist is **now** announcing to Israel here in our passage...

#### **John 1:29**

" The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "**Behold, the** Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John made an announcement which was more profound than anyone realized (except Jesus).... that THIS guy... is the fulfillment of everything we have been waiting for.... and even though they don't know it yet.... He is the ONE the whole world has been needing.....

- What I am asking you to do today.... is to OWN Him as **YOUR** Lamb....

You can not be a Christian... without owning the reality that you deserve to keep on dying under the wrath of God forever in hell.... (your sin is **THAT** serious)... and that God's **LOVE** is THIS deep...

#### **1 John 4:10**

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that **he loved us** and sent his Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins."

That means....that while you were God's enemy... He killed His own Son (like an innocent lamb) on the cross... in order to make you His friend....

God's anger at your sin....was **appeased** (propitiated) by Him pouring out His wrath on Jesus instead of you...

Jesus is YOUR sacrificial LAMB....

**1 Peter 2:24**

"He himself **bore our sins** in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."

Will you OWN that today? That **YOU** should have died.... because it was YOUR sin... Jesus was punished for on the cross....

The **gruesomeness** of that event..... is supposed to make you **hate** the sin that nailed this innocent lamb to your tree....

And LOVE Him all the more.....as you receive the reality that (like the scapegoat) in Israel... your sins have been BORN away....from you...

As far as the east is from the west....

Though your sins were as scarlet... they have been made as white as snow....

if Jesus is your LAMB... take a trip with Him....(if you will this morning).....

Take a little journey.....up His road of suffering.... as Isaiah describes what it was like....

**Isaiah 53:7-10**

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; **like a lamb** that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, **stricken for the transgression of my people?** And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD **to crush** him; he has put him to grief; **when his soul makes an offering for sin**, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall **prosper** in his hand."

The way you can know if you are the offspring for whom Jesus died.... is if you BELIEVE that this offering of the Lamb of God.... is YOUR offering....

Do you believe... that **YOUR** sin was paid in full on that cross ... as JESUS was stricken for your transgressions....

**Confess** that to Him now..... Receive forgiveness... now...let ALL your guilt and shame be **CARRIED off**... taken away on the bleeding back of this LAMB...

Because the price for your sin has been paid.... this INNOCENT Lamb of God...has now been resurrected from the Dead...and is now seated at God's right hand... so that... as a blood bought child of God....

You can **joyfully** and freely....enter in to WORSHIP!

**Hebrews 10:19-22**

" Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the **blood** of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

If you are enjoying the goodness of that cleansing.... the freedom of a cleansed conscience....

That is the **FUEL** which should motivate you to PUT to death the sin you just confessed.....

And to keep on looking to this Lamb who was slain in your place....

Let John pastor you ... as He did those in Asia during his lifetime....

**1 John 2:1-2**

" My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone **does** sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."

One the things which makes John's confession of who Jesus is... so profound here... is that He introduces Him as the Savior of **the World**....

He announces the coming of the King of Israel.... as someone who is not ONLY for Israel....

He is the Savior of the whole wide World!

Jesus has come to draw men and women, boys and girls to himself from every tribe and tongue and nation.... from every generation...

But listen to how John describes his ministry as the MEANS of announcing this Savior / King... to Israel first.....

**John 1:30-31**

"This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he

was before me.' I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be **revealed to Israel.**""

**Israel**...was the scope of John's ministry.....

John the Baptist was brought into the world.... as a prophet of God..... to REVEAL Jesus as the King which Israel had been waiting for....

Get some context here.... so you can grasp what JTB was about:

To become an Israelite (at least externally) all you had to do was be born into a Jewish family....

If you were a male, you would have been taken down to the temple on your 8<sup>th</sup> day.. and been circumcised.... as a sign that you were a covenant child.....

Your **identity**... and your claim to the Kingdom of Israel.... rested on almost entirely on your ethnicity... and the religious practice of your parents....

- Some of you may fall into a similar category here today..... whatever attachment to Christianity you have rests in something your parents did..... or the fact that your family attends church...

Israel... as a nation.... (in those days) had fallen away from God....

John the Baptist came to call out the **believing REMNANT** from within ethnic Israel....

He called them to REPENT of their sin.... and of trusting in Abraham as their father....and to turn from that.... and believe on Jesus...

John's baptism was a symbolic BRIDGE ....between OT Israel... and the Kingdom of God.....

In order to fulfill God's design of building the Kingdom on the rich root of His people Israel...

### **Romans 1:16**

" For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, **to the Jew first** and also to the Greek."

Jesus' entire earthly ministry was spent making disciples of Jewish believers... in order.... that after they were baptized in the Holy Spirit... He could send them (with the gospel) to the whole world...

In order that **all flesh** should SEE the Salvation of God....

That all peoples could LOOK.. could BEHOLD the Lamb who takes away their sin...

Just like you are today... so that for all eternity.... a people bought by His blood could ...say with a LOUD voice:

**Revelation 5:12-13**

“**Worthy is the** Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!””

Remember that it was John whom the HS used to record the words of this book of Revelation....

So we have here the full scope of Jesus’ ministry... from suffering sacrifice to resurrected KING in glory...

John goes on to utter a **second** critical **declaration** of what this MAN to whom He was pointing was going to accomplish...

**John 1:32-33**

"And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 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.'"

JTB is recounting and testifying about what happened on the day of Jesus’ baptism some 40 days before...

At Jesus’ baptism (the other gospels record)... the Holy Spirit descended upon Him (bodily) in the form of **a dove**...

This was the VISIBLE means of God’s **anointing** His Son for ministry.....

The Dove came to REST upon Him.... much like the tongues of fire would come to rest on His disciples on the Day of Pentecost.... as a visible means of showing that the Holy Spirit was now empowering Him for ministry...

This Dove was a visible **SIGN** of the Permanent Residing of God’s Spirit within Jesus.... ... but also indicative of that which He was going to confer to others through preaching the gospel....

Here is what Jesus testified a short time later (as He began His ministry):

**Luke 4:18-19**

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has **anointed** me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Certainly... we see in Jesus’ life... (for the first time) the POWER of the Holy Spirit working through a man....in ways that FAR EXCEED anything we saw in the OT...

We see Him speaking with POWER like none other before Him... we see Him healing the sick, calming the sea.... feeding the hungry... even raising the dead...

ALL through the power of the Holy Spirit...

But JTB is saying that God revealed more than that to him on that day.... He is saying that unlike the prophets of the OT.... who experienced the power of God’s Spirit in **limited** ways....

This Jesus.... Who is now being revealed.... is the One who will **confer** New Life in the Spirit to all who believe!

**The Sin Remover****2. Confers Life in the Spirit**

I was among those who was somewhat surprised at how many people were in mourning over the death of Steve Jobs....

I do believe that part of the reason was that he represented what they perceive an increased quality of life through their imacs, ipods, ipads....and iphones...

I did wonder if somehow fear....in the back of their mind ...that when Steve took his last breath that those devices we love so much might mysteriously stop working....

Whereas that is not true of electronic inventions of man....

It IS true of the Holy Spirit....

HE is the Person... that empowers you to live for Jesus... When you believe in Jesus.... Jesus is the One who immerses you in the Holy Spirit...

v. 33 “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, **this is he** who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.”

One of the few sayings contained in all 4 gospel accounts is this reality that John baptizes with water... but Jesus will baptize you with **(in)** the Holy Spirit....

Everyone agrees... that in salvation history... the literal event this is pointing to is the Day of Pentecost... after Jesus' atoning work is completed and He ascends to the right hand of the Father....

Whereas ...(before Pentecost the Disciples certainly had been regenerated in the Holy Spirit).....as evidenced by their saving faith.....

they were not empowered with the FULLNESS of God's Spirit....in the way that believers who are born again today are.....

Because Jesus' work had not yet been FINISHED....

John himself will later testify to this...

### **John 7:37-39**

" On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' " Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

Unlike those first disciples of Jesus.... who lived and came to faith during that 3 year span of Jesus' earthly ministry....

Anyone who believes on THIS SIDE of the finished work of Jesus....will be transferred OUT of the domain of darkness ... and immersed into the Holy Spirit....

Out of **YOUR** heart.... will flow the springs of LIFE that only the Holy Spirit of God can give...

JESUS is the One who confers that gift upon **all** who believe.....

This gift is the PORTION of God Himself, He gives to all His children.... not only so that we can KNOW Him.... but so that we can serve Him in power that can only be attributed to the Spirit of God alive in us...

Lastly, John testifies that...

The Sin Remover

### 3. is God's **Only** Son

Jesus is now and forever will be the ONLY legitimate son of God. Those of us who trust in Christ.... are all ADOPTED into God's family through our union with Him...

In what would have been a STARTLING... even shocking announcement to Jews..... JTB spills the beans on what Jesus is gradually going to reveal in His ministry....

**John 1:34**

"And I have seen and have **borne witness** that **this is** the Son of God."

JTB has borne witness... He has testified to three things which the Father revealed to Him about the Christ....

- Jesus is The Sin Remover... for the whole world...
- Jesus is the One who Confers New Life in the Holy Spirit to those who believe...
- Jesus is the ONLY Son of God... given to us so that we might KNOW the Father...

John's people Israel NEEDED a Sin Remover..... and so does our people....

More than we need an economic plan.... or a health care plan.....

Your family members.... your co-workers.... your neighbors.... your class mates.....

Need someone.... anyone.....to stand up and say....

**LOOK!** The Lamb of God... who takes away the SIN of the world....

LOOK to Him... and **Live**...