

**Behold, the Lamb of God.** Lambs for God are to be sacrificed. The reason why the Tabernacle; Temple established by God. Lambs sacrificed, every morning and night, to deal with sin, graciously allowed by God to die in the place of the sinners who deserved to die. People confess their sin, see death of their substitute; give thanks to God for His mercy, love, forgiveness; real blood; real death; for real sins; a life for a life; the innocent for the guilty.

**Behold, the Lamb!** 3 OT events come to mind. After the fall, God clothed Adam and Eve's shame - with animal skins. Where did those come? That's right...first sacrifice. A death. A substitute. A life for a life. The innocent for the guilty. Ancient paintings depict a lamb as the animal whose life was given, blood shed to clothe Adam and Eve.

Then Abraham and Isaac. The first window on the OT side, God said **Take your only son, whom you love, go to the mount I direct; offer him there as an offering,** the only Son carries the wood of a sacrifice on His back up the mount, Isaac says, **where is the lamb for a burnt offering?** Abraham said, **God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.** He did. Finally, the Passover lamb. Sinners place hands –their sin -on the Lamb. The Lamb would die. Sacrificed. Substitute. A life for a life. The innocent for the guilty. Blood covered the doorpost. Death passes over. And God's people ate the flesh of the Lamb slain for them.

All Old Testament history - soaked in sacrificial blood; foreshadowed THE Lamb to come. Fulfilled in John's words. **Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.** Why Jesus came, your sacrificial Lamb; your substitute. The only son who is loved; carries the wood for the sacrifice on His back up the mount of God's choosing. He cloths His people with Himself. That blood marks the doorpost of your soul and death passes over. And God's people celebrate the New Covenant, partake the Lamb's flesh and blood. His life for your life. The innocent one, for you, the guilty.

John's words still ring out. For sinners; whatever you've done, whatever regrets; **Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!** We need to hear that, especially annual Sanctity of Life Sunday.

Because all mess up life. We do. The sanctity of life, God's gift of life from the moment of conception to natural death- is more than one-Sunday-a-year topic – it's the battle between God and satan. Between God who believes every life is worth saving; satan who believes every life worth consuming.

A pastor told me of a parishioner from China. Christianity is persecuted there. They would post a sentry to keep an eye out if the authorities came to the house, where the Divine Service would take place. One day, the sentry

told them the authorities were coming, the congregation and pastor scatter. The authorities took the homeowner and tortured him. “Just tell us where the pastor is and we’ll let you go.” The man wasn’t about to give up the Sacrament, give up the Pastor. They took a modified cattle rod and shocked him, “just tell us who the leaders are, give us the pastor’s name and it’ll all stop and you can go back to your family.” After 4 weeks, they couldn’t break him, so they let him go. He would not give them up or give up the Sacrament. As soon as he could; he made way to America. He was able to come to church, to the Sacrament without fear. He also realized in America, you work harder you make more, he wants more for his family; able to work more, be more, do more, accomplish more, to provide more. Soon, he wasn’t going to church every week, then only once a month, soon only Christmas, then Easter and when I heard this story he missed Christmas.

Don’t miss this point, what communism and tortured couldn’t do, what electrocution, what threats and persecution couldn’t do, our culture can do without even lifting a hand. Torture couldn’t break this man’s love for the preached Word and Sacrament; our culture was able to strip away in just a couple of years. We are in a fight; to witness. Witness to the Lamb, to witness to the sanctity of life, sanctity of marriage and not deny Christ by failing to do so; to contend for truth; to bring real life to the lost. To not give in the temptations and distractions and fill our days with ourselves. To not give into the culture

John’s confession; our confession. We stands like John in a wilderness: that devalues, dehumanizes life from womb to tomb; a wilderness that mocks you as ignorant, unloving and phobic; a wilderness that fills our time and days with so much stuff and distractions we lose focus and have little time for what and who matters most, a wilderness that revels in man’s increase and Jesus’ decrease.

Have you remained silent; not confessed the sanctity of life, God’s truth for life and marriage? **Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!** Do you’ve regrets about decisions you’ve made; things you’ve done? **Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!** Have you failed to love, failed to serve, failed to forgive? **Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!** Have you lived as if you matter most; others less than you? **Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!** See this bread, see this wine? **Behold the Lamb of God.** On the last day, you will **Behold the Lamb of God who**

**took away your sin.** Face to face. Who gave you His life, for the sanctity of your life.