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Rev. King Duncan shares, “Two months before his assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke to his congregation at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta about his death in what would oddly enough become his eulogy.”

The historic civil rights leader said, “Every now and then I think about my own death, and I think about my own funeral”. “If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don’t want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell them not to talk too long. Every now and then I wonder what I want them to say. ...” Dr. King continued, “I’d like someone to mention that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others. I’d like someone to say that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to love somebody. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try, in my life, to clothe those who were naked. I want you to be able to say that I did try to visit those in prison. I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity.” Dr. King concluded with these words: ‘I won’t have any money left behind. I won’t have the fine and luxurious things of life to leave behind. But I just want to leave a committed life behind.’”

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I would go a bit further and suggest the sacrifice of Jesus – the Son of God as *“the Lamb of God”* was not so much to fulfill the Divine Parent’s requirements of the Law of the Old Testament but as a way of demonstrating to us and all people how through **God’s Self-Giving and Sacrificial “Agape” Love for us**, we are already **Forgiven** and offered **Reconciliation** with the Creator and the **New Faith Relationship** with God!

Today’s Scripture continues reporting what John the Baptist said when he pointed Jesus out as *“the Lamb of God”*, he announced, *“This is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘A man is coming after me, but he is greater than I am, because he existed before I was born.’ I did not know who he would be, but I came baptizing with water in order to make him known to the people of Israel.”* I underlined those words of the Baptist because they give his self description of his purpose or task. Fortunately, at least in this gospel, John the Baptist reveals *“the Lamb of God”* to some people!

Evidently, none of those present immediately decided to act on John’s revelation of the identity of the Promised One. We are informed the Baptizer had a second opportunity to point Jesus out and to encourage some of his own disciples to follow *“the Lamb of God”*. Today’s Scripture continues, *“The next day John was standing there again with two of his disciples, when he saw Jesus walking by. ‘There is the Lamb of God!’ he said.”*

Finally, John the Baptist accomplished his ultimate purpose of revealing the identity of the Messiah! Today’s Reading continues, *“The two disciples heard him say this and went with Jesus. Jesus turned, saw them following him, and asked, ‘What are you looking for?’”* As all of the gospels show during Jesus’ public ministry, so here at the beginning of their relationship with him, the Original Disciples were slow to comprehend the nature of Jesus and their appropriate reply. In response to *“the Lamb of God’s”* question, *“What are you looking for?”*, *“They answered, ‘Where do you live, Rabbi?’ (This word means ‘Teacher.’)”* Fortunately, Jesus did not throw up his hands, shake his head, and say, “go away!” Instead, *“‘Come and see,’ he answered.”*

Kate Huey discusses this conversation between the two disciples of John the Baptist and Jesus, saying, “The answer Jesus gives is no long-winded sermon full of obscure theological truths, but just three simple (and familiar) words that could provide a theme for our best evangelism efforts: **‘Come and see’**. Campbell writes a similarly beautiful reflection on Jesus’ response, which is both invitation and promise of what they can experience if they will, as Jesus promises in the other Gospels, **‘Follow me’**. But Campbell’s insight about the order of the three little words is also moving: rather than first understanding who Jesus is (we might call this ‘having it all together’), and then setting out to follow him, Jesus’ tender invitation brings these seekers close to him, in relationship, to ‘where he lives,’ and knows that being in that relationship will transform their lives. Along the way, we slowly come to understand better who Jesus is and what it means to be faithful to him. And the more we understand and see and live in faith, the more we’ll want to witness in our turn, Charles Campbell claims: ‘In the power of the Spirit, which Jesus has breathed upon us, we offer our fragile and

vulnerable testimony to Jesus, backed up by the faithfulness and integrity of our life together.” Campbell warns, “At a time when the church is tempted to become just another appealing commodity for middle-class consumers, the text from John poses a significant challenge to our communities of faith.” Campbell asks, “Do our words and deeds bear witness to Jesus? And when we invite people to *‘come’*, will they be able to *‘see’* Jesus in our congregations?”

Huey explains, “Revelation, then, is no simple matter. It happens in many different ways, in many different settings, and thinking of our life together in the church as one way that God is continuing to reveal God’s love for the world may be something new to us. (Someone once said that ‘Revelation is an ongoing event.’)” Huey suggests, “The United Church of Christ says that God is still speaking words of hope, compassion and justice, still revealing God’s justice and compassion, through the shared life of our congregations. That’s how we witness to what we are experiencing in the transformation of our lives. However, revelation is not something we cause or control, Charles Cousar writes, but ‘a sheer gift of grace.’”

Huey points out, “It seems that people are often looking for the sky to open and listening for the voice of God to provide dramatic and clear instruction, but maybe we’re missing the myriad ways that God is still speaking around us.” Huey concludes, “This passage, when the crowds listened to John’s ‘fragile and vulnerable’ yet powerful testimony, illustrates the call of the followers of Jesus to listen carefully, live faithfully, and tell the story of what God has done in the midst of their own transformed lives.” (Sermon Seeds Reflection by Kate Huey)

Today’s Scripture concludes by sharing with us, ***“One of them was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. At once he found his brother Simon and told him, ‘We have found the Messiah.’ (This word means ‘Christ.’) Then he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, ‘Your name is Simon son of John, but you will be called Cephas.’ (This is the same as Peter and means ‘a rock.’)”*** Maybe Andrew was one of the quicker disciples! He, evidently, had come to experience enough of Jesus in a very short time that Andrew sought to bring his brother to also know and be with ***“the Lamb of God” – “the Messiah”!***

Those of us who have spent enough time with ***“the Lamb of God”*** recognize our New Life in Christ and New Faith Relationship with God are enabled through him and the Holy Spirit. If you have not yet had enough time with Jesus and his people, then be assured that you are always welcome here and you will not be pushed or forced by any of us to join us in the realization, declaration, and commitment to ***“the Lamb of God”***. On this Sunday before the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, it is helpful for all of us to consider the response of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to Jesus’ invitation to live out the joy of being God’s Forgiven Child, who lives the New Life in Christ.

Rev. King Duncan shares, “Two months before his assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke to his congregation at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta about his death in what would oddly enough become his eulogy.”

The historic civil rights leader said, “Every now and then I think about my own death, and I think about my own funeral”. “If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don’t want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell them not to talk too long. Every now and then I wonder what I want them to say. ...” Dr. King continued, “I’d like someone to mention that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others. I’d like someone to say that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to love somebody. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try, in my life, to clothe those who were naked. I want you to be able to say that I did try to visit those in prison. I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity.” Dr. King concluded with these words: ‘I won’t have any money left behind. I won’t have the fine and luxurious things of life to leave behind. But I just want to leave a committed life behind.’”

Duncan asks, “Did Martin King have that level of commitment when he first began his ministry? Duncan answers his own question, “It’s doubtful. He had youthful enthusiasm to be sure. He had strong convictions. He was well brought up, with an outstanding Baptist preacher as a father. But people who are truly captured by the spirit of Christ do so generally after years of walking in Christ’s footsteps.” Duncan concludes, “Our faith is validated and grows as we ***‘come and see’***.” (King Duncan, Collected Sermons, www.Sermons.com)

“Come and see” – live in his Body and be nourished and enlivened at his Table! “The Lamb of God” is with us always! After accepting the invitation of Jesus Christ, follow Andrew’s example and invite or introduce to Jesus - “The Lamb of God” your family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and everyone in need of the Good News of God’s “Agape” Loving Forgiveness, New Life in Christ, and New Faith Relationship with God. Amen.