

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you O God, my strength and my joy...Amen.

I enjoy the evenings when my husband and I get to watch a movie together. Thanks to digital streaming this doesn't entail too much of an outing... Instead, it usually consists of us searching on a venue for something that looks good.

I especially like when there are previews to watch, because you don't just get a feel for the storyline, but you also can see the quality of the acting, filming, and other things...

But sometimes the previews reveal just too much, at least for me.

For example, on more than a few occasions, while we are mid-preview, I pause the preview abruptly and say, it looks good to me! I do this, because if I watched any more, I might just have the entire movie figured out...

Thankfully, my husband is a good sport and is now used to this strange quirk of mine....

Well, our gospel reading, from the first Chapter of John... is like one of those reveal all previews...

In these 13 verses of our gospel, we get a full picture, plus some spoilers, of what Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit are all about.

We hear the story of Jesus' baptism and the starting of his ministry by calling his disciples...

But yet this baptismal story is different than what we hear in the other gospels... As this baptism was not performed by John, instead this baptism was witnessed by John...

Jesus is being baptized by God and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And it is because of this act, the descending of the Holy Spirit and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, that John knows exactly who Jesus is because of what he witnessed...

And so, John boldly and loudly claims right at the start of our gospel that Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world... Spoiler alert!

As the other gospels, do not reveal this truth about Jesus until much later and not nearly as directly as John does... In the gospel of John there is no hiding who Jesus is.

Because Jesus as the Lamb of God, holds theological significance.

Especially since Jesus dies on the day of preparation for Passover in the gospel of John.

Placing Jesus' death around the same time of the slaughtering of the lambs for the Passover meal...

For you Old Testament buffs, you will most likely recall that Passover celebrates God's deliverance from Egypt....

In Exodus we experience the first Passover in Egypt, with the Israelites while they were still enslaved there... When God told Moses to have his people smear blood from a lamb on their doorposts...

As this act would spare all the people in the house, passing over their house, with a special focus on the first-born child.

Which is significant to Jesus... As Jesus is not only God's firstborn son... But Jesus is also the firstborn of all creation...

As we read at the very beginning of John... In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God... All things came into being through him...

So, for Jesus to become the Lamb of God, and to die on the night of preparation for Passover with all of the other lambs is significant.

As Passover signifies protection, deliverance, and God's promise of relationship...

And it is only because of Jesus as the lamb of God that a new relationship between God and humanity is made possible.

So, lets recap... Our reveal all gospel tells us about Jesus' baptism by God, the start of Jesus' ministry, the calling of the disciples, and Jesus as the Lamb of God which we now know entails his death and resurrection, where all of creation is reconciled to God in a new relationship.

Now that is a full story and a TON of good news in a short 13 verse preview... And it was all brought to you by a witness... John...

As throughout this gospel, John is doing something sacred in and of itself... John is continuously pointing to Jesus and saying, BEHOLD the Lamb of God...

John does not claim to be Jesus, John does not tell you how to live... John says, this is God... This is the Spirit... They are active and they are in our midst...

So how can we be more like John? How can we observe the world around us and point to acts of God when we see them?

Since we are witnessing things all of the time... From movie previews, to football games, to children growing older...

And as Christians we believe that God is with us... Especially now, at this time of the year, more than ever...

As we just got done celebrating Christmas and Epiphany... Two Holy Days that reveal... Immanuel—God is with us and that God has been made manifest to the world.

How then do we allow our faith to inform what it is we are seeing, witnessing, and experiencing?

Well, the simple answer is...You don't have to do too much... Because God will reveal Godself to you through the mysterious workings of the Holy Spirit...

The same Holy Spirit who continues to make our relationship with God possible... As this is the Holy Spirit who descended upon Jesus, the Lamb of God, during Jesus' baptism... A baptism that John witnessed.

And the thing is, John could have witnessed this Holy moment and kept it to himself... But he didn't... Because the good news was too great to keep quiet...

The good news was too glorious, as this changes everything.

And even now, when the world may seem void of good news, God promises that it is there... Now, it might be hiding underneath the snow, but it is there.

And John reveals to us today the importance to share this good news with others... As this news might be something that someone needs to hear... to continue or to deepen or to start their relationship with God...

John in an essence is saying, it is your turn now, to get excited and to share what you have witnessed...

Courage to not hit the pause button... But to allow yourself to witness God working in your midst...

Because there is always good news with God...

And when you find it, you will know... And in those moments, I encourage you to be like John, to let the excitement bubble up inside of you, so that you can boldly proclaim, look! Behold! God is in our midst... Amen...