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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton,
on Sunday evening, 2nd February 1964

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which
taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29

That is a very solemn and yet blessed type that we read in the 22nd chapter Genesis, the trial of Abraham's faith. It sets before us a type of the Lord Jesus. Doubtless the faith of Abraham and of all the Old Testament saints was given to look beyond the types and the figures and the shadows, and behold the glorious Antitype. For of Abraham it was said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it and was glad." So that the faith of the Old Testament saints looked forward, as the faith of His people today look back; and we sing sometimes

*My faith would lay her hand,
On that dear Head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin. (Gadsby's 125)*

But Isaac asked a very painful question of his father: "Behold the wood and the fire; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? The wood and the fire were those parts that were to destroy. The fire set forth the wrath, the, curse of God; and the wood would set forth the sins of the people. But Abraham laid his son upon that altar. But a voice was heard from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham, stay thy hand, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."

But the lamb that was provided is in the text; 'The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' Well, may the Holy Spirit help us to behold the Lamb appointed of God. What was this Lamb? Who was He? The antitype was Isaac, Abraham's only son; and this Lamb is none other than God's own and only-begotten Son. No other sacrifice was effectual. Every other sacrifice, though it was by divine institution in the Levitical dispensation, yet it was all imperfect, and this will mean something to us. We shall feel it as we bow before the Lord with our own cases and our own sins and confess -

*Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give my guilty conscience peace
Or wash away my stain. (Gadsby's 125)*

And you will feel an inward teaching, and be brought into an agreement with the Word of God and favoured to walk with God in what He declares about and against sinners, and what He says concerning Himself. It is a wonderful consideration that all the characters and offices of the Lord Jesus would fall to the ground and be of no purpose were it not for us, if it were not for sinners, if it were not for His people. For of what use is a Saviour if there are no lost sinners' causes to plead? Of what use is a good Shepherd unless He has a flock; and so you will be given to realise, not

superficially, but in connexion with your own case, that all the glory of God in Christ, in salvation, involves your state as a sinner.

'Behold the Lamb of God.' John had a view of Him in heaven; the same Lamb. He did not vacate a single office He assumed here. He did not dissolve a single relationship that He made with His people in taking human nature. So John saw Him in heaven - "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne: and the beasts and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." A sacred ascription of praise to the exalted Lamb after He had finished the work of salvation and led captivity captive and ascended on high.

O to behold Him! 'Behold the Lamb of God.' The Lamb of God, the sacrifice appointed by Him. He is eternal, He is God, equal, with the Father. If He were not what He is, then His sacrifice would have had no more validity than those of old, and this makes His person to be very sacred, very precious. I do believe that I receive into my heart the blessed doctrine of the eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, because it has been made the very foundation of my hope.

'Behold the Lamb of God.' Who this Lamb is, in His eternal Person, God and Man; and you will feel to need Him. None other could have redeemed lost mankind, and in the method of salvation the Lord will give His people to know it. In reading the chapter, it seemed to be just in the nick of time that the voice from heaven was heard. Abraham was just about to strike that knife into the heart of his only beloved son. Just as it were, in time. We read that the righteous are scarcely saved. Not that there is any scarceness in salvation; it is a plentiful redemption, an infinite fullness. But the Lord will give His people to know the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that nothing less than what is revealed in the Gospel can save. O the condescension, the life, the sufferings, the ignominy, the reproach, the blessed death of the Lord Jesus! Nothing less was sufficient to remove sin and take it away. 'Behold the Lamb of God.' There seems something very blessed about this declaration, -- 'The Lamb of God.' A provision, an appointment: "As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment, so also was Christ once offered to bear the sins of many; and to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."

There are two appointments, and behold the Lamb appointed by God! - A sacrifice acceptable to Him. A sacrifice which needed to be offered but once; and the reason is because everything that Christ did had the virtue of eternity in it, because His eternal Person. What we need is the Holy Spirit to make application of it to our own case. O to behold Him as a provision for us!

'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' Therefore, Paul says to the Corinthians "I determine not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." That determination will be wrought in the heart of a poor sinner who views this Lamb of God, and He alone can remove sin, cleanse the heart, heal the conscience, sanctify the soul and fit a sinner for heaven. I have thought of the two things that Paul expressed concerning this Lamb of God. He said, "I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." He also said, "I am persuaded that nothing shall separate us from His love."

'Behold the Lamb of God.' Behold Him in His birth taking human nature; otherwise He would not be a Lamb, could not be a sacrifice. Deity cannot die. Deity cannot be a mediator between God and Man. O then, behold the Lamb of God in taking human nature, wherein he assumed every blessed character! If it were not for this He would never be the door into the sheepfold. If it were not that He was God and man, He would never be the way to God, from hell to heaven, from sin to grace. If it were not that He took real human nature, He could never have been a Substitute -and this is the Lamb, substituted as in the type that we read, in the type of the ram that was caught in the thicket. We would not use any fanciful interpretation, but my friends, it might well intend that the Lamb which represents Christ as a Substitute for His people was caught in the thicket of the divine decrees of God. 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.'

He is spoken of in another character - "Behold my servant whom I uphold, Mine elect in whom My soul delighteth." - the same blessed person. This Lamb was a Servant: "I come to do Thy will, O My God; Thy law is within My heart." The mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ does display His matchless condescension. I have felt, and sometimes said and believed, that it is warrantable to say that the highest honour that was conferred upon Christ in the work of salvation, was an infinite condescension, it must be; and yet therein the glory of the Lord is magnified. In redemption's work there is a display of the wisdom, and love, and goodness, and justice and mercy of Jehovah and the whole was in Christ Jesus, in this Lamb. All the forgiveness, and all the life that the whole Church did need. All the grace - grace to save them, grace to abound in them over sin, grace to be sufficient for them, in every time of need. A fullness, a richness of divine mercy. A fullness of life - in Him was life, and in this was manifested the love of God toward us, that He sent His only Son into the world that we might live through Him. O behold this Lamb of God sitting upon the throne of His heavenly graces Behold Him in casting up a highway to heaven, removing every stumbling block. Behold the Lamb of God obeying the law, rendering infinite satisfaction, paying the uttermost farthing, to every debt His people owed.

Shocked at the sum, yet prompt to pay. (Gadsby's 794)

If what we are saying is true my friends, you will agree with the Apostle to the Romans where he says, "Wherefore, brethren, we are debtors." 'Behold the Lamb of God.' There must be a sacrifice, there must be a ransom, there must be a deliverer, a Saviour, and this is the One provided. We read I think in the 159th hymn in Gadsby's -

*That wrath would have kindled a hell
Of never-abating despair,
In millions of creatures, which fell
On Jesus, and spent itself there.
'Twas justice that burst in a blaze
Of vengeance, on Jesus our Head;
Divinity's indwelling rays
Sustained Him till nature was dead.*

'Behold the Lamb of God.' He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter, was this Mighty One. Omnipotent! He who created the heavens and the earth and all that is therein, yet for love to His people He opened not His mouth.

Behold Him in the Judgment hall. His judgment was taken from Him. Have you ever followed the divinely inspired record of this Lamb of God in the work of taking away the sins of the church? They had to be removed in such a way that justice should not be violated, that the glory of God should not be sullied. O how precious it is when you approach the throne of grace realising what you are! You cannot find a worse sinner than you are yourself, and yet to behold the Lamb of God as you trace Him in the Holy Scriptures. Behold the Lamb of God in surveying the wondrous cross. He was the Prince of Glory, He hung there. His enemies thought they had a victory, thought that He was defeated, He looked helpless. They derided Him and said, He saved others, Himself He cannot save. They put vinegar to His sacred lips when He was athirst. O the sufferings of the Lord!

*The pangs of His body were great,
But greater the pangs of His mind; (Gadsby's 159)*

and in all this, if we are given to see it rightly, we shall see sin like itself to be, and, therefore, the greatest thing in our apprehension will be salvation.

'Behold the Lamb of God.' Hear Him cry, "It is finished." If the Holy Ghost should bear witness in our hearts that that was declared for us, it would dissolve us at His blessed feet in love.

*Love and grief compound an unction
Both to cleanse the soul and heal. (J Hart)*

'It is finished.' He knew it. He knew that all things were accomplished. He knew that redemptions work was done. He knew that every one of His dear people was redeemed and secured. He knew that the law was honoured and fulfilled and magnified. He knew that the works of the devil were destroyed. He knew that every promise concerning Him in the Scriptures was now fulfilled. All that the prophets prophesied concerning Him. "It is finished." To have a glimpse of this sacrifice, the Lamb of God, upon Calvary's cross, offering Himself. He never offered anything else; and everything that He did had the virtue of His Person in it. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect and I believe it is right to say this, that His work is not only perfect because of its perfect accomplishment, but it is perfect through the merit and virtue of Him that wrought it. Difficult it is to express this blessed truth. You may perhaps see a carpenter, a skilled carpenter; he will make a piece of work and the joints perfectly joined together, but the perfection of that work does not come from the person of the carpenter. But all the perfection of the work of salvation is a communicated work. Infinite merit of the Person of Christ in what He does and that is what makes salvation so great in the heart. It partakes of Himself. He is in the work. But this is the work — 'which taketh away the sin of the world' that is, the world of His people. It cannot be the whole world, otherwise this would not have been true; "Of all that Thou hast given Me I have lost nothing." But the taking away of the sin of the world was by the sacrifice of Himself. "Who His own self, bore our sins, in His own body, on the tree." How explicit that is - "Who, His own self" that is, His divine person; in His own body, His sacred humanity bore, our sins, on the tree.

Have you ever seen Him by faith? If you have, you have loved Him. Are you after Him? John here had been baptising and some asked him "Why baptisest thou then if thou be not that Christ, neither

Elias, neither that prophet?" John answered them saying, "I baptise with water, but there standeth One among you whom you know not, He it is that coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." O what a blessed sight John had of Him! He said, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

We try from time to time in our feeble way to lift Him up. You will behold Him in the Scriptures, in the various characters so suitable to sinners. View Him as Moses lifted Him up in the wilderness in the emblem of a serpent, a brazen serpent, a very blessed type. Those that were stung and bitten, they looked and lived. You know what the sting of sin is, what the venomous bite of sin is which spreads the dire contagion to the hearts but O to behold this Lamb of God made sins.

*Serpents are the beasts that strike them;
Make of brass a serpent like them;
That's the way I choose to save. (Gadsby's 876)*

Behold the Lamb appointed of God, made sin. He spared Him not, *spared* not His own Son. Every Word has weight in it. God never loved any like He loved His Son, although with the love wherewith He loved His Son He loves His people; but not in that measure that He loved His Son. "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him."

Well my friends, if we are not interested in that work which He declared as finished then we have a terrible eternity before Every utterance of the Lord Jesus was eternal, an eternal Word. And when He died he knew for whom He died; "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed." The Lord Jesus knew every individual for whom He finished that work, and He beheld them with His infinite eye and recognised them and said, "It is finished."

O there are some here doubtless, whom the Lord saw when He cried "it is finished!" Finished for that sinner. Redemption is complete. He bowed, bowed His sacred head and dismissed His spirit, gave up the ghost. "I have power (said He) to lay down My life; I have power to take it again." This is the Lamb of God. This is the Saviour of sinners. This is the Mediator between God and men, by whom alone we can draw near unto God. This is He, who of God, is made, even unto His people, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption.

O what a question, I say again, was that which Isaac asked of his father. I believe there is an experience under the law when a poor sinner is self-condemned; and under the condemnation of the law when he can only see the wood and the fire - that which devours, sees nothing else. "Where is the Lamb for a burnt offering?" Behold Him!

O may the Holy Ghost reveal Himself, in our hearts, that we may behold Him as the Father's Servant and as the Servant of the Church, the Servant of poor sinners! What a service He rendered to everyone that is His. What honour has He raised His people unto! Through His condescension in taking human nature, He has made it possible for a sinner to partake of the divine nature, to be brought into eternal union with Him and into eternal relationship with Him. What great honour then, to be sons and daughters of the Lord almighty, to be heirs of God Himself and joint-heirs with Christ! To have reserved in heaven an inheritance so different from everything here below, which we

must leave. An inheritance into which His people enter. O rich inheritance of those things which are incorruptible, undefiled and that fade not away!

May the Lord grant to us here and there a faith's view of His glory, that we in the midst of tribulation may in our very experience know and confess, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us".

Amen.