

Sunday, January 18, 2026

Epiphany 2A

John 1:29-42a

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

My friends,

What is certain?

What is true?

The internet has created a platform where every single person on earth can yell at each other.

So much is being said.

So much is being claimed.

Is any of it right?

And with AI,

it is getting harder and harder to know
if what you're seeing and hearing is real.

Epiphany Season is about the truth.

Epiphany is about revelation.

This season takes us through times
when God cuts through the noise of our world.

God cuts through the noise and speaks.

He speaks truth.

His Word that created reality.

His Word is the truth.

Epiphany is not about our discovery of Jesus.

It's not about our opinions of Jesus.

Epiphany is about God making Jesus truly known.

He makes Him known by the Holy Spirit.

John's witness to Jesus today is not speculation or sentiment.

His testimony is grounded in Divine revelation.

He bears witness to the truth.

John calls us today to look, hear, and go.

I. LOOK

My friends,

St. John the Baptist points his finger toward Jesus.

He takes a deep breath and cries out,

*"**Look**, the Lamb of God,*

who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

John makes it clear that this confession did not come from himself.

"I myself did not know Him," he says.

But God revealed Jesus to him by the Holy Spirit.

The One who sent John to baptize

promised that the Spirit would descend and remain on
the Christ—

and so John bears witness:

"This is the Son of God." (John 1:33–34)

And now, by that same Spirit, John points Him out to us.

*"**Look**, the Lamb of God."*

Notice who John does *not* tell us to look at.

He does not say, "Look, a great teacher."

He does not say, "Look, a moral example."

He does not say, "Look, someone who will show you how to live."

He says, *"**Look**, the **Lamb** of God."*

In the Old Testament, lambs were sacrificed for sin.

Lambs were offered daily on the altar.

The blood of the Passover lamb

caused death to pass over God's people.

And through Isaiah, God promised a servant—

"Like a lamb led to the slaughter,"

Who would be

"cut off out of the land of the living,

stricken for the transgression of My people." (Isaiah 53)

Now John says: ***Look** at Him.*

Take your attention off of everything else.

Pay attention to Jesus.

Look at Jesus!

Jesus is not a lamb that **we** bring.
 He is the Lamb **God** provides.
 The Lamb *who takes away the sin of the world.*

So turn your eyes from this mad world.
 Turn your eyes from your sin.
Look to Jesus.

Jesus is not **a potential** forgiveness.
 He is not forgiveness for **some** sins.
 He is forgiveness for **every** sin.
 He takes away the whole broken condition of sin itself.
 There is **nothing** Jesus has not taken away.
 Forgiveness for you
 is established, accomplished, assured, and completed.
 for "*[Christ] poured out His soul unto death...
 was numbered with the transgressors...
 and bore the sin of many.*" (Isaiah 53:12)

Look at Jesus.

He is the Son of God—eternal and preexistent.
 Though John was born first, he confesses,
"[Jesus] was before me."
 Before Jesus' conception,
 He was with God and was God. (John 1:1)
 By Him all things were created,
 and in Him all things hold together.
 He is the image of the invisible God. (Colossians 1:15)

So when you see Jesus, you do not see a symbol of God.
 You see God Himself come in the flesh for you.

Look at Jesus.

He is the One who takes *your* sins away.

II. HEAR

My friends,

Before we can go anywhere or do anything, we must first look.

We must **look** to Jesus and **hear** Him.

Because faith does not begin with our decision.

Faith begins with God's revelation.

Today's text calls us to **look** and to **hear**.

Jesus creates disciples by speaking.

So **hear** His gracious invitation and Spirit-giving Word!

The Holy Spirit works through the testimony of the Word.

John speaks, "*Look, the Lamb of God.*"

*"The two disciples **heard** him say this,
and they followed Jesus."* (John 1:37)

The disciples **hear**, and they follow.

Romans 10 says,

*"So faith comes from **hearing**,*

*and **hearing** through the word of Christ."* (Romans 10:17).

The Holy Spirit works through the external Word.

Faith isn't generated by human feeling or effort.

Faith is made by the Spirit's power

working in the objective, proclaimed Gospel.

The **External Word is the** tangible, public means God uses.

The Holy Spirit uses the Bible (God's written Word).

The Holy Spirit uses the sermon & sacraments

(God's spoken Word).

The preaching and reading of the Gospel

and reception of Absolution and Baptism,

and Holy Communion

are the divinely appointed channels

through which God delivers His Spirit and saves people.

Hear Jesus!

Listen to the clear, objective Word of Christ.
 Your assurance and confidence
 are in His unchangeable, eternal Words.
 Your trust is not in feeling spiritual,
 in intense experiences,
 in your circumstances,
 or in moral advancement.

Your confidence rests on the objective truth of God's Word.
 You believe the promises Jesus spoke to you from the Scripture.
 Jesus says,
*"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.
 The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."* (John 6:63)

The disciples heard, and they followed.
*"Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them,
 "What are you seeking?"
 And they said to Him, "...Teacher, where are you staying?"
 "He said to them,
 "Come, and you will see." (John 1:38-39a)*

Hear His gracious invitation!
 Listen to His Spirit-giving Word!
"Come and you will see."

Jesus doesn't ask for a resume.
 Jesus doesn't have a list of prerequisites.
 He doesn't ask for references or work experience.
 Jesus just gives an invitation and a promise.
"Come and you will see."

"And they stayed with Him that day."
 Discipleship began with abiding.
 Being with Jesus makes all the difference.

*"I am the vine; you are the branches.
Whoever abides in Me and I in him,
he it is that bears much fruit,
for apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)*

How do we stay with Christ?

By Being with Him where He is.
And where is He?
He is where Christ promises to be.
He promises to be in His Word.
Jesus promises to be in His Supper.
Jesus promises to be in Holy Absolution.
Jesus promises to be in Baptism.

The means of grace.

This is where the Holy Spirit gives and sustains faith.
This is where Jesus is staying.
Abiding in these,
*"you are not lacking in any gift,
as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ."*
(1 Corinthians 1:7)

III. GO!

My friends,

Today's Gospel calls us to **look, hear, and go.**

*"One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus
was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.
He first found his own brother Simon
and said to him,
"We have found the Messiah" (John 1:40–41)*

What is the result of seeing and hearing Jesus?

The Holy Spirit-empowered result of the Gospel is witness.
Andrew tells His brother, *"We have found the Messiah."*

Andrew hasn't taken any courses.
 He hasn't learned steps or techniques.
 He just has good news to share.
 His heart overflows.
"We have found the Messiah."

Andrew **goes** and finds Simon.
 He brings him to Jesus.
 Not to himself.
 Not to programs.
 Not to a slick performance.
 He simply brings Him to where Jesus is.

And Jesus does the saving.
 Jesus does the naming.
 Jesus gives Simon a new name.
 He calls him Peter.

John pointed to Jesus.
 Andrew pointed to Jesus.
 And Jesus welcomed.

The results are not up to us.
 We just **go** to people and point them towards Jesus.
 It is the Holy Spirit who calls people by the Gospel.
 The Holy Spirit is the one who enlightens people with His gifts.
 The Holy Spirit is the One who sanctifies
 and keeps people in the true faith.

All we do is go and point.
"We have found the Messiah."

And even that pointing is worked by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.
 And Jesus has put **you** in the Spirit.
*"For into one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...
 and all were made to drink of one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13)*

God promises,

*"Repent and be baptized every one of you
in the name of Jesus Christ
for the forgiveness of your sins,
and you **will** receive the **gift** of the **Holy Spirit**."* (Acts 2:38)

And our Lord

*"...Jesus stood up and cried out,
"...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...**"
(John 7:37–39).*

The Holy Spirit frees us from fear.

The Holy Spirit uses us in our ordinary vocations and roles.

The Holy Spirit works through our imperfect lives.

The Holy Spirit has us **go** through life, pointing to Jesus.

With the Holy Spirit's help, we **go** and point each other to Jesus.

With the Holy Spirit's help, we **go** and point the world to Jesus.

The Father says to Jesus,

*"It is too light a thing
that you should be my servant to raise up [only Israel];
I will make you as a light for the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."* (Isaiah 49:6).

The Holy Spirit uses you to reflect the light of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit shines in you to point others to Jesus.

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My friends,
Jesus is the truth.

We **look** again and again to the Lamb.
We **hear** His Spirit-filled Word.
And we **go**, not driven by guilt, but carried by grace.

The Holy Spirit revealed Jesus at the Jordan.
The same Holy Spirit reveals Jesus today.

He reveals Jesus in preaching, in Baptism, in bread and wine.
The Holy Spirit reveals the Lamb
until the day we see Him face to face.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, amen.