



Scandal of the Lamb ~ April 7, 2019

OPEN

What political scandal stands out in your mind? Have you ever thought of Jesus as scandalous? Jesus said, "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34) In the New Testament terms like "offense" or "stumbling block" come from the Greek term for "scandal". Think of the scandal of Jesus in John 12...

- verse 37 – though Jesus performed attesting **miracles**, many did not **believe**
- verse 42 – though some **believed**, but would not confess Christ out of **fear**

There is a scandal to the Lamb of God is but only He brings spiritual **vitality!**

DIG

Read **I Peter 2:1-12**. Consider three ways in which the Lamb gives **vitality**.

Verses 1-3 - Here the language is about laying aside all that hinders growth, in order to grow! As followers of Jesus, what should we put aside? Malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander. Instead, we should be just like a newborn who craves milk. Why? That baby is programmed to grow. And that is the expectation for someone who has experienced salvation in Jesus Christ. At Cornerstone we are mapping out a discipleship pathway which has four stages.

Relating - Learning to love Jesus, and in response to His command to love one another, as we read in the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40). Loving relationships are a reflection of God's love for believers in Christ Jesus (I John 4:9-11).

Serving - Learning to live like Jesus in response to His pattern of selflessness and service. Not only did Jesus model service for us, but He told us that we should also serve one another (John 13:13-15). Serving like Jesus is a distinguishing mark of Christian discipleship.

Depending - Learning to live like Jesus with a heart of dependence upon God. Only as the Holy Spirit empowers us will our ministry activities bear fruit (John 15:1-11). We express this dependence primarily through prayer, but it extends to having a disposition of depending on God.

Multiplying - Learning to live like Jesus in response to His pattern of making disciples, as He command us in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). We are given the mandate to multiply followers of Jesus Christ who will win and intentionally disciple other followers, who in turn will make other disciples (II Timothy 2:2).

Verses 4-10 - There are several Old Testament references in these verses which show that it should not have been surprising that Jesus would provide offense. Though He was scandalous, yet He accomplished salvation! Christians are rescued from the scandal of hopelessness and given a new, eternal purpose to glorify God. Think of it as a "glow" if you will.

- The glow which comes from shared, spiritual vitality - vv. 4-5
- The glow which comes from satisfaction not disappointment - vv. 6-8
- The glow which comes from being people of God and priests - vv. 9-10

Verses 11-12 - The scandalous Saviour vitalizes our lives by sending us into the world, just as He was sent into this world – see **John 20:21**. This "going" into the world in which we live has a negative and a positive aspect.

- We must abstain from lusts which wage war against the soul - v. 11
- We must keep [our] behavior excellent" - v. 12.

This is done with the recognition that we are foreigners and strangers in this world. There is a unique [floating house](#) on the banks of the Thames River in England. It embraces the flooding of the river by rising with it. The follower of Jesus will face a flood of spiritual scandal - doubts, insults, sneers. But the Holy Spirit will enable our "house to float" in these times.

REFLECT

Nixon's "hatchet man" Charles Colson was convicted and jailed for his part in Watergate. But in 1973 Colson's life was transformed by the grace of God. He founded [Prison Fellowship International](#), wrote Christian books, established Christian world view center, and offered daily radio commentary [BreakPoint](#). Jesus lifted Colson from scandal to "declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (I Peter 2:9).

Jesus Himself expressed, "Blessed is anyone who does not stumble [lit. "scandaled"] on account of me." (Matthew 11:6) Reflect further on the *scandal* of Jesus by listening to the song "[Scandalon](#)" by Michael Card...

*The seers and the prophets had foretold it long ago
That the long awaited one would make men stumble
But they were looking for a king to conquer and to kill
Who'd have ever thought He'd be so weak and humble*

*He will be the truth that will offend them one and all
A stone that makes men stumble and a rock that makes them fall
Many will be broken so that He can make them whole
And many will be crushed and lose their own soul*

*Along the path of life there lies a stubborn Scandalon
And all who come this way must be offended
To some He is a barrier, To others He's the way
For all should know the scandal of believing*

*It seems today the Scandalon offends no one at all
The image we present can be stepped over
Could it be that we are like the others long ago
Will we ever learn that all who come must stumble*