

Season 4, Episode 3: Glorious Lamb (1:19-34)

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Felicity: Hello and welcome to two sisters & a cup of tea. My name is Felicity and I live in the US. And this is my sister Sarah and she is in the UK. Hi, Sarah.

Sarah: Hi, nice to see you.

Felicity: What's in your cup today?

Sarah: Oh, I've got an Earl Grey today. What do you got?

Felicity: Or same actually. Earl Gray classic gentle brew. I like.

Sarah: We do often get a snap like that.

Felicity: No, I'm more expecting you to have a sort of hot water at this time of the day.

Sarah: No, I think I've branched out quite a lot in the last year. Podcast provokes tea drinking. Definitely a wider variety going on than there was a year ago.

Felicity: It's true when you name your podcasters, your podcasters isn't a cup of tea, then there's a certain obligation to hit that tea drinking.

Sarah: I enjoyed it, though. I'm enjoying the exploration to tea.

Felicity: Me too. Biscuits as well. I'm quite proud of my bike today, actually. A handmade star biscuit.

Sarah: Oh, nice. Christmas recipe.

Felicity: One Christmas recipe in honor of my son's birthday, though. He wanted a space themed birthday, so star biscuits and a cake, you'll be glad to hear.

Sarah: Oh, good.

Felicity: Yeah, biscuits on their own. A little disappointing, even if you are English. Yeah.

Sarah: Okay, so, Flisty, before we get into John, a bit more of John, we thought it would be worth asking the question, why do we bother picking up the Bible during the week with a friend? But if you're hearing it on Sunday at church and you're maybe even in a house Greek or a home group or something as well, why do this as well? Why the encouragement to meet up with a sister in Christ and do this?

Felicity: Yeah, I think even not just with a sister, but on your own, like, why bother picking up the Bible for yourself just as much as whether you do it with a friend when you're hearing things at other times? And I think in my experience, there's just been so much gained from digging into the Word myself. My own understanding of the word then helps me to develop my own convictions that are not dependent upon who's teaching me it. And it's not to say that teaching is bad, that is essential, that is a good thing. But as I understand it for myself, I think I'm more rooted in my faith, less likely to be shaken because I'm really convinced that that is what the Bible says rather than just hearing it from someone in a pulpit or whatever. What about you? Have you had a similar experience?

Sarah: Yeah, that's helpful. It's just the more you read it and I guess the more you get into it for yourself, the richer it becomes, doesn't it? Because I think the more you that you do it, the more the easier it probably becomes as well, and the hungrier you get to keep reading it. And I think that should then flow into back into how you listen on a Sunday and how you chat in a home group and how, you know, generally encourage others anyway. And I think just this time, either chatting with you or with someone else or on my own, it fuels everything else as much as the Sunday service urban will fuel this time as well. Does that make sense?

Felicity: Yeah, that's so helpful. So the hunger grows and so then you're more and more attuned to the Word, and so more and more eager to listen to God and to encourage others in it. That is so true. That's so true. I think.

Sarah: Yeah. All right, well, let's get stuck into it. Today we are reading John's first chapter still, and we're on verses 19 to what are we doing, 1934? And we're in the NIV translation, in case we didn't mention that last time. So John, chapter one, verse 19 to 34. Now. This was John's testimony. When the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was, he did not fail to confess, but confess freely. I am not the Messiah. They asked him, then who are you? Are you Elijah? He said, I am not. Are you the prophet? He answered no. Finally they said, who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself? John replied, in the words of Isaiah, the prophet, I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness. Make straight the way for the Lord. Now the Pharisees who'd been sent questioned him. Why then you baptize if you're not the Messiah? Nor Elijah, nor the Prophet. I baptized with water, John replied, but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. This all happened at Bethany, on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day, John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I meant when I said, a man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me. I myself did not know him. But the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel. Then John gave this testimony. I saw the spirit come down from heaven as above and remain on him. And I myself did not know Him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, the man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. I have seen and I testify that this is God's chosen one. Wow.

Felicity: That ending is just so strong. Isn't it just? This is him. This is God's Chosen One. I think it's so amazing all the way through, especially that first half, that John is so clearly pointing to Jesus rather than to himself. There's so much kind of the people coming to us, the priests and the Levites are asking him, who are you? And he's just kind of deflecting again and again. It's not about me. You're asking the wrong question, really, aren't they?

Sarah: Yeah. I think it's really interesting that, isn't it? All the way through, there's this kind of repetition of John's testimony. He confessed freely, his testimony. He looked so I've seen I testify so there's like, again, like what we're beginning to see last week as well, weren't we about testimony? And then yet at the same time, he's not saying, this is who I am. He's saying, look, this is who I've come to talk about, this is who I'm pointing to. He's like the Jesus pointer of all time is me.

Felicity: Yeah. Otherwise known as the signpost. Yes, the signpost. The voice. Yeah. When they say, are you Elijah? They're talking about if you were to go back into Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, there's a kind of reference to the next person of God before the Messiah will be Elijah. So it's interesting that they're asking that because they kind of have spotted, oh, this guy John, he is of God. Could he be that person that's talked about back in those prophecies? But then they don't seem to make kind of the next leap, do they, or not? Yet? Whether they're going to or not has yet to be revealed.

Sarah: Yeah, it's interesting, why, isn't it? And then they say, Are you the prophet? And I don't really know what they're talking about there, do you?

Felicity: No. I did a lot of research and I still couldn't work it out. So I think it must just mean an important person theological there. Yes.

Sarah: So then he goes on verse 23, and he replies, in the words of Isaiah, I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness makes straight the way for the Lord. And I think what's really helpful about Bibles is that if you look at the end, I've got this little kind of letter and look down at the bottom, mine's letter D, and it says Isaiah 40, verse three. And then you can go back and check what's happening in Isaiah 40. And I don't know whether you did this, but this absolutely blew my mind as I took myself back to Isaiah 40 and saw the context of this quote.

Felicity: Yes, it is huge, isn't it? Such a huge chapter in the whole realm of Isaiah. Anyway, and then you read this and I think as we go back and check the footnote, it's not that you're checking to see whether it's right, it's actually like, okay, what's the deal at that point? And

we have this huge this chapter actually starts with this kind of comfort. Comfort because the Lord Himself is coming to save and to judge. And that's that's one of one of the big things here. We have this whole kind of the enormity of what John is saying as he quotes Isaiah here is that God Himself is coming.

Sarah: Yeah. And that's like just the way that that's described in Isaiah. In verse five, it says, the glory of the Lord will be revealed. The mouth of the Lord has spoken. It talks about the word of the Lord, lasting, enduring forever. It talks about the Lord coming with power, but he'll also tend to his flock like a shepherd and gather the lambs in his arms, carrying them close to his heart, gently leading back. It's just the most extraordinary picture of the Lord coming to his people. And we've just read before about the words becoming flesh and then you just connect the dots and you're like, what?

Felicity: This is amazing.

Sarah: And so it's not just that John's kind of saying, oh, I'm that guy in Isaiah 40 saying, I'm going to prepare the way. It's the whole context of what that verse is in that is so extraordinary and it so kind of just brings us home, whom he's introducing us to.

Felicity: Yes, absolutely. So in a way, like, the reference just kind of adds a whole new dimension to the introduction that we've been having in these opening verses. If 120 is the prologue and kind of get setting the scene, introducing Jesus to us, and then we get this like really early doors, big fat Isaiah quotation, which just blows it all out of proportion because it's cosmic levels of who Jesus is and what he's fulfilling. And suddenly you see that this person who's being talked about here is what all of that has been anticipating, essentially the whole of history up until this point has been waiting for the word to be.

Sarah: And then you get John, because the next day John sees him and the first thing he says about Jesus is, look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And again, that's like a mind blowing kind of concept and kind of saying what he just said is extraordinary. And that's the first thing we get about Jesus from John's mouth. I just think, Whoa, it's really interesting, isn't it?

Felicity: Because then he repeats it again in the verse that just dispersed after our passage. So in all of this, as he's introducing Jesus, you think when you're telling someone about someone else. The first things you say are of kind of utmost importance. So clearly we've had that whole identity of him as the Son of God, as the chosen one, but then also that person is also the Lamb of God who is going to take away the sin of the world. And that, in its very statement, is quite something, isn't it? The idea that this yahweh is also the lamb, the sacrificial lamb, who will take away the sin, which is our biggest problem. And I wonder whether that's one of the challenges through having this description so early on is for us to realize that sin is such a big problem that we need to know that he's the Lamb of God really early on to recognize that. What do you think?

Sarah: Yeah, I mean, the fact that is the first thing he says about it, about him, it means it's really important, isn't it? It's setting a tone, isn't it? And it's kind of looking back, Jesus, you know, the whole of the Old Testament is kind of image in this moment, isn't it? Like, if we think about just sacrifice through the Old Testament and then here we are. If we think about sin, all of it is image here. And just the enormity of I just can't get over the kind of a picture of a lamb, a lamb, a gentle little lamb, and the sin of the world. I mean, it's so incongruous, isn't it? You can't really picture those two things together at the same time, and yet they are. And that's who John is saying Jesus is, and that's who we're kind of introduced to you.

Felicity: And I wonder what you're saying about the kind of Incogniti of those two things, like the Lam and the sinwa that must have been very similar. So you're looking at this very ordinary man. He's nothing remarkable to look at according to all kinds of accounts, and yet he's being described in these kind of magnificent terms and that he is capable of taking on himself the sin of the world. And those two things, just that the enormity of who Jesus is and what he has come to do are just beginning to become more and more clear, aren't they? We're only in the first chapter still, and I feel like my view of Jesus is kind of exploding. It's interesting, isn't it, walking so slowly through these verses, which are very familiar verses. I've definitely read these a number of times before, but it's really I feel like my eyes are being opened wider than they have been before, and I.

Sarah: See this and I think that's the challenge on our hearts, isn't it? Does my view of Jesus line up with what I'm seeing here today? Is this what I think about Jesus when I wake

up in the morning? That my sin is included in that phrase? My sin needs to be dealt with today. And it's my view of Jesus lining up with what Isaiah says about Jesus as well, because this is extraordinary picture, isn't it? We had an extraordinary picture last week of introducing him in the prologue. And this is another kind of aspect that just again, it's so kind of awful, what's the word?

Felicity: Or inspiring something along those lines, isn't it?

Sarah: But like, oh, that feels like that's my prayer. I want my view of Jesus in the middle of my day to be this and not to be kind of diminished.

Felicity: And I think that is really helpful. To then have these verses, their whole purpose, as John has told us, is to reveal who Jesus is so that we might believe in his name. And as we then dwell on these verses and things like the Isaiah quotation, even just John pointing to him as the Lamb of the Lamb he takes into the world, they all kind of add to those anchoring understandings of who Jesus is. Because I think then I come back to these verses and I've been coming back to them repeatedly as we've been looking forward to this, then I'm more likely to think like this rather than think like what my unbelieving friends are saying or what I see the world to be kind of making a big deal of. But the more I dwell on this, the more my heart is maybe shaped by this. Is that the word or kind of anchored in these truths? It's been encouraging to me. And I think that all comes in with the revelation theme that we've been having going through these verses as well. When John is saying, Come and see, look, he's pointing, it's testimony, it's witness. And what a blessing it is to have revelation, to be able to see Jesus through these words so we can be absolutely sure that this is who Jesus is and he is worth following and he is worth having a huge picture of. He surpasses anything else that we could imagine.

Sarah: Yeah, definitely. And I think John very he feels like he's been extraordinarily intentional in that, in setting up his first chapter and just reminding the reader of how sure he is because of what he's seen and again, what John the Baptist has seen and testified to. And he's lining up the witness statements of me and he's combining that with these kind of belters of phrases about Jesus that make you sit up and make you realize, I can't just leave. You know, this is crazy. What you're saying about Jesus is either true or it's not, isn't it? It's a crazy statement to say you're the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. I mean, it's nuts if it's not true.

Felicity: And I think it's interesting. Is it? Because that's right. So it's nuts if it's not true. And then hopefully John is giving us so many different facets of who Jesus is so we can be all the more persuaded that he is the lamb who takes away the sin. He is capable of being that lamb because of all the other voices and all the other testimonies that show who he is. It's challenging in a kind of it's not like go away and do stuff, is it's?

Sarah: My bigger view of Jesus, I think. And that's what we came back to know in Esther maybe as well, thinking actually, sometimes a lot of the time, applying God's word doesn't necessarily look like, go away and do this thing. It looks like here, it looks like, look at Jesus, marvel at who he is, that you got this word of God that's shown through in front of you and pray to that end, isn't it?

Felicity: It's totally amazing. I mean, I've got an old tingly feeling. Just happens. Why don't you pray for us, Sarah, that we would have hearts that are filled with Jesus.

Sarah: Heavenly Father, we just thank you so much for this testimony that we have here that is true and trustworthy. We thank you so much for this extraordinary vision of who Jesus is, that he brings comfort, that he leads his people gently, like a shepherd with his lambs, and yet he is also the lamb of God. He takes away the sin of the world. We just praise you so much, Lord, that this is who we are presented with today. And this is what we need to hear about the Lord Jesus today. We need to hear that our sin is a problem. We need to hear that there is a solution and it's found and met in the Lord Jesus. Lord, please, would you keep enlarging our view of Jesus? Would he become greater and would we become less as we see more and more of this extraordinary picture of the Lord Jesus? Amen.

Felicity: Amen. Thank you, Sarah. Thank you, everyone for listening. We'll be praying on that. We're all be heart filled with Jesus. I finished my delightful cup of El Grey. It was very pleasant.

Sarah: I know. Very quick. Yeah. Love a good cup of tea with you. It's great. Great. So we'll see you next time. If you are enjoying this series, why not share it with a friend? Is there someone you can text right now and say, why don't you listen along together? And we've got these questions in the Show Notes. Go to the show notes. We've got a range of different things on the show Notes to help you, but the biggest thing are some questions to dig into over a cup of tea that just kind of helps to root this in your heart a little bit more and to help you pray it through with a friend as well. And we'll see you next time for the next bit of chapter one.

Felicity: See you next time. Goodbye. Bye.

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