MESSAGE 5:

# *THE LAMB OF GOD*

**SUGGESTED PASSAGE:** John 1:29-37 (NASB)
29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' 31 I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water." 32 John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. 33 I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' 34 I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

**MESSAGE GOAL:** The goal of this message is to show you how to apply the benefits of Jesus Christ's death as the Lamb of God to your life, not only to save you in heaven, but to save and deliver you in history.

**INTRODUCTION:** One day, a repairman working up high on the steeple of a church slipped and fell to what appeared to be certain death. But just as he fell, a lamb came walking along in front of the church. The workman hit the lamb, which broke his fall and saved his life, although it killed the lamb. The workman got up and got himself together, then walked over to the door of the church and painted a picture of a lamb on it. He wanted everybody who came through that door to recognize that their only right to enter the church was because a lamb had been slain.

That brings us to the next name of Jesus, to whom John the Baptist pointed and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). "Behold" means "Pay close attention. Look! Here is the promised sacrificial Lamb that Israel has been looking for centuries." They had been waiting for the One promised to come who would take away sins. John the Baptist was saying that the wait was over.

**SERMON POINTS:**

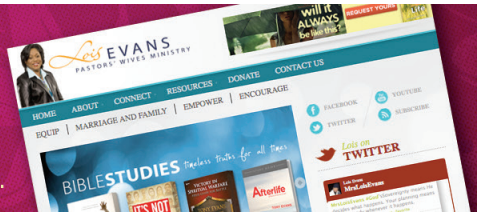
**1. JESUS' NAME AS THE LAMB OF GOD TELLS US THAT HE IS THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PROMISE TO PROVIDE A ONCE-FOR-ALL PAYMENT FOR OUR SINS:**

- When Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to cover their sin themselves by sewing leaves together to wear (Genesis 3).
- But God had to kill an animal Himself and shed its blood in order to provide an acceptable covering for Adam and Eve.
- This led to the sacrificial system throughout the Old Testament by which the wrath of God against sin could be assuaged.
- The centerpiece of this program occurred on the night of Passover (Exodus 12:13). The blood of the lamb would avert judgment based on God's justice.

**2. THE SACRIFICIAL LAMBS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ONLY PROVIDED TEMPORARY COVERING FOR OUR SIN UNTIL THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS, THE PERFECT LAMB OF GOD:**

- Ultimately, it is "impossible" for the blood of animals to take away sins (Hebrews 10:4).
- A lamb was a temporary sacrifice because God demands that sinners pay for their own sins.
- But since the sacrifice had to be perfect, without spot or blemish, no human being could meet the demand because we are all equally messed up by sin.
- So God instituted a temporary system to keep God's wrath from being expressed to His people because of their sin (Hebrews 9:11-14; 10:1-14).
- Isaiah 53 gives a description of this One who would come as a lamb to the slaughter to bear the iniquity of mankind.
- God only accepts a perfect sacrifice that is in keeping with His righteous justice. He only accepts Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God.




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**3. JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD DIED ON THE CROSS FOR OUR SINS IN OUR PLACE; IT WAS A SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT (2 CORINTHIANS 5:21; ROMANS 3:24-25):**

- The statement that Jesus the Lamb takes away our sin is a way of describing God's provision for sin that theologians call the substitutionary atonement.
- The Old Testament lambs were temporary substitutes pointing forward to God's ultimate, permanent substitutionary atonement in Jesus the Lamb.
- The Bible says that God made Jesus the perfect Lamb, who knew no sin, to become sin for us so we could become righteous in Him and acceptable to God.
- Three words are used to describe our salvation:
  - Justification – This is a legal term from the courtroom that means to be declared not guilty.
  - Redemption – This means to release someone on the payment of a price.
  - Jesus bought us off the slave block of sin and set us free through the sacrifice of His blood as the Lamb.
  - Propitiation – which means to be satisfied. Jesus satisfied the just demands of a holy God with His substitutionary atonement.
- Because Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, God can now offer the world eternal life (2 Corinthians 5:17-20; 1 John 2:2).

**4. THE LAMB OF GOD DID NOT JUST DIE TO SAVE US IN ETERNITY. HIS DEATH SAVES US IN HISTORY AS WELL:**

- Jesus died so you can live in spiritual victory instead of defeat. Jesus' death not only saves you later in heaven, it saves you today in history.
- The blood of Jesus that saves you for the sweet by-and-by is also here to help you in the nasty here-and-now.
- On the cross, Jesus not only paid for your sins, He also broke the power of Satan. It's the blood that gives you the power for victory and of righteousness.

**SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:**

**A GIFT TO RECEIVE:**
If I were to buy you a brand-new car, all free and paid for, you would be foolish to start sending in monthly payments. The only reasons you would do that is either that you don't believe me, or you are unwilling to accept my gift. But if you don't accept it, you are not benefiting from your paid-up gift. You have to receive what is paid for in order to benefit from the payment, just as a person has to accept the payment of Jesus the Lamb for their sins to benefit from it.

**TOO SHORT:**
God doesn't measure you by your neighbor. You may be better than your neighbor, but you are too short to measure up to God's standards because "all have sinned" and fall short of the glory of God. So, don't ask God, "What about Joe, Jim, Betty or Bill?" That's irrelevant. God is measuring you against His standard. If you and I were swimming to Hawaii, you might swim farther than I do, but we are both going to drown because the distance is too far. The distance between a perfect God and a sinful humanity is too far for us to cover. We all fall short of meeting God's standards.

**SET FREE FROM OUR CAGE:**
A little boy bought two birds in a cage and was heading home with them when a man stopped him and asked, "Young man, where are you going with these birds?"

"Oh," the boy replied, "I'm going to play with them for a while, and then I'm going to feed them to my cat." The man wanted to rescue the birds, so he said to the boy, "How much will you take for the birds? I will pay you whatever price you require."

The boy thought about it and came up with a very high price. But the man reached into his pocket, pulled out the money and bought the birds in the cage. Then he opened the door of the cage and set the birds free. As they flew away enjoying the freedom because the price had been

paid, the birds looked back at the man who paid the price and began singing—they worshiped!

Those birds in a cage illustrate our condition without Jesus: trapped, unable to help ourselves, destined for destruction and no hope for eternity. The devil likes to play with us at times, but his goal for us is death. Satan had you and me caged. But on the cross, Jesus reached into His pocket and paid the price in full for us. He opened the door of our cage and set us free. So, wherever you go this week and from now on, don't forget to look back and say, "Worthy is the Lamb!"

**BACKGROUND, BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CULTURE:**

Leviticus 16:1-34 outlines the strict requirements the high priest of Israel and the people had to follow for the Day of Atonement, the once-a-year sacrifice for the nation's sins. The high priest took the blood of a spotless, unblemished lamb into the Holy of Holies, the innermost part of the tabernacle, and later the temple, where God's holy presence dwelt between the two cherubim hovering over the ark of the covenant.

The lid of the ark was called the mercy seat because the high priest applied the blood of the sacrificial lamb to it in order to satisfy God's holy demand of shed blood to cover sin for one more year.

This happened every year in anticipation of the day when the Messiah would come and offer the final sacrifice for sins. According to Hebrews 8–9, this is exactly what Jesus did. He rendered the old sacrificial system obsolete by His not once-a-year, but once-for-all sacrifice for sins.

**QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:**

"We have to understand something about God's wrath. He is not reactional with His wrath. In other words, He doesn't just 'lose it.' God's wrath is tied to His justice, and His justice is part of His nature. So, God has to respond to that which is outside of who He is, and therefore His wrath is a response to His justice."

"The Old Testament sacrificial system was God's 'layaway' plan for sin. It's much like the old layaway plan at stores in which you put merchandise you wanted to buy, but didn't have the full price for, on hold and paid a little bit each month until the price was paid in full, and you could redeem or claim your purchase. But until full payment was made, you could not have what had been provided."



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