

# "Let Me Repeat That"

Text: John 1:29-42a

May the love of God the Father fill you with wonder; may the sacrifice of God the Son fill you with gratitude; and may the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit fill you with faith, hope, and love. Amen.

Dear Fellow Christians, I wonder how many today are familiar with the expression, "*Repetitio est mater studiorum*"? Ironically, I had to hear the expression many times as a student before I actually thought about it, understood it, and came to agree with it. The irony is that it's a Latin phrase that means, "*repetition is the mother of study (or learning)*." The phrase is so old it isn't even attributed to a single individual as having coined it, which tells us it has always been true. Human beings often need to hear things repeatedly before we actually hear and understand. Once we do hear and understand, we need to hear it again because we forget.

Yet despite the need, more often than not we find repetition tedious, even somewhat irritating. Hearing a joke for the second time is like leftover salad – the same ingredients as the first time, but just not the same. Hearing parents warn of the same dangers over and over again makes young people almost numb to the actual threat. We are bored to tears by a speaker that overuses a word or repeats a single thought or point. We want new and fresh. We crave thought-provoking and exciting.

The problem, however, is not always with the one speaking. Often the problem is the one refusing to truly hear. This is especially true when God is speaking, and when God finds it necessary to repeat himself – when God himself finds it necessary to say to us, "*Let Me repeat that.*" Necessary, because the message is just too important to allow it to pass unheard. We find one such example in our text for this morning, recorded in the Gospel of John, the First Chapter:

**ESV *John 1:29-41* The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"<sup>30</sup> This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.'<sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel."<sup>32</sup> And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him."<sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'<sup>34</sup> And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."<sup>35</sup> The next day again John was standing with two of his**

**disciples,<sup>36</sup> and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"<sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.<sup>38</sup> Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"<sup>39</sup> He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.<sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.<sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ).<sup>42</sup> He brought him to Jesus.**

This is God's Word. Since we know and believe that these are the words of our perfect God, and not the words of fallible man, therefore we struggle to give these truths our undivided attention as we pray: "**Sanctify us by Your truth, O Lord. Your Word is truth.**" Amen.

Do you recall that part of our page 15 (Red Hymnal) communion liturgy where we would sing "*Oh Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world...*" three times in a row? Why do you suppose whoever first composed that "*Agnus Dei*" thought it necessary to repeat virtually the same phrase three times? One suggestion is that it is a reference to the triune nature of our God. I remember as a boy thinking that it was sort of a waste to repeat virtually the same words three times in a row. I no longer think that. It often takes me two times through before I even start to pay attention, and even when I am paying attention I am reminded of different truths each time through. The same sort of thing happens in that same liturgy when we sing "*Lord have mercy... Christ have mercy... Lord have mercy*" all in a row. Repetition is necessary, especially for those of us who tend to be a bit slow.

We have a problem when it comes to spiritual laziness. There are many things in life – many bits of information – that are safely forgotten or neglected. There is no shame, for example, in being really bad at Trivial Pursuit or Jeopardy. Not so with God's Word. While no one would debate that, we still often read our Bibles or hear God's Word in church with little or no thought. It is as if we imagine that simply sounding out the words or being in attendance when God's Word is spoken in itself holds great merit or benefit for us. Scripture teaches us with perfect consistency that Christianity is a matter of the heart, and that the thoughtless and heartless observance of certain rituals is of little or no spiritual value. What in this world could we possibly spend our time and energy on that could ever be *more* important than paying attention to God's Word, and thereby feeding our eternal souls.

This is more than just another natural product of today's passive entertainment lifestyle – although that certainly doesn't help. The problem existed long before monitors and screens. The Bible is full of repetition. In fact, once you look for it, you find it throughout God's Word. In John 10:6-7 we read, ***"This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. 7 So Jesus again said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.'"***

Whenever you hear Jesus saying, "Truly, truly" or "Verily, verily" or "Amen, amen" he is speaking the original form of our sermon theme for this morning: *"Let me repeat that."* It was his way of saying, *"Pay attention. This is too important to ignore."* Other examples of the need for repetition abound. In his Letter to the Galatians, Paul wrote, ***"As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed."*** <sup>ESV</sup>(Galatians 1:9) In his Letter to the Philippians, ***"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice."*** <sup>ESV</sup>(Philippians 4:4) Again to the Philippians, ***"For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things."*** <sup>ESV</sup>(Philippians 3:18-19) Vital messages bear repeating. Finally also Peter, in his Second Epistle, made a point of repeating himself, including also the reason for doing so: ***"Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. 13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, 14 since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things."*** <sup>ESV</sup>(2 Peter 1:12-15) Repetition is the mother of learning, and remembering.

Our text for this morning provides yet more evidence of the lack of thought and understanding that also afflicted even the Godly men of Jesus' day, and therefore also the need for repetition. We find the great John the Baptist doing what he was called to do in and around the Jordan River, which was to call the Jews to repentance and to baptize the penitent *in preparation for the coming Messiah*. As John was baptizing, Jesus himself came to him, and John in our text makes a most remarkable statement: ***"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"***

How many times have we referred to Jesus as ***"the Lamb of God"*** without ever stopping to consider what that title means? In fact we sang those words a few minutes ago in our liturgy. Did you think about them? My

rather imprecise estimate is that I *still* say or sing the term *at least* 100 times without thought for each time I really hear and contemplate what those amazing words mean: Why would a holy God need his own sacrificial Lamb?

The term John coined for Jesus is, in fact, purest gospel. It explains in a single phrase exactly what our God has done for us. Though our Creator had no sin of his own and was in no way to blame for the sin of man and devil, he nonetheless provided the remedy for man's sin. The remedy, amazingly, was his own Son, whom God the Father sacrificed for the sum total of all the sins of his rebellious creation. God the Father saved every single one of us by sending Jesus to pay what he did not owe. This is the payment Jesus made on Calvary's cross. Who could possibly have imagined such a plan for our salvation?

We cheat ourselves and we deny the Word of God full admission into our own hearts whenever we fail to reflect on such divine truths. We repeat phrases that are both good and true (like grace and faith and redemption) but we rob ourselves of their power and meaning through our own thoughtlessness and laziness. We read passages like: ***"God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself"*** with barely a thought as to the incredible truth these words convey. Think of it! God sacrificed his holy Son to pay the debt of his rebellious creation – to pay *my* debt, *your* debt. God himself did that for us, for me.

Clearly the tendency to ignore and therefore miss invaluable truths was also a problem for John's disciples. We have no reason to doubt that they heard his great testimony and endorsement of Jesus *the first time he said it*. Yet they still remained with John. John had to repeat his striking witness again the next day, in effect saying, *"Let me repeat that."* This time we see the kind of "hearing" our God wants to see in each one of us. This time Andrew (Simon Peter's brother) and another disciple (probably John – who never mentions himself in his Gospel) not only actually hear John's words, they act. This time they forsake the Great Forerunner in favor of the One whose way John had been called to prepare. Our text says simply, ***"The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."*** That is the kind of *hearing* our Father wants to see in each of us. Not the thoughtless, heartless, passive reception of words, but the true, "take it to heart" hearing of God's own words, together with the actions that results from such *true hearing*.

Because they actually heard and acted, a whole new world was opened for the two men in our text. They were led to Jesus, who does not ask

them, "Whom do you seek?" but "**What do you seek?"** With this simple question the Good Master encouraged Andrew and his companion to search the depths of their hearts. In effect he was telling them to take a good hard look inside and to ask themselves just what it was that they were looking for. Maybe at this point in their spiritual development they didn't even know the answer, but they soon come to know where their answers could be found, and they followed the One who could teach them.

The Word of God – including also *this* Word of God – is more than just history. God's Word is, and is intended to be, living and active in our hearts, in our minds, and in our actions. This morning, for example, we are to hear our Savior asking not of others but of each of us the question that he asked of Andrew: "***What do you seek?***" *What is it that you are looking for or struggling to gain or accomplish during your time of grace on this earth?* Our Savior repeats his question until we actually hear, and then repeats it again when we forget. With great shame we recognize the need in our own lives... because we miss, and because we forget. Too often we struggle in vain for what is of no value.

John, in our text, knew his words were too important. His men had to truly hear them – and act on them. They had to leave him and follow the One whose way he came to prepare. They had to learn exactly what it meant that Jesus was "***the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world***" In effect he was therefore saying, "*Let me repeat that.*" From this you and I are also reminded that Jesus doesn't want us to hear his words without thought and personal application. He wants us to hear, understand, and follow through. In this case we are here reminded never to walk thoughtlessly through this life as the godless do, but to examine what it is that we are really all about and to let God determine our walk and purpose.

And when we forget, as we undoubtedly will, accept it as a demonstration of God's mercy and love when he repeats himself – in his Word and in the lessons he teaches and re-teaches us throughout our lives. Amen.

ESV **Isaiah 49:1-6** Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. <sup>2</sup> He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away. <sup>3</sup> And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." <sup>4</sup> But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God." <sup>5</sup> And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him-- for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength-- <sup>6</sup> he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

ESV **1 Corinthians 1:1-9** Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, <sup>2</sup> ¶ To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: <sup>3</sup> ¶ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> ¶ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge-- <sup>6</sup> even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you-- <sup>7</sup> so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

ESV **John 1:29-42a** The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" <sup>30</sup> This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' <sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." <sup>32</sup> And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup> And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." <sup>35</sup> ¶ The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, <sup>36</sup> and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" <sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" <sup>39</sup> He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. <sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.



## ST PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

# ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2510 E. Divide Ave. Bismarck, ND 58501

Parsonage and Office: (701) 223-4885 Cell: (701) 425-5483

Website: [www.bismarcklutheran.org](http://www.bismarcklutheran.org)

Mick Johnson, President Angela Pfennig, Organist  
Michael Roehl, Pastor

**The Second Sunday after Epiphany— January 15, 2023**

## The Opening Prayer by the Pastor

## The Opening Hymn – 129 (Red Hymnal)

"Hail, Thou Source of Every Blessing"

## The Order of Service – Supplement page 12ff. (Brown Hymnal)

## The Scripture Lessons: (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

**The First Lesson:** (Isaiah 49:1-6) Truly God's Son was great enough to pay for all sin, not just the sin of the Children of Israel. We hear in our first lesson how God, even from ancient times, had planned for the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles in the promised Messiah. During this Epiphany Season we thank God both for sending His Son for all sinners and for making that Son known to us, personally.

## Psalm 100 (Supplement page 35) (Brown Hymnal)

**The Second Lesson:** (1 Corinthians 1:1-9) Note how Paul opens this Letter to the Corinthians in part by assuring them that they share fully in all of God's grace and in all of God's gifts. This Letter could well have been addressed to this congregation. God has been so good to us. We give thanks unto you, Lord, for you are good! Yet we also acknowledge that to whom much is given, much more is expected – even as we seek to thank our God with more than just words.

## The Confession of Faith -

The Apostolic Creed – Supplement page 15. (Brown Hymnal)

## The Pre-Sermon Hymn – 40 (Red Hymnal)

"The God of Abram Praise"

## The Sermon – Text: John 1:29-42a (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

**"Let Me Repeat That"**

## The Offertory – (Supplement page 16 insert)

## The Post-Sermon Hymn – 136 (Red Hymnal)

"Angels from the Realms of Glory"

## The Prayers followed by the Lord's Prayer

## The Closing Hymn - 800 (Brown Hymnal)

"Go, My Children, with My Blessing"

## Silent Prayer

**Welcome!** - We warmly welcome any visitors worshipping with us this morning and invite you to join us each Sunday at this time. We are glad you are here! **To our Visitors seeking Holy Communion** – In obedience to God's Word, we practice "Close Communion." This practice stresses both our concern for others, not wanting anyone to receive the sacrament to their harm (1 Cor. 11:27-30) and the importance of unity in confession and faith (1 Cor. 10:16-17). For this reason we ask that anyone who has not established this unity through membership in a CLC congregation please meet with the pastor to discuss this Scriptural doctrine before communing. This is a practice that we follow out of love and concern for you, and out of obedience to God's Word, not in judgment of anyone's Christian faith.

## Attendance – Sunday (27) Average (36)

### This Week at St. Paul:

<b>Today</b>	<b>-9:00 a.m.</b>	– Sunday School and Bible Class
	<b>-10:00 a.m.</b>	– Worship Service
	<b>-11:00 a.m.</b>	– Fellowship Hour
	<b>-11:30 a.m.</b>	– Elders Meeting
<b>Monday</b>	<b>-10:00 a.m.</b>	– Study Conference in Pierre
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>-6:00 p.m.</b>	– Confirmation Class
	<b>-7:00 p.m.</b>	– Midweek Bible Class
<b>Next Sunday</b>	<b>-9:00 a.m.</b>	– Sunday School and Bible Class
	<b>-10:00 a.m.</b>	– Worship Service w/Communion
	<b>-11:15 a.m.</b>	– Fellowship Hour
	<b>-11:30 a.m.</b>	– Church Council Meeting

**CLC News** – Pastor Andrew Schaller is considering the call to Luther Memorial of Fond du Lac. Messiah of Eau Claire has called Pastor Wayne Eichstadt.

**Study Conference** – Pastor Roehl is scheduled to attend a study conference in Pierre tomorrow with other pastors of the West Central Conference.

**Meetings** – The Board of Elders is scheduled to meet during the fellowship hour this morning, and the Church Council next Sunday.

**Mission Helper Trip** – The final day to sign up for the 2023 Mission Helper trip to Nepal is tomorrow (January 16<sup>th</sup>.) For more information, or to sign up, go here: <https://mht.lutheranmissions.org/2023-nepal>

**Olvera Update** – Daniel Olvera, the son of Pastor Juan Jose Olvera, underwent successful surgery and is recovering well at home. Today is the last day to help with their medical expenses.