

## BEHOLD THE LAMB – TAPE #4

“The Lamb Who Glorifies God”

### SIDE #1

Let us pray. Shine in our hearts, oh Lord Jesus Christ, who loves all humanity, the pure light of your divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our minds that we may understand the announcing of your holy gospel. Set us in awe of your blessed commandments, so that trampling all carnal desires, we may begin to live according to the Spirit, both willing and doing everything for your pleasure, for you are the light of our souls and bodies, Christ God, and we render glory to you, and to your eternal father, and to your all holy, good and life giving spirit, now and always, and forever and ever, amen.

At the close of the last talk, I said God is Father, God is love, is our security. The spirituality of the lamb of God begins in a new vision of God that Jesus gives us. God is Abba, God is Father, God is love. By definition, a lamb is vulnerable. A lion that will kill and destroy to protect itself, or those that it cares for, its young, is not seen as vulnerable as a lamb. A lamb is vulnerable, and yet this is the image that Jesus chooses to give us, that God chooses to give us, through which we are to understand how we are to live in this world. Simply said, the image of the lamb of God offers to live in this world as vulnerable. It offers not to choose those things that are not of God, in order to create an artificial sense of invulnerability, an artificial sense.

What does vulnerability mean in this massive universe of which we are a part? The fact is, that to be alive is to be vulnerable. Any struggle against invulnerability, any struggle against vulnerability, is doomed to failure. You can arm yourself to the teeth – you can have the best medical insurance, you can, you, you can eat absolutely pure organic grown food, you can drink only specially distilled spring water, you can do anything you want to do, and you die. As, as the little bumper sticker goes that I’ve seen in the United States, I’ve jogged every day, I’ve kept my cholesterol down, and I’ve eaten only vegeta-, vegetarian food, and I’m still gonna die.

The fact is, to be human is to be utterly fragile and vulnerable. The terrible, terrible fight that people go through, at every level of society in order to be invulnerable, in order to feel a kind of security in that little two by four world they create, is a disaster spiritually, and a disaster humanly. The reality is that when we want to be invulnerable, the way we choose to be invulnerable is by choosing means to live that are un-lamblike, un-Christlike. Do you remember the story in the Gospel, where Jesus tells the little story, the parable, of the man who is struggling to be invulnerable, secure, and he has so much surplus, that’s what surplus is all about, isn’t it? It’s a way of having more than I need in case of bad times. Other people may perish, but I’ll be alright. He has so much surplus, he has to tear down his barns and build new barns. And then after he finishes his new barns, he says, you know, soul, now you can relax, now you can rest in peace, and of course we all know what Jesus’ response is, to that utterly artificial sense of, I have made

myself secure, in my little two by four world, Jesus' response is you fool, this night your soul will be asked of you.

When we choose to be invulnerable, we choose to accept means of living that are contrary to the gospel, that are contrary to the spirit of Christ, that are unlike the means of the lamb of God, the suffering servant. Did you ever look at pictures, say the first, say of the first World War, and you see all these poor human beings, maybe the picture, depending what it shows, it may show hundreds or maybe a thousand of, of soldiers on both sides, German, French, English, Irish, whatever the case may be, American, coming out of trenches or fighting or shelling, you know. So this would have been 1916, 17, probably they were, the average age was, was, was 20 at that time. If the average age is 20, it meant that they were born in 1897. All of them are dead now. Every one of them, as you look at the picture, the hundred, two hundred, two thousand that are there, every one of them is dead. Whether they were killed on a battlefield, or whether they died of cancer, it's irrelevant. What was the meaning of going out in 1917 and tearing each other apart? For the security of the little two by four world. Germany, France, Austria, Hungary, whatever it might be. What security?

And so, to be alive is to be vulnerable. But to be alive is also to desire to be secure. Peace, real peace, is intimately tied to the feeling of security. The question is, how, how to be secure. Absolutely no doubt about it. You can be armed to the teeth with the best medical care there is, eating the right foods, and you just get on a bus and someone with one of those new strands of tuberculosis, you get it, you're dead, no cure, nothing – or a thousand and one other diseases. A little change of a, of a molecule, in your brain or in your nervous system, and you're dead of a heart attack or a brain hemorrhage or God knows what. Microscopic changes. So wherein lies the security for peace?

Jesus tells us that security lies in one place, and one place only. In the fact that God is our Father, God loves us. God is love, and He loves us. That is the only source, the only place of genuine security. All other securities are false securities, and they will come to an end. They will come to an end as certain as the security of the farmer that filled up his bins came to an end, as certain as that. All human security is illusion, and all efforts to secure ourselves humanly are efforts contrary to what the lamb of God is.

When did you ever see a group of lambs out there forming an attack circle, or an attack wing? They don't. I mean, we're talking about a gentle, or kind animal, and that's the image that Jesus picks. Jesus is vulnerable. He accepts life without the artificial securities and the artificial protections. Said another way, he accepts to live under the protection of the Father. It is God who is His protection. It is God who will save Him.

When we do not accept God as our security, when we go looking for some other avenue of security, some other means of security in human life, the natural consequence of searching for something other than God, God as Jesus taught, God as Father, God who loves us, God who cares for us, God who will protect us in time and eternity, when we go looking for something other than God as our security, regardless of what we find, what we always find with it is fear. Fear. Human security, the search for human security

brings with it automatically the reality of fear. Because all of us know that when we go looking for human security, we are looking for a way of saving ourselves, and that is impossible. We know our security systems will and can and must eventually break down, that we make, and therefore we fear.

And so, what we have, is we have that fear, fear drives people to unChristlike activity, to unChristlike activity. When we strike out at another person, when we strike out at another person, with our tongue or with a gun, in order to protect something, our good name, our status, our money, our country, whatever the case may be, when we strike out, we strike out because we fear, we fear that the investment we've made in life will not be protected. That we're going to lose it, whatever it might be. And so, we try to cause hurt and hence engender fear, and we strike out in fear. Fear is the natural consequence of not living in the love and the reality of the God that Jesus taught is God, Father. The God that loves you, the God that loves each and every person and cares infinitely for them.

In the human, in the Christian life, in the Christian life, the great spiritual war is between love and fear. Love – not love and hate, love drives out fear, and fear drives out hate. Observe yourself. Every time you tell the simplest lie, every time you tell the simplest lie, if you'll just step back a second and look, every single lie is motivated by fear. Every single lie is motivated by fear. Fear is a terrible thing. Fear generates insecurity. It generates a further search for personal security by my means. And of course, it generates enmity, enemies, those who may negatively affect our security. And yet, what in a strange way is the truth of the matter, people who have phobias, people who are phobics, you know, they're afraid of riding up elevators or flying in planes or, you know, they have some fear – we call it in society an inordinate fear. The person who is a phobic is not crazy, they're simply someone that cannot block out all the variables that are there that could really work against the person and destroy them. For example, flying in an airplane. There are millions of variables, anyone of which goes wrong, down you go. Now there are check systems and countercheck systems and so forth and so on, but every day some plane goes down. All the phobic does, is for some particular reason he or she gets particularly fixated on all the insecurity in a particular area, riding elevators or whatever. But the reality is, that's life. That is life. We just block it out, that on any given day, any given way, there are zillions of things that could destroy us. Body, soul, mind or spirit. There's no way to protect ourselves. We are in fact vulnerable, and there's nothing we can do about it, except perhaps live in an illusion that we're not, and try to do a few things that make us believe that we're really secure.

Yet in the end, we can't protect ourselves, and regardless of how much we fear or how much we engender fear in others, there is no protection through the use of fear. There is only one protection for the human being, and it's the one protection that the human being has to know is there, and if the human being doesn't know it's there, all else is turmoil and kayos, and that is that God loves them. That God is Father.

In the end, in the end everyone will lose all their protection. Everyone will lose all the illusions of earthly protection. It's called death. The time comes when we all have only one choice, and that is to trust in the Father. No more do the arms and the tanks and the

planes, no more will the doctors protect us, no more will the food and whatever else we use, the day comes for everyone when the only protection can be, can be the Father, the only hope is that God is love.

Why wait till the end of life to live in that protection? Why wait till there's nothing else to do? Why not begin to live under the protection of the Father now? Why not give up the very thing that we use for protection daily, which is the returning of evil for evil? Why not begin to live the life of Christ, the lamb life-like of returning good for evil? Of accepting to be a victim in the two by four world, of accepting to drop the paraphernalia of artificial protection, accepting the fact that what I'm supposed to be about is I'm supposed to be about living in the consciousness that God loves me and that God loves this one here, whoever he or she is, whatever they are doing to me, and I am called to respond out of that consciousness that God loves us as Christ would respond, which is doing good to the person under the wrong circumstances.

And so, why wait? Why wait till the end of our time to say, into your hands Father I commend my spirit? Why not say it now – and the next second, and the next second, and the next second? Father, God, you who are love, into your hands I commend my spirit, and out of that consciousness I will move my hands and my feet, my arms and my legs. I will live under your protection now, not just in the last instances of my life. The strange and terrible thing here is, and it is a terrible thing, so many people go to their death still unable to trust God. Because through their life, through their community, the whole effort has been their effort to protect themselves. Somehow, they are going to save themselves, instead of the fact that God loves them, God is Father, and God saves them through Jesus.

Do you know what the purpose of the Christian life is, officially defined? Indeed, the purpose of the Church, officially defined? The ultimate purpose of the Christian life, the ultimate purpose for which you and I are given the gift of faith, and the ultimate purpose for the entire existence of the Church is to glorify God, to glorify God. The purpose of your life as a baptized Christian in Christ, the purpose of the entire Church is to glorify God. Now you can ask yourself, as any of us would, I think, why does God need to be glorified? Why does He need me as a public relations man? I mean, everyone knows who God is, what difference does it make if He has a thousand or a million or a billion people down there saying God you're great? I mean it doesn't even sound right, does it?

It isn't right, of course. What's gone wrong is, we've lost our sense of what glory is, what to glorify is. Glory today is kind of a trash thing, equivalent to having celebrity status. Glorifying television stars, or glorifying sports heroes, glorifying those people that win ribbons for killing people in war and so forth. Glory means applause, being a big shot, being at the top of the heap. But that's not what glorify means biblically. The best way I can explain it to you, and the shortest way, is do you remember the magnificat? The magnificat begins, my soul doth glorify the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior. Now, there is another way of translating that that we used to use and absolutely correct before this. It is, it was and is, if you so wish to use it, my soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior. To glorify God is to magnify

God. To glorify God is to magnify God. You know how a magnifying glass, when you look through it, you see a speck if you just use regular eyes, but when you look through the magnifying glass, it's big. That's exactly what to glorify God is. It is to enlarge, it is to enlarge the image, the vision, the reality of the true God so people can see it. Enlarge it how? By our lives, by our words and by our deeds. Said in a kind of commonplace way, the Christian is meant to be the magnifying glass of the Father. For whom? For the world. Why?

Because the world can't see the Father. The world can't see that God is love, and therefore the world can't live out of it. The world is inundated, impregnated, saturated with evil. Evil clouds the vision of human beings. They cannot see that Heaven and Earth is full of God's glory, the glory of the Father, they cannot see it. And so, human beings act differently than they would act if they knew that God loved them, that they were totally secure in God's love, and that God loved their next door neighbor and every single human being, God drew out of nothingness for life. None of that is seen. And the whole vision is taken up with things that are other than the glory of God, for most people. Therefore, God sends his son Jesus, who is the glory of the Father, the magnification of the Father, He is in fact God. And through Jesus, we catch our first vision of the true God, the God who is Father, the God who is love. Infinite, unconditional, eternal love, and the God who drew you and I and everyone in India and everyone who has ever lived, out of nothingness in love, in order to be loved eternally. In Jesus, for the first time, we catch a vision of God as Father. It is as we said this afternoon, that it is not that the Father is the center of Christ's consciousness, the Father is the center, the circumference and everything in between. There is nothing in the consciousness and mind of Christ but the Father. Everything comes from his knowledge of, and His commitment to, and His living in the presence of the Father. He magnifies the Father. He who sees Jesus, sees the Father. And we, of course, are supposed to be little Christ's. And the idea of the Church and the individual Christian, glorifying God is that he who sees us, and hears us, he and she who comes into our presence, should likewise see a magnification of the Father, should likewise see through us, get a glimpse of, that God is love.

And what does that glimpse mean? That glimpse means that they see us as little lambs of God, because it's in that state of vulnerability where we rely on the protection of God, that we are able to communicate to the world that God is love. It is in that state of lamblike vulnerability, we will return good for evil rather than evil for evil. When we suffer rather than hurt, when we love rather than fear and hate, it is when we do those things that people say, what's that person acting that way for, how can they act like that, why are they acting like that, and they see an entirely different person. A person living under the protection, and in the consciousness of the mind of Christ, and the consciousness that God is Father.

## SIDE 2

The fact of the matter is, people desperately, desperately, all five and a half billion people on the planet, desperately want to know that God exists, that God loves them, and that they're immortal. Their hearts long for that, for themselves and those that they love. It is the Church that's supposed to magnify that reality by each member of the Church magnifying that reality in his or her life.

But you see, it is that kind of life, it is to, it is to that reality that people will be drawn to like a magnet. That's what people will convert to, because that's what people long for, to know that Jesus is correct, that God is indeed the Father, that God loves everyone, and that everyone is of infinite value because they are of infinite value to God. That it is not possible, if we put on the mind of Christ which is the mind that God is Father, it is not possible to devalue any human being. It is not possible not to struggle to love every human being. It is not possible to be a vicious and ferocious lion, protecting it's cubs, it is only possible to be a lamb, responding as Jesus would respond.

You know, it is a real choice, though. You'd be surprised, even if you examined your own consciousness, let alone what's out there in the world, you would be surprised how many visions of God there are. God is this, God is that, God of this religion, God of that religion, God of this holy man, God of that holy woman, God of this visionary, God of this mystic, God of this philosopher, God of that philosopher. Remember earlier I mentioned the biblical scholar John L. Mackenzie. I don't know if I mentioned at the time that Mackenzie was the single brightest human being I've ever met. Simply, just in another category as far as, as far as the ability to, to read and study and grasp ideas, retain them, memory, all those faculties that are necessary for scholarship. I've hung around universities and been around universities for decades, and never saw a mind like this. He knew, he was trained formally, in the nuances and the history of philosophy, human thought, as well as theology and so forth and so on. And Mackenzie said in one of his writings, in fact his last writing, he said, all that I know or think I know about God comes through Jesus Christ. All that I know or think I know about God comes through Jesus Christ. Not the philosophers, not the talk shows, not the magazine articles, through Jesus Christ. Not even the saints. For all the saints know about God, and whether they're right or wrong about God, has to be, if they are consistent or inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus.

Now, the point is this. From the perspective of the gospel, every god that we talk about, that is not in conformity with God as Father, God as love, God as taught by Jesus, is a false god, is an idol. It's that simple. Regardless of who teaches it, under what conditions they teach it, if it is not the God that's taught by Jesus in the gospel, it is a false god. It's that simple. Jesus is the one that reveal definitively to the world the true nature and reality of God. And it is very, very important to recognize that no place in the New Testament does Jesus ever refer to God as king. King is not Jesus' understanding of God. There were plenty of understandings of God, all over the world in Judaism and other religions as king. Jesus' understanding is Father.

Think about what a king is. A king is one who ultimately rules by what – fear. A king rules by fear. The relationship between king is one of subject. Our relationship in Christ with God is heir, we are heirs to the kingdom. We are not subjects. We are friends of God. We are sons and we are daughters of God, literally, we are children of God. This is gospel truth. We are not subjects living in fear. We'll talk tomorrow about how Christians got into this consciousness of living in terror of God, as if God were a taranasaurus rex. But the fact is, Jesus never calls God rex, for Jesus' God is Father.

And indeed we say that, don't we? When we, every Sunday and holy day, when we say our creed, the first thing out of our mouth in our profession of faith is, we believe in one God, the Father Almighty. We don't start out by saying we believe in one God, king of the universe. We have to say what Jesus' said. We believe in God the Father.

And what's the purpose of that? The purpose of that is this – Jesus is trying to communicate to the world, communicate to people, all of us, who are just beaten so badly by evil and all its consequences, from ignorance to death. He's trying to communicate to us that we are loved, and that each and every one of us is loved. Said negatively, the good news is, the news that's announced by the angel at Bethlehem, the first proclamation of the gospel, the minute Jesus is born is, fear not, peace. After Jesus rises from the dead, and he enters the room with the twelve apostles, who are huddled, terrified of the Jews like, like they, Jews in Nazi Germany were, He walks through the doors and he says, peace, fear not.

The task of the Christian and the task of the Church is to bring to the world that peace that is free of fear. Free of threat, free of hurt, but that peace can only be brought to the world, not by a lion, but by a lamb. Someone who is not threatening and fearful. Someone that lives in total vulnerability, trusting that the divine will care for him or her. At the annunciation, even before Bethlehem, when the angel appears to ask Mary to become the mother of Jesus, the first words are fear not. Our God is not a god of fear, He's a God of love.

Now, it is that God that we are supposed to proclaim, by our words and by our deeds, and not other god. But we will proclaim some god, by our words and by our deeds. There is no doubt about that at all. If we begin to rely on the protection of evil, whether it be the tongue or the gun, whether it be lying or greed, once we begin to rely on the protection of those unlamblike things, we communicate clearly, at a bare minimum, we don't believe that God is Father, God is love, and God will protect us, and that God loves each and every one. The world is desperate, I assure you, for God to be glorified through the Church and through the Christian life. The God who is Abba, Father, love.

Probably the greatest single secular mind of this century, Albert Einstein, Einstein wrote at one later on in his life, he said, the question is, is the universe a safe place for a human being to be, is the universe a safe place for a human being to be. He of course was thinking back on the holocaust of the Jews, disease, and the thousand upon thousands upon millions of ways people can be destroyed. Is the universe a safe place for people to be? In light of the evil that inundates the world in which we live. And the power of evil

to torment and destroy, is the universe a safe place to be? He had the right question. The answer the vast majority of people is no. It is not a safe place to be, and so they arm themselves to the teeth, or they arm themselves in all kinds of other ways, to protect themselves from the evil that is in the universe. They look at Jesus and they say, even Christians look at Jesus, perhaps most Christians look at Jesus, and they say, Jesus' lamblike trust in the Father is folly. It's a tragedy. Look what happened to him. Remember the scoffing when Jesus was on the cross, two thousand years ago, and they, and the people were down at the foot of the cross? And they said, let's see if God will save us. They mocked Him, on the fact that the Father was going to protect them.

Most people, perhaps most Christians, just don't believe what Jesus said, that God is love and God is eternal protection for one and all. What they see in Jesus' trust in the Father is something they would never do. For what they see in Jesus' trust is folly, and in the end the tragedy of Calvary. Calvary is a clear, absolutely clear statement that the world is not a safe place. Calvary is an answer to Einstein's question, is the universe a safe place to be – Calvary says no, it is not a safe place to be. But the empty tomb, the resurrection is a clear statement that the universe is a safe place to be, and that's the central proclamation of Christianity, cross and resurrection at the ultimate proclamation. The empty tomb is the proclamation that God is love, and the universe is a safe place to be. For the universe is ultimately not under the control of mindless and amorphous forces, or under the control of evil, the universe ultimately is in the hands of the Father Almighty. The universe is a safe place to be, is what we say on Easter Sunday. God is trustworthy, God is Father, God is love, is what we say on Easter Sunday. On Easter Sunday, we say, the lamb has conquered. We say on Easter Sunday, this is the way to eternal life.

And so, normally we protect ourselves, artificially, of course in our little two by four world, by being willing to, quite willing to, and doing it, victimizing others. Victimized others. That's what happened to Jesus, right? Caephus says – Caephus is not a bad person, he's the high priest, he's a religious man, he's got a tough job trying to negotiate between the Romans and the Jews, and he says about Jesus exactly what most of us say most of the time. It is better that one dies and then that the whole nation perish. So Jesus becomes the victim. And they kill Him, and the Roman are placated and the Jews are placated. But Jesus never says it's better that one die, or two or three or a million. Jesus says it is better that I die. Jesus is never victimizer. The Lamb of God is never victimizer. The Lamb of God is always victim. Not a stand by victim, not someone who just absorbs evil, as we'll talk about in a few days, but someone who does not return evil for evil, returns good for evil. In the world's eyes, this is victim. From Jesus eyes, this is the power of God entering into history. Love of even the enemy, for God is love.

And therefore, the Christian has a new security vision. It is a vision of that God who is Father, and who totally cares for and eternally protects. Now all of us know how serious this is, because all of us know how far or how close we are to really believing Him. And yet there is no doubt the central proclamation that Jesus came to give, and gave, and is left to us in the gospel is God as Abba. My Father and your Father. The only prayer he taught us begins Our Father. Yet, how do we look at it? Well, to use the one example,

for most Christians, Heaven, Heaven, is that wonderful beatific blessed holy beautiful joyful blissful place we will go and spend eternity with a God who is love, with a God who is Father, when we're absolutely forced to go there.

I look back here, in the chapel and I look at the picture of Saint Theresa on the wall, and I'm reminded in her autobiography of, or story of her life, okay, her autobiography, I'm reminded of the morning, the evening between good, Holy Thursday and Good Friday, in 1896, when she spit up blood, she writes about it. She spit up blood, and to spit up blood in those days was the sign it was all over. She was 24 years old, and she had tuberculosis beyond curing. That's what spitting up blood meant. She'd gotten into bed, after, after the Holy Thursday celebration, and she felt the blood in her mouth, she put a handkerchief to her mouth and spit it out, and she says in *A Story of a Soul*, her autobiography, she says, she didn't even bother to get up and look because she knew what it was, and she knew she was going to meet Jesus, and she was overjoyed. That's what she says. That's someone that lived with God, her name for God – Poppa, Poppa. And when she knew she was going to die, there was no, dragging her into Heaven, she couldn't wait to go there. Another phrase she used at the same spot she said, she said, in the same little spot in the book she says, she was overjoyed because the bridegroom had announced his coming.

Is that how we feel towards it, towards God? Do we feel that kind of security? That's gospel truth, though. And that's what we proclaim, that we're supposed to be proclaiming to the world, and that's what the world longs to hear and see. But the only way we can proclaim it, the only way, is to live it. Because no one is going to believe us to say trust that God is Father, God is everlasting love, if we're living lives like lions and snakes, only if we live in the vulnerability of the lamb, only if we live like Jesus.

And the most extraordinary part of this is it is precisely at the moment when the world says choose to be un-lamblike, choose not to trust God as Father, choose to go after your own protection, and some form of evil or another, whether with the tongue or with the gun, it is precisely in the crisis situation where everything seems to say Jesus is wrong, that God works fullest with those who trust Him. The primary example of that is Calvary. When everything would seem to dictate God had totally failed and abandoned Jesus, Jesus continues to trust. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. Father forgive them – he continues to live. Saint Theresa – three days after that story I told you, Saint Theresa lost all consciousness of God. Everything went. She had, her only consciousness was that she was going to be annihilated at death, yet in raw faith, for the next 18 months with no, no exception, she lived as if God was Father. She lived like a lamb, with no experiential base for it except the truth of the gospel. And we see what came from that crisis, when everything inside of her was telling her this is not so, it's a lie. She writes about it in her book.

Crisis, the Greek word for crisis is, means judgment. Judgment in Greek is crisis. The moment of judgment is not the end of time exclusively. The moment of judgment is right here and now, when am I or am I not going to live in the mind of Christ, the mind of God as Father, am I or am I not going to live that vulnerable life of the lamb, and return good

for evil, and not use evil for protection, or am I not. Depending upon what I do, I become one thing or I become another, depending upon what I do, people who are in desperate need of seeing God as love and Father, see it or don't see it.

And so, here we are. Our sole path, our main task is the task of glorifying God, glorifying the Father. It is the same task that Jesus had, and we are supposed to be little Christ's, little lambs doing it. We are to bear witness to the truth that God is love. That is our task, and that is what the witness of the lamb of God is. You could not be more vulnerable, you could not be more vulnerable than the lamb of God in this universe, and simultaneously you could not be more secure. Easter Sunday is radical proof that the lamb of God, living the way of Jesus, is the most secure approach to existence there is. God, God will fight our battles for us. All we have to do is be faithful to living the life of Jesus, the Christlike life, the lamblike life, the life of divine goodness that's taught us, and the good news of Jesus Christ that God is Father, God is love.