

“Having An “Aha!” Moment”

John 1:29-42

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Have you ever had an “Aha!” moment? It’s a revelation, an epiphany. It’s a moment when you have a sudden insight. That lightbulb goes on, and you get it, you understand. And in that moment you see things in a new and different light. You may even say such things as, “Wow! It was right there! I never saw that before! But it makes perfect sense.” That is having an “Aha!” moment.

In fact, Pastor Kyle Idleman wrote a book entitled “Aha – The God Moment That Changes Everything”. In the book he talks about how God creates these life-changing moments in people’s lives. But what I found most interesting is that he breaks down that “Aha!” moment into three stages; stages that correspond to the three letters of the word “Aha!”. The first stage is the awakening. That is when the lightbulb goes on and you suddenly realize some new truth from God. The second stage is the honesty stage, when we are honest with ourselves with what God is trying to address in our life. And the third stage is the action stage, when we take action on this new truth. Well, I think that does a pretty good job of describing an “Aha!” moment.

Now, I bring this up because I think John the Baptist experienced something like this as we read in John’s Gospel today. Verse 29 says, “The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.’” Of course, this was following Jesus’ baptism, which John referred to in verse 32. It reads, “And John bore witness: I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on Him.”

OK, John tells us that this Lamb takes away the sin of the world. Well, sin is a subject that people really don’t like to talk about. I have found that many folks don’t want to see it or acknowledge it. Instead, they want to ignore it, or call it something different, like, a mistake, a goof, a slip, a weakness, or something less threatening. There are those who have even told me that the sin back then is not sin today, because they interpret the Bible differently, or the world today is more modern, more sophisticated, more advanced. We no longer have those primitive, uneducated ideas of what sin is, and what is right or wrong.

So, with that in mind, I would like to acknowledge some very simple Biblical truths. The first is that sin separates us from God. God is life. And without God, life ceases to exist. If you were separated from air, food, water, you would die, correct? Air, food, and water are necessary for human life. God is the source of spiritual life, so life, eternally. So, separation from God is spiritual death.

But you know, people have the hardest time saying this truth. I have dealt with this time and time again. And I think the reason for this is that we do not see the true nature of our sins. Folks, let's understand, Jesus didn't come into this world and go to the cross simply to clean us up a bit, and make us better, shinier versions of ourselves. He came to raise us up from the grave. I think that John had this "Aha!" moment at Jesus's baptism. He saw how far our sin has taken us from the presence of God. He saw the destructive power of death looming over us, and he realized how urgently he needed to point people to Jesus.

Now, that being said, John also saw how far God would go to bring us back. He said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Folks, I don't think any of John's followers would have been shocked, or not understood what he was saying. They were all very familiar with the Passover, and how the blood of the perfect lamb spread over the door post and lintel saved God's people from the angel of death. So, I think they would have understood the statement perfectly.

They understood that the Passover lamb was innocent and physically perfect, without a spot or blemish. That means that the lamb was very valuable as an object of trade. Of course, the lamb also had no choice and no way to escape from being sacrificed.

Now, the "Lamb of God" who John was referring to, Jesus; He was also completely innocent. Even in His humanity, He never sinned. He lived in complete devotion and submission to the will of God. Therefore, His spiritual perfection made Him an extremely valuable object of trade. He traded His sinless, perfect character for our sinful, rebellious character. He then traded His life for ours. But here's the big difference between the Passover lamb and Jesus. Jesus had a choice. He could have escaped His fate at any time. But He chose us. He chose to be our sacrifice. What John saw in Jesus was God's sacrificial, unconditional, never ending love for us. What he saw right there before him was how far God would go to bring us back to Him.

This is why John had to share this message of Jesus, no matter what the cost. Getting back to Kyle Idleman's book, the acronym of "Aha!" was the awakening, the honesty, and the action. Well, according to Idleman, you have not had a true "Aha!" moment unless you put this truth into action. Well, John saw this truth of Jesus and he put it into action, he proclaimed that truth. Verse 34 says, "And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." So, John lived the rest of his life, short as it was, testifying to this truth, that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. In fact, the day after John said this, he saw Jesus again, and repeated himself to his disciples saying, "Behold the Lamb of God." (V 36) That's when two of His disciples had their own "Aha!" moment and followed Jesus. One of them was Andrew, Simon

Peter's brother, who then told his brother, and he then had his own "Aha!" moment and put it into action and followed Jesus.

Could you do that? Could I do that? Let me tell you about a woman who actually did this. Her name is Karen Watson. Well, Karen wrote a letter to her family which was to be read only in the event of her death. Karen became a Christian at the age of 29. She grew in her face, she felt the call to share the Gospel of Christ in Iraq, serving as a relief worker with her churches mission board. In Iraq, Karen and her fellow aid workers built schools and worked on a water purification project. She also lead a literacy project for widows, teaching them to read and write and gain job skills to support themselves. And when the opportunity arose, which it did all the time, she shared her faith in Jesus with those she helped. On March 15, 2004, Karen and her fellow relief workers were killed by gunmen in the city of Mosul. Karen had sold her home and all she owned before she left for Iraq. The only things she left behind on this earth were one duffel bag of every day items, and this one letter addressed to her family. There is one line in this letter that really gets to me. She wrote this, "I wasn't called to a place; I was called to Him... to obey was my objective, to suffer was expected, His glory my reward." Wow! That's powerful, isn't it? Well, I guarantee you that she is in the presence of the Lamb of God right now, and she will be there for all eternity. You see, that Lamb of God who John spoke of, is also mentioned in that Revelation passage that we read today. Only this Lamb who took away sin of the world, He is indeed in His glory now. The Apostle John wrote about that glory here. He spoke of the myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands of angels, along with the four living creatures and the 24 elders, bowing down before the only One who is worthy to break the seven seals and open the secret scroll. And together they said with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." (Revelation 5:12)

Folks, I believe that this is a very accurate and stunning portrayal of that Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus, and the glory that is now His. I believe that this is what Karen knows right now. This is the victory that she has in Christ.

This is also the victory that is ours in Christ Jesus. Yes, our sins once separated us entirely from God. But the Lamb of God took away those sins and restored us to Himself. You and I have been called to Him. So, what are we going to do about it? Are we going to go on with our everyday lives, doing our own thing, and living as though we are in control? Or are we going to give over the control to the Lamb of God? Are we going to take action? Are we going to make our objective complete obedience to God's will? Folks, there is a world outside these doors that is separated from God. Those people are dying in their sin. And we can point them to the source of life.

That is why it is my sincerest prayer that, by the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives, each one of us would have that "Aha!" moment today. I pray that first, we would awaken to the truth that God is showing us. Secondly, we would be honest with ourselves about this truth. And thirdly, that we would take action to change whatever needs to change in us, and then to live out this truth. I pray that by the power of the Holy Spirit in the name of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Amen.