**19th Jan 2020 Jesus is the Lamb of God**

**Isaiah 49:1-7**

**John 1:29-42**

Who is your favourite superhero?

The one I remember most from my childhood is Batman, he had Robin as his sidekick and the bat cave as a base. He had a cool car (for those days!!) and was pitched against a range of baddies like the joker.

He had a real-life persona as Bruce Wayne.

Like a lot of superheroes, he started out on the pages of a comic long before he came to the cinema screen, but he did not have superpowers in the way that the later and more recent superheroes have come to have.

Why did you choose your particular superhero?

Superman, Spiderman, the Incredibles, the list is long, but what is it about superheroes that attracts people’s imagination?

What are the superpowers that you would like to have?

There is a sense in which superheroes are the good people who fight the bad people. That is their job.

Superheroes aim to save those who cannot save themselves.

They protect those who are vulnerable.

The films are full of superheroes coming in to save the day, defeating the baddies and restoring law and order, justice and righteousness.

In the Bible restoring justice and righteousness is seen to be God’s role, and Jesus came to earth to show us the way back to God so that we can join with him in doing his work here on earth.

In John’s gospel we have a real emphasis on Jesus being both God and man, the incarnation. In today’s reading Jesus appears for the first time in John’s gospel.

John has talked **about** Jesus, but this is the first time that Jesus is seen.

John the Baptist says “here is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”.

Before we get out of the first chapter in John’s gospel, we have a statement of who Jesus is.

Today we see Lamb of God referring to the old testament theme of sacrifice and offerings which have preceded Christ’s coming, and those hearing the title would have made the association with the sacrificial lamb.

John is keen to show that Jesus is not some superhero that appears for a time and then goes again.

John ‘s gospel demonstrates, more than the other gospels, that Jesus was and is part of God’s plan from the beginning of time.

John is keen to help his readers understand this as he sets out in verse 1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being”.

Jesus is God. He has always been God and will always be God.

We have one God, father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In this one statement John conveys a huge message to his readers about Jesus and his role in the world.

Jesus came for a purpose; he came to die. The title of the lamb of God makes that clear.

But he came to die for a reason.

The blood of Jesus takes away the sin of the world and frees us from sin.

The characteristics of Jesus that we see in the gospels are that of a servant submitting to His Father’s will. His humility is there for all to see as his ministry progresses. He is not like the superheroes that we have today. His power is real

But so what? What does this tell us today?

It was the mission of John the Baptist to point people to Jesus, that is our mission too.

There are so many people who are waiting to hear the good news of the gospel so that they can join the kingdom of God here on earth, they just don’t know it yet.

It is our job to point people towards Jesus and all that a life with Him can offer.

In our reading two of John’ disciples hear John proclaim Jesus as the Lamb of God. Their response is to follow Jesus.

The verb follow is used in the tense which means a once-for-all action, it was not a tentative, well let’s see what this teacher is about, but it means to follow as a disciple from that time onwards.

It is also interesting to note that every time we meet Andrew in the gospel of John, he is bringing someone to Jesus. In our reading he brings his brother Simon, in chapter 6 he brings the boy with the loaves and two fishes to Jesus, and in chapter 12 he tells Jesus about some Greeks who wanted to see him.

We do not proclaim Jesus so that people can follow us or become like us, we proclaim Jesus so that people can look at Jesus and follow him.

Jesus turns to the disciples and says “what are you looking for?”

As we follow Jesus what are we looking for?

The response of John’s disciples is to call Jesus Rabbi, which means teacher. That is primarily what Jesus is, a teacher. He teaches us how to live God’s will in our lives, to be part of God’s plan for the world.

What about us?

We cannot be superheroes who go out and save the world, in the way that the superheroes do. But they are not real.

We can join in the fight to bring God’s kingdom of peace and justice to earth.

We can still choose to help those who are not in a position to help themselves.

We can still work to protect the vulnerable.

The way that we do it is different.

We as both individuals and the church are chosen by God to be his people.

As individuals and the church, we are called to be God’s servants here on earth.

The fight is the same, for God’s justice and righteousness to be seen here on earth.

Just as Jesus came to give his life sacrificially, so we are asked to give of ourselves.

We are going to sing “will you come and follow me” which says this:

Will you come and follow me
 if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don’t know
and never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown,

will you let my name be known,

will you let my life be grown

in you and you in me?

Will you love the ‘you’ you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?

Will you use the faith you’ve found

to reshape the world around

through my sight and touch and sound

in you and you in me?

So, what is God calling you and me, and us as a church to offer to him at the beginning of a new decade?

If we choose to let God into our lives then the following words are so true:

Lord you are the author of my life

You have begun a work in me

You have predestined me

To do your perfect will

So Lord finish in me what you’ve begun

Guide me by your mighty hand Lord

Let me trust in you

And Lord, let me seek your holy face

May I always walk with you Lord

And let your will be done

And Lord, you are the Lord of all my days

You are the Lord of all my nights

You have chosen me

To carry forth your Word

This week I want us to think about where we are being called to take God’s word, both as individuals and as a church.

We don’t just want to talk **about** Jesus but we want to show the world who Jesus is, if we are on God’s team then that should have a direct impact on the way that we live and the people that we are.

We are not superheroes as the world sees them, but the message that we bring, both in words and deeds, also brings justice and righteousness if we use it well.

If there are things that you think we should be getting more involved in as a church then talk to us about it.

How are we going to restore justice and righteousness in Aldington, in our country and in the wider world this week?

Amen