I remember as a child my parents telling me not to point. I’m guessing your parents probably told you the same thing. They would say it is bad manners. Even today we may consider it rude to point.

But that was not the case with John the Baptist. He was forever pointing, but only at a certain individual - the Lord Jesus Christ. That was John’s calling as the forerunner of the Messiah. His God-appointed task was to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming Savior. He preached a message of repentance. In text, we find him standing and pointing the people to Jesus and talking about him. But what John said about Jesus was good news. He said: Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

We still follow John’s pointing when he tells us: LOOK, THE LAMB OF GOD. We look to that Lamb for forgiveness and point others to him as well.

What a fitting word-picture John gives of Jesus by calling him the Lamb of God. That speaks of our salvation. John used it to focus attention on the true purpose of Christ’s coming. Jesus is that innocent, unspotted, meek and patient lamb. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah prophesied in this way about him: Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent in front of its shearers, he did not open his mouth.

The Old Testament Jews offered a lot of lambs as sacrifices to God. All those sacrificial lambs pointed to Jesus. He came to offer the perfect sacrifice. He became the saving Lamb. As John says: who takes away the sin of the world.

Our loving God still invites everyone to look on the Lamb of God with eyes of faith. No greater invitation can be extended because Jesus is the lamb who forgives all our sins.

We need this saving Lamb in our lives. Our hopeless, sinful lives must be pointed toward him in order to be numbered among the saved. We need to look on him with eyes of faith, not only in the troubling and hard times, but also for our eternal salvation. We need to begin and end each day with our hearts pointed toward him, knowing that one day we will be with our saving Lamb in heaven. Yes, Look, the Lamb of God.

Many at that time thought that John might be the Promised Messiah. He had to repeatedly tell the people that he was not the Christ. As Jesus was walking toward him, John pointed to him and said: This is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘The one coming after me outranks me because he existed before me.

Here John declared Jesus to be the eternal Lamb. It did not matter that John was six months older than Jesus. Jesus had been before John because Jesus is from all eternity. Christ was in existence before he was born here on earth. That is why he told people: Before Abraham was born, I am. He was in existence when the world was created. Later he became a part of the creation at his birth. He is truly the eternal Lamb of God.

Why was this so important? No other lamb could save us. He had to be the Lamb of God, the Son of God. Nothing less would do. His humanity was evident at time of his birth. But there were those who knew that he was much more, but it had to be revealed to them, from Mary to Joseph, the shepherds, wise men, Simeon, Anna and others. John now wanted everyone out there on banks of Jordan River to know as well. He did not want anyone to make a mistake in identity.

It is a great comfort to know that this Lamb is eternal. He is so different compared to us. In all our experiences in life, there is a beginning and end. It does not make any difference
whether we are talking about lives, jobs, schooling or vacations. We begin and before we know it, time has run out. But the greatest comfort is knowing that, even though we have a beginning and end, we who cling to Jesus in faith will one day share eternity with the one who has no beginning and end.

But to point Jesus out to others, John had to be able to recognize him. He could not afford to make a mistake in identity. So God told John: The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

At Jesus’ baptism, John saw the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus in the form of dove. The Holy Spirit was active in Christ’s human nature through his preaching, teaching, healing and showing love and compassion on lost souls. Now John could say with certainty: I saw this myself and have testified that this is the Son of God. Jesus truly is the Lamb of God.

That same Holy Spirit is active in our lives as well. The very fact that you confess Jesus as your Lord and Savior gives testimony of the Holy Spirit’s presence in your heart and of his work in your life.

One thing the Holy Spirit is forever doing is pointing you to Jesus as your Savior from sin through Word and Sacraments, just as John was doing in his ministry. So always pray for a greater measure of the Holy Spirit.

As you read this section, there is a little word that keeps popping up – the word: again. That little word tells us so much about the work of John the Baptist. Again and again, day in and day out, John was pointing people to Jesus as the Lamb of God. It did not matter if he was preaching to priests, Levites, Pharisees, his disciples or large crowds. His message was the same - it centered on Jesus Christ.

Although John was known as a great preacher of repentance, his message was clear: Look, the Lamb of God. To be sure, we will never outgrow our need for hearing God’s message. We need to hear God’s law to remind us of our sinfulness and need for a Savior. But may our hearts be set aglow every time we hear of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Proclaiming Jesus Christ and him crucified is a timeless message because it is the one message needed to be heard by all ages. That is why it is important for us to point others to that Lamb of God.

Consider the fact that there are approximately 150,000 more lost people in the world today than there were yesterday. If all the people in the world who are without Christ were to line up single file as your front door, the line would reach around the world thirty times. And what is worse, that line would grow at a rate of over twenty miles a day.

So always give this timeless message of the Lamb your praise, your honor, your prayers and your support. Like John, point others to Jesus.

We see John do that in text. He pointed two men, Andrew and John, to Lamb of God. These two men then followed Jesus. They wanted to spend time with Jesus. Jesus was eager to spend time with them. Come, he told them. They then spent the day with him. And John the Baptist could not be happier to see two of his disciples now become disciples of the Lamb of God. God’s Word moved John and Andrew to leave the Baptist and follow Jesus, just as the Baptist had intended. John’s testimony was to promote Jesus. These two men did not make a decision for Christ. It is simply a matter of the Word accomplishing its gracious purpose in the hearts of men.

How much time do you spend with the Lord? Do you have the same eagerness to follow him and learn more about him? Do you take time out for the Lord only on Sunday mornings? If you make it a point to do this each day, you will be spiritually refreshed.

Unfortunately, many do not take the time to get to know the Lord better and enjoy him.
When you are distressed, troubled over sin or some other problem, don’t wait. Take the time to pray to your Savior. Spend time in his Word and you will be refreshed and strengthened.

We have a fine example of Jesus’ first disciples pointing others to the Lamb of God. If I would ask you to name all of Jesus’ twelve disciples, you would probably be able to name some of them: Peter, James, John, Judas, Matthew and maybe a few others. Many usually forget about Jesus’ first disciple - Andrew. The Bible does not really say much about him, compared to some of the other disciples. He is not one of the prominent ones. But whenever Andrew is mentioned, he is leading someone to Christ. We find four examples of him doing that in Bible.

After finding Christ, Andrew could not wait to tell his brother. We are told: The first thing Andrew did was to find his own brother Simon and say to him, “We have found the Messiah!” (which is translated “the Christ”). Andrew was so overjoyed with the news that the long-awaited Savior was there, he had to share that news with others. He wanted to share with others the joy he had in his heart for the Savior. His brother Peter was first on the list, but many other followed. He was forever testifying of the Lamb of God.

The Bible gives us many examples of splendid results to personal evangelism. Jesus found Philip and Philip found Nathaniel. Andrew brought Peter and Peter brought 3,000. And these scattered about, brought many more thousands.

Andrew is an example for us. He was always working in his own quiet way for the Lord. He did not get the headlines that his brother Peter did, but that did not make him any less a disciple of the Lord.

Our witnessing of the Lamb may not bring us recognition, but it is the love of Christ that constrains us to be concerned about others, even those close to home. Just living a Christ life as we go about our daily affairs, whether at home or away, we are being an Andrew. The Lord still notices and is well pleased.

Pointing may be considered bad manners, but not when it comes to the pointing as John the Baptist did when he said: Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. May that message live in our hearts and lives each day. May it leave such an impact on our life that we will always be the John the Baptists, Andrews and Peters in our day, pointing others to Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The results can only be that many more will join the cry that Andrew and Peter gave: We have found the Messiah. Amen.

Pastor Keith Bilitz
St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, Alma City
Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Smiths Mill
St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, St. Clair