

Experiential / Personal Reflection

Sometimes we refer to a little child as a “a little lamb”. This especially when we are moved by the heavenly sphere of the angels who watch over small children and are very close them. Jesus speaks of us needing to become ‘like little children’ in order to ‘enter the Kingdom’. It is their quality of ‘innocence’ that is being referred to. If you can, watch children at play. Enjoy their spontaneity, the way they live in the moment, and their joy in little things. Notice their openness, simplicity and honesty – and also their vulnerability. Reflect on these new lives and how the Lord’s inflowing is present in more visible and approachable ways.

Consider Isaiah’s prophecy describing how the Lord comes to us. He writes, “The wolf will live with the lamb ... and a little child shall lead them.” Isaiah 11:6. See the Lamb of God in the eyes of a child. Skip with the Lamb of God - do something with a child just because it’s fun, then thank the Lord for joy and laughter. (Note - some of God’s children are 80 years young!)

Meditation

Imagine yourself on the holy mountain that Isaiah describes (Chap 11:6-9). A little child is leading you.

Feel the ground under your feet ... breathe in the fresh mountain air ... sense the sun on your skin and the wind in your hair.

Look at all the creatures from lions to lambs living in harmony, without violence or conflict ... Walk among them ... what do you see? How does it feel.

Can you see the little child? ... What is He doing? Speak to him, how does it feel as He looks at you? What is the expression on His face?

Now look at your own inner world. Ask the child born at Bethlehem to lead all your thoughts and affections, and to bring within you the same peace, harmony and wholeness you have enjoyed on His holy mountain.



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Five Essentials - Aspects of Loving - a focus for the Church
2nd Essential: Part 4: Relating to Love - the Lamb of God
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Relating to Love - the Lamb of God



He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open his mouth. Isaiah 53:7

John saw Jesus coming towards Him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’ John 1:29

**Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels
‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!’** Revelation 5:11-

In these three verses we move from the Old Testament through the Gospels to the final book of the Bible. In doing so we travel from tragedy and a travesty of justice in the Servant songs in Isaiah, through trust and hope in the words of John the Baptist, finally ending in triumph in the visions of the Book of Revelation.

In these passages are profound and humbling truths that speak of the love of the Lord for you and me, for the people we know, indeed for every individual everywhere. This is no distant Divinity that we cannot know or feel or relate to. This is the love of which Jesus spoke when he said, “Greater love has no-one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:13.

Meek and lowly of heart

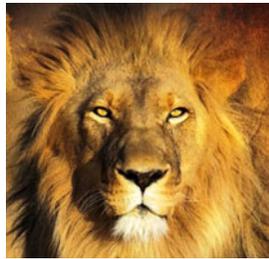
These passages speak not of the outward form that the Lord took when he walked the lanes and byways of Palestine to teach and heal. These verses show us something far more real. In the parable language that Jesus Himself was to use, ‘the lamb’ is a picture of the Lord’s heart. It is a living image that speaks to our hearts of His affection for us; free of any threat, with nothing we could ever have any need to fear.



A lamb called 'the Lion'

A gentle and lovable lamb is a defenceless creature at the mercy of a harsh world. This is often how we think of love and gentleness. It can be the way the world perceives patience and forgiveness too; but the reality couldn't be more different. It takes an inner strength (unimagined by the bully or the hypocrite) to refuse to hate or to harm an enemy. Jesus did more than lay down His life for friends, He did it for His enemies too! He had the power of the entire angelic heaven to command (Matthew 26:53), yet He cries from the cross "Father forgive them". To say this is love is not enough, it is Divine Love - an infinite compassion, an undefeatable devotion on a scale that defies our comprehension. Here is an energy so intense we need to be shielded from its true power.

When the lamb is finally named, He is "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" (Revelation 5:5). The Lion being the King of beasts, and David being the king whose exploits inspired and united a nation. A powerful name indeed! The apostle Paul puts the paradox of the Lamb in this way - 'His strength is made perfect in weakness'.



Bible focus

Read through **Isaiah 53:1-9** and reflect on how vulnerable and defenceless is the humanity in which the Divine chose to come to us that we might be neither threatened nor harmed.

The Lord's Divine Human, being called 'The Lamb' was a treasured insight for the early Christians who often faced persecution and suffering for their faith. See **Acts 8:26-35**

Reflect on **Revelation 5:1-14** the contrast between the name that is spoken and the vision that is seen of the love that comes to us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Teaching focus

"He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7)

Some thoughts drawn from Swedenborg's writings :-

The Lord when He was in the world was – as to His Human – Innocence itself, and since for this reason innocence emanates wholly from Him, the Lord is called the Lamb, and the Lamb of God. (Arcana Caelestia 10132/5)

But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His wound healing was given to us. (Isaiah 53:5)

These words describe the grievous temptations that the Lord underwent in the world that He might subjugate the hells, and reduce all things there and in the heavens into order. It was during this time He glorified His Human. The human race could be saved by no other means. (based on Apocalypse Explained 365/31)

The Lord is said to have borne sins on behalf of the human race. Some think it means that He took the sins of the human race onto Himself and allowed Himself to be condemned even to death on a cross, but no such ideas should be understood by 'bearing sins'. No one's deeds can be taken away by transference onto another who will bear them. This only happens by repentance and a changed life.

The Lord bears sins when He fights on behalf of a person against the hells; for no one is able by himself to fight against them. Rather the Lord alone does so, indeed constantly for every individual person, yet differently with each one according to their reception of Divine Good and Divine Truth.

(based on Arcana Caelestia 9937 - also see AC 1846/3, AC 10132/5-7 & AE 805/5)