Worthy is the Lamb — Delivery Transcript

Revelation 5:8–14 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, August 1, 2021 · *Heavenly Worship*

Watch or listen: Subsplash (video & audio) · YouTube

> ⚠️ ***AUTO-GENERATED TRANSCRIPT — verify against the audio before quoting publicly.*** *Produced from a Descript transcription of the Broadview Church sermon recording and lightly cleaned (filler words removed, obvious mis-hears of names and Scripture references corrected). No timestamps. This is not a publication-ready manuscript and it is not Wes's exact words for print. Check any line against the recording before it goes on a graphic, in an email, or in a book.*

We are actually finishing up a series we've been in for about four weeks now in Revelation chapter four and five, and the name of the series is Heavenly Worship. I know that's not a super creative title, but you're not working with a lot here with me on creativity. The point of the series though was to understand what worship looks like in heaven so that we can better orient our lives in worship here on earth. And having studied this passage and seeing how it fits with the rest of Scripture, I really— I know it's provocative to say, but I believe worship is the foundational reality of the universe because worship is the foundational reality of heaven.

Right now, as we speak, the angels, the four living creatures, the people of God are worshiping around the throne. And they never stop. And that heavenly reality means that on earth, if God created what he created in heaven to bring worship to him, that also means the things that he created on this earth were created for worship. You were created for worship; I was created for worship. The Bible talks about the heavens declaring the glory of God, that all of creation brings praise to God. So bringing glory to God, that in an essence is worship.

Even the word worship just means to ascribe worth. It's worth ship. You're giving God what He is worth. And your flourishing and my flourishing is connected to how well we are oriented towards that end. How much of our lives is lived in worship to God will be a big determiner of how much of our life is blessed by God, flourishing the way it's supposed to be. And so it really is a big deal. And of course when I say worship, I don't just mean what we just did, singing. I don't even mean what we're doing in terms of preaching the word and worshiping in the gathered worship, but it's a living worship.

It is a life lived in obedience and love towards God, bringing glory to God in that way. That is what the angels are doing in heaven. That's what we are created to do on earth, and that is what we'll be for evermore when God finishes the rest of the story. So we were made for

worship. That's number one. That's by way of review. Also, some of you may just now be jumping in. So to catch you up, we've looked at Revelation chapter 4. We've looked some of Revelation chapter 5. We're going to finish Revelation chapter 5 this morning.

But there is a big shift that takes place between Revelation chapter 4 and Revelation chapter 5 that, if you don't catch that, you kind of get lost as you make your way through the rest of the book of the Revelation. In Revelation chapter 4, the focus is on God the Father and the focus is on the throne. You see these unbelievable angelic creatures that are covered in eyes. They have six wings, they're flying up and down. That part kind of gets a little bit confusing, but what they're doing is not confusing.

They're 24-7 giving praise to the one seated on the throne, being God the Father. And the emphasis is on the creative power of God the Father. They say you are worthy because you created everything. And so because you're the creator, because by your will everything exists. You are to be glorified. But then when you get to Revelation chapter 5, everything begins to shift. It's as if the camera pans away from the throne, away from God the Father, and it begins to zoom in on the scroll that is in the right hand of the one on the throne, and on the lamb.

And so it shifts away from the Father to the Son, it shifts away from the throne to the scroll. And this question is raised in Revelation chapter 5. And the question is, who is worthy to take the scroll? Now the scroll, for those of you who missed last week, the scroll represents the future. It represents God's future plans, particularly for the end of the world. And we get kind of caught up in the judgments of God on the end of the world, and that's what the book of Revelation is about.

And it's really fascinating and interesting. But it's not just the judgments that are the climax of what's in the scroll. It is the coming down from heaven of the kingdom of God, the new Jerusalem comes down from heaven, becomes established on the earth, and Jesus reigns to put a total end to brokenness as we experience it today. He puts a total end to sin, to death, the devil. Revelation talks about God wiping every tear from our eye. As Tolkien says, everything sad will come untrue. Kind of like when a woman is in labor, the labor pains are absolutely terrible but when the child comes the joy of receiving that child is so powerful that it overwhelms and subsumes the brokenness and hardship of this life.

That's the end of the story. That's what's in the scroll. And Revelation chapter 5 was basically saying there is nobody who can bring about those ends. There is nobody who can reverse the curse, nobody who can redeem the world. And so John begins to weep, but then one of the elders says to John, Stop weeping, look. And when he looks, he says, there is the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, he has conquered. And therefore he is worthy to take the scroll. And so this camera zooms in on Jesus presented not as a lion, but as a lamb, a slaughtered lamb.

And the angels, the 24 elders, all of creation began to sing a new song. And the new song is, You are worthy, the lamb is worthy to take the scroll because he uniquely accomplished what no other person could accomplish. And because of what he accomplished, he is uniquely qualified to take the scroll and to open its seals. So what we're going to do this morning is to look at the content of that new song. So I'm going to teach you a new song this morning. Not like the songs we sing with Taylor, but a new song that is going to be sung in heaven by us, by the redeemed, when Christ comes in his glory.

Just real quick in your notes, the monumental shift from Revelation chapter 4 to Revelation chapter 5, what we're talking about this morning, is that the way we bring glory to God the Father is not necessarily just by praising God the Father, but by exalting God the Son. I know that feels counterintuitive. You might think, well, if the Father is so worthy of worship, why don't we just worship the Father? But as someone who has a son, I would not be robbed of any glory whatsoever if people begin to praise my son.

I would be thrilled to see my son have a positive influence on people's life and for people to brag on my son would be a great deal of blessing to me. And in the same way, to exalt the name of the Son does nothing to rob God the Father of his glory. In fact, it magnifies his glory. We give maximal glory to God the Father through the exaltation of God the Son, and that's what Revelation chapter 5 is about. Okay, let's read the passage. Revelation chapter 5, starting in verse 8.

When Jesus the lamb took the scroll, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the lamb. Okay, they fall down in worship. If you weren't with us in chapter 4, the four living creatures represent all of creation. The 24 elders represent the entire covenant people of God, twelve tribes of Israel, twelve apostles in the New Testament. So it is the redeemed and all of creation falling down before the lamb in worship. It says that each one of the 24 elders had a harp and golden bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sang a new song. And the new song said, You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slaughtered, and you purchased people for God by your blood from every tribe and language and people and nation. You made them a kingdom and priest to our God, and they will reign on the earth. And then I looked and heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and also of the living creatures, and of the elders. Their number was countless thousands, plus thousands of thousands, and they said with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb who was slaughtered to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, on the sea, and everything in them say, blessing and honor, and glory and power be to the one seated on the throne, and to the lamb forever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen, and the elders fell

down and worshiped. And God's people said, Amen. It's a powerful, powerful passage, the best, the best song ever. Okay, it's got three stanzas like all great songs and all great sermons. Three points, three stanzas. The first stanza, if you're taking notes, is— well, I'm just going to call it the song of the redeemed.

Okay, it's the redeemed humanity. It's the covenant people of God. It's the longest stanza. It's the one we're going to spend the most amount of time on. But then stanza two, you don't have the redeemed singing this stanza. This is the angelic heavenly host. You had thousands upon thousands and tens of thousands upon tens of thousands, which is John's way of saying a whole lot of angels that were surrounding the throne, surrounding the 24 elders, surrounding the four living beasts, and they said, notice they don't sing, angels don't sing. Sorry, Christmas carols.

Hark the Herald Angels Sing? No, they don't. They said, Worthy is the lamb who was slaughtered. And then they go through these seven words, and then the third stanza is everybody, and I mean everybody. The angels, the redeemed, the non-redeemed, the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, all of creation, in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, every living thing begins to say worthy is the lamb. Blessing and honor, glory and power be to the one seated on the throne and to the lamb forever and ever. So the three points of the sermon are the three stanzas.

We're going to spend most of the time this morning on the first stanza because that's our stanza, and we need to be ready to sing our stanza. And not make a mistake— don't be butting in on the angel stanza when it's not our turn to sing. Kind of like the song we're going to sing at the end of today's message. There's the white print that Taylor sings and then there's the yellow print that we're supposed to sing and sometimes I get so caught up I start singing the white print. Does anybody else ever do that?

You don't want to do that in heaven. Alright, so we want to do our stanza, which is the first stanza, and it's the song of the redeemed. Now, you say, why do you call it the song of the redeemed, when it doesn't say it's the song of the redeemed, it says that it's the 24 elders and the four living creatures? Well, if you remember from Revelation chapter 4, the 24 elders are representative of a particular group of people. And it's almost consensus that the group of people that the 24 elders represent are the people of God.

You have 12 plus 12, which makes 24 for all of our math geniuses in the room. The first 12 were the 12 tribes of Israel in the Old Testament. That's the old covenant people of God. But then you get to the New Testament, you have the 12— what? The 12 apostles. Of course you got Judas who kind of fell out of favor, but then you had Paul replace Judas. So you've got 12 apostles, which represent the new covenant people of God. So you put the old covenant people of God together with the new covenant people of God.

It represents the entirety of the covenant people of God, meaning it represents people like you and me. Now these people, it is said that they sing a new song, and that's important. It's not an old song. The word new song I think is used not only because it's different from Revelation chapter 4, which was focused on God the Father, but in the Old Testament and the New Testament, a new song was always associated with some big victory, okay, some big breakthrough in your life. Maybe let's say you're in school and you're, you know, you're slaving it out and you're grinding and you finally get finished with your four years or some of us six or seven years.

Graduation day comes, boom, you've graduated, you've got your degree, you sing a new song, right? Because you have finished your degree. Or maybe you've been looking for that special someone and you finally found the perfect man, or you finally found the perfect woman? You have your wedding day. It's so glorious and wonderful. And then you sing a new song because you finally got it, right? You finally arrived at that place in life where you had your special someone. Well, that's somewhat of what the new song is in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, when the people of God were liberated from slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt. And they had the Exodus. You guys remember this? They sang a new song because they had been liberated. They had been set free. There was a victory associated with the newness of the new song. And when you look at the newness of the new song in Revelation chapter 5, the victory that is informing this new song is the victory of Jesus over sin and death and the devil. That's the victory. If Jesus had not come, if Jesus had not lived, if Jesus had not died, if Jesus had not been raised, then we would not be singing a new song.

There would be no victory, there would be no hope, there would be no gladness, there would be only weeping, which is why John was weeping in Revelation chapter 5, when there was no one found worthy. But because he came, because he lived a sinless perfect life of love and obedience to God the Father, because he willingly laid down his life on the cross, atoning for our sin, because three days later God raised him from the dead, putting his stamp of approval— paid in full— because he was ascended to the right hand of God the Father, and because he now rules and reigns, seated at the right hand of God, because that is true, we sing a new song.

The victory of Jesus over sin, death, and the devil is the victory that's informing this new song. And I would go even further than that. It's not just the victory of Jesus displayed at the cross 2,000 years ago. It's not just the resurrection, a historical space-time event, but it is this future historical space-time event where Jesus comes again and abolishes the brokenness of this broken world and makes all things new. That's the newness of the new song. Because he's worthy to take the scroll and open the seals, that's why we sing the new song.

So who are the elders? It is the people of God. Some people have this debate. Are they people or are they angels? It's an interesting debate. If you're reading— anybody doing a King James Version this morning? New King James? No shame in your game, right? I'm not trying to shame you. But if you read a King James Version or a New King James Version, there's a difference in the translation between them and the CSB. The CSB says You have redeemed people to God. You've made them a kingdom and priests to our God.

But in the King James Version and the New King James Version, it says, you have made us. You have redeemed us. You have made us a kingdom and priest to our God. So if the original manuscripts actually said us, then there can be no doubt that these are actual human beings. These 24 elders are actually human beings. But New Testament critics disagree on whether or not the word us was in the original manuscripts. Okay, it's interesting. When the New Testament letters got put together, it wasn't like there was one golden copy from heaven who came down to earth.

There were thousands upon thousands of manuscripts. That's why we have such great certainty that the New Testament we have is very, very, very identical to the original manuscripts because there's so many manuscripts to judge them against one another. And there's a great deal of harmony and agreement between them. But every now and then there is a discrepancy. Usually those discrepancies don't make a hill of beans in terms of the interpretive conclusions, but this one does. Okay? If the earliest manuscripts really did say you've redeemed us to God, then these 24 elders are in fact human beings.

If it doesn't, then they're probably angels. You say which one's which? You're going to have to ask somebody smarter than me, because I don't know. You can go talk to Randy or to Tim, and he'll tell you. I don't know. But if it's human beings, the question is, well, what human beings are they? And again, I don't know. But it doesn't matter. They represent the redeemed, represent you and me. They have harps in their hands. The harp was a song— I'm sorry, the harp was an instrument of joy. Okay, you wouldn't have played a harp at a funeral because it was like a celebrative kind of instrument.

Harps were always associated with the giving of prophecy in the Old Testament. They would play the harp, give a prophecy. And then you have these bowls which have incense in them, which the incense is said to be the prayers of the saints. Could you imagine if we had bowls of incense set up here on the stage, it'd probably be my last Sunday at Broadview. Kind of dim the lights, let the incense burn. I like that idea, but I'm not going to test it. But in the worship of heaven, again, it's symbolic.

Maybe there's literal bowls, I don't know. But it's symbolic of the prayers of the saints. In the Old Testament, Psalm 141 verse 2 says of prayer, let my prayer be set before you as incense. It's like a pleasant scent from earth. Our prayers are like a heaven-sent, beautiful scent to the nostrils of our Heavenly Father. And that's what these angels or these representatives are

doing. They're wafting up the prayers of the saints. What are those prayers? I don't know. It could be general prayers, it could be the Lord's prayer. I think it's in particular a reference to the prayers of the people of God for Christ to come.

It is every prayer you've ever prayed where you said, God, can it ever get any worse than this? Will it ever get any better? God, will you ever do anything about the injustice in this world? Lord, how long will you allow these kinds of evils to take place? How many more children have to die? How many more people have to go hungry? How many more, how many more governments and politicians have to become corrupt, creating misery for their— how long, O Lord, until you bring it in. I think that's the prayer being prayed, and it's being prayed to the lamb, and the lamb is the answer to every prayer prayed by every saint.

Alright, so that's the background. You've got their instruments, you've got the prayers, and what do they sing? The content of their prayer revolves around two things. In your notes, I put them under two R's. You've got the redemption in verse 9, and then responsibility in verse 10. Let's read verse 9 again. Verse 9 says, they sang a new song. The content of the song is you, Jesus, you are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because you were slaughtered, and you purchased people for God by your blood from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Now, I know a lot of people don't like that kind of language. Slaughtered— it's a Greek word that means to be maimed. It means to be butchered. Jesus was maimed and butchered. And if you look at Roman crucifixions back in the first century, it literally was a human butchering. But John says it wasn't just a good man dying. It wasn't even just God in the flesh being tortured, physically tormented. John says there was a spiritual transaction that took place on the cross. He says, by your blood you purchased people for God.

In other words, there was a price to be paid, there was an item for sale, someone paid the price, and somebody received the payment. So what does that mean? It means there was a spiritual transaction that took place on the cross. And if you read this passage, you can read other passages in the New Testament like 1 John 2, which says that if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation, not only for our sins, but for the sins of the world.

Other translations say that the death of Jesus was an atoning sacrifice. Now again, I know people don't like the idea of blood and death and all of that stuff, but what happened on the cross was an exchange where Jesus absorbed into his own body the wrath of God that we deserved. I think all of us could admit to ways in which we sin against God's holy standard. Here's what God says to do. Here's, on our best day, us getting to that standard. And then here's us, normal, living life, not even all that bad.

Not even getting close to our standards, much less God's standards. And then there are the really, really bad people in the world who are super, super separated from God. But the truth of the matter is whether you're sort of kind of separated or super super separated, everybody is separated from a holy God. And it is this unbridgeable gap between sinful human beings and this perfectly holy God. And that enmity is what Jesus Christ died to reconcile. So you ask the question, well, what was for sale? If something got purchased, what was for sale?

What was for sale was reconciliation with God. Who paid the price? Jesus Christ paid the price. How did he pay it? He paid it through a substitutionary death on the cross. He willingly laid down his life. He gave his life up so that we could be saved. Now, in Jesus giving up his life, why did that do anything special on the cross? If you go all the way back to the Old Testament, you can read the book of Leviticus, you can read Exodus, you can read Deuteronomy, you have all of these laws and these regulations around animal sacrifices.

A lot of people get tripped up on animal sacrifices in the Old Testament. And rightly so. This is a grotesque thing, right? Have you ever slaughtered an animal? Okay, it's not a lot of fun. It's bloody, it's messy. But in the Bible the reason why animals were slaughtered is it was to make a statement, and that is that the life of an animal is in its blood. And the wages of sin is death. And so for sin to be atoned for, a life must be given. Obviously we're not going to be sacrificing humans and so the blood of bulls and goats was shed as a way of a sinful humanity recognizing my sin has separated me from a holy God.

The wages of my sin is death. And there must be a life given in the place of my life for me not to receive the right punishment for that sin. Now, even in the Old Testament, people knew the blood of bulls and goats is not going to save me. Like on the Day of Atonement, they would send away the scapegoat.[1] But even then they knew this does not forgive us of our sin. It postpones the judgment of God one more year. All of those Old Testament sacrifices were meant to point to something greater, point to someone greater, and Jesus is that greater someone.

The book of Hebrews talks about Jesus, the death of Jesus on the cross being a once and for all eternal sacrifice. That when the blood of Jesus was shed, it was a once and for all sufficient payment for all sin, past, present, and future, for all of humanity. Why? Because it wasn't the blood of bulls and goats, it was the sinless perfect life of the Son of God. He lived a life that none of us could live. He lived a sinless perfect life of obedience to the Father, and then he willingly laid that life down.

And when he laid that life down, a transaction took place where we received Christ's righteousness and he received our sin. In your notes, I say that the death of Jesus on the cross was an atoning sacrifice wherein God's holiness was satisfied through an incredible demonstration of God's love. God's holiness was satisfied through an incredible demonstration of God's love. We saw it last week. God the Father couldn't open the scrolls

because He's just, He's a just judge. A just judge can't let people off the hook just because they feel regret. There has to be a punishment.

If you murdered someone, it doesn't matter how sorry you are. You sinned against that person. You robbed them of the life of their husband or daughter or whatever the case was. Somebody has to pay the price. This is God the just judge making somebody pay the price, but it's not us it's Jesus. And he did it willingly because of his great love for us. There's no other person from any other religion, no religious leader who would ever do anything like that for you. History does not have an example of Buddha dying for his followers.

There's no example of Muhammad dying for his followers. There's no example of Joseph Smith doing anything noble like this to any of his followers. Christ and Christ alone is the only one who has demonstrated such great love towards us. We are redeemed. Redeemed by the blood of the lamb. Not only did he redeem by blood, this redemption was broad. Look at it in verse 9: it's people from every tribe and language and people and nation. I love this that around the throne of grace there is not just a bunch of white people.

There's not just a bunch of black people. There's not just a bunch of people from China or Asia or down under in Australia, there are people from every tribe, every tongue, every nation. Every nation that's ever lived will be represented around the throne. And I love that because I think that for the Christian it puts an absolute end to any form of ethnic superiority. Any form of white supremacy or black supremacy or Indian supremacy or whatever supremacy you may— think that you have some kind of greater commendation for your particular tribe or race because of what you've done or what you've gone through— heaven is not about us, it's about him.

And any ground for pride, any ground for arrogance is absolutely abolished, not only around the throne, or not only around the cross of Christ, but around the throne in heaven. And I ask the question, why is it that God selects people from every single tribe and nation? I think some of it is He's a loving God. He's not willing that any would perish, but all would come to repentance. And so it makes sense that he would actualize a world in which the maximal number of people could be saved. And there would be people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

But I think it's more than that. I think another reason perhaps why God has such great diversity around the throne is because the diversity around the throne actually magnifies the exaltation of the Son. If you are a leader and you're trying to lead people, it's one thing for you to lead people who think like you, look like you, talk like you, act like you. Anybody can do that, right? A teenager has a crew, a leader teenager has a crew around him that looks like him, thinks like him, talks like him.

But it's totally different if you as a leader can get different people from different cultures, different ethnicities, different preferences. They don't look like you, think like you, talk like you, act like you, and for you to be able to unite all of those people underneath your leadership then you are quite a leader indeed. And Jesus Christ is that leader. He takes white Westerners, He takes southern people from Africa, he takes Latin Americans, he takes literally takes people from every single tribe and nation that exists on the earth, and he unites them in a common allegiance and praise to his name.

And that more greatly magnifies the exaltation of the Son, but it's not even just that. The diversity around the throne, I think, also magnifies the beauty of the praise that is given. The best tasting food in the world is not super bland, boring food, unless you're Wes Terry, who doesn't like sauce and spice. But normal people like a little variety in their food, correct? A beautiful-sounding orchestra is more— there's more beauty to an orchestra with all sorts of different instrumentations. Not doing their own thing on their own terms, making a loud noise, but channeled and organized and led towards a single goal of a beautiful symphony that's much more beautiful than just the man and his guitar, right?

Having a full band is better than just Taylor and the guitar. Sorry, Taylor, this just is the way it is. There's something beautiful about the diversity of instruments being channeled together. It magnifies the beauty of the praise and I think that's another reason why Jesus has people from every tribe, people, and nation. It's like in America we take the best parts of different cultures and we assimilate them. We take the good and we spit out the bones. Usually we just take their food. We make it better and we spit out the bones.

That kind of variety, that kind of diversity magnifies the exaltation of the Son, magnifies the beauty of the praise, and that's why he has people from every tribe nation and language. We are redeemed. Redeemed by the blood of the lamb. Doesn't matter who you are, where you've been, what you've done, what your skin color is. You are welcome at the throne of grace. And I'll go one step further because that is the goal at which we will eventually arrive. There's absolutely nothing wrong with churches trying to get towards that goal.

I've had people question my desire or leadership to have a church that's not just a white church or a church full of a bunch of hillbilly white people, of which I am. I am a Roby white hillbilly, but I don't want a church full of a monolithic skin color, monolithic culture, that we would be a people who look like heaven, because that's where we're going. We might as well get comfortable with it now. Because we're going to have it for all of eternity. But it's much more difficult. There has to be a lot of sacrifice and preferences.

But there's nothing wrong with that goal, because that's what heaven's going to be. Not only are we redeemed, we have responsibilities. Very quickly, Revelation chapter 5, verse 10. You made them a kingdom and priest to our God, and they will reign on the earth. Some people spiritualize that reign, and that's their right to do so. I've even talked about the kingdom of

God as being the rule and reign of Jesus Christ. Wherever Jesus reigns, there his kingdom is. And that is true. Your heart should be, the kingdom of God should be in your heart.

The kingdom of God should be in this church. It is spiritual in that sense. But John's not talking about that. He's talking about they will reign on the earth. So there is a sense in which there is a physical, literal, earthly reign to Jesus Christ that he will establish, and we have been given a responsibility to reign with him in that kingdom. And not only are we a kingdom, we are a priest. A priest was somebody who had special access to God. I think in your notes I say we reign, we work, we serve, and we praise.

Then very quickly the second stanza is the stanza of the angels. Camera zooms out, you have a heavenly host. He says I looked and heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and also of the living creatures and of the elders. Their number was countless thousands, plus thousands of thousands. It's the Greek words myriades myriadōn. That's where we get the word myriad. Plus chiliades chiliadōn; that's where we get our word kilo. Meaning thousand, they said with a loud voice, worthy is the lamb who was slaughtered to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

Again, the seven words. Why do they choose these seven words? I don't think it's relevant, the particular words necessarily. They use seven to capture the fullness of the praise, because in the book of Revelation, the number seven means full, it means complete, the totality of a thing. And they're not saying let's give more power to the lamb, let's give more blessing to the lamb, let's give more glory to the lamb. They're not saying that at all. They're saying all of the glory, all of the power, all of the blessing, all of the wisdom, all of the strength is possessed by the lamb.

He lacks nothing. He is the summation, he is the epitome of what it means to be wise. He's the epitome of what it means to be strong. He doesn't need any of these things. He is the possessor of all of these things. They are essentially who he is. And then stanza three, everybody joins in the chorus. Every creature in heaven and on earth, under the earth and the sea, everything in them say blessing and honor and glory and power. It's not even that. It's in the original language, it's the blessing, the blessing, the glory, the honor, the power.

And it's not the word dunamis, it's the word kratos, it's a word exclusively used to talk about the power of God in the Old Testament, the God who redeemed, the God who led us out of slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt, that kratos belongs not just to the Father, look at this, not just to the one seated on the throne, but also to the lamb. Forever and ever. And the four living creatures said amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped. Every creature who's ever been born or will be born will one day bow the knee.

Everybody from everywhere at any time will bow the knee and declare Jesus Christ as Lord. Every knee will bow, every tongue will confess, every Hindu, every Muslim, every secular

atheist, every religion— it doesn't matter the religion, it doesn't matter your spirituality— every single person will bow the knee. And I know that's exclusive. I know a lot of you don't like that. That's so narrow-minded, that's so rigid, and that's so mean. And what— there's sincere believers in all these different religions. And I get it, and listen, I struggle with it. But you know what else is narrow-minded and rigid is gravity.

It is narrow-minded and rigid, and if I jumped off of this stage, I would fall down to the ground, no matter how sincerely I believed I could fly. No matter how well my intentions may be, I would crumble probably with a bunch of broken bones. Because God has orchestrated the universe to operate according to certain laws. He created the world and the world is real. Like we're not in some simulation. So if there is a God who exists out there, and if Jesus really is the Son of God, if he really lived and died and was raised, if all of that's true, which I think there are reasonable evidences to suggest that is the case, if it's true, it's either all true or it's not true at all.

And if it's true, and He really is going to come again, and the scripture really is accurate in saying every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. It doesn't matter what your sincere beliefs are. It doesn't matter how narrow-minded and rigid you may think that it is. It is what it is. And some of us, many of us, will bow the knee when he comes again, and we will do so with joyful praise. But some of us will bow the knee with piercing regret. And the question is, are you going to be part of the many or the most?

Will you be someone who bows the knee in ecstatic praise or will you be someone who bows the knee with piercing regret? And it really all boils down to the timing. Do you bow the knee now, before you die, before he comes again? Or do you wait until it's too late? He is worthy. He is worthy of everything that we have to give. So what I want to encourage you to do, Taylor's going to come back up and lead us through a time of worship. If you're here this morning or if you're watching online and you're not a Christian and the Spirit of God is moving in your heart to say, maybe I was wrong, maybe this really is true, maybe Jesus really is Lord, and if He is, there are things in my life that separate me from a holy God.

And if it's possible for me to be reconciled back to my Creator through faith in Jesus Christ, then I'm tired of running, I'm tired of doubting, I'm tired of excuses, I'm repenting of sin, and I'm putting my faith in Jesus as Lord. And if you're here this morning and you're not a Christian and you need to make that decision, then please come forward and publicly declare, I can't save myself. I need Jesus. I was preaching the gospel this week with somebody in the hospital, spent his whole life putting off that decision.

And it's getting to the end. He's getting close to the end of his life. And I'll tell you what I told him. Number one, it's never too late. Jesus said to the thief on the cross, today you'll be with me in paradise. But your salvation is not dependent on what you say, it's not dependent on some prayer, it's not dependent on some baptism. This guy's been baptized four times. None

of that matters. What matters is not what's on this, it's what's in here. It's with the heart one believes. And so this morning, if your heart is moved to a place of faith, then why not this morning say Father, I know I can't save myself.

I want you to save me. I believe. I'm trusting in Jesus to forgive me of sin, to give me eternal life when I die. And if with the heart you believe, then make that public through baptism, make that public through a public declaration. I'm not ashamed of the Lord. But most of us are not in that place. Most of us are believers. And I want you to consider in your life if he really is worthy. Is there anything you're withholding from him? All blessing, all glory, all honor, all praise. It all belongs to him.

Some of us are holding back. For some of us it's areas of disobedience. For some of us it's what we're doing with our sexuality. For some of us it's what you're doing with your finances. Maybe it's some relationship. The Holy Spirit will bring to your mind those things that you are holding back from the King who is worthy of everything. And all I want you to do this morning, if the Spirit of God moves, is to say, Lord, who am I to do these things to you? You are worthy of everything, and I surrender my life to you.

And if there's something in particular you want to pray about, I'll be happy to pray with you. If there's a public decision— maybe you've gotten saved in the past, but you haven't been baptized, and you say, I'm tired of putting it off. I want to make sure Jesus has my all. He is worthy of everything. Today's the day to bow the knee, to surrender everything to the Lordship of Christ. Don't wait until it's too late, where you do so with piercing regret. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for this time.

We declare you are worthy. And it really doesn't matter what we say, the universe will one day say it anyway. Every knee will bow, every tongue will confess, but we ask through your Holy Spirit, you would enable us to say it and mean it today. Words from a person on a stage will not do the trick. Your Holy Spirit has to move. And so would you, through your spirit, move in our hearts so that we can respond in a way that is pleasing to you, in a way that gives you all that you deserve.

And really in a way that positions us to invite the blessing of God onto our life, our families, all that we are. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

---

1. Transcript note: spoken as "they would sacrifice the scapegoat"; on the Day of Atonement one goat was sacrificed as a sin offering, but the scapegoat was presented alive and sent away into the wilderness. Source: Leviticus 16:8–10, 21–22 (CSB). ↩