A Light In The Darkness — Delivery Transcript

Revelation 5:1–7 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, July 25, 2021 · *Heavenly Worship*

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If you're just joining us, we've been in a series through the book of the Revelation. It's the last book in the Bible. It's the most interesting book in the Bible. It's got some crazy things in there that are very difficult to understand, but we've tackled it anyway and we've been trying to seek to understand what God has to say in this magnificent letter. It's the only letter that says at the beginning, if you read this letter aloud— and if, I'm sorry, if you read this letter or if you're the one reading this letter out loud, then there's a blessing on the one who reads it and a blessing on those who hear it.[1] And so there's a blessing attached to this book.

One of the reasons we're going through it is to invite that blessing of God. We've seen in chapter 1 this exalted vision of Jesus. In chapters 2 and 3, we saw these letters to various different churches that were trying to overcome various different obstacles. But in the last couple of weeks, we've been in the throne room of heaven in Revelation chapter 4 and 5, and we've seen a picture of what I'm going to call heavenly worship and I believe the foundational reality of heaven is worship. And because worship is the foundational reality of heaven, I would also argue that's the foundational reality on earth as well, that the reason why anybody has ever been created, the reason God made the trees and the canyons and human beings and animals and all that exists, it has as its primary function, to use a Greek word, the telos.

Its intended design is to bring glory to its creator, and that is what worship is. It is ascribing worth to the Lord. And so when you get this picture of heavenly worship, you see in the throne room these majestic creatures with all kinds of wings and different crazy interesting things going on. They're worshiping God the Father who's seated on the throne. You see these 24 angelic beings. They're called elders. They're doing much of the same. But then you get to Revelation chapter 5 and things begin to shift a little bit.

And the attention is drawn away from God the Father. It's drawn away from the throne. And it is shifted to God the Son. The light is shined brightly on Jesus Christ and this scroll that is in the right hand of God the Father. And I think one of the things that shows us as we think about our lives and what does it mean to worship God with my life: the primary way that you can bring glory to God, your creator, is through the exaltation of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the essence of worship. Worship is the glorification of God the Father through the exaltation of God the Son. There's a lot of people today who say, you know, I'm spiritual, I believe in God. But what they mean by that is some kind of generic God, spiritual but not religious, and they kind of worship God in that general sense of surely something created the universe. There's some kind of force or some kind of something holding everything together and moving things forward. But biblically speaking, worship is not God in general.

It's not even worship of God the Father in general. It is the worship of God the Father through the exaltation of God the Son. The primary role of the Holy Spirit— Christians believe that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit— the primary role of the Holy Spirit is to shine a light on Jesus Christ. Some people call him the shy member of the Trinity because his job is to make Jesus look great. My job as your preacher, every time I get up here and preach, my fundamental responsibility, my goal is that I would shine a light on Jesus Christ.

I'd make him look good, attractive, beautiful, worthy of worship, that you would treasure him in your heart. The best compliment I've ever got on any sermon I've ever given was a sweet little old lady at the end of a sermon that I thought didn't go all too awfully well, but she said, Pastor, you helped me see Jesus today. Best compliment I'd ever received, because that's the role of preaching. That's the role of this gathering. It is the glorification of God the Father through the exaltation of God the Son. So with that in mind, let's read the passage.

Revelation chapter 5. Coming out of Revelation chapter 4 with the focus on the throne and the Father, John says in verse 1 of chapter 5, then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll, and this scroll had writing on both sides, and it was sealed with seven seals. I also saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals? But nobody in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or even to look in it.

And so I wept and wept because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or even to look in it. And then one of the elders said to me, do not weep. Look, the lion from the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered, so that he is able to open the scroll and its seven seals. And then I saw one like a slaughtered lamb standing in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth.

And he went and he took the scroll out of the right hand of the one seated on the throne. May God bless the reading of his word. And God's people said, Amen. It's an interesting text, right? I mean, you have this very interesting picture of Jesus presented as a lion and a lamb at the same time. He's this lamb that has seven horns on his head and seven eyes. It's kind of even very difficult to picture in your mind's eye what that might even look like, but as soon as this lion-lamb figure, represented as Jesus, takes the scroll, you see this fundamental shift in heaven where all the attention gets directed towards Him.

They sing a new song that He is worthy. So before we get to that dynamic, that contrast of Jesus as the lion and the lamb, we need to understand this scroll because the emphasis in Revelation chapter 5 is on the scroll and on this question that there is nobody who is worthy to open the scroll and to read its contents and nobody can be found who is worthy. So what is this scroll? What are the seals that are on this scroll, and why in the world is nobody worthy to open it?

If you can't answer those questions, you don't really understand the climax of Revelation chapter 5 when Jesus comes on the scene and does just that. Now there's no shortage of guesses as to what the scroll is for those of you who are end times junkies, who love reading on the end times and what did all the symbols mean, you know that there will be all different kinds of answers for what the scroll actually is, but to kind of give you my point of view and to show you how you can do this in your own study, how you can try to understand the very difficult to understand meanings in the book of Revelation.

A lot of times when John mentions something like the scroll, he defines the essence of what is mentioned later on in the book. And that's certainly true as it relates to this scroll, as it relates to these seven seals that are on the scroll. In fact, you don't even have to read very much further if you go out of chapter 5 and into chapter 6. You see that Jesus begins to break these seals that are on the scroll, and the breaking of those seals, I think, gives us a little bit of insight into what the scroll actually is.

I don't have time to read all of Revelation chapter six, but how many of you have heard the phrase the four horsemen of the apocalypse? Heard that phrase before? Watched the good movie? Maybe you've heard about the four horsemen of the new atheism who take their cues from Revelation chapter 6. That is a reference to the first four seals on the scroll. The first horse is a white horse. He is topped by a rider who has a crown and a sword and he goes out to conquer. So he's this great conqueror that goes out.

We'll talk about that in a couple of weeks. The second horse is a red horse, and it says the rider on that horse goes to take peace from the earth. So you have this war and this fighting and this hostility that is global in its scope. The third horse is said to be a black horse, and the rider on the black horse has a set of scales in his hands. And it says that he goes and he begins to weigh out basic essential goods like wheat and barley and the bare necessities of

life, and it says that the prices on your bare necessities begins to skyrocket when this horse is unleashed from this seal.

And then the fourth horseman is a pale green horse. His rider's name was Death, and Hades follows after him. And literally, this rider goes into the earth and you see all sorts of human carnage and death, and everywhere the rider goes, not only does death follow, but all Hades breaks loose around and outside of that rider. And you see about a quarter of the earth destroyed. The fifth seal is correlated with persecution and martyrdom. If you read in Revelation chapter six, when the fifth seal is broken, you have these Christians who have been persecuted and martyred for their faith, they're crying out to God saying, how long, O Lord?

How long until you come and you bring justice and make things right. This is not the way that things are supposed to be. This is unjust persecution and torture and death. And then the sixth seal: you see the wrath of the lamb come. You see these cosmic signs and wonders. The sky turns black, the moon turns to blood, there's a huge earthquake. God's judgment is poured out that even kings and nobles and like highfalutin people, nobody's safe, even they are trying to duck for cover and they're saying, Who can bear the wrath of the lamb?

Which leads to the seventh— when the seventh seal is opened, You have silence in heaven for about 30 minutes. That's about three seconds. That's awkward. Imagine 30 minutes of silence in heaven, and then after that 30 minutes is up, seven trumpets of judgment are unleashed, followed by seven bowls of judgment after the seven trumpets. Now, those are the seven seals, which are really, really interesting. And I wish we had time to go in and unpack what all the ins and the outs of all those things are. It's a reason why you should come back next week to keep on learning.

But if those seals tell us anything about what's written in the scroll, I think what they would suggest is that the contents of the scroll have something to do with God's future plans for the earth. That as these seals are broken, and I think they're broken throughout human history, leading up to the end, the contents of the rest of that scroll— it is the contents of God's future plan for all of the earth. I say that for all of the earth because the scroll is written on both sides, which is kind of atypical for scrolls back then.

Usually it was just written on one side. And so it's this dense information. I think it captures the plan of God from creation all the way to the end. And as it is unfolded, it is unfolding not only the judgments of God that are going to come at the end of days. But also the incredible blessing of God as He brings His kingdom down out of heaven, onto earth, brings about justice once and for all, wipes away every tear. There is no more sin, no more death. No more brokenness. There is the light of the Son, and he rules that kingdom forevermore and abolishes sin, the devil and his companions once and for all.

Okay, that's the end of the story. That's what the book of Revelation points us towards. That's how it climaxes there in chapter 19 and 20. And this scroll represents God's sovereignty over that story. Okay, the scroll is the story of God. It is the plan of God for the future. And I think the seals point to that definition. Okay, you may disagree, but that's what I think it is. If that's true, if it's true that God is sovereign over all of history, that there is no second guessing, there is nothing that takes God by surprise, there is nothing that kind of gets by him and overwhelms him and causes things to happen that he did not want to happen.

That means that God is sovereign over history. It means nothing happens to you in your life that is not first filtered through the wise and good hand of your heavenly father, which should be a source of extreme comfort as a believer. It's also a source of extreme difficulty from time to time in your life. If it's true, God is all powerful and He is all good and He is all wise. And he knows the end from the beginning. How could he have allowed this to happen and this to happen and this to happen?

And those are very real, legitimate questions to ask in light of a God who has a scroll that knows the beginning to the end. And many of you have asked those questions. Some of you may be asking them right now. But those questions, the answers to those questions, though I may not know the particular answers to every particular why question that there is, the absence of answers on those kinds of questions does not negate the truth that God is sovereign. And that whatever his reasons are and whatever his answers are for those things, it in no way undermines or undoes the promise of a better future where that sadness and that grief and that uncertainty is subsumed and overwhelmed by the reality of a new heavens and a new earth and the abolishment of death and brokenness and grief forevermore.

And the reality that plan is unfolding, will be unfolded, ought to be a source of extreme comfort for Christians, even in the midst of your uncertainty and your grief that God is in control and therefore I can have hope. Nothing takes him by surprise. As Peter said to the Lord Jesus, when Jesus said some things that were hard for him to understand, and he says, Peter, are you going to leave? And Peter goes, well, I don't know where else I could go because you have the words of life. And as easy as it is when God breaks you and hurts you and causes grief in your life.

It's very easy to get mad at God and say, I don't need you right now. I don't want you right now. I can't worship you right now if you would allow those things to happen. The question still remains, where else can we go? Because he has the words of life. He holds the scroll. Now that sovereign plan is in God's right hand, meaning he's in control over it. That raises the question in the text in verse 2 where an angel says, who is worthy to open the scroll? In other words, who's worthy to bring about God's plans for the future?

In verse 3, there's this search where they look in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and they can't find anybody who's worthy to open the scroll. And so in verse 4, John begins to weep. Because he realizes this better future, this glorious promise will not come about because there is no one worthy to bring it about. Let's read those verses one more time just to keep it fresh on your mind. Verse 2 says, I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?

In other words, who can bring about God's preferred future? But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or even to look in it. And so I wept and wept. In other words, it wasn't a sort-of kind of cry. It was an ugly cry. You guys know what an ugly cry is? He was ugly crying because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or even to look in it. Now I don't know about you, but I'm kind of a skeptical-minded person, so when I read a passage like verse 2, my immediate question is, why not?

Why not? Why is there nobody worthy to open the scroll? I mean, God the Father is right there on the throne holding the scroll. Why doesn't he open it? It's his scroll, right? It's his plan. But he doesn't open it. John can't open it. All he's doing is crying. You don't have any of the angels say, oh, I'll do it. I can open the scroll. None of these amazing creatures, they don't open it. Why not? Why? Why? Well, what is the scroll? The scroll is the unfolding of God's future plans.

The scroll is the putting an end to death, putting an end to sin, putting an end to the brokenness of this world, and bringing about a restoration and making of all things new, a wiping of every tear from every eye. It is a good news kind of unfolding that is going to fall on people when that scroll is unfolded. The problem is the people on whom that blessing is going to rest, those are sinful people. I'm a sinful person, you're a sinful person, and according to the scriptures, the wages of sin is death.

And if God is a good God, and if God is a just judge. It would be unjust for him to put blessing on people who deserve curse. It would be wrong if you had a judge— you committed a violent, evil act and maybe ended the life of another human person, it would be wrong for the judge, knowing your guilt, to say, you're released. Not only are you released, I'm going to give you $10 billion. It would be a bad, unjust judge to do that. And I think that's the reason why God the Father can't open the scroll.

It's because of human sin. In fact, this whole search on the earth and under the earth and everywhere in heaven, that is exposing the unique dilemma posed by human sinfulness. It's because of human sin that the Father can't open the scroll. It's because of human sin that John can't open the scroll. John knows, I'm not worthy. John knows the scriptures that even on our best day our righteousness is like a filthy rag before the Lord. On your best day, on your best day, the days where you love your spouse well, you disciplined your children, you

didn't get angry, you didn't do anything wrong, you communicated your love, you did it just right, you didn't cuss at anybody on the freeway, you didn't get road rage.

You did your job with joy. You worked that unto the Lord and not unto man. You did everything right. You go to bed at night and you think to yourself, God, you must be really proud of me, because everything I did today I did without sin. I did it really well. And you commend that righteousness to the Lord and God says even that, even your best day is like a filthy garment. It's not even right for me to say what the actual reference is. It's filthy dirty to me. So if that's us on our best day, then how much worse off are we on our worst day?

And not one or two worst days, but every worst day you've ever had culminated together. I'm not worthy. You're not worthy. Nobody's worthy. And John feels the weight of this. He feels the angst of a world gone wrong. He feels the overwhelming despair of it'll never get better, it'll never get fixed, the end will never come, justice will never be brought. Maybe you felt those same kinds of things as well. God, is this all that there is? Will I ever be happy again? Can I ever have a marriage again? Will I ever have any kind of purpose again?

Will it always be financial struggles from here on out? Will I always struggle with my children? Will my children always be crazy and hate my guts? Will it ever change? And John, you got to remember, John is right now being ostracized on Patmos because of his faith in the Lord. He knows people who are being tortured for their faith. He knows people who are being martyred for their faith. He knows just how broken things are, and he is weeping because he realizes if God doesn't open the scroll, if I can't open the scroll, if the scroll never gets opened, then it'll never get any better.

And it is devastating. And it is a picture, I think a perfect picture of life without Christ. It is a perfect picture of your life separated from a holy God without any hope of reconciliation and mediation. Without Christ there can be no hope, there can be no joy, there can be no peace, there's only weeping. And some of you know that firsthand. This is why a lot of movie stars who make tons of money and have all the beautiful girls and all the beautiful boys will sometimes, if they're honest, say, you know what, it still wasn't enough.

I was still unhappy. This is why some of us who thought that we could satisfy that longing in our heart with enough pills or enough alcohol or if I just had enough pleasure in my life, if I could just numb it with enough sex and enough pleasure, or if I could just numb it with enough wealth and enough money and enough prestige in the workplace. If I could just get there, if I could just get to that height, then I would finally be happy. And the reality is you get that money, you get that sex, you get that pleasure, you get that recognition, and you're still empty.

Why? Because you were created for worship. You were created to have that longing and angst satisfied, not by God in general, but by the Lord Jesus Christ in particular, because

without Christ there is no hope. He's the only one who can satisfy that longing, and that's what this search is exposing. That there is a dilemma that every human being faces, and the only answer to that dilemma is the Lord Jesus Christ. Without Jesus, we stand before a holy God and a broken world without hope. There must be a mediator. There must be someone who can act as a go-between.

And only Jesus is qualified to serve in that role. And so that's what the elder says. Verse 5. John's despairing because life without Christ, there's only weeping, it's empty, it's meaningless. But then this elder, one of the 24, says to John, You don't have to weep. There is hope on the horizon. Look, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he is able to open the scroll and its seven seals. And then I saw one like a slaughtered lamb standing in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders.

Such a compelling picture, right? Jesus is the lion and the lamb. John is weeping and despairing. This angel tells him to stop weeping and to look, and his attention is fixed towards this idea of a lion. Okay, he doesn't see the lamb yet. He hears about a conqueror, someone who has defeated sin and defeated death, and he is described as the Lion of Judah, Root of David. That of course is a reference to Genesis 49, where Jacob has one of his sons, Judah, and he pronounces a blessing on Judah that says, you're going to rule over your brothers.

You're going to reign. He's also referred to as being from the line of David, which is a reference to the Davidic covenant in the Old Testament, which was basically a promise that Jesus was going to rule and reign forever and ever. So Jesus is presented in these images that convey power and strength and intimidation. But then when John looks, you would imagine he would see some beast of prey or some kind of intimidating animal, but instead of that he sees a lamb. To kind of capture this, imagine you remember when you were playing sports in high school or junior high if you did that.

You know, your mascot, you would try to pick a mascot that was really intimidating, like the Roby Lions, intimidating lion, or the Cooper Cougars, right? It's kind of scary. Even the Abilene High— you know, it's a bird, but it's what kind of bird? An eagle. Scary, right? You ever seen the talons of an eagle? That's impressive. It would be crazy for you to have a sports team where you're trying to communicate strength and power and conquering spirit. It would be crazy for you to be like the Rotan Lambs. That's just embarrassing, right?

The Rotan lambs. Ooh. They're really the Rotan Yellowhammers, which, you know, that's not all that impressive either, but the Rotan lambs, it's even worse. But that's exactly what you have here. And it's a reminder that the way of the kingdom is not the way of the world. Jesus has a kingdom, but his kingdom is upside down and inside out. His kingdom does not advance through political acumen and physical force and violence. His kingdom advances

through love, compassion, sacrifice, forgiveness, truth, and grace. He does not operate like the rest of the world operates.

His kingdom was a subversive kingdom. It came from underneath and ate it, not from the top down, but from the bottom up. The lion gets the victory through the strategies of the lamb. Jesus, when he entered into Jerusalem on his last day, you guys may remember this. We talk about it on Palm Sunday: they had the palm branches. And they were laying them down on the ground and they were praising Jesus, saying, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Royalty, kingdom, strength, power. But then when Jesus walks out of Jerusalem with a cross on his back, he's being tortured and whipped like a slaughtered lamb.

He's the lion, the victor, the conqueror, but he gets the victory through the strategies of the lamb. And notice this lamb in heaven, he's not laying down, he's not still slaughtered. He has the marks of the slaughter. But he is standing, meaning he is alive, he is victorious, he gets the victory through the strategies of the lamb. As the lion, Jesus is full of glory. As the lamb, that glory is mingled with humility. As the lion, Jesus is eternal and transcendent, but as the lamb, his divine power is set aside and accompanied with condescension, humility, taking on flesh.

As the lion, he enacts perfect justice without partiality. As the lamb, he offers mercy to escape judgment through repentance and faith. As the lion, he is majestic. As the lamb, he is meek. Jesus, the lion gets the victory through the strategies of the lamb. You even see it in verses like Hebrews chapter 2. It talks about Jesus the conqueror of death. And it says in Hebrews chapter 2, verse 14, that the way he conquered death was by becoming mortal and dying. He conquers death through his death. He conquered death through his death— he might destroy the one holding the power of death, that is the devil.

And he frees those who are held in slavery all of their lives by the fear of death. When you understand this about the Lord Jesus Christ, you will just think differently about everything. You will begin to see why he is so worthy. He's not just some powerful God who demands your respect and obviously he's worthy of that, but he doesn't force himself on you in those ways. It's not just a fear of the Lord that creates worship in your heart, but it is the reality of his compassion and his kindness and his grace and his pursuit and his sacrifice and his humility.

It's those things being accompanied with his power and majesty and miracle working and all of those things. It is the wedding of those two things that makes Jesus so irresistible, so beautiful, so honorable, so worthy of praise. You've got to see them together. He's the lion and the lamb. You notice how beautiful people don't have just one quality in excess? Really beautiful people have symmetry, right? They have contrasting qualities put together. They're

brave and they're strong, but they're not just brave and strong, they're also kind and compassionate. Like, the most beautiful women are not all girly.

They have a little bit of masculinity in there, right? And the most beautiful of men are not all just manly, they have a little bit of femininity to soften up the hard edges. It is a combination of contrasting features brought together, and that's what you have in the Lord Jesus Christ par excellence. He is a lamb-like lion and a lion-like lamb. John continues in verse 6. I saw one like a slaughtered lamb standing in the midst of the throne and with the four living creatures and among the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth.

I know that throws some of you for a loop. What is this? This is hard to picture in your mind's eye. But again, John's using metaphors to communicate what he saw. Okay, maybe he literally saw seven horns, I'm not sure. But he's using this language to try and capture the truth of what he saw. And in the scriptures, the number seven is symbolically important. It means complete, it means full. Horns were a symbol of authority and power. You see this in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Eyes were symbolic of knowledge and wisdom.

And so what John, I think, is trying to communicate is when he saw this lamb, it wasn't just some slaughtered lamb, meek and mild, kind of pitiful. It was a standing lamb who was strong, who had seven horns, meaning he had total authority. He had seven eyes, which mean he had perfect and complete wisdom. And he was standing, which meant he was victorious, and he sent his spirit, those seven eyes, which refer to the seven spirits, which is a reference to the Holy Spirit. John says he sent those spirits to the earth which I think is a perfect reminder, a perfect picture of what Jesus said in the Great Commission.[2] You remember when Jesus ascended into heaven in Matthew 28, verse 18 to 20?

He told his disciples, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Okay? Seven horns, all authority, all power has been given to me, so I want you to go make disciples, baptizing them, teaching them, so on and so forth. And remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. My spirit is with you. Not me physically. I'm not physically beside you wherever you go, but my spirit. I have sent my spirit into the earth. And wherever you go, I will be. You are never alone.

I am with you in your darkest hour. I am with you in your most difficult of questions and most difficult of uncertainty. I am with you at points of danger and I am with you in points of success. I am with you always. I'm the hope in your darkness. So put together the seven horns and the seven eyes convey the completeness of Jesus' power and wisdom to take the scroll. And the passage closes in verse 7. He went and he took the scroll out of the right hand of the one seated on the throne.

It seems pretty underwhelming, but a lot of people think that's the most important verse in the whole book of Revelation because as soon as Jesus takes the scroll from the hand of God the Father, everything changes. And I mean everything changes. The attention of heaven shifts away from the Father, away from the throne, and onto the lamb, and onto the scroll. The beings in Revelation chapter 4— you remember the four beasts and the 24 elders— they sang a song in Revelation chapter 4, verse 8. The four living creatures sang, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.

They were worshiping God the Father. Why? Because he was the creator. You see that with the elders in verse 11, Our Lord and God, you are worthy to receive glory and honor and power. Why? Because you have created all things. In other words, the focus in Revelation chapter 4 was the Father because the Father created. And the purpose of the creation is to bring glory to God the Father. But as soon as Jesus takes the scroll from the hand of the one seated on the throne, everything changes. The four living creatures fall down and worship.

The 24 elders fall down and worship. And it says in Revelation chapter five, verse eight, that they sang a new song. Not the old song, not you are worthy because you created. No, they sang a new song and they sang a song of worship to the lamb: You, Jesus Christ, the lion and the lamb, you are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because you were slaughtered. Because you died on the cross, because you paid the penalty for my sin. And you purchased people for God by your blood from every tribe, every language, every people, every nation.

You made them a kingdom and priest to our God, and they will reign on the earth. In other words, you are the one. You are uniquely qualified to unroll the scroll. You are the one who is going to bring about God's intended future to the earth. You are the one who's going to reverse the curse. You're the one who's going to forgive my sin. You're the one who's going to take my shame and replace it with the hope and a future. It is through Christ and Christ alone that our deepest, darkest hour can be overwhelmed with the light of life.

He's worthy. He's worthy. And he's not worthy because he's some distant, detached God up in heaven. He's not worthy just because he created. He's worthy because though he was the creator, he condescended and became part of the creation. He took on flesh. He felt the pains that we feel. He wept at the tomb of his friend Lazarus. He took the penalty for your sin and for my sin in his own body on the tree. Even though he lived a sinless perfect life of love and obedience to God the Father, he's worthy because he was slaughtered when he didn't deserve it, and he has made a new people.

He's taking people like you and me who aren't all that impressive on the outside, and he's giving us a hope and a future. He's making us a kingdom of priests and servants to our God, and one day we will reign with him on the earth when he comes again and makes everything new. And so as we respond this morning, my goal, the goal of this sermon is that you would

see Jesus in that way and worship him. Okay, I'm not asking you to change some habit you do on Thursdays. I'm not asking you to love your spouse better, parent your kids better.

I'm asking you to pray: Holy Spirit, open my eyes so that I can see Jesus as he truly is. Give me this fresh, compelling picture of Jesus Christ as one who is worthy of all worship because he was slaughtered. Lord, give me an awareness of how my sin separated me from you, but because of your great love for me, you sent your one and only Son to pay the penalty for my sin. Where sin is bitter, grace will be sweet. So as we respond to the Lord and we take the Lord's Supper, I want to challenge you to ask the Holy Spirit to move in your heart to respond to the Lord in that way.

We're going to sing a song that kind of captures this chapter as we're singing. If there's a personal need that you have, if you want to pray with somebody about something, if you are not a Christian and you want to give your life to Jesus Christ this morning, I'll be down at the front and you can come and talk to me about that. But for all of us, whether you're not a Christian or a Christian, just allow the Holy Spirit to redirect your gaze to that heavenly throne and to open up your eyes to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We will glorify God the Father through the exaltation of God the Son. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for this time, and we do pray that the Holy Spirit would do his unique work of opening up our eyes to the truth about Jesus Christ our Lord. Forgive us for settling for less, for making a Jesus in our own image, who affirms what we affirm and disapproves of what we disapprove of, but who never really confronts us in our sin, never really challenges us on what's right and what's wrong. Forgive us for the idolatry of our heart, for trying to find hope and light in other things, even good things.

Spouses, children, job. Nothing can satisfy the longing of our hearts other than the Lord Jesus Christ because we were made to worship Him. Our hearts were made to rest in Him. And so would you this morning, through the Holy Spirit, put our hearts at rest in the Lord. Help us to take his yoke on us, to learn from him, to see him, and to treasure him, and to flourish as we were meant to flourish, because we are orienting our lives to the one who is worthy. And we pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "a blessing on the one who says it"; Revelation 1:3 pronounces a blessing on the one who reads the prophecy aloud and on "those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it." Source: Revelation 1:3 (CSB). ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "the Sermon on the Mount"; the words quoted ("All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me… I am with you always, to the end of the age") are the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20, not the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). Source: Matthew 28:18–20 (CSB). ↩