

All right, you ready to get after it?

Revelation 5 is where we'll be.

Take your Bibles, Revelation 5.

If you don't have a Bible and you want to use a house Bible, just lift your hand high.

Michael, scurry throughout the room and pass those out to you.

And we say this every week, but we'd love for you to take that house Bible home with you.

If you don't own a copy of God's word, please consider that a gift to you this morning.

All right, Revelation 5.

If you're just joining us, we began at the beginning of this year what will end up being a very long journey through the book of Exodus.

And as we came upon the account of the plagues, you know the plagues, right?

God's showing, he's displaying his power, his glory through all these signs and wonders as he releases his people from captivity in Egypt and

You know, we came upon these and we're like, look, instead of just kind of reading through each of the plagues and then working through the mechanics of what we see happening in those texts, because there is a good bit of repetition in there, we thought, how cool would it be to identify

a bunch of theological areas that we see at work or evidenced in the plagues.

And so we identified six areas of doctrine that we could work through that God is using the plagues to reveal to us

As to his character and nature.

And here's the cool thing about theology.

And by the way.

I love all the conversations that have been happening.

About these theological areas.

They're fantastic.

But understand this.

That theology.

The study of doctrine.

is always meant to grow us in love and humility, not to puff us up and create pride.

You might remember Paul wrote to the church in Corinth and he says, knowledge puffs up, love builds up.

Now, I'm not saying that we don't grow in knowledge.

Of course we do.

But what he's driving at is that the knowledge that comes in, the theology that comes into our heads is meant to be digested into the heart where it takes up residence and then changes us from the inside out.

But it changes us to look more like Jesus.

And Jesus is all about love and humility and care for other people.

And so as we grow in theology, we should grow in our love for people.

And in charity, as we walk these things out, going, oh, I don't have any of this figured out and on lock.

And you don't have any of this figured out and on lock.

So we can just discover what God said.

And with the spirit of love and humility, explore these things together.

You guys with me in that?

That's what theology does.

And when we all grow together like that, man, it's amazing to see what God does.

So with two weeks remaining in this little mini series in Exodus, let me very quickly review where we've been over the last four weeks, because these areas of theology are meant to build upon one another, and they're symbiotic, which means they sort of

feed in and out of each other.

The first thing we talked about is monotheism.

Very simply, there is one God and you aren't him and I'm not him.

We are creatures and God alone is the creator, the source.

God is self-existent, which means that he depends on nothing or no one and

And we as creatures are utterly dependent upon him.

In fact, it's the way that God designed us and made us.

Now what sin does in us is it turns us into practical polytheists at times where we chase after all kinds of

lesser things and treat those things as though they are better than God.

And so we'll attach our worship, our hope, our trust, our affection to all these other things that aren't God.

And what the gospel is doing is it's repairing and restoring that in our heart as it bends us back to worship of God where is exactly where our worship belongs because he alone is God.

That's monotheism.

Now that led us into a conversation about,

God's covenant faithfulness.

Very simply, God is a promise keeper.

You and I are habitual promise breakers.

God alone is faithful.

You and I are not faithful, which means that redemption is based entirely on God's faithfulness and not on our ability to measure up.

Aren't

Aren't you glad that God steps in and says, okay, here's covenantalism and I'm gonna uphold both sides of the covenant.

That's immeasurably good news because without that truth, we would have no hope.

We would be dead in our sins and trespasses and completely hopeless because as we'll see in Revelation 5, you and I have nothing good in us besides what God puts there as an act of his grace.

This is covenant faithfulness.

God does it all.

Third week, we talked about divine sovereignty and the truth that God rules and reigns over absolutely everything.

There is nothing that exists or happens outside of God's ordination.

That's a fancy word that just means outside of God's say-so, which means that everything in your life and mine falls under the sovereign working of God and has great purpose.

God's planned all of it for our good and for his glory.

Now, the call on our lives is to actually find rest in God's sovereignty as we trust that he's always working for our good and he's always working for his glory.

That's a tricky one for us because remember, we're glory thieves, right?

So we actually want to act like we're sovereign and God's not sovereign, that we're in control because he doesn't have it.

So I got to do it myself.

And you know what that does?

It pulls you out of rest and it pulls me out of rest.

And a really good sign that you're not resting in the sovereignty of God is when you are not really resting.

And you know if that's true, you feel anxiety and worry and you feel the need to control things.

We need to go back to the sovereignty of God.

He's got it.

He's literally got all of it, as we're going to discover today from Revelation 5, in the palm of his hand.

It's that children's song, he's got the whole world.

Like we used to sing that when we were kids.

He's got it all in his hands.

You don't want to hear me sing.

Divine justice.

That's what we talked about last weekend.

God is always right and always just.

He's perfectly holy and righteous.

He's pure in every way.

There's no error.

There's no lack in God whatsoever.

Everything that he does is right and good, and everything will one day be put in its right and proper place.

Now, there was a great conversation that was happening after the gathering last week that I got to be a part of for a few minutes.

By the way, I love that people, again, are chewing on these things together.

We should be discussing.

Like, if you're like, oh, sweet, you know, we talked about God's sovereignty, and then you just put a pin in that,

or shelve it and then go eat chicken wings at Chili's for lunch, and you're not thinking about God's divine sovereignty, something's not clicking, right?

We don't walk away from these theological conversations.

The heart is meant to marinate in these things where it's like, ooh, man, we need to soak in these doctrinal areas.

So I love that these conversations are happening.

And here's kind of what was being discussed, or at least a part of the question,

that was being discussed with this group of people.

And I want us to think about it for a moment.

It was, how is God's justice upheld when there's obviously so much injustice in the world?

And maybe more specifically, how do you explain God's goodness and faithfulness when people suffer injustice?

And even more specifically, how do you explain God's goodness and faithfulness to non-Christians?

when they're suffering injustice in the world?

Isn't that a good question?

I love that conversation because I think a lot of people are wrestling with that.

So let's talk about it for just a couple minutes.

We don't have a lot of time, but let's think about it.

There are a couple of important things to remember when we deal with the issue of injustice.

First, I think we have to see the issue through the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

The fact that, if you don't know the word incarnation, it's just the fact that Jesus came into the world, taking on the form of his own creation and lived life.

This is what we see in John chapter one, the beginning of John's gospel.

He says, in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

He was in the beginning with God.

All things that were made were made through him.

And then later in verse 14, it says, and the word of God, this is Jesus saying,

took on flesh and dwelt among us.

That's the incarnation.

So I think we need to think about this through the incarnation because the truth, by the way, this helps us explain the issue to non-Christians.

Because the truth is, is that no one understands injustice and what it feels like better than Jesus.

Nobody understands injustice in a visceral way better than Jesus.

He was betrayed.

He was falsely accused.

He was abused.

He was mocked.

He was condemned unjustly, scourged without cause.

And crucified as a perfectly innocent man.

And that's a big part, by the way, of the beauty of salvation.

That Jesus didn't just rescue us from sin and death.

He subjected himself to death as he took our sin upon himself.

Thereby suffering grave, indescribable injustice.

You see...

The cross and the resurrection speak an infinitely better word over injustice.

The cross points to the fact that Jesus didn't sweep sin under the rug.

It all gets dealt with and it all gets paid for, but he's the one who paid for it.

Justice was satisfied fully in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

So the cross of Christ proves that God takes evil and injustice far more seriously than we do or ever will.

And the resurrection guarantees that injustice and death do not get the final word.

They do not get the final word.

Jesus will return as the righteous judge and he will establish perfect justice forever as everything is brought into the light and reconciled under the banner of the gospel, God's redemptive work.

Now, there's a lot more that could be said about the issue of divine justice, but I wanted to circle back and at least make mention of that to help us as we really continue to dig on and chew on the issue.

And I want to encourage you to keep digging, keep chewing on these things together because all of these areas of theology are so important as God continues to shape our heart.

Now,

All of that brings us to a fourth area of doctrine that we see at work in the account of the plagues.

It's called compatibilism.

It's not cannibalism, that's different.

That would be a short sermon, don't eat people.

This is compatibilism, which is a fancy theological word that just simply means that God is sovereign, like all the way sovereign,

And man is responsible, like all the way responsible, at the same time.

That's compatibilism.

It comes from the word compatibility.

How can the doctrine of God's sovereignty and the doctrine of man's responsibility coexist and be working at the same time?

So let me give you a roadmap of where we're going this morning.

I have three very simple points to make.

I'm going to give you these points up front.

Then we're going to discuss how we see compatibilism at work in the plagues.

I'll try to help you think through it categorically.

And then we're going to go and see how it all fits together by looking at this passage in Revelation chapter 5.

Does that sound good?

Okay, and then Gavin will be done after that, all right?

You with me?

Okay, all right, you got it?

All right, so here are my points.

You can write these down if you're taking notes.

Number one, God is completely sovereign.

Number two, man is completely responsible.

And number three, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus is completely sufficient, okay?

God's sovereign, man's responsible, the atonement in Jesus' substitutionary work is completely sufficient.

Now, God's sovereignty, man's responsibility, same time.

Where do we see that compatibilism

Where do we see that happening in the account of the plagues?

Well, we could get into the weeds and unpack that we see it in a few different ways, but I just want to cut right to the quick this morning because it's most evident to my mind in what we see happening with Pharaoh's heart.

This is something that we talked about before leading up to the plagues, and we actually talked about it last week from Romans chapter 9 as well.

Between Exodus 7 and Exodus 12, we see that God hardened Pharaoh's heart repeatedly.

It's actually listed five times explicitly that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, which means that God exercised his sovereign will doing whatever he wants in hardening the heart of Pharaoh, and he's perfectly right to do it.

But we also see in those chapters that Pharaoh hardened his own heart repeatedly.

It's mentioned three times explicitly that Pharaoh was the one hardening his own heart in these circumstances.

And then to muddy the waters even more, we see six times, that's three,

was hardened okay we got all of those happening in the account of the plagues so what gives which one is it it's all of them at the same time God's hardening Pharaoh's heart Pharaoh's hardening Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh's heart is being hardened you almost get the sense that they're used interchangeably in some ways right

So you see the sovereignty of God clearly at work in the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

We talked about that over the last two weeks in Romans chapter nine, where Paul tells us clearly the reason that God raised Pharaoh up

was to harden his heart, to calcify the pride and rebellion already in his heart so that God could glorify his name in this situation.

It's yet another evidence of many of the fact that when God wants to do something, he does that thing.

God doesn't need permission to

to do anything.

He doesn't need our approval.

God does what he pleases, when he pleases, and what he does is always right and it's always good.

So you have that, and at the same time, we see the fact that Pharaoh is responsible for the condition of his own heart.

In other words, God can't be blamed for Pharaoh acting with pride and selfishness as he's being controlled by his flesh.

But Pharaoh is fully responsible for his own behavior before the Lord, as are we all.

Now, those two things are happening at the same time.

Now, we think about that and we're like, but I don't get it.

Like, how does that work?

Because it doesn't make a whole lot of sense how those things can be happening at the same time.

Did you know that's actually a question that Paul anticipated in this dynamic and addressed in Romans 9?

I think we read it last week.

We might have read it the last two.

It's verse 19.

Throw it up on the screen, Richard.

This is what it says.

Paul says, he anticipates, he says, okay, so you're gonna say to me,

Why does God still find fault?

Who can resist his will?

That's what Paul's saying.

He's saying, look, if God's exercising his sovereignty and doing what he wants, then immediately your question is going to be, well, then how does he find fault in us if it's about God's sovereignty and we can't really resist his will?

That's what Paul's asking.

And he doesn't really give us an answer.

You know what he does instead?

Paul calls out the illegitimacy of the question coming from us.

That's what he says.

Paul says that we're simply not in a position to ask the question in an accusatory way.

By the way, we hate that.

We hate that because we want to know everything, right?

Now, here's what I'm going to suggest.

I'm going to suggest that we wouldn't understand the answer anyway.

I mean, let's just be honest.

This is what happens with small children all the time.

You know, like when really small kids, they start to speak, right?

And so they gain the ability to communicate.

And so everything is, why?

Why?

Why, why, why, why?

And so you're sitting here as a parent and you might tell a toddler, you might say, hey, we're going to do this thing.

We've made this decision.

And as an adult, there's like a hundred different factors that go into that decision.

That that toddler has no capacity to understand whatsoever.

You're thinking about schedules and budgets and other people's schedules and the weather and all these different things.

They can't even go to the bathroom by themselves.

And they're like, why?

And so you know what as a parent?

Because you're like, it doesn't do me any good to explain the nuance to them.

What do you end up saying?

Right?

Because I said so.

That's why.

It's because I said so.

Now, when you get old, there may be a time I can explain that to you, but that's what we end up doing.

Listen, by the way, do you think it's any accident that God calls us into a relationship where we operate like small children with a childlike faith with him?

See how that fits together?

Sometimes God's like, bro, relax.

I said so.

That's why.

but I don't understand.

Listen, I think God trying to explain how the mysteries work to us would be like trying to explain trigonometry to an ant.

I mean, honestly, by the way, you want to know how dull I am?

I couldn't even spell trigonometry in my notes.

I couldn't.

Do you know how bad it is when your computer looks at you and you are so far from whatever the right answer is with spelling, it's like, I got nothing.

The computer was like, were you meaning Triscuits?

Because you aren't even close.

I wasn't even close to Trigonometry, so I had to Google it.

That's how dull I am, and then I'll sit here and act like I know better than God.

God's like, bro, you can't even spell trigonometry.

You see how it works?

Come on.

So how can God's sovereignty be total and complete...

and compatible with the fact that man is responsible for his own attitudes, actions, and behaviors as he exercises the agency that God has given him.

I don't really know, but I know the Bible says that it's true.

And I know that if we're willing to think about it critically and honestly, we actually see it play out all the time in our lives.

I think if we think about it, we see this play out all the time.

I'll give you an illustration.

I shared this illustration at some point.

It might have been a year or two ago, so if this is redundant, I apologize.

But this helps me think about how these things work together.

You may know our family.

lived abroad for a while.

We, for a time, were living in India, doing mission work in Mumbai, and so we would travel internationally a lot.

Sometimes we would return home.

There was one Christmas where we came home to be with family for a couple weeks, and we were heading back to Mumbai.

It was a trip that should have taken us about 24 hours to

when you add up the flying time, the layover time, all that stuff, should have been about 24 hours, which is a daunting trip.

24 actual hours of travel when you're traveling with nine children ranging from age 16 to age four, that's a daunting trip if everything goes well.

Sanctifying, some might say.

Yeah.

So we were in Philadelphia where we caught our connection.

We were supposed to go on to London and we were delayed by several hours.

I mean, like three hours sitting, y'all remember this, sitting on the tarmac in a plane.

Turns out there was something wrong with our plane, which I'm so grateful was revealed before we were over the Atlantic.

Like, don't get me wrong, happy about that.

But they deplane us.

And it means that we're gonna miss our connection at London Heathrow badly, which prompted me to offer to the American Airlines manager who was assigned to solve this problem to simply fly us back to St.

Louis and we could rebook the entire trip and avoid any problems.

I understand the complexity of trying to find a block of 11 seats on one airplane and rebook somebody.

I said, look, we'll go back to St.

Louis and we can start the whole itinerary over, no problem.

She had another plan.

She said, how about this?

We're going to just fly you to London and we will put you up in London for several days.

Hotel, food, transportation, vouchers, all paid for until we can get you booked on another flight a few days later to Mumbai together.

Now you can imagine what we thought about that idea.

I looked back and everybody's like, let's do that.

Three days paid for in London, this sounds amazing.

So we boarded the flight to London thinking that we'd be in London for a few days, but that's not what happened.

While we were in the air, something very nefarious was going on, Jeff.

It turns out that instead of us getting to vacate in London for a few days, we were met at the gate by an American Airlines agent that rushed us through the airport

frantically.

I mean, we were running through the airport to a terminal a long way away.

I'm like, you couldn't book one of those things?

That would go better.

Nope.

We're like, no, we want, you want a dead sprint over to this other terminal.

They board us on an Etihad airplane.

Airlines flight headed to Abu Dhabi, which is not that close to Mumbai.

You're like, I've never heard of Etihad Airways.

Nobody has, okay?

And so it's like literally a scene from The Amazing Race.

If The Amazing Race was being run with a family of 11, including small children, which by the way would sell, that would be awesome, right?

We end up, we get to Abu Dhabi.

We have a layover in Abu Dhabi for like eight hours.

And the airport was packed.

We couldn't even find a place to sit down.

And at one point, Jeremiah, who's now like 6'1", he was seven at the time, he just fell over.

Like we're standing there and nobody pushed him.

The ground wasn't slanted.

He just fell over.

Like we were dropping.

In total, that 24-hour trip ended up being almost two full days of travel.

Now let me ask you a question.

Was God sovereign in that situation?

Yes or no?

100%.

He knew that we all needed to be refined.

He knew that he wanted to make me and Maren look a lot more like Jesus at the end of that trip than when we started.

He was setting up all kinds of strategic conversations.

We had two very cool gospel conversations in the Abu Dhabi airport.

God was 100% sovereign over the entire situation.

He was probably working in an infinite number of ways that we'll probably never even know about.

But make no mistake, American Airlines was responsible for the whole thing.

Do you understand?

Yeah.

It plays out every day in our lives if we think about it.

The responsibility of man and the sovereignty of God happening at the same time to accomplish everything that God has ordained from before the beginning of time.

Man is surely responsible in human history, but God is sovereign over human history.

We make choices, but God is in absolute control of absolutely everything.

If you can imagine with me a very large circle and a dot within that circle.

Circle being God's sovereign will in his providential working, the dot being our lives.

Do you have the ability to move around within that larger circle?

Of course you do.

You're making choices and exercising agency that God's given you.

You're responsible for those movements.

But at no point do you ever go outside the circle of God's sovereign will and providential working.

Never.

Now, you might say, okay, Jeff, I understand that, but I still don't understand how these things fit together.

That's fair.

That's a fair statement because there's a lot of mystery here.

But again, the Bible says that it's true.

So it's true.

And it brings some greater clarity to this.

I want to explore this dynamic through the lens of Revelation chapter 5.

I thought about this last week because if you were here for our gathering last week,
we were singing the song, Who Else?

I've actually asked the worship team to end the gathering with that song, so we're going to sing it again after communion.

But as I was out there worshipping, I felt compelled to come up on the stage and read the account from Revelation chapter 5 that that song is based on.

And it's simply because the Spirit was doing a work in my heart, stirring up and reminding me how all of this fits together in a way that drives us to the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

And that's precisely where we must be driven.

Straight into the arms of Jesus.

When we think about God's sovereignty and we think about our responsibility and our state before the Lord and our sin, it must drive us straight into the arms of Jesus.

And so that's what I want to unpack with you for the next few moments as our hearts are prepared to come to the table and celebrate the Lord's Supper together this morning.

So let's start by reading the text.

And then we'll chop it up and we'll work through it together one point at a time.

This is what it says beginning in verse 1.

John records this.

Then I saw in the right hand of Him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the scroll?
and to break its seals.

And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.

And I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

One of the elders said to me, weep no more.

Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain.

with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

And he went and he took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.

And when he had taken the scroll...

The four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the lamb, each holding a harp and a golden bowl full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sang a new song saying, worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals for you were slain.

And by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

And you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God.

And they shall reign on the earth.

This is the word of the Lord for us this morning.

Here are my three points.

First, God is completely sovereign.

Completely sovereign.

Verse 1.

Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back sealed with seven seals.

Let's just stop and think for a moment about what's contained in the scroll that God is holding in the palm of his hand.

When you dig into the chapters that follow, you recognize that this scroll contains God's foreordained plans for the future.

It contains the course of history that leads up to the culmination of this redemptive age and the consummation of God's kingdom.

It contains the sovereign will of God for all creation throughout the course of history, including his purposes in redemption, which as we've discussed over the last couple of weeks, we really don't even understand.

It contains God's sovereign decree for the future glorification of believers and the final damnation of unbelievers.

And listen now,

All of it is in the hand of God.

All of it.

Just like all things throughout all time have always been in the hand of God.

There is nothing that exists outside of his hand.

In fact, when you go back and you look at the end of Revelation chapter four that leads us into this text, look at what it says.

It says, worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they existed and were created.

So here's how you can summarize all of that when we think about this scroll.

Our sovereign God holds the destiny of the world.

In the palm of his hand.

This is what we discussed two weeks ago.

With God's sovereignty.

So I'm not going to spend too much time here.

You can go back and listen to that online.

But God is completely and utterly sovereign over all things.

He is in absolute control.

And that is incredibly good news.

It is immeasurably good news that God holds everything in the palm of his hand.

If it were not so, we would be hopelessly lost.

If it were not so, nothing would exist because God is currently upholding the universe by the word of his power.

And that is because our God is completely and utterly sovereign over all things.

It is an absolute power.

that in no way negates the fact that we are all responsible for our choices.

All of us.

Second point, we are completely responsible.

Now, here's where we get a picture of sin and brokenness, beginning in verse two.

John says, I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?

And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.

And I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

The shocking reality that is brought to the forefront in this passage is that no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth is worthy to open the scroll and thereby reveal the sovereign will of God and the judgment of all things.

So the question goes out, who is worthy

And the silence of heaven testifies to the sinfulness of man.

The reality that our state before God, apart from Jesus Christ, is one of utter hopelessness.

There is nothing worthy in us whatsoever apart from what Jesus puts there according to the sovereign will and action of God.

The truth is that we all stand responsible before God for everything that we've ever thought or said or done.

Every motivation of the heart.

And we are utterly hopeless without Christ.

Listen, think about this.

This helps us understand something important.

about the two areas of doctrine that we've discussed over the last two weeks, divine sovereignty and divine justice.

Because some people will ask, they'll ask a question like, well, what happens to the innocent guy living in a remote part of the world who never hears the gospel?

What happens to him when he dies?

And the answer to that is very simple.

He goes to heaven without question.

Problem is the guy doesn't exist because there are no innocent people.

You with me?

There's no innocent guy living out in a remote village.

If there were innocent people, there would be no need for the gospel for them.

But the reality is that we are all guilty and stand responsible before a holy God for our rejection of him through sin and rebellion.

That is a universal truth that applies to the whole of humanity.

Listen, let me put it this way.

When we enter the world, I mean the moment we enter the world, we are running as fast and as far away from God in our hearts as possible.

That's everyone.

Scooting away from him as fast as we can.

By the way, I don't know if you've ever thought about this or not.

Because then the question comes up.

Why does God save these people, not these people?

How could a loving God let these people?

Do you think about this?

Christians are the only ones who aren't getting what they want.

Because everybody wants to be away from God in their sin and brokenness.

It's true.

When we enter the world, we're running from him.

Now, God intervenes in the life of some and brings them back from the dead.

You're like, why them?

I have no idea.

We talked about that over the last couple weeks.

I have no answers for you on the why, but the Bible says that's what he does.

But listen, the people he doesn't save are getting exactly what they want, which is to be far away from God in their hearts.

Why does he save me, not somebody else?

I have no idea, but I'm sure glad he does.

Sure glad he does.

Have you ever thought about that and just drop?

Listen, these areas of doctrine should drive such a thanksgiving and worship in the heart, leaving you with the question, why me, Lord?

When's the last time you just dropped to your knees and said, God, thank you.

I don't deserve a single thing from you but death and separation.

And I was running from you in my heart, thumbing my nose at you as I did.

And you rescued me from myself, from sin and death and separation from you.

I'm so glad that God has done this because I'm hopeless and helpless without his intervention.

And the same is true of you.

And that's the point of all this.

We must be brought to a place where we can see our sin and understand our responsibility before a holy God for that sin.

And the point of that is not to drive us to despair or shame or guilt.

The point is that we would be driven to the sufficiency of Jesus Christ to save us by His perfect sacrifice.

which is our final point.

The atoning sacrifice of Jesus is completely sufficient.

Verses five through 10, once again, the elders said to John, weep no more.

Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, Jesus Christ, has conquered so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.

Between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, he looks and he sees a lamb who is standing as though it had been slain.

Seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

And he went, listen to the audacity of this.

He walks up and snatches the scroll from the right hand of God seated on the throne.

By the way, you see beautiful Trinitarian theology here.

The son who was slain but is standing walks up to the father and takes the scroll.

When he'd taken the scroll, these four living creatures and all the elders fall down before the lamb, each holding this harp, the golden bowls full of incense that are the prayers of the saints, and they start worshiping.

And here's my point.

This drives us to worship.

Where we don't then look at ourselves and say, self, you know, worthy are you, Jeff?

Man, aren't you awesome?

Listen to that sermon or look at these ways or look at how you serve this person or look at how you did that.

Nothing here drives us to self-glory and glory thievery but the exaltation of Jesus Christ whereby our only boast is in him because he alone is worthy.

Worthy are you.

To take the scroll and open its seals for you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

You've made them a kingdom and priest to our God and they shall reign on the earth.

It is Jesus who has done this.

The reason that Jesus came into the earth

and lived out His righteous perfection in joyful submission to His Father and died as our substitute and was raised victorious over sin and death.

The reason is to ransom His people, a people from every tribe and language and people and nation.

It was to make us a kingdom with Jesus as our King.

His atoning sacrifice

is completely sufficient for all of our salvation.

That's why the calling on our lives is never to try to somehow improve or add to his finished work.

Do you understand the foolishness of that according to this text?

The whole point of Revelation 5 is there is nothing worthy in us.

You and I could spend an infinite number of lifetimes trying to figure things out and we would all fall infinitely short in our best efforts of the worthiness and righteousness that it takes to be right with God.

Impossible.

But he's worthy.

He's worthy.

And he gives us his righteousness, imputes it to us, covers us with it as a gift of his grace.

This is the gospel, not to try to measure up to something, but to find rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ to make you clean.

That's one of the reasons why Jesus has given us the gift of communion.

The Lord's Supper.

He's instructing his...

disciples in the upper room, before he was going to go to the cross, he said, look, every time you do this, I want you to do this in remembrance of me, in remembrance of the gospel, remembering what is true of what I'm about to accomplish for you through my death and resurrection.

And so he takes a piece of bread and he breaks it and he passes it to him and he says, this is my body.

given for you.

It's a picture of the substitutionary atoning work of Jesus whereby he would hang on the cross in our place.

We take that and we remember his sacrifice.

He passes the cup and says, this is the cup of the new covenant.

This is my blood.

It's a symbol of what I'm about to pour out for you for the forgiveness of sins.

And so when we take this little juice cup, we're remembering that Jesus didn't just give a portion of his blood.

Aren't you glad that Jesus didn't just tithe his blood to us?

Uh-oh.

He gave it all.

I'm glad for that because it took every drop of it to do this work.

takes our shame, our guilt, our condemnation, the wrath of God being stored up against our sin.

He takes it all upon himself in this perfect atoning sacrifice and brings it all with him into the grave so that when he comes up out of the grave, because death had no claim on Jesus, on his righteous perfection, it couldn't hold him.

So he comes up out of the grave victorious over sin and death, having put death to death so that death, injustice, pain, suffering, all the rest does not have the final word in our lives.

Jesus has the final word in our lives and he brings life.

This is good news.

It's the best news imaginable.

That we, who deserve nothing from God, can receive everything from Him because of His great, abiding, redeeming, steadfast love for us.

So when we come to the table, all we're doing is we're remembering the sufficiency of Christ.

We're remembering what he's done and it's driving repentance in our heart where we're saying, Jesus, there's all kinds of ways I don't believe this practically in my life.

I'm turning back to you in repentance and I'm putting on that right belief.

And we're begging him, help us in our unbelief.

Jesus, help me believe what's true about who you are and what you've done and what you've said about my identity.

Because listen, you and I will run around acting a fool practically in our lives with misplaced identity.

Where we've forgotten who we are in Christ.

We come to the table to remember.

Remember what he's done and what he said about us.

Already I've made you clean by the word that I've spoken to you.

We also come to the table and we look forward to the fact that he's coming back.

Work's not done.

Work's not done.

And I know you want it to be done.

And we should cry in our hearts, Maranatha.

Back to the injustice piece.

We should, when you turn on the news and you're like, I can't believe I just read that.

And we see the most horrific things happening.

You know what that produces in our heart?

The cry, Maranatha, Jesus, come back.

But listen, you can't cry Maranatha unless you believe he's coming back.

He is coming back to finish the work that he started in us.

And he can be trusted to do it.

That's what we remember when we come to the table.

You know what you bring to God's table?

Wow, this is gonna be freeing for somebody.

Your sin.

That's it.

That's all you bring to the equation.

You come in empty-handed saying, I got nothing.

And Jesus says, bro, I got it all.

I got it all for you.

Just come.

So here's the invitation this morning.

It's to engage in the Lord's Supper by coming to his table empty-handed.

If you're here this morning and you thought,

that having a relationship with God is about doing a bunch of stuff, going through motions and doing right things and staying away from wrong things, and God's like grading on the curve, there's a scale, there's something happening, you know, let that nonsense go.

That's nowhere in Scripture.

There's nowhere in Scripture that says that.

Everything in Scripture talks about the gift of salvation, which is a gift of faith.

It's by grace, not your own doing, because if it was your own doing, you'd be able to boast.

Let that go and run to Jesus.

And I guarantee you, there's every single one of us who follows Jesus, we're holding on to stuff in our hearts where we're not believing the gospel, we're chasing after idols, we're ruled by fear, we've got all kinds of worry and anxiety riddling our hearts.

Listen, Jesus is saying, let that go.

Come to my table and find rest for your souls.

My yoke is easy.

My burden's light.

I'm just telling you to come and wear that as you're with me.

That's the invitation.

So that's how we come.

I want to invite you, if you've trusted the Lord Jesus, love and follow him, you've given your heart to him to partake in the Lord's Supper this morning.

We've got two tables up front, two in the back.

You can do that, and I want you to take, I've saved a good bit of time.

Gavin, we're under 50 minutes, bro, all right?

We got time, okay?

I want you to take time, and maybe you're reflecting yourself with the Lord.

Maybe you're with a group of people, family, gospel community, your DNA, something like that.

Take time and pray.

Thank the Lord.

Pray with people.

Gather around.

If you need somebody to pray with you, I'll be up here at the front.

I'd love to pray with you.

If you want to talk more about salvation, I'm here.

I'd love to chat about that.

But let's not miss an opportunity to run into the arms of Jesus as we come to his table.

So let me pray for our elements, and I'm going to release you to respond as the Lord leads you this morning.

Father, we thank you for

this great grace that is super abounding over our sin.

We thank you for the fact that you speak a better word over our lives than our sin, our brokenness, our messiness.

God, I thank you for the freedom that we bring only that mess to the table.

And you remind us that you've made us clean because of the work that you've done

Remove guilt, remove sin, remove shame, condemnation, all gone and replaced with just the words, this is my son in whom I'm well pleased.

This is my daughter in whom I'm well pleased.

Because when you look at us, you see Jesus and his righteousness.

Thank you for that freedom, God.

And I pray that we would drink deeply of your grace as we come to your table this morning, God.

So work in us according to what you've purposed to do for your glory.

We pray in Christ's name.