



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ASHLAND

This guide is an invitation to follow Jesus with greater purpose and hope. It will help you to explore the scriptures and challenge you to live out your faith. Each week we'd love for you to think about how you relate: **Up** (with God), **In** (with church) and **Out** (with neighbors).



Weekly Questions:

- How is God getting my attention? For help, think about these areas:
- How are you living up with God?
- How are you living in community with other followers of Jesus?
- How are you living out on mission with your neighbors?
- What are you going to do about it?

Revelation: Power Through Sacrifice

Revelation 4-5

- **The throne and the open door.** Revelation 4 opens with a door standing open in heaven and a voice inviting John to "Come up here." This isn't an escape from reality, but an invitation to see the *true* reality. We are invited to look past the "curtain" of our daily anxieties and political noise to see the throne that is never empty. God is at the center of all things, surrounded by a chorus of worship that never ceases. When you look at the world right now, do you see a "throne room" of God's sovereignty or a chaotic "waiting room" of uncertainty? How does the image of the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before the throne challenge your own desire for control or recognition? In what area of your life do you need to "come up here" and get a fresh perspective on a situation that feels overwhelming?
- **The Lion who is a Lamb.** In Revelation 5, a crisis emerges: no one is worthy to open the scroll of history. John weeps because it seems the story of the world has no meaning. But then, he is told to look at the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," the ultimate symbol of power. However, when John looks, he doesn't see a Lion; he sees a "Lamb, looking as if it had been slain." This is the great reversal of the Kingdom: God's "winning" looks like losing; God's power is expressed through sacrifice. Do you ever find yourself waiting for a "Lion" (force, coercion, winning the argument) to solve your problems, rather than following the "Lamb" (sacrifice, humility, love)? How does the idea of "Power Through Sacrifice" change the way you think about success in your workplace, your home, or your neighborhood? Why do you think John had to "weep" before he could see the Lamb? What role does our own brokenness play in recognizing God's power?
- **A New Song for a New Creation.** The result of the Lamb's sacrifice is a "new song" sung by people from every tribe, language, and nation. We are not just spectators of this worship; we are invited to be "a kingdom and priests" who bring the reality of heaven down to earth. We follow a Jesus who asks us to live out this generous, big-hearted love in the "low" and mundane places of our everyday lives. How does the diversity of the crowd around the throne (every tribe and tongue) challenge our tendencies to stay in comfortable, homogenous circles? If we are called to be "priests" in our community, what is one way you can represent God's love to a neighbor or co-worker this week? What "crown" (source of pride or security) is God asking you to lay down today so that you can join the song of the Lamb?
- **Practice: The Sacrifice Shift**
This week, identify **one situation** where you feel the urge to use "Lion power"—to demand your own way, to win an argument, or to exert control. Intentionally choose a "Lamb" response instead. Ask yourself: *How can I*

show love through sacrifice here? Whether it is giving up your time, letting go of the "last word," or serving someone who can't pay you back, practice living as a citizen of the New Creation.