

Remain in an attitude of worship. What's going to be read is a passage of praise, of incredible praise, and we'll keep the music playing even and just sit and remain in an attitude of worship as the word of God is read to you today.

A reading from the Book of Revelation, chapter five, verses one through 14. Then I saw a scroll in the right hand of the one who was sitting on the throne. There was writing on the inside and outside of the scroll, and it was sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel who shouted with a loud voice who was worthy to break the seals on this scroll and open it. But no one in heaven or on Earth or under the Earth was able to open the scroll and read it. And then I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll and read it. But one of the 24 elders said to me, Stop weeping and look. The lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David's throne, has won the victory. He is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals. And then I saw a lamb that looked as if it had been slaughtered, but it was now standing between the throne and the four living beings. And among the 24 elders, he had seven horns and seven eyes which represent the sevenfold spirit of God that is sent out into every part of the Earth.

And he stepped forward and took the scroll from the right hand of the one sitting on the throne. And when he took the scroll, the four living beings and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people. And they sang a new song with these words, you are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it, for you are slaughtered. And your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for our God, and they will reign on Earth. And then I looked again and I heard the voices of thousands and millions of Angels around the throne and of the living beings and the elders, and they sang in a mighty chorus, Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. And then I heard every creature in heaven and on Earth and under the Earth and in the sea, and they sang blessing and honor and glory and power belonged to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.

And the four living beings said, Amen. And the 24 elders fell down and worshipped the Lamb. Can you go ahead and please stand for the reading of the Gospel from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 18 verse nine. Through then, Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else. Two men went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer. I thank you God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else, for I don't cheat and I don't sin and I don't commit adultery. I'm certainly not like that tax collector and I fast twice a week and I give you a 10th of my income. But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest and sorrow saying, O God, be merciful to me for I am a sinner. I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted the word of the Lord.

All right. Hey children, we're going to do kids alive now over there. You can go with your teachers. Let me pray for you. It's a lot of fun so if you want to join them, if you've never done it before, it's really great. Heavenly Father, we ask that you would bless kids alive and we ask that you bless our children. We pray that you'll bless those who teach them today and share the word of God. In Jesus name, Amen. Amen. Alright. And now, Lord, we pray for the word that's going to be preached and proclaimed to your people here today. We pray you would give us eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to take it in and cause it to be part of our lives that we live your purposes in this world. In Jesus name, Amen. So how do you measure worth? How do you look at the things that you have to do, the people in your life that you might invest in? How do you make the decision that it is worth it to invest your time, whether it's in a job or a person, a relationship, family member, whether it's in a hobby?

How do you measure worth? Well, this week was a big week for our family. Our daughter Rebecca who's here today with her husband Eric. So glad to have you guys here along with my sister and my brother in law and my niece and my what do you call my great niece Grandma. We're really glad to have you all here. Well, this week they're here because my daughter is expecting going to give birth in June and we had a baby shower. And let me tell you, we did all kinds of preparations for that baby

shower. I painted a painting for the baby and you know how it is. I had so many things going on that the time crunch was coming and then I was like, oh, gosh every night. I was up this past week every night painting this painting and making sure it was just right. And we were organizing food, we were organizing schedules, we were coordinating golf for the guys. And it was all worth it. It was all worth it. We're worth it because it's family and family's worth it. It's worth it because it's my grandbaby and my grandbaby's worth it.

It's worth it because it's my daughter and my daughter's worth it. How do you measure worth? We get into trouble sometimes in this regard, especially as Christians, because we are not worthy. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. But what was he slain for? Our sins. And our sins mean that we are not worthy. But we sometimes confuse worth with worthiness. There was a systematic theology professor, and at times he would have various students in his class give the opening prayer. So one day he called on a Mr. Williams. Mr. Williams got up and he said, Mr. Williams, lead us in a class prayer. And Williams, wanting to impress his systematic theology professor, is praying all these grand prayers about God. You are the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning and the end. You are awesome. You are Holy or righteous. You are worthy. But, Lord, we are miserable. We are wretched. We are sinners. We are worthless. And the systematic theology professor said, Mr. William, stop. We are not worthless. Jesus Christ shed his blood upon the cross for miserable, wretched sinners like you and me. We are worth every drop of that blood. We are not worthy, but we are worth it.

You may continue your prayer. Yeah, we get into trouble because we mix that up. I was even talking to a pastor, a friend of mine, this morning. We pray every Sunday together. And as I told him what I was going to be preaching about, he said, Man, I struggle with that. I really struggle with feeling worthwhile. Do you? I think it's a common struggle. Well, the book of Revelations speaks about that, and it helps us to consider this question. What will help unworthy people like us grasp our ultimate worth in the eyes of God and so live worthy of the Salvation that was bought for us. We are unworthy, but we are called by Jesus to live worthy for the blood that has been shed for us. How do we do that? Well, the book of Revelation, which is a book about revealing, actually reveals the answer. I know it's a frightening book. It's a book with scary images of beasts and Thunder and hail and plagues and earthquakes and death and horrors riding on the back of these beasts and Dragons. And people say, what is it? Is it a book about what is to come?

Many people believe that all that Revelation talks about has not yet happened. It's off in the future, maybe the distant future, but with the way things are looking now, maybe the not so distant future, where the world descends into chaos and a Lord of the Rings type of battle will take place with real swords and real armor and real beasts. Is it a book about what is to come? Or is it a book about what was? Many people believe that that's what the book of Revelation is. It describes Rome and their oppression of Christians and the prophecies were for that day and they have been fulfilled. A book about what was. But there's another view, a view that's sometimes called the idealist view, that it is a book about what is, what was and what is to come, that it is a revelation for all Christians at all times. And it is revealing not just the meaning of what is, what was and what is to come, but of God's sovereignty over it all. So you know what the book of Revelation is primarily? It's a book about worship, a book that is really integral for us to find our ultimate worth and value in the one who has ultimate worth and value our God, and to derive ultimate worth and value from the one who has ultimate worth and value, his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

So it is a relevant book. It's a book I hope you get to love. I love this book. In his three book series on the Kingdom, Jamie Smith makes the case again and again that human beings, all human beings, are primarily worshippers, not primarily doers or thinkers or lovers or fighters, though we do all those things. But we are worshipers. Everyone worships something. It's our nature to worship and to so become like what we worship. And when we consider passages like this one, really to worship anything smaller than God and the God on display in Revelation is, well, it's small. So today I want to look into that. This book of Revelation begins, and it ends with worship. An initial vision of God is given as recorded in chapter one. And then Jesus himself dictates seven messages to the seven churches that John overseas as a Bishop. And those seven messages are full of commendations and warnings and urgings to remain faithful and to the promises that are given for those who by faith are victorious. In other words, it's a call to live worthy, to live worthy of what Jesus has done. And

because they're in the midst of a battle, they need to be ready for that call.

A battle in an unseen realm, a realm that the vision will reveal. But before the vision reveals it, before we get into all the later chapters with all those images, worship, worship, worship. It begins with chapter four, where we see that God is the Father, he's the Creator of all. He's seated on a throne. The throne is shining like a precious Ruby. It's encircled by an Emerald rainbow. It's surrounded by 24 elders that we heard in chapter five. Those 24 elders represent the twelve Apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel. Almost all commentators believe that. And so those 24 elders basically represent all of the people of faith, past, present, and future, giving worship to God. And then there's four winged beasts, a lion, the greatest of the wild beasts, an Ox, the greatest of the tame beasts, a man, the image bearer of God, and an Eagle, the King of air, indicating God's sovereignty over all things. And they cry out, Holy, Holy, Holy. And in verse eleven of chapter four, all the people cast their crowns down at his feet. And they say, you are worthy, for you created all things. And you think you could stop there?

You think now you'd be ready for the battle, but not yet. For this picture of worship of the Creator God, as awesome as it is, is incomplete. In verse five, one, it reads like this, and you could turn to Revelation if you want to and follow along. Then I saw in the right hand of him, and the right hand in the Bible is always the hand of favor, the hand of blessing, the hand of authority. So I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. So these Scrolls show up in the Bible from time to time. And there are two scroll images from which we can kind of help us get a clue about what's on this scroll. In Ezekiel sees a scroll on roll before him, and he says, on both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe. It's a scroll of judgment. But the Daniel in Daniels chapter twelve has shown a scroll that is a scroll that holds the names of those who are the righteous, who are written in the book of life.

And he was told, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. So the scroll is a scroll of judgment. It's a scroll of mercy. And the idea here is that there's a knowledge that only God can unlock and a story that only God can tell. But the time of the end is inaugurated at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit is given, Peter stands up and says, These are the days of the end that the Prophet Joel prophesied about. So the scroll is being opened up for the time of the end for the equipping of you and me to live lives worthy in this time of the end, that we are living in the Church from the time of its inception until Jesus comes again is living in the last days. But there's also something really significant about the scroll. Last Wills and Testaments in Rome were written on Scrolls, and they were sealed with seven seals by seven witnesses. And they had writing on both sides. The insides were the contents, and the outsides bore the names of the seven witnesses, and it could only be unlocked by a worthy executor.

So we come to verses two through four. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll. But no one in heaven or on Earth or under the Earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found. It was worthy to open the scroll. No one. So John weeps. He understands that the scroll contains God's ultimate will, his ultimate plan of redemption and ultimate judgment and eradication of all that is evil and unjust in this world. And if no one can unlock it, then life is a dark and cruel comedy. And so he weeps. But his weeping is short lived. One of the elders said to me, do not weep. See the lion of the tribe of Judah. The root of David has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals. I love that. The lion of the tribe of Judah. The lion of the tribe of Judah, shows up in Genesis, chapter 49. When Israel, Jacob is blessing his children and he gives each one of them a blessing.

But when he comes to Judah, he says, the scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nation shall be his. It's a prophetic word that there's a Messiah coming from the tribe of Judah. And he will take up the scepter. He will be the ruler. And so he's given this incredible Noble name. What great expectations we have for a conquering Messiah? That's the expectations the Jews had. And isn't that what we all want? A forceful savior, someone literally to come in and by sheer power, make everything right. Would you like that? I would like that right now. Yeah. And so people choose strong leaders because they want that. Make it right. Make it right. But instead of a lion, which is what John heard,

what does John see in verse six? It says, Then I saw a lamb looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. You know, Jesus is referred to as the Lamb 27 times in the Book of Revelation.

It's the predominant title. If you want to know who Jesus is, consider the lamb. It's the title that Jesus loves. Jesus. The lion of Judah came to give his life as a lamb. And it tells us something about the way life works as a Christian. When we want someone to come with force or power, when we're looking for a governmental leader to be forceful and powerful, when we're looking for corporate leaders, when we're looking for pastors, when we're looking for you name it, to be forceful and powerful, Jesus may be saying you're looking for the wrong thing. When we work or we lead from the vantage point of power, and we all do this, right. We try to figure out what power we have to exert in certain situations. And when it's expedient, we are so tempted, right? I know I am. When I get in conflict with someone, I want to think, how can I force the right view on them? Because I do have the right view. I always do. How can I force it? Jesus said, if that's where you're coming from, you may be working from the wrong vantage point. Yet he does have power.

The Lamb is described as having seven horns. And the Horn is always a symbol of power and strength in the Bible. So he has power, he has authority. The number seven means it's perfect. It's perfect power and perfect authority. This Lamb has seven eyes, which says, or the seven spirits of God, which range throughout the Earth, which we see in other passages in the Bible, a description of the Spirit that knows all, sees all. So his ultimate authority, ultimate power, all seeing all, knowing. And yet in the most vulnerable form, Christianity is ironic. And we're called to live into that irony, to choose humility. And it's only against humility that Satan has no power. Two men go to the temple to pray. God, I thank you that I am not like that tax collector over there. And the tax collector is beating his chest. And Jesus says, I tell you the truth, it's that one who is justified in the eyes of God. It's that one who Satan has no power over. So it says simply that Jesus humbly walks didn't say humbly, but I know it's humbly. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.

And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they were holding Golden Golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. You know, we'll find out later that the prayers for God's people, the martyrs, those who shed their blood, they're crying out, how long, Lord? How long? And we can easily read them as prayers for retribution. How long before you slaughter those who killed us? But they are really our prayers for vindication. Is it worth it that my blood was shed? Lord, do you know that if you're a believer in Christ, you're a martyr? You know what the word martyr means? It means a witness. You're one who testifies and everything you suffer in this world because of your faith, the way you pray for your family, the longing to see people come to Christ, the desire to share Christ with people and even be ignored or mocked or counted as little. All of that, Jesus takes note and your prayers rise before him as incense. And so we who follow Jesus and lay our lives down, pray for vindication that our lives will ultimately be worth it.

And Jesus answer is, It is the fact that you're here today, this is worth it. The fact that you're worshiping me, it is worth it. So our prayers are rooted in joy, for the Saints burst into song to the one who is worthy when they sang a new song, saying, you are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals because you were slain. And with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You've made them to be a Kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the Earth. You've given us purpose, Lord. You've caused us to be one, to call others towards you and you're worth it all. And then I looked, he said, and I heard the voices of many Angels numbering thousands upon thousands and 10,000 times 10,000. And they circled a throne in an allowed voice they were saying, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise. You know what that means. There is nothing worth more that you can do with your life. There is nothing worth more that you could do with your life but to return to Jesus all power that's given to you, all your resources and your wealth to use for his glory, all wisdom and strength and talent that's been given to you, to use it for the honor of his name, all honor and glory and praise that has given you to turn it towards Jesus.

There's nothing worth more in life than to give your life Holy back to God, to join with the Saints and

the Angels, with the Church. The brothers and sisters in Christ gathered here today, gathered in churches all around this country, gathered in churches all around this world who are coming together to give praise and honor and glory to God, who are coming together to serve each other, to love each other, to pray for one another. There's nothing worth more because in the end we'll stand around the throne, worshiping Him with every creature in heaven and on Earth and under the Earth and on the sea and all that is in them, saying to him who sits on the throne into the Lamb, be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever. The four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped, you're worth it. Jesus died for you. We are worth it. But he is worthy and he is worth everything we have to give. So what you are doing right now is worthwhile. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I ask you to restore worth to any or feeling worthless. I ask that we would be a people who restore worth in others, whether they're poor or sick or broken or discouraged.

Let us be a people who spread the worth of God and then let us turn everything over to you, Lord. Let us recognize that which we do here today and every day in your name is given to you. Because you are worthy. We love you, Lord. In Jesus name Amen.