

Worthy is the Lamb 29 December 2024

Leaders' Guide

- 1. What has been your experience with the book of Revelation? Has it been good, bad or have you, like much of the church, just avoided it?**

Read Revelation 5:9-14

- 2. The detail questions:**

- a. Who are the “they” who sang the new song? (check vs. 8)**

The 4 living creatures & 24 elders. See 4:6-8 for the description of the living creatures.

As 12 is the number representing completeness the 24 elders are doubly complete with 1 elder from each tribe of Israel & another 12 representing the nations of the earth.

- b. Who is the Lamb? (read ch 5: 1-7)**

- c. What is the scroll?**

The scroll is mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and as Tim said in the second sermon in our series, the scroll represents God's judgement - God's will or purpose. And what is God's will? God's will is for the reconciliation and restoration of creation - which includes judgement, but God's judgement is always reconciling in nature. The lamb, by His death, has broken the seals of the scroll allowing the scroll to unroll & God's purpose to unfold.

- 3. What is the nature/focus of this worship? Why is the Lamb worthy?**

It recognizes the otherwise unimaginable reordering of the human condition achieved by the death of Jesus. As long as we remain in the narrative that we're not so bad, that we're not really in need of being rescued, we will never begin to get a real sense of the wonder of the work of the cross. But once we do realize our need, once we are aware of how wounded and incomplete we are, how we wound and alienate others with our words and actions, we too will be overwhelmed by the magnitude of it all.

- 4. What is the structure of the worship?**

*There are 3 movements: vs. 9-10, vs 11-12, vs 13, with a coda in the silence that follows in vs 14: *And in the moment of silence that follows this overwhelming polyphony of praise, the scene concludes with the creatures saying “Amen” and the elders falling down and worshiping.**

Amen means Yes! This is certain & true.

That phrase “fell down and worshiped” is a bit redundant as the Greek word used here for worship includes the act of bowing down or falling down. A bit earlier I said that we must abase ourselves to step into our royal calling. Worship - or at least this kind of worship - says you, Lord, are holy, you are sovereign, you are the one who rescues - and I am not. I make obeisance to you. The proud and self-idolatrous part of us rebels violently against this. Yet that part must be rejected, must be put to death for the proper order to be established and for us to step into our purpose and calling - which is that of royalty.

5. What does this mean for us today?

*Our worship is the orientation of our lives as priests to our God... The times when we worship together in song are there to remind us what our orientation is to be - or at least could be - as we do the dishes or drive our car. The medieval monks believed themselves to be called to a life of prayer. Yet they had much work to do to keep their communities running. So to resolve these conflicting needs they developed the idea of work **as** prayer. Now we as modern believers might translate that to “praying while you work” but that is not what they meant. What they meant was that every task in life could - and eventually should - be done consciously in the presence of God and to God’s glory. The work itself became a form of prayer irrespective of thoughts or words.*

6. For reflection: In what ways might you be able to step more fully into your priestly vocation of worship to God?

Depending on the comfort level of the group this is a question that members might be prepared to answer in the group, or it may be a question to take home and reflect on.