

# FIRST READING

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[0:00] Father, this is your word. This is not our word or my word. This is your word. And we are your people. Jesus is our Savior.

And we are gathered here, Father, in the presence of Jesus this morning. And we confess before you, Father, that unless your Holy Spirit moves and works in our hearts and minds and wills, we cannot hear or understand your word right.

So, Father, in your mercy and in your kindness, may you continue to pour out your Holy Spirit upon us as we hear your word and think upon your word. And we ask, Father, that you would bring upon us the renewing of our minds, the renewing of ourselves, that we might in our daily lives bring you glory, prove how excellent and how wonderful you are.

And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So I'm going through the book of Revelation.

Some of you who have been here before know that this is part of a several-year project of me confronting some of my fears in preaching. I've done 1 Timothy, which meant I had to talk about the ordination of women.

[1:10] I've done Ecclesiastes, Revelations on the list. I still have to do the book of Job, which we'll do sometime in the future. And I'll probably also do Genesis 1 to 11 sometime in the future.

You know, given that evolution is so commonly believed and has so bent Christians out of shape when they read Genesis 1 to 11, of course, it's a very easy part of the Bible to preach on and teach on.

But in one of my daughters over Christmas, she was asking me about the book of Revelation. She'd been reading it. And she said, you know, Dad, there's all these weird things in the book of Revelation.

You know, like there's the dragon that wants to eat the baby and the whore of Babylon and all this death and all this destruction. What do you think about it? I said to her, you really need to pray for me.

I don't know what I think about it yet. I haven't started studying it yet, so I don't know what I think about it yet. And hopefully, week by week, when I come to the text, I'll be able to prayerfully discern what the Bible is teaching and how it applies to us.

[2:09] And I'll be able to communicate it well to us. I mention that because this is the last, I don't know if you thought the text, the Revelation text, which I read just a few moments ago, if you thought that was pretty odd. I mean, I suppose a lamb with seven eyes and seven horns is sort of an odd type of phenomenon.

But this is actually the last normal chapter in the book of Revelation. From now on, it gets really crazy and psychedelic. So I really need your prayers over these next few weeks.

This is sort of my last easy week. And then after that, I mean, you know, just next week we'll have death, famine, a quarter of the earth destroyed, stars falling from heaven, just real, real easy stuff.

So please, please pray for me in the weeks ahead. And we'll be doing approximately a chapter a week, taking a break over Easter, but approximately a chapter a week until we finish the book.

But it'd be a great help. Now, if we look at this last easy chapter, so to speak, but it actually has something, has a lot of very, very challenging and un-Canadian things to say. And so it'd be a great help to me if you open your Bibles and turn in them to Revelation 5.

[3:18] Revelation chapter 5. And you can follow along with me as we open God's Word and read it and think about it and try to have it apply to our lives. And I'm just going to start reading it again, verses 1 to 7.

I want to draw out a couple of your attention to a couple of things and then sort of give us sort of our opening point to launch us into the rest of the text. So Revelation chapter 5, verse 1.

And here's how it goes. 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 just sort of pause before we read any further. Because these are all powerful images. So what's the image that God desires us to have as we read this opening verse?

Is God, I mean the one on the throne, which is God the Father, is he grasping the scroll in his right hand? Is he holding on to it really, really tight?

[ 4 : 18 ] Will he grudgingly give it away? No. In the original language, it is that his hand is open and that the scroll is lying across it. So his right hand, of course, right-handed prejudice against left-handed people, is his arm of power and strength.

And he has his arm out like this and his hand is open and the scroll is there. And the scroll is basically the outworking and the plan that God has from the moment of the crucifixion to the end of all things.

And it's all outlined and talked about and sort of revealed there. And his hand is open, the scroll is lying across it. And verse 2.

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

And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or look into it. And just sort of pause here. The way we hear this part of the Bible shows how we're deeply formed by our culture.

[ 5 : 34 ] And here's this offensive thing, in the quotation marks, here's this offensive thing that it's saying. No one in heaven and on earth is worthy to open the scroll.

That means Muhammad's not worthy. It means Krishna. It means Buddha. It means Oprah. It means Dr. Phil.

It means the President of Russia and the President of the United States. It means Marx. It means Adam Smith. It means Mitch Albom. It means Billy Graham.

It means the Pope. It means you. It means me. You see, we have often cultural filters on our ears so that when we hear the Scripture, the pointiness and the sharpness of it doesn't hit us.

But that's what this text is saying. In a sense, the angel is scanning all the past and all the present and all the future. And he's scanning, that's what it means, under the earth, over the earth, those who are dead, those still become, every single person and no one is worthy.

[ 6 : 45 ] No one. No one. No one. In fact, what's going to characterize a person like the Pope or Billy Graham or your favorite Christian leader is that they have to understand they're never the one worthy to open such a scroll.

that in fact, this text is a leveling text of human humility, calling human beings to humility. And the Christian world is filled with arrogant Christians and every one of us here struggles with pride and arrogance.

But this is a text which levels us all and says not a single one of us is worthy to have taken that scroll from God's hand. So even if we have to, in a sense, when we're listening to our friends and our neighbors who are Muslims or Buddhists or Hindus or seculars or have their own spirituality that they're putting together and have them speak, on one hand, inside in our head, we are to understand none of those religious teachers or guides, none of those books are worthy to understand and to open the scroll that talks about the future from the crucifixion to the second coming of Jesus.

None. Not one. But I also am not worthy. I also am not worthy. Neither is Billy Graham or the Pope or John Stott or take your pick. None are worthy.

Continue reading at verse 4. What was his response? And I began to weep loudly. And in the original language, it's not only loud grief, but deep grief.

[ 8 : 28 ] Deep, heart-wrenching, almost wanting to vomit grief. And I began to weep loudly because, and then to make sure we catch it, it says again, no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

Not even to look into it. And one of the elders said to me, weep no more. Behold. Behold, remember, is always in the, in the Greek means look.

Look. Look over there. Look. Look. 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 here, once again, our cultural prejudices play an error. All of us, most of us in the room, if we're at all familiar with the book of Revelation, know what's going to happen next. And of course, I just read it a few moments ago.

But, you know, hearing this for the first time, and if it was, be read very well to Christians, to non-Christians or to new Christians, there's a shock because, you see, at first, the text seems to be playing into our normal human cultural prejudices.

[ 9 : 34 ] You see, since we as human beings are fallen, since we are bent, and what characterizes our bentness is that we desire to be a God or the God, it means that our heart, we always desire power, whether it's the power of money or the power of military might or the power of wisdom, of poetry, of art, or whatever it is, but we desire some type of power.

And so, on one level, this is fitting right into our cultural prejudices. Ah, the king of the beasts, the powerful lion who has conquered, and he's the one who's going to be able to open this.

And, you know, at the heart of all different spiritualities and all different religions other than the Christian faith, and I'm not saying that people outside of the Christian faith are more proud than Christians.

That's definitely not the case. Pride is a human problem, not a problem of any particular religion or spirituality. It's a human problem.

But, the idea that I, as a teacher, have discerned the way to God, discerned the way to heaven, discerned the way to perfection, is always, whether it's realized or recognized or not, a proud thought, a powerful thought, a thought of power, that I, I can hitch my, I can hitch, in a sense, my wagon to this powerful thing and become powerful myself.

[ 10 : 59 ] And so, at first, this text plays right to our cultural and our human expectations of a lion and of conquering. But then, look at the surprise. One of the many things in the book of Revelation, I haven't talked about it much most weeks, but the book of Revelation is filled with irony and filled with inversion.

With, you know, G.K. Chesterton's famous for saying that Christians sort of are the people who should understand that the best way to see the world is to stand upside down and look at everything upside down and it's the better way it could, it's a topsy-turvy way of looking at the world. And, and the book of Revelation is constantly surprising our expectations. And here's what happens in verse 6. And between the throne and the four living creatures among the elders I saw a strong lion conquering.

No, I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain. In the original language, the word for that is really slaughtered. Not a lion conquering.

I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slaughtered. with seven horns and with seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

[ 12 : 13 ] I have a little vlog about this on the webpage but basically my understanding of the book of Revelation is we should always interpret the numbers symbolically. And so seven is the number of perfection.

It's perfect. So this lamb, little tiny, blah, blah, little tiny lamb, blah, you know, huge throne, huge creatures, huge elders, blah, blah, little tiny lamb all gashed because it's been slaughtered.

But even though it's a little tiny lamb gashed as though it's been slaughtered, it has seven horns. Horn is the image of strength in the ancient world and it means it's perfect in power.

And seven eyes means it's perfect in vision, it's perfect in knowledge. and it connects this perfect knowledge with the Holy Spirit sent out into all the world.

And that's who's standing in the center there in verse six. And he went and took the scroll, verse seven, from the right hand of him who is seated on the throne.

[ 13 : 24 ] And that's the image. Baha, baha, goes up, takes the throne. Here's the first point. The only one who saves is also the only one who is in control of God's unfolding plan for the future.

If you get nothing else out of the sermon, if that's all that you take away from it, this is in a sense the overarching message of the text, that the only one who saves is also the only one who is in control of God's unfolding plan for the future.

This is a life-changing teaching. I mean, one of the things that we can do, maybe some of us need to do it right now, is just pray that this truth, the truth of Revelation 5, grips us.

You see, it's, what do many people think is going to be happening in the future? Many people, as they look at their lives today and they understand themselves, we see ourselves as cogs in a wheel. We say, like, well, why does it matter? How can we make any change? How can we make any difference? Look at the power of the United States. Look at the power of Russia. Look at the power of Iran. Look at the power of the arms industry.

[ 14 : 45 ] Look at the power of capitalism. Look at the power of the global change movement. Look at the power of queer theory and gay rights. Look at the power of feminism. Look at the power of traditionalism.

Look at the power of Hindu nationalism. Look at the power of radical Islam. Look at the power. Look at the power. Look at the power and we're surrounded by powers and we feel like we are cogs in the machine and many people feel that because of that, let's just eat and drink because tomorrow we die or let's just take our little tiny place in this cog or let's not try to right some evil or let's not try to plant some church or let's not try to do some big venture because we are tiny and there's all these powerful things and they are completely and utterly indifferent to us.

They are indifferent to me. Hopefully they won't notice me. Hopefully I can get some crumbs from the march of capitalism. Hopefully I can get some crumbs from the march of bureaucracy or the march of socialism or the march and I can get some crumbs and I can have some peace and I can have some quiet and I can have the things that I like but these things they are indifferent to me and some of them are evil and some of them are scary and some of them I put my hope in and some of them I dread and in such a world Revelation 5 says the only one who saves is also the only one who is in control of God's unfolding plan for the future.

President of Russia he has his plans President of the United States they have their plans global capitalism they have their plans Islamic Jihad they have their plans they all have their plans the Bible doesn't say they don't have plans the Bible says at the end of the day what this is talking about is that there is a scroll that God has a plan that brings us from the moment of the crucifixion of Jesus to the moment of Jesus' return and the one who is in control of the unfolding of this plan is also the one who saves me who saves you who saves unreached people in China and unreached people in North Korea the only one who saves is also the only one in control of this outworking of this plan you see as people throughout the ages have been gripped with this it means it doesn't I mean some Christians have misunderstood this text and believe that that therefore means that we should just withdraw from the world that we should live pietistic type of lives in insulated communities or ghettos but as this truth has gripped people we say it says well how can we figure out to get into North Korea to share the gospel how can we think of bringing the gospel to Iran it gives a hope to attempt things now this truth when it grips us does not lead us to feeling powerful or powerless not powerful in ourselves but it creates a sense of hope that means that we can take risks that we can get married we can have those children we can start that business we can write that book we can we can write that song we can make that statue we can plant that church we can start that young people's ministry we can do this we can do that why?

[ 18 : 28 ] well because global capitalism all these types of things I know they're going to make a huge mess of things they're going to kill people and they're going to do all sorts of things but at the end of the day none of those things are in control who's in control?

God's in control well does God just treat me like I'm a cog in a machine? no the one who's in control is the same one who died on a cross to save me that's who's in control that's who's in control now the text goes even deeper and it goes deeper and remember earlier on I said how our cultural blinders stop us from hearing the pointiness of the text who's worthy to open the scroll not Muhammad not Buddha I guess this is going to be put on Vimeo I don't know it'd be interesting to see if people find out that it's such an un-Canadian un-North American thing but that's what the text is saying that's what the text is inviting us as Christians to believe to hope in to trust in it's a leveling humbling idea but we also have other cultural blinders that think that means that we can read the text without understanding the text or seeing what it's saying about 10 years ago for the first time I left North America I was going to go to Africa and on the way I spent some time in Amsterdam and I was a little bit worried when I was going to Amsterdam you know because I don't travel much I never travel outside of North America before and I was worried that when I got to Amsterdam that all the signs would be in Dutch and I was hoping that I could figure out where I had to go I could eventually figure out the Dutch words and I got off the plane I'm in the airport in Amsterdam I'm walking through it and every sign that's in Dutch is also in English and as I'm going around and I

start to go to Amsterdam everything is either in Dutch or in English and I say to myself I love this place I can understand the signs I know I can figure out where to go because it's in English a few years after that I went to England for the first time and I can't remember who it is it said that North America and England are two countries separated by the same language and I discovered that this was true I had to go to Nottingham and I had a constant problem understanding working class Nottingham people and some of you have heard the story the classic thing is I went to order a coffee and I said I'd like a coffee and the woman with a very nice smile said something to me and I know it was English and I didn't understand a single thing she said so I said again I'd like a coffee you know classic dumb North American view I'll just say the exact same thing again and she once again with a nice smile responded in completely incomprehensible words that I knew had to be English because I'm in Nottingham like if I had been in Amsterdam I might have thought she was speaking Dutch and gone for somebody to help me speak Dutch maybe when I was in Kenya I thought they were speaking a local language I could find somebody to help me but I know they're speaking English to me so I I I ask again in English because I'm a slow learner and she says the same incomprehensible thing so at this point in time I say yes and nod my head yes and then I turn to the one other fellow in the lineup and say I feel so stupid

I'm from Canada you know I can't understand these English accents and he said to me well mate I'm from London and I didn't understand a word she said either so I said you don't know what she's bringing me he said I don't have the vaguest idea what she's bringing you and eventually it was an Americano I think she was trying to tell me the coffee machine was broken and I needed to have either an Americano or a latte or a cappuccino I think but with a heavy nodding them working class accent so in the same way sometimes we can read the Bible and we don't actually see we think it's like we're nodding them but we don't realize it that we're not really understanding what's being said even though it's a language and here I'm going to tell you the point Andrew if you could put this up and then we'll read through it and I'll just sort of gently point out a couple of things but here's the big thing about this text and those of you who know the Athanasian Creed can see how I've been influenced by it there is one lamb not two lambs one father not two fathers one god not two gods and the lamb is not the father this text is teaching us that Jesus is God this text in fact gives us pictures to help to understand a little bit the fact that there is one three persons but one God and it does it in a type of picture language which is hard for us to understand but for pagans who are used to mythology and used to having language and stories about the gods they would have read this text and been blown away on one level it's talking about something completely outside of their categories of thought yet on the other hand they know that this isn't talking like this isn't talking like Athena and Apollo and and and Hercules and it's not it's not it's not talking as if there's three gods and it's it's not talking as if there's just this one God it's very clear that somehow the lamb is God and the one on the throne who is the father is God and it's somehow clear that that they're not the same person but they're different but at the same time it's and this this this is the

[ 24 : 13 ] Athanasian creed if you've never read it it's a very very helpful I call it the creed for dummies and it's a very very helpful creed but you see in this language of the text which to the original people the first several centuries of those reading the text used to the writings of paganism it would have been very constantly striking it very very clearly teaching that Jesus is God yet it teaches that there's not two gods but one God like look at look at verse 6 even and between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain slaughtered with seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God the seven spirits of God is the perfect spirit is the Holy Spirit sent out into all the earth so somehow the lamb sends out the Holy Spirit and he went in verse 7 and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne who is also God and yet it doesn't talk like paganism in multiple gods it's very clear as you read all the way through the book of Revelation that there's one God and even if you just sort of jump down a little bit in verse 13 and I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them saying to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever and the four living creatures said amen and the elders fell down and worshipped

I mean even in the same song of praise it puts the one on the throne the father and the lamb and it makes a distinction between them and treats them as if they're both God yet nothing in the language of the entire book sounds like paganism and discussion of multiple gods but always of one God the highest possible claims are being made about the one who is the lamb of God who

takes away the sin of the world the one who is slaughtered to ransom us for God there is one lamb not two lambs one father not two fathers one God not two God and the lamb is not the father Jesus is God the father is God but there are not two gods there is but one God I think it's C.S. Lewis which uses an analogy imagine for a second that he doesn't talk about Star Trek and Q but imagine that all of a sudden those of you who've watched the Star Trek things that we're Q and so one of us as Q is able to take a very very very very large piece of paper and we're able to draw a figure on a piece of paper and then we're able to make it alive and so now this stick figure this drawing is going to live its entire life on this sheet of paper in two dimensions and then you as Q decide that you want to try to communicate to this stick figure the fact that you exist and that you've created him but the problem is going to be for the stick figure the drawing in this two dimensional world is how will he or she ever possibly get their mind around the fact that you exist in more than two dimensions you see in fact if we think about it that the stick figure in the drawing will find it very very hard to think of anything other than two dimensions and it will get all sorts of things wrong at some point in time it has to just trust that if this creature you or me are great enough to create this two dimensional creature that it's very possible in fact very likely that two dimensions won't describe or capture who you are and in a sense you can understand that like in other religions in Hinduism and Buddhism and Islam and Judaism that in fact they're caught in a three dimensional type of model but that really if there is a creator sustainer end of all things who really does exist who is in fact the living God doesn't it make sense that if there is in fact such a God that he can't be characterized by our three dimensions and that the Bible has to use language picture language like this to try to get us to understand that God is greater than the limits of our dimension speaking of C.S. Lewis it's a great irony that Aslan disagrees with everything that I've said and by that I don't mean Aslan in the Narnia Conocles I mean Riza Aslan who's written within the last couple of years a very very powerful very popular book on who Jesus is and basically describing him as a type of political zealot and just you know basically all about politics and he's one of a long line of very popular writers who are always trying to cast Jesus in some other type of role as a great mystic as a great political agitator as a great prophet as a great moral teacher and he is just yet one more in the long list of all of these who want to try to recast what the Christian faith is and try to make it look as if somehow or another Christians have misunderstood the records of Jesus but here we see John who has this vision of Jesus in heaven how is it first of all he describes Jesus as God but he sees the central aspect of what Jesus has done as not as being a political agitator not as being a moral teacher not as being a mystic not as being a prophet not in any sense like that but how is he described his primary work is described in verses 9 and 10 look at it with me and he's saying a new song saying worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals for you were slain you were slaughtered 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 priest to our God and they shall reign on earth here's what the Bible teaches the lamb who was slain ransoms me for God the lamb who was slain ransoms me for God it describes the fundamental work of Jesus not as a political zealot not as a moral teacher not as a great religious teacher or prophet or mystic but that the fundamental aspect of who he is comes down to his being willing to be slaughtered on my behalf to ransom me for God to ransom you for God and when the text says every tribe and people and nation it means to ransom everybody every color every every it's a it's a it's a it's a worldwide world changing sacrifice which is to fuel our desire to share the gospel with unreached corners of the earth and to pray for it to pray for our missionaries and to pray for the unreached corners in our community the arts community the gay community the goth community whatever communities that seem to be unreached by the gospel to pray to pray that they can be told that the lamb who was slain who ransoms me for God and the purpose of the image isn't to raise the question of who does Jesus pay the ransom to that's not the purpose of the image the purpose of the image is it's a it's a a technical word in the original language which refers to a person who's hopelessly captured by a foreign power in war and now is a slave of war and has no chance of rescue no chance of escape and a ransom is someone pays to free them and so it's it's said in the text that the lamb who was slain ransoms me that I that the purpose of the image of the ransomeness is to once again it's a it's a humbling image it is to humble me to understand that it doesn't matter how much money I make it doesn't matter how artistic I am it doesn't matter how high I reach in the bureaucracy it doesn't matter how much money I make it doesn't matter if I have the perfect wife or a succession of perfect trophy wives it doesn't matter what any of my human accomplishments are that fundamentally in terms of my relationship with God that I am helpless that I am helpless and unless

God does something to help me in my helplessness then I am eternally separated from him and only God can provide and only God does provide and he provides his own son who is slain and his death comes to me in my powerlessness and its effect when I put my faith and trust in him is that I am now poor God I belong to God this is a very very humbling thing if you're a billionaire but ultimately it's a humility that brings true hope because riches are fleeting and when the richest man or woman on the planet dies they are as rich and as poor as the poorest beggar because you cannot be any poorer than dead and it is a profound word of hope to the untouchable to the slave to the abused to the oppressed to the handicapped to the forgotten that these words of the powerful to describe them when they put their faith and trust in Jesus is not the final and true word about who they are but when they put their faith and trust in the one who was slain for them they now belong to God

[ 34 : 22 ] I now belong to God unworthy as I am not weighing my merits but pardoning my offenses when I put my faith and trust in Jesus I belong to God he loves me so much that he sent his son to die that I might belong to him the death knell of pride humility that gives life and confidence and strength I don't mean to offend you but the fact of matter is is that just as I said that first point the idea that the only one who saves is the only one who is in control of God's unfolding planet for the future that that's a truth that needs to grip us but this is a humbling thing if we're honest with ourselves Andrew if you could put the next point up this is what many of us have to pray into because we have to realize that we struggle with it in a world without hope for real redemption we that means

Christians worry that God has provided only one means for redemption the lamb who was slain we feel tongue-tied and we feel embarrassed embarrassed but we don't but he has provided he's provided a means and we're caught up in the fact that it's won because it's an unpopular idea and an un-Canadian idea and it doesn't appeal to the innate pride in every human being that there can be their own way the question isn't do all religions lead to God the question is do all religions lead to the lamb who was slain the answer is no but that is not something that we should be embarrassed about it's something for those who wrestle with despair and understand the limits of their religion and are weighed down by religion and weighed down by spirituality and weighed down by advice and weighed down by failure who understand at the heart the type of despair at the heart of all man-made religion and spirituality no matter how wise or dressed up it is it is a powerful news of hope that God only God can provide a means and he has and he has and he doesn't say I won't make my means available to you because you're gay I won't make my means available to you because you're an untouchable I won't make my means available to you because you're too rich too good looking not good looking enough too old too young too fat too slim too muscular too black too white too red too yellow too polka dot whatever he turns no one way just very very briefly in closing I want to one of the big mistakes made in the Anglican tradition was during the English Reformation when they made a big mistake about what to call ministers and they knew that they would use the word priest and by the word priest they meant presbyter elder but I think that the Anglican Reformation in the mid 1500s made a big mistake by not getting rid of the word priest I think it's led to obscuring the gospel many times

I think it's led to congregations and clergy thinking that it's all about sacrifices it's all about rituals it's all about following rules it's all about religion and I think we made a big mistake and you can see in this text that it says it teaches very clearly that even the lowliest person who becomes a follower of Jesus becomes a priest priest I I I I'm a presbyter in a congregation that should understand that it's the priesthood of all believers let's look again at verses 9 and 10 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 point when I belong to God I become part of the kingdom of priests who are called to reign over creation for the glory of

God what does a priest do priest does not I as a Christian never offer a sacrifice the only sacrifice I can ever offer is myself as a living sacrifice is Romans chapter 12 teaching the role of a priest is to stand in the presence of God for me to walk my day understanding that I spend my 24 7 in the presence of God in the presence of the one who died for me to redeem me and call me to himself and I am to stand before God I am to pray for the world I am to serve God I am to teach and I am to proclaim and that's given to every single person who comes to faith in Jesus Christ and I am to understand that I belong to God I belong to God when I belong to God I become part of a kingdom

of priests who are called to reign over creation for the glory of God I enter into the Christian way into this kingdom one by one I don't enter by my parents

[ 40 : 15 ] I don't enter by my grandparents I don't enter because I'm a Canadian I don't enter by any external thing I enter how do I enter I enter when I am like the elders and the angels and all the creation I enter when I in humility and submission fall down before almighty God and proclaim and accept and acknowledge what the lamb who was slain has done for me on the cross that's how I enter and now I enter but I become part of a people with a royal king and I am called to reign over creation for the glory of God and this is not in a political or a sense of power how is it that this could be interpreted in a powerful way when everything about the Christian faith is teaching me humility and dependence upon God I'm not worthy to open the scroll I don't have the power to make myself right with

God it's humility humility humility humility humility this issue of this picture of being priest and reigning is Genesis chapter 2 to walk with God to talk with God to pray on behalf of the entire created order to bring it to God if Adam and Eve had not fallen and they had children to tell their children about God and to tell their children children about the ways of God and to lift up God before them and to tend the garden all to the glory of God how is it that we are to take it that we are to reign on earth not by seizing power and making Christian by force Canada by force a Christian nation whatever that would mean if we managed to somehow take Canada by force it would be something abhorrent if we tried to make Canada a

Christian nation by force how do we reign plant a garden start a business do well at your job do well at your studies care for that part of this created order that God has put within your circle of influence take risks use your gifts in church pray for the salvation of unreached people give of your time and your money for the supportive missionary endeavors at home and abroad pray for your church tend your garden your circle of influence all for the glory of God please stand just bow our heads in prayer father you know that every single one of us struggles with pride in different ways some of us don't struggle like we should you know us too and father we ask that your holy spirit would teach us a healing humility a healing submission to you a healing seeking of your glory not our own a healing desire to be your doulos a healing desire to be your doulos in our circles of influence in a way that brings you glory a healing humility that allows us to take risks confident that your son the one who died for us is in control of the future and he calls upon us to take risks to take risks for the lost to take risks for

Ottawa to take risks not only spiritual risks but monetary risks and physical risks and we ask father that your holy spirit would grant us a deep christian freeing humility as we come to know your saving power and healing authority in every part of our lives and all this we ask in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen