

# Worthy Is The Lamb

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Preacher: Mike Salvati

[0:00] And last week I had a friend, he preached down in the breakfast downstairs Sunday morning. And he pulled me aside and just said, hey, can you give me some feedback on this sermon I just preached?

He just wanted to get another set of eyes on the sermon he preached. That's all he wanted to do. He wanted to get perspective. He wanted to be helped. But this morning, in Revelation 5, we're going to get some perspective.

We're going to get some help. Now, I know that you probably realized that today is the first Sunday of Advent. And starting next week, we're going to get into Isaiah chapter 9, verses 6 and 7.

And through Isaiah, we're going to meditate on this one, this child born unto us who is wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father. Prince of Peace, the government's on his shoulders. We're going to start meditating on that next Sunday. But this Sunday, we're not going to be in the manger. We're going to be in a throne room with a heavenly perspective.

[1:11] Revelation 5 has a timely word for us, Christ the King Church, to see things as they are right now.

To see the one who is worthy. Just to give you a little background in the book of Revelation, in chapters 2 and 3, you have seven letters written to seven struggling churches.

They are just trying to seek to be faithful in the cultures that we're in. And the risen Christ speaks to them through John, and he calls each one of them to conquer, to overcome, to don't give in, don't back down, to press on.

And in chapters 4 and 5, the shift changes from the struggle on earth to this glorious heavenly scene in the throne room on high.

And there's basically two acts to the drama that plays out in Revelation 4 and 5.

[2:23] Act 1 is the one seated on the throne, chapter 4. And Act 2 is the Lamb who is slain.

Worthy is the one on the throne. For he created all things. And worthy is the Lamb who was slain. For by his blood he purchased a people. We have here in the heavenly throne room a vision that is going to carry us through the rest of the book of Revelation.

Everything works out of the heavenly throne room. God is in control. And so now as we turn to chapter 5, this Act 2 has actually three scenes.

It starts with a situation. Verses 1 through 4. A rather hopeless situation. And then it moves on to an appearing in verses 5 and 7.

[3:32] And it is a surprise appearing. I can't wait for you to see it. And then in verses 8 through 14. Following this appearance.

There is this spreading chorus of praise. That goes to the end of the earth. Worthy.

Worthy is the one who is slain. This chapter offers us a perspective. That changes the way we live our lives.

So let's look at the situation in verses 1 through 4. We are in the throne room of heaven. And we see, verse 5. John say, Then I saw.

I saw in the right hand of him who is seated on the throne. A scroll written in and on the back. Sealed with seven seals. We are to see what John sees.

[4:38] On the throne. The ancient of days. Surrounding him as four living creatures. Holy, holy, holy.

Is the Lord God Almighty. Who is and was and will be. Chapter 4, verse 11. Worthy are you, our Lord and God.

To the one sitting on the throne. To receive glory and power and honor. For you created all things. This one seated on the throne.

Has in his hand. A scroll. You see that? John wants us to see that. Then I saw in the right hand of him.

Who was seated on the throne. A scroll. A scroll. It's in his right hand. His authoritative right hand.

[5:39] And we see that there's writing on this scroll. It's writing within and on the back. It's both sides. It's this scroll that's been scrolled up and rolled up.

And what you can see is writings all over. It's like when I'm taking notes. When I hear someone else preach. I'm like writing everywhere. And eventually I got to go on the back side. And I'm finding all this different space in the bulletin. This scroll was just packed full of writing.

And not only is it in his right hand. Not only is it packed full of writing. It's sealed. With seven seals. It was a wax imprint.

With a signet seal on it. And what that means is it was private. Contents are only to be seen by those authorized. And there are seven seals.

And we know from our study of the book of Revelation. That seven means complete. Means full. What are the contents of this detailed undisclosed scroll.

[6:50] In the right hand of the ancient of days. On his throne. Well if you flip back to chapter 4 verse 1. Jesus.

With a voice of a trumpet. Calls John to peer into the heavenly throne room. And he says to John. Come up here. And I will show you what.

Must take place. After this. After the letters to the seven churches. This scroll. Is what must.

Take. Place. It's God's plan. For the. Seven. Fullness. Of God.

It's what must. Happen. It's his plan. For the fullness of time. To establish his saving reign. On earth.

[7:48] Which includes. The pouring out. Of judgment. On all. Who refuse. To worship him. And to vindicate. All who have faithfully. Born testimony.

To him. And endured. And maintained. Their worship. Of the lamb. Those seven seals.

Mark this. As the complete. In full. Plan. Of God. For all. Time. So do you see the scroll? And do you see it's in the hand.

Of the ancient of days? Verse two. We see something happen. And again. We're. Drawn with our eyes. To see something. And I saw a mighty angel.

Proclaiming with a loud voice. Who is worthy to open up the scroll. And break its seals. This mighty angel. Is going to show up again. In chapter 10 verse 1. And 18 verse 1.

[8:45] These. This mighty angel. Has this way of appearing. In these dramatic moments. In the unru. The revealing of God's plan. For the fullness of time. And this mighty angel.

Is unusual. Even on angelic standards. He proclaims. With a very loud voice. It's so that.

All. Of heaven. And earth. And under the earth. Can hear. What he's about to say. And what does he say?

Who is worthy? Who is worthy? Who is worthy? To open up the scroll. And break its seal. That word worthy. You got to think about it.

In terms of. Who is authorized. To approach the throne. Take the seal. Take the scroll. Look into it. And then. Accomplish. Everything written in it.

[9:42] Who's worthy of that? Who's qualified. To do that? Have you ever seen some. Like personal ads.

And Craigslist. Or the newspaper. You've got men seeking women. Women seeking men. And. Here we have. Mighty angel. Seeking one. Who is worthy. To accomplish God's plan. For all time. This angel. Is. Calling out. To all creation. Who is worthy. To take. The scroll. In the hand. Of the ancient of days.

And execute it. Look at the response. In verse 3.

No one. No one. No one in heaven. No one on earth. No one under the earth.

[10:42] Was able to open the scroll. Or look into it. Or look into it.

All creation. Not one. Not one. Qualified. Authorized.

To open the scroll. No one worthy. Not one of the 24 elders. Not one of the four living creatures. Not even this mighty angel. And no one on earth.

No general. No king. No president. No CEO. No cabinet. No professor. No business board. No noble prize winner.

No one was able. To open the scroll. In all. Of creation. We. Have a situation.

God's plan for the fullness of time. Held in the hand of the ancient of days. Someone do this. No one.

[11:42] No one. We've got a major vacancy. John sees it too. Look at verse 4. And John says, I began to weep loudly.

Because no one was found worthy to open the scroll. Or to look into it. That is not a whimpering. That's a wailing. Wailing.

And why is he wailing? No one. No one is able to. To open the throne. Remember. John himself. Has been. Exiled.

To this rock pile of an island. Called Patmos. And he was there. Because he was a faithful witness to Jesus. And he's just written down. To these seven churches.

Seven letters. And calling them. To overcome. To conquer. To be faithful. To press on. John. John himself.

[12:38] Has been overcoming. Conquering. Enduring. Now if there is no one. If there is no one. To take the scroll. If there is no one.

To carry out. God's detailed plan. For the fullness of time. In accomplishing. Setting his kingdom on earth. What's the point? What's the point of enduring?

If there is no one. To take up the scroll. What's the point of. Staying true. Of witnessing at cost. Of running the risk. Of straining relationships.

With those people you love most. Because you are living for Jesus. Hey. If there is no one. To take up the scroll. What's the point? And then. If nobody takes up the scroll.

Sin goes unchecked. Death. Has the final word. The devil. Has his way. If there is no one.

[13:37] Worthy. To take up the scroll. There is no hope. For us. Do you want to know. Why John is crying? He is experiencing.

A hopelessness. A despair. Oh no. Is God's plan. In jeopardy. Maybe. Maybe you are.

Coming to the building today. I mean. You are feeling hopeless. You are despairing. You think that. Chaos rules the day. Random acts of evil. There is no one in charge. Why is this happening?

What's the point? What's the point? Christmas rolls around. For some of us in the room. Christmas can be like. A welcome distraction.

[14:32] To the chaos. For others of us. In those rooms. Christmas can be more of a reminder. Of the chaos. Can be a season of despair.

So some people conclude. Hey. This messed up world. Is all that we got. And there is nobody. To take up the scroll. So.

Hey. Eat drink. And bear. Be merry. Sin goes unchecked. Death triumphs. The devil wreaks his havoc.

Who can take up the scroll? Is there really no one worthy. To open the scroll? Is this our situation. Today?

Hardness abounds. Difficulty. Not just in Kenosha. But. Brothers and sisters around the world. North Korea. Iran.

[15:38] Western China. Nicaragua. Nicaragua. Nicaragua. If there is nobody. To take up the scroll. What is the point?

If God's plan. Is not going to be fulfilled. Why bother? Are you hopeless. This morning? Are you despairing?

Have you been wondering. If Christianity. Following Jesus. Is worth it? Is anyone worthy. Is anyone worthy. To take up the scroll. And execute God's plan.

For the fullness of time. That's the situation. Now. For the surprise. In verses 5 and 7.

5 through 7. We see an appearing. And there's a surprise. You've got to see it. So John. In verse 4.

[16:38] Is weeping loudly. And in verse 5. One of the 24 elders. Goes to John. And he interrupts him.

And the elder says. Weep no more. John. Stop your weeping. John. You must not despair. John. You must not be hopeless.

Why not? There is one who is worthy. Someone has stepped up. To the throne.  
Behold. The line. Of the tribe. Of Judah. The root. Of David. Has. Conquered. So that he. Can open the scroll.

And. It's. Seven. Seals. The line. Of the tribe. Of Judah. And the root. Of David. We just sung it.  
They are titles. Of the coming Messiah. The long.

[17:34] Anticipated king. Who would. Exercise. Dominion. Over all creation. Bringing. A kingdom. Of grace.

The line. Of Judah. Is taken. From Genesis. 49. 9. Where. Jacob. Blesses. His sons. And to Judah. He says. You are a lion.

And from your tribe. The scepter. Will not depart. It's kingly talk. The lion king. And what we know. Is that. Jesus. From Matthew chapter 1. The genealogy. Jesus. Is a descendant. From the line. Of Judah. Judah. Is from Jacob. Jacob. From Isaac.

Isaac. From Abraham. And it was to Abraham. That God said. I will bless. All the nations. Of the world. Through your seed.

[18:34] The lion. Of Judah. Will bring blessing. For the nations. But then there's also. The root of David.

It echoes. Isaiah chapter 11. The stump. Of Jesse. Jesse was David's dad. And it's Isaiah 11. That the Messiah.

Would be. Completely filled. By the Holy Spirit. And he. Will bring. Peace. He will cause. The wolf. To. Shall. Lie down. With. The lamb. Peace. And what makes. This wording. Very interesting.

Is that the Messiah. Is the root. Of David. The source. Of David. This. Messiah.

[19:29] Is David's. Greater. Son. Psalm 110. These titles. The lion. Of Judah. The root. Of David. They point.

To a king. Who's going to. Establish. A kingdom. Of blessing. And peace. The one. Worthy. To take the scroll. From the hand.

Of the ancient of days. And did you notice. The lion of Judah. The root of David. David's greater son. He has conquered. In the original language.

It's very. Intentional. And emphatic. This is a past. Tense. Event. It has already. Happened. The victory. Has been won.

The triumph. Has already been accomplished. The thinking here. Is the lion king. David's greater son. Has already won. The victory. Over sin.

[20:24] Death. And the devil. And it's just going to get. Worked out. This. Victory. Is the basis. For what qualifies.

This one. To take up the throne. He has conquered. So that. He can. Open the scroll.

And it's. Seven seals. So this elder. Interrupts. The weeping. John. Says. John.

Stop your weeping. There is one. Who is worthy. Because he's already. Conquered. He is the lion king. David's greater son.

One. The warrior king. Has won. And that first word. Behold.

[21:20] Weep no more. Behold. The elder is saying. There he is. Look. Now. Don't look at the next verse. What are you expecting to see?

You read descriptions. Of the lion of Judah. What do lions do? They. Crush. And they tear. And they pierce. With their teeth. You hear the name.

David. And you think. Of a warrior king. Battle hardened. Shedding blood. Behold. The lion king.

The root of David. And everybody. Is expecting what? Six foot two guy. Four percent BMI. He's right at a rock.

The stage is set. For the appearing. Of the lion of Judah. The stage is set. For the appearing. Of the root of David. The one who's conquered. The one who's worthy.

[22:22] To take up the scroll. And what do you see? Surprise. Between the throne. And the four living creatures.

And among the elders. Right in the middle. Of the throne. Right in the middle. Of it all. What do you see? A lamb. That had been slaughtered.

Surprise. A lamb. A lamb. A lamb. A lamb. This particular word means. A young lamb. A helpless lamb.

A lamb. There have been different descriptions of Jesus. Leading up to this point, but this title lamb is what carries the day through the book of Revelation 27 times from chapter 4 on Jesus is referred to as the lamb and he's standing he's been slaughtered bled out bearing the marks and he's standing he's alive here's the connection this juxtaposition is to make a point the lion of Judah David's greater son won the victory by becoming a lamb sacrificing himself humbling himself and being slaughtered when you hear lamb there's a couple

Old Testament passages that should be floating up in your mind Exodus chapter 12 the Passover lamb the lamb that was slaughtered its blood was spread over the doorposts and the angel of death was passed over and they were delivered God's people delivered through the blood of the lamb and then what also should be in your mind is in Isaiah 53 the lamb that is led to the slaughter and speaking of the Messiah the suffering servant who would take the place of his people by bearing on himself the wrath intended for them by his stripes we are healed you see the lion triumphed by not crushing his enemies but by being crushed for his enemies the root of David he did not shed the blood of his enemies in conquering he shed his own blood for his enemies to triumph he became a servant he took on the nature of a servant he came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many there's the victory the victory won was a triumph through self-sacrifice through a substitutionary death and that qualifies him to take hold of the scroll what John is seeing is a very vivid explanation of how the line of Judah

[26:22] David's greater son Jesus Christ has conquered and we know from 1 Corinthians chapter 1 that such foolishness in the eyes of the wise such weakness in the eyes of the strong to those who are being saved it is the power of God it's a true victory it's a true win when Jesus cried from the cross it is finished and breathed his last the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world he triumphed over sin death and the devil and this cross work uniquely qualifies him to take the scroll open it and carry it out to the full worthy worthy is the Lamb who was slain what we're seeing here is that the cross inaugurated the kingdom of God on earth and now the risen

Christ given full authority the scroll is carrying out God's plan to establish God's kingdom on earth that will be consummated when he comes back you may have noticed in verse 6 a couple other things that this Lamb has seven horns horn is a connotation of strength seven of course means complete and full all powerful this humbled Lamb he's all powerful and he has seven eyes omniscience complete knowledge and notice that those seven eyes are described as the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth and if you've been with us in our study of Revelation it's a reference to the one Holy Spirit in John chapter 14 15 and 16 Jesus talks about sending out the Holy Spirit to bear witness to him and to convict the world of sin righteousness and judgment he knows everything this Lamb and then in verse seven the Lamb approaches the throne and takes the scroll from the right hand of the one who sits on the throne you got to understand this is a Daniel seven moment the throne room the son of man the Lamb approaches the ancient of days and the ancient of days gives him dominion over all kingdoms of peoples and languages and nations the scroll is in the hands of the Lamb now the Lamb is working out God's detailed plan for the fullness of time to establish his saving reign on earth surprise who was worthy to open the scroll a Lamb that was slaughtered to the wise it's foolishness to the strong it's weak but to those who are being saved it's the power of God do you see the Lamb and do you see he is worthy because of what he has done all the inhabitants of heaven do in verse 8 we make a transition from the surprise appearance of the

Lamb now to a spreading chorus of ceaseless praise verses 8 through 14 but you got to understand the praise doesn't start in verse 9 the praise starts in the previous chapter 4 8 for living creatures holy holy holy is the God Lord God almighty who was and is and is to come 4 11 the 24 elders get in on the action falling down before him they cast their crowns worthy are you our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things there's the worthy and then there's the reason for and so we see this start of a spreading chorus of ceaseless praise in chapter 4 and then in chapter 5 after the appearing of the lamb who is worthy to take the scroll because he is a slain lamb standing praise erupts and when he's taking the scroll the four living creatures and the twenty four elders fell down before the lamb each holding a harp golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints now the living creatures and the elders are now combined the inner circle

around the throne the entourage is now falling down before the lamb which means they're worshipping the lamb as they worship the ancient of days which means the lamb is fully God and then it just starts to spread the harp in their hands is they're getting ready to sing they're going to sing a new song verse nine and the golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints we're going to come back to that in a few weeks when we're in chapter eight those prayers are specific prayers from our particular group of saints but notice in verse nine the twenty-eight in the inner sanctum inner circle they sang a new song to the lamb whenever you come across those words new song in the old testament new songs were always sung when God's people experienced this fresh deliverance this fresh outpouring of God's grace a new song for a new work of God's amazing grace and that is exactly what we're seeing here a new song is being sung for a new work

[32:57] God is doing through the lamb the praise is proclaimed to the lamb worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals and now the for just like in verse 11 worthy for reason now we're given for the lamb worthy are you for reason number one a new work for you were slain it's a new work of grace a new work in God's plan of salvation and not only is he worthy because of this new work for you were slain he substituted himself it's a new work creating a new people for by your blood you ransomed you purchased people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation this new work is creating a new people group before under the old covenant it was mono ethnic ethnic

Israel worshipping God with one language in one place and now this new work of the lamb blows that the doors wide open and now through the blood that Jesus shed he is purchasing for himself a people from every tribe and language and people and nation from mono ethnic to multi ethnic and we believe God is doing a multi ethnic work here gathering a people for himself that in the world's eyes typically have no business dealing with each other but in Christ we've got all business dealing with each other this new song is about a new work of a formation of a purchase of a new people through the blood of Jesus they all have a new purpose in verse 10 you've made them a kingdom and priests to our

God they shall reign on earth this kingdom and priests language was originally used of God speaking to his people his mono ethnic people Israel Exodus 19 you're my people I'm your God and now with this new work of the lamb this description of Israel mono ethnic Israel is now being applied to this new group of multi ethnic blood bought people the church it's the priesthood of all multi ethnic believers and we're to reign with him some commentators think that this reigning with God is a reigning that will happen in the new heavens and the new earth some commentators think that this reigning is with

Christ now on the present earth I happen to think both are true we will reign with him in the new heavens and the earth but we reign with him now as he inaugurated his kingdom our reign is exercised through humility and through servanthood and through self sacrifice even when it looks foolish and weak it's the way of the lamb that's how we reign with him now in verses these verses what you realize is the living creatures and the 24 elders this inner circle do you know who they're singing about they're singing about us this work that God has done we're the reason that Jesus is worthy he shed his blood for us this praise spreads from the inner group now to an outer group we see that in verse 11 and

I heard around the throne the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands a myriad is literally ten thousand and so when you see a myriad and myriad myriad you're supposed to multiply them ten thousand times ten thousand do you know how many that is one hundred million I don't think we're supposed to be counting them I think the intent is they're more than we can count and this huge throng of angels in heaven they gather around the lamb and they say worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing all of the angelic host are gathered around the throne to give the praise due the lamb he's worthy count with me power one wealth two wisdom three might four honor five glory six blessing seven fullness of praise full and complete praise from the angelic host surrounding the very throne to the lamb worthy is the lamb and then it goes beyond heaven to the earth verse 13 we read and I heard every creature in heaven and earth and under the earth and in the sea 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 we move from heaven and now we move to earth and we move all over in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea all that is in them every living thing including you and me the first two choruses in chapter four worthy are you the one who sits on the throne the creator the second two choruses in in revelation chapter five worthy to the is the lamb who was slain the redeemer and then this last chorus it's a chorus to both the ancient of days and to the lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever all of creation we're not sure it's hard to know if this is now or what will happen what's the destiny of all of us to give praise and glory to the triune

[40:48] God for what he has done in heaven and on earth worthy worthy is this one to take up the scroll in verse 14 we see the response of the entourage the four living creatures and the elders the four living creatures see all of creation giving right praise to God and they say amen that's right and then the 24 elders they close the service by falling and worshiping a very appropriate appropriate response chapter five starts with a rather hopeless situation who is worthy and then it moves on to this surprise appearing worthy is the lamb and then it's the spreading of praise heaven and on earth all earth and under the earth the very ones who were quiet when the angel said who is worthy to open the scroll when they couldn't answer now they do worthy is the lamb gives us some perspective it helps us to see what is really going on who is worthy it helps us it gives us perspective on this person this lamb is

God it gives us perspective on his position he's not in a manger anymore he's on the throne it gives us a sense of the priority of his death the slain lamb what he accomplished is central to the throne he's being worshipped for it in heaven right now you never outgrow it we'll never get used to it it was the act that makes him worthy to execute God's plan for the fullness of time he's got a plan the scroll is in his hand now you don't need to weep you don't need to despair you don't need to be hopeless worthy is the lamb he's been given the scroll and for when we get back into revelation in January we're going to see the lamb execute judgment after judgment after judgment the breaking of seals he's in control carrying out

God's plan no need to despair the bottom line is this fuels our perseverance we overcome because he overcame and he's on high carrying out the plan of the ancient of days worthy is the lamb God thank you so much thank you so much for revelation chapter five Lord would you help us to sing your praises now in light of revelation chapter five and the much needed perspective it gives us in Jesus name amen