

Revelation 5 “His Worth Gives Us Worth”

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 October 2026

Preacher: Derrick Harris

[0:00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

Our reading today from God's Word is from Revelation chapter 5. Please read along with me. And I began to weep loudly, because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or look into it.

One of the elders said to me, Weep no more. Behold, 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 between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes. Which are the seven spirits of God sent out unto all the earth.

And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who is seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

[1:29] 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 a kingdom and a priest to our God. And they shall reign on the earth. Then I look and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders, the voice of many angels, numbing myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.

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 worshiped. Thank you, Kevin. Good morning, everybody.

We are going to be in Revelation 5 again this week. Such a great passage. For those I don't know, I'm Derek. Good to meet you. For those online, hello. Welcome. That song we just sang at the Offertory, right?

[2:48] Hallelujah. So many years ago I was leaving a mission trip in Cuba. And I was sitting on the airplane and I was trying to process everything that I had just experienced.

And as the plane took off, I was listening to that song. And I just remember crying. I got overwhelmed with emotion because we had just watched the Lord change people for an entire week.

And we had seen prayers answered. And we had experienced incredible worship. And the whole trip had done something to me. It redefined to me what I thought worship was.

And one moment I remember was in the homes. We'd go in the homes of people. And they were so alive for the gospel that they would book appointments for you to come share the gospel with their family. And so we would go do that.

And through the week they would worship in homes. And all they had was a CD player at one of the houses. A really old one. And they would put in any song that had Christian music on it.

[3:54] And they would just push play. And they would sit there and pray. And they would cry. And I remember looking at them thinking, I think I got something off here.

Like, I don't experience that regularly. And I remember thinking, this must be a little bit of a taste of heaven. Fast forward to another mission trip I was on.

I was on another airplane. We're on the way to take some students to Belize. And one of the students named Addie, she was sitting there near me. And she asked me a question that I've never forgotten.

She said, why is it that I just feel so close to God when I go on these trips? I just feel so free. And I remember telling her something like, maybe it's because this week almost everything about who you are is focused on him.

Your reason for showing up is focused on him. Your schedule is built around him. You wake up thinking about what's God going to do through you today. And you get to join him.

[5:02] But then when you get back home, that's not always the case. At home, there's like a thousand other voices. And sometimes those voices become the voices that are the loudest, the ones that actually get to name us.

But for this week, you're focused on the name that God gives you. Who names you? Won't you think about that a minute?

Who gets to tell you what you're worth? We all carry names, okay? Some were given to us lovingly. Some came through a wound. Some came through failure. Some came through success. Some came from people we trusted.

Some came from people we don't. Sometimes the names are good. But many of the names that you carry and you remember the most are the ones that are bad, okay?

[6:04] Those are the names that we start to say to ourselves over and over and over, right in the morning when you wake up and all through the day. Names like failure, disappointment, too much, not enough, weak, behind, unwanted, unworthy.

Negative naming leads to shaming, okay? Shame is powerful, very powerful, because it does not simply say you did something wrong.

No, shame says you are something wrong. Shame says you have to hide. People can't know that about you. It's who you are, just like Adam and Eve, right?

Shame tells us to stay away from God. So we do. And we hide that from each other. So we spend enormous energy trying to get a better name.

We perform. We achieve. We control. We stay useful. We got to keep people happy. We compare how we're doing.

[7:19] And sometimes we can even use our faith to try to convince ourselves and God that we are enough. But you can't rest when your worth must be earned every single moment of every day.

And that may be why some of you are so restless right now. Revelation 5 opens the door into another space, the throne room of God.

And in that space, there's a discussion happening about true worth, okay? About true value, about worship. And in that space, we hear a question.

And the question is not, are you worthy? The question is, who is worthy? And in this space, all of heaven answers and points towards one, Jesus.

And I want you to remember this today. His worth gives us worth, okay? So who is worthy? That's the first question.

[8:33] So continuing from last week, let's remember where we are, okay? We are in the throne room of heaven, the holy of holies. And this is the place that you and I, whether or not we know it, we all long to be, okay?

And John is looking into the throne room of heaven. Revelation 4 has already set this up for us and overwhelmed us even with the throne, the rainbow, flashes of lightning, the rumblings of thunder, these living creatures you can't possibly imagine, and the elders with crowns worshipping.

Just take for a minute, I want you to think about the colors that might be there, okay? I like this picture. I couldn't think of colors. Like I think of the colors.

And then I was talking to Susie Talbot, and she was praying, and she's got a great gift of art. And she showed me this thing that she had been painting. And I was like, that's exactly what I think of when I think of the throne room of heaven. Can I use that someday?

Sure. Sure. Fun things happen at Lunch Life in Scripture on Wednesday. It's just saying. So, okay. So she, colors of heaven, I want you to think of that.

[9:36] Now I want you to take that to the throne room of heaven with me, okay? This is obviously a recreation. So if you take those colors in, imagine those creatures, right?

There's creatures on each side of the throne. They're full of eyes in the front and the back. You've got one like a lion, like an ox, face of a man, like an eagle in flight. Twenty-four elders, wise elders, and they worship.

They cast their crowns. They rule with God. And then our prayers are there, right? We'll talk a little bit more about that later. But it says the elders hold our prayers in an incense bowl. Think about that, though, for a second.

There's an aroma of heaven that's made by your prayers. What? And then there's a scroll, it tells us, right? There's a scroll in the hand of one.

It's been seated on the throne, and it has seven seals on it. I didn't put that up there. Just imagine that. Cool fact. Roman wills were normally sealed with seven seals.

[10:34] And the seal is usually wax to ensure that nobody tampers with it. And the will can only be opened after the death of the person who willed it. What's in this will? I think it's nothing less than the game plan, God's game plan for redemption in all of history.

Okay? And the restoration of all things. It says it's got writing on the front and the back. That's very uncommon. So that's a distinct statement. The question goes out, though.

Right? Who is worthy? And then John weeps because no one is found worthy. And then he hears, weep no more. The lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered.

And then John turns to see the lion, and he sees a lamb standing as though it had been slain. Now, I know when we go through Revelation, some of you want us to stop and decode everything.

And I don't want to like burst your bubble, but nobody knows. Okay? Even the greatest minds, they're still operating within the three dimensions, right?

[11:40] The three spatial dimensions of earth. Maybe the fourth dimension of the temporal. God is omnidimensional. He's omnipresent. So if we want to take a stab at it, you've got the seven in there.

Well, seven can mean power and perfection. Will talked about that so well last week. You could think the seven eyes, the seven horns, they can mean God can see everything. God can know everything. Omniscience. Omnipresence.

But he's omnidimensional. So even when I'm talking about God right now, I have no idea. Like there is a mystery to him.

You're Star Wars people. Okay? Why do things blow up in space and Star Wars? It ruins the movie. We don't know. It doesn't matter. Right? And I want to encourage you with Revelation.

We're going to jump in and try to decode where we can. But don't ruin the movie. Okay? There's some mystery in here that is meant to be experienced and just not known.

[12:43] Okay? So just take enough of that. But here, if we want to geek out for a minute, the seven could mean perfection and power. It also could not be. It can mean nothing that I say. I have no idea.

But I love God. And he's so huge. So let's go back to the movie. Okay? Because every movie has a great soundtrack. But the lion here spoken of is definitely the lion from Genesis 49:9.

Okay? The root of David spoken of in Isaiah 11:1 and 10. If you want to go look that stuff up. And it's the lamb spoken of in Isaiah 53:7.

The thing I think we need to take for this movie is that we relate to God now. He relates to us as the lamb. But he fights for us as the lion. And he's also still got that judgment, that lion side of him.

But he relates to us now as that lamb. Right? That's why we can approach him. But he's slain and standing. Wounded but victorious. Sacrificed but very, very alive.

[13:46] And then the room starts singing a song. Now, let's go back to the movie. Right? Every movie has a great soundtrack. I love music, if you know me. Music is powerful.

Words are powerful. Music and words, boom. Okay? They're extremely powerful. Now, we're going to go back in a little lesson in history, especially for the kids.

Back in the day, we would give each other mixtapes. Okay? This is before Spotify or anything. And a mixtape was basically something you wanted someone to listen to while they were going and doing something.

And you wanted them to think certain things. And so the beauty of the mixtape was you're always trying to decode. What did they want me to think about from this lyric? And sometimes it could creep you out. Sometimes it's like, oh, this is cool.

Do you all remember the mixtapes? Some of you? It was a great day. It was a great day and time. So they're like, hey, you're driving home from college. I want you to listen to this tape. And you'd listen to it and think, do they like me?

[14:48] What do they mean? I don't know. It's usually from a girl or a guy sometimes. Sometimes dudes would send them to each other. Girls send them to each other. But they always had meaning. And there was a soundtrack they wanted you to be hearing while you're looking and living.

So imagine in this throne room picture that God, he's given us a mixtape. And there's some lyrics he wants us to hear. Let's listen to those lyrics.

They're in verses 9 and 10. And they sang a new song saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and open its seals for you were slain. And by your blood, you ransom people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

And you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God. And they shall reign on the earth.

Okay. Back to the mixtape.

Right. He's worthy. He's worthy to open the scroll. God's given you a little soundtrack today, right?

Let's enjoy the movie. Let's listen to the song.

[15:53] All right. It's a song about achievement. But it's the achievement that you and I are looking for in everything else.

The lamb is worthy. Okay. Worthy are you to take the scroll and open its seals. Why? Because you were slain. Because you have purchased us. Because you have fulfilled God's redemptive plan. Now notice those lyrics. Not what we achieve, but what he achieved. Okay. You were slain. You ransomed people for God.

You made them a kingdom and priests. This echoes 1 Peter 2.9. Exodus 19.6. If you like to look that stuff up. The song is about the accomplishment of the lamb.

And that matters. Why? Because when we think about those names that we live by, the song of shame has some very different lyrics. Its lyrics say, look at what you have done.

[16:53] Look at what you are not. The song of worship though, which we're seeing here in heaven, it says, look at what the lamb has done.

He is worthy. Now there's something to that. Maybe we need to learn some new lyrics. Some of the shame that we carry in us is attached to the things that we have done.

Some is attached to the things that were done to us. Some comes from words spoken over us that so often that those words become a name that we live by and we don't even realize it.

And they can create deep, deep wounds. And then wounds become places where lies attach themselves to our identity. And then we protect the wound.

We don't want anybody to know that. And we hide. And we isolate. And we control. And we perform. But look at the center of heaven. Okay?

[17:57] There's a lamb standing as though he had been slain. I have a friend named Hugh Welch. He was a dear mentor of mine. He died one time and they revived him.

And he was the president of my seminary at the time. RTS. So take that to the bank. He's not lying. And he saw the lamb. I said, what did you see when you died and came back?

He said, I saw the lamb. And he would start crying. I was like, what else do you see? I'm not going to talk about it. And then he later passed away again. Or into glory.

But the lamb of God. Okay? Jesus stands. And he meets us in our wounds of shame. And he meets us with his wounds of worthiness.

And because of his worth, we are healed by his wounds. We are healed. That's the song we're supposed to sing. That's the soundtrack he wants us to hear in our head. But we spend so much time asking, am I worthy?

[18:58] Am I good enough? And Revelation is teaching us here. It's reorienting us and pointing us back to the center of the throne of heaven, which is really the center of the universe, which is really the center of all things, which is supposed to be the center of our lives and our minds and our thoughts.

Okay? And our purpose. Who is worthy? He is. Jesus is. We just sang it. And his worth gives us worth. And then you hear this response. Okay?

Then I looked and I heard around the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, the voice of many angels numbering myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice,

worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.

Myriads of myriads. That literally means hundreds of millions of angels. Creatures that we don't see all the time. There's feathers. There's power.

They're strong. And they're singing, pointing to the center of the universe again, the center of the throne. And they're saying, worthy is the lamb. To receive what?

[20:10] The power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor. Well, you know what they're doing right there? They're naming things. They're naming true things to the one who deserves them.

Okay? They're speaking names. You are power. You are wealth. You are wisdom. You are might. You are honor. What gets the most worth in your life, though?

Right? Because they're ascribing worth. What gets the worth in your life? What do you ascribe worth to? Whose opinion carries the most weight with you?

What have you quietly asked to tell you who you are? See, if my job gives me worth, then losing it can erase me. If approval gives me worth, then criticism will crush me.

If usefulness gives me my worth, I will use people to reassure myself that I matter. If success gives me my worth, then failure becomes an identity crisis for me.

[21:17] But if the lamb gives me worth, ah, now we're talking about something completely different. And outside of me, secure, beyond me.

That's who God says is where we are supposed to find our worth. Worship doesn't make Jesus worthy. He already is.

Worship reorients us in our hearts toward the center, where the worth belongs to begin with. And when Jesus gets the worth that he deserves, there is no room left for all the other things to compete for our affections.

But it doesn't mean they won't try, right? And that's what I was beginning to learn when I was leaving Cuba on that airplane. And that's what Addie was experiencing, I think, on the way to Belize, starting to put her head around it.

For a few days, right, our schedule, our attention, our prayers, our conversations, they had Jesus at the center. Our schedule, completely, time, all ordered around his purpose.

[22:27] And it created this freedom that changes other things because his worth gives us worth. So in heaven, the song continues.

The response now grows. 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. He's worthy forever.

Who's worthy? He's worthy. He's worthy to open the scroll and receive power and might, honor, glory, blessing. And he's worthy forever. John hears every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea saying this.

Blessing, honor, glory, might forever and ever and ever and ever and ever. The voices of response have expanded now from the angels, the cherubim and seraphim, to all of creation.

[23:35] Okay? Let's try to enter that scene for a minute. There you're at the throne again. You get the rainbow, the flashes of lightning, the creatures, the elders, the angels, the voices. They're harps, it says.

But it says in the hands of every elder is a bowl, an incense bowl that are the prayers of the saints. Your prayers.

You're a saint. If you're in Jesus, you're a saint. You probably don't think of yourself as a saint, but you are. Because being a saint, believe it or not, has to do more with Jesus than anything else.

Okay?

And your prayers are in the picture. The prayer whispered in the car. The prayer beside the hospital bed. You may not see what happened, but there's a prayer that's being heard.

The prayer you barely knew how to pray. The prayer that you felt like went nowhere, but it went somewhere. It went before the throne of God, to the incense bowl, in front of the lamb, creating the aroma of heaven.

[24:36] Okay, now around Huntsville every once in a while, you'll hear one of these distant rumbles from the arsenal, and you may not see what happened. But you feel enough of it to know

that something powerful happened beyond your line of sight.

Well, revelation is reminding us that there is a reality beyond our present line of sight. And it's the worship of heaven right now that we're reading.

It's the throne room of heaven. And at the center is the lamb. The lamb who gives us a place in his kingdom. Kingdom and priests. And you will be there one day if your faith is in Christ.

But before that happens, know that your prayers beat you there. They're already there. So you'll get to catch up. That they're right at the center of that room, though. And here's why it matters.

His worth gives us worth. What happens when that mission trip ends? Right? When you get off the airplane and you get back home.

[25:37] That may be the real question. Because most of life is not that mission trip experience in Cuba or Belize. Most of life is Monday morning.

Okay? The alarm goes off. The phone lights up. The calendar is full. Somebody is disappointed with you. You have a deadline. You have a bill. You have a child who needs something.

You remember something you wish you could undo. And all those voices start to name you one by one. Again and again and again. Failure. Not enough.

Unsuccessful. Wish you had more. Didn't make the grade on my test. Should quit studying. What does it look like for worship, though, to reorder that room?

It starts by, I think, learning to live in the ordinary life with Jesus at the very center. By learning to ask, who has naming rights today? Okay?

[26:35] Some of us are carrying those names that Jesus never gave us. Failure. Damaged.

Unlovable. Too late. Not spiritual enough. Not successful enough. Maybe somebody gave you that name.

Okay? Maybe a wound gave you that name. Maybe you gave it to yourself. Maybe the enemy has been happy to keep you repeating it. But Jesus did not give you that name.

That is not the name that he gave you. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. So if you have any name in you that you are carrying that is anything other than what Jesus says about you, it is a lie.

It is a lie from Satan. Don't listen to it. This is why we read scripture. This is why we want you in the word. This is why we need groups and communities to tell us the truth.

This is why we pray. Because there are lies that we believe and they keep us from living the purposes that God has called us to. And they are blinding us from the truth and the beauty of his love in the everyday ordinary things.

[27:44] You are enough right where you are. Because Jesus is enough right where he is. Okay? And his worth gives us worth. Right? The lamb who was slain.

He earned it. And he promises that in Revelation 3. What did he say he would do to those who conquer? Give him a new name. Uh-huh. There it is.

Do you hear that name? Or do you hear the other name? I am not what happened to me. I am not the worst thing I have done. I am not the best thing I have accomplished. I am not somebody else's opinion of me.

In Christ, Derek belongs to the lamb. Derek has been loved at the cross. Derek has been brought near. Derek is being formed by his spirit.

He's been given a place in his kingdom. Derek's future is held in the hands of the one on the throne in the center of the throne room. And that truth makes Derek worship. If it can make me worship, oh man, I didn't earn it.

[28:46] I know it can make you worship. And what does that worship mean? Just give myself as a living sacrifice and say, God, today possess me and use all of me for you.

And show me why you even have me waking up. That's living. That's purpose. Okay? That's worth. And that's what you're after. I know it's what you're after. Okay?

Because you're a human being. So how do we live our ordinary lives with Jesus at the center? By letting Jesus be the only one who has permission to name us. That's the first thing.

Okay? It starts by learning to live with the name that he gives us as our truest identity. And then letting that worth give us the worth that we're looking for in so many things.

Because he's alive. He's present by spirit. This is a thing that happens. This is what it means to relate and commune with the triune God. Hebrews 4, as Will mentioned, it teaches us we can go to the throne of grace to receive mercy and find help in our time of need.

[29:44] The connection you have there is that when you pray right now in temporal time, your prayers are there in eternal time in that incense bowl before Jesus.

And that is connecting us. Why are we connected? Because when you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes to live in you. You are tethered to the one who said to tell us to die. And nothing can take that away. Nothing can break that.

Okay? Think about that, though. The throne is a throne of grace for you, right? Lamb. You approach the lamb. Lamb. And you can go there every moment and say, I need you to be a lion right here. You can go there Monday morning. You can go there before the phone gets to name you, before the meeting names you, before the mistake names you, before success names you. Those first thoughts are so important, y'all, in the morning.

They're like breakfast for your soul. Eat well. Okay? Eat well. So, I'm going to land the plane here. You don't just go in the morning.

[30:42] You keep going all day long. You can talk to the one who's worthy every second. You can go to that throne room every second. You can ascribe him worth. You can ask him for direction.

You can bring him to places where shame's been talking loudest to you. And when you forget your name, that's where you go. Hey, what's my name again? And I think it looks something like this. If I have to get practical. People want the secret to success. It doesn't exist. But this is about as close as I think it gets to the rhythm of the Christian relationship.

Confession, repentance, and transformation. Right? You wake up. You're in a moment. And you might be in a public place. You might be in a private place. And there's that lie that comes in. And you're able to name it. That's not real. You go back to God. And you confess. You truth tell to him about the thing you're not believing. Hey, I'm believing this lie.

[31:41] Right? And then what do you do? You repent. I don't want to believe this lie. You turn around. Literally repent. And you go back to the center. Will you replace this lie I'm believing or this sinful behavior I'm doing in fill in the blank with you?

God, by your spirit, will you make that happen? He makes that happen. It comes back into you. It changes your mind. And guess what? Over time, it transforms you and your form changes. And this, it's happening all the time.

It never ends. Okay? We just turn on the volume and listen to the other mixtape. But in that moment, you need to put in the He is worthy tape over and over and over and play it loud and proud. Okay?

But go to God. You can go to that throne room. And it's every second. It's every moment.

Sometimes it's, hey, I need to take a beat and get out of this conversation and go over here with God. You saw Jesus go to God all the time.

Don't be afraid to do that yourself. But that's the rhythm of the Christian life. And maybe you need to pray, Jesus, you're worthy. I give you this name I've been carrying. Teach me to see myself in light of your love.

[32:45] And Revelation 5 doesn't just end with the throne room there. It actually points the whole book of Revelation as a preview of a story going somewhere. It moves towards the day when God makes all things new.

Okay? Okay? God dwelling with His people. New heavens. New earth. New direction. And we now begin to live in that direction as kingdom and priests.

Okay? Bringing worship and truth and mercy and beauty and reconciliation and hope into the ordinary places. All right. So let's close. We could talk about this forever.

Let's keep talking about it. But His worth gives us worth. That's what I want you to remember. And when our lives become centered on the worth of Jesus, we begin to remember who we really are. Some of you have forgotten who you are. How do I know? Because I forget who I am. And He sent me here today to say, remember who you are. You're not alone. Is that who you actively give your life to each day, though?

[33:51] Or are you giving it to all the other patterns of the world which are going to leave you empty? Okay? In this time frame, they go to the same place.

Empty, sad, not enough. Jesus has something so much better for you. He's worthy. He's at the center. And we're His. So tomorrow morning, the question is not whether something is going to try to name you.

