



3rd Sunday of Easter
May 5, 2019
Revelation 5:11-14

“A Hymn of Glory to the Lamb!”

He is risen! He is risen indeed! Grace and peace to you from Him who is and who was and who is to come, our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in His name, dear friends in Christ,

What’s the purpose of a movie trailer? Why do movie producers and promoters make movie trailers? What’s the point of them? Perhaps there’s a number of reasons. First, it whets your appetite for what is coming, it also gives you a glimpse of what the movie is going to be like, perhaps it shows that you might get a little scared along the way, perhaps there’s going to be some fun stuff ahead, overall it prepares you for the movie and anticipates the adventure you’re going to have. It puts these images in your head and it supposed to make you really want to see it and enjoy the movie.

Well, our text this morning is kind of like one of those movie trailers. But it’s far more. It not only whets our appetite for something that lies in the future, but it changes the way that we approach life in general right now. And all of this is because of the lasting effects of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

Revelation is a very interesting book – it’s confusing only if you don’t spend the time and work to study it deeply. It begins with an introduction where the apostle John is in exile on the island of Patmos and he receives this vision of the Lord. It’s such a spectacular vision, He sees Jesus in all his holiness- robe down to his feet, head and hair white, eyes like blazing fire, feet like bronze glowing in a furnace, voice like the sound of rushing waters, double edged sword coming out of his mouth, face shining like the sun in all its brilliance. Spectacular! But John faints in terror because he knows he’s a sinner. But then Jesus says, “Do not be afraid. I am the first and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead and behold I am alive forever and ever.” In other words, Jesus rising from the dead is proof positive that your sins are forgiven and you have no reason to be afraid of God any more.

Then in chapters 2 and 3 we get 7 letters written to 7 different churches of John’s day and they have applications to all churches. Then in chapter 4 in his vision John is invited to get a glimpse of what’s happening heaven. He saw the throne in heaven, circled by a rainbow like an emerald, then there were 24 thrones with elders on them – which represent all believers, there are these living creatures which are probably angels, they are singing in chorus, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.” Then John sees this scrolls that is sealed with 7 seals. It is the scroll that contains the future. No one is found who is able to open the scroll so John begins to cry and cry. But then one of the elders says, “**Don’t cry, look the Lion of the Tribe of Judah has triumphed, he’s able to take the scroll and open it.**” Then Jesus comes forward takes the scroll everyone worships him saying, “**You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.**”

And then we get to our text. There’s many angels, thousands upon thousands, ten thousand times ten thousand, an innumerable number of angels encircling the throne and they sang in a loud voice: “**Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!**” Wow! Can you imagine this scene? Can you imagine seeing what John saw? It must have been absolutely breathtaking and spectacular! Perhaps you’ve had one of those experiences- maybe here at church in worship, maybe at a choir concert, maybe at some other venue gathered with a bunch of people where you get goosebumps down your arms, your breathing gets heavy, your heart is vibrating in your chest, perhaps even a few tears of joy in your eyes.

But that's not it. We're told here that then *every* creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and on the sea sing together, **"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever! Amen!"** Incredible!

So what's the point? Why does God give us this movie trailer of what's going on in heaven? It shows us worship. Our English word "worship" really comes from the old English word "worthscip" and it means to "ascribe worth to someone or something." That's what worship is all about. Every human being from the beginning has been designed for worship. Every person is worshipping something. What are you worshipping? To what are you singing your song of praise? Everyone is looking to something for their deepest joy in life, their deepest longings in life, to give their life fulfillment and meaning. What are you worshipping? What are you ascribing ultimate worth to?

You see this longing to worship something higher and greater than ourselves has happened throughout history. The Greeks and the Romans had a whole pantheon of these different gods. There was Aphrodite the goddess of beauty, sex, and pleasure. There was Apollo the god of music and art. There was Athena the goddess of intelligence, wisdom and skill. Dionysus or Bacchus was the god of alcohol, drugs, parties. Hermes was the god of travel and communication. We live in a world full of those same gods and idols today, don't we? America is full of idolatry. People still worship sex, alcohol, beauty, money, wisdom, technology.

And it isn't without effect on us, is it? What do you worship? To what do you ascribe worth? If someone would chart out how you spent every minute of your last week, would that give a pretty good clue about what you worship? If someone examined all your finances for the past month or year, would they get a pretty good idea about what you ascribe worth and value to? If someone could track how you used your words this past week, what you looked at with your eyes, what you filled your mind with this past week, would they get a pretty good idea of who or what you worship? What is it in your life that if you were to lose it, it would make living unbearable? That's what you're worshipping. It's amazing that people who have little or no time for God here would expect to enjoy God's presence forever in heaven. Even heaven would be hell for someone who doesn't want to spend eternity with God. That's what our polytheistic hearts, so captivated by the unfulfilling and unsatisfying things of this earthly life finally deserves.

All those Greek and Roman gods, where are they? Perhaps you can find a remnant of a statue somewhere, but that's it. They had no real power, they were nothing. The same is today. Where is money, sex, beauty, intelligence, technology, when you're looking for meaning, significance, purpose in life? Where are they when death comes fast approaching?

There is only one worthy of our worship, hear what the angels sing, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain." First, who is the Lamb? The Lamb of course is the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Why was He slain? Why was He killed? John the Baptist said it best, "Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Jesus died, was crucified, slain on the cross for all your and my idolatries and worship of created things instead of the Creator. He was slain for all sin. But He didn't stay dead, He rose and now not only lives but has all power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise. He has rescued you and through His Spirit in Word and Sacrament has used His power to work faith in your heart to believe in Him. And He has all power, riches, wisdom, strength and honor to lead us and guide us until we join this eternal song of saints and angels.

And the result? Worship. Praise. Honor. Glory. Power to him forever and ever. We were made not for our glory, but for His glory. He has brought us back into relationship with Him so that we reign with him as kings and queens, so that we find the deepest joy in life in the free access that we have to God all the time, that we find the deepest celebration in our hearts in the worship that we can offer God, the greatest honor of knowing that we will reign with our King forever and ever. We were made to have our entire lives be a song to His glory and praise.

A pastor once told a story about a jeweler and it went something like this: Imagine a woman inherited a piece of jewelry from her mother, who inherited it from her mother, and it's just one of those things in a drawer somewhere and she

doesn't really think about it and then she stumbles upon it, and she thinks, "I should really get it appraised once." So, the jeweler, gets out his little eye glass and he starts to look at it, he notices the way the facets reflect light, colors, texture, after he thinks about this for a little while all of a sudden his eye thing pops out, this is an absolutely unique jewel, it is priceless, it can't be made again, he has labored breathing, his heart pounds, he realizes that what he has in his hand is more valuable than all the jewels in his entire shop and all the jewels he has had in his shop for 30 years. Then when she finds out about the value, her entire life is changed, she now has a completely different life because she didn't appreciate the value of the thing that she had all along, the beauty of it. Worship values the beauty of what you have.

Jesus died, He didn't stay dead, He rose. And because He did I'm rescued, what we see here is just a preview, just a movie trailer. Just wait until you're there. And it's yours, right now. Every song you sing, really first starts in your heart, it's to be more than your voice that sings a hymn, it's to come from your heart. This is way more than a movie trailer, knowing what you know here means you can start singing this song today. The way that you live your life is to be a hymn of glory to the Lamb, the way you approach and use your finances is to be a hymn of glory to the Lamb, the way you use the physical possessions that you have is to be a hymn of glory to the Lamb, the way husbands are to treat their wives is to be a hymn of glory to the Lamb, the way wives respect their husbands, parents parent their children, students do their homework, workers work at their job. All of it a hymn of glory to the Lamb. He is worthy of praise in your thoughts, in your words, in your actions.

If I belong to this Savior, who is such a God of power, might, strength, glory, love, and beauty. I know that He will safely and successfully carry me through whatever lies ahead. And if He is with me no matter what, I don't know what lies ahead, I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, but it doesn't matter, because seeing this, any evil, trouble, hardship, won't even be a blip on our radar screen when we join this awesome choir. Anything bad we face in life is like a little pin prick. Worship Him. Look at this song, hear this song, sing this song, rest in this song, enjoy this song today: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise! Amen.