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REVELATION 5

LIVING UNDER THE LAMB'S THRONE

Then I saw a scroll in the right hand of the one who was sitting on the throne. There was writing on the inside and the outside of the scroll, and it was sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel, who shouted with a loud voice: "Who is worthy to break the seals on this scroll and open it?" 3 But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll and read it.

4 Then I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll and read it. 5 But one of the twenty-four elders said to me, "Stop weeping! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David's throne, has won the victory. He is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals."

6 Then I saw a Lamb that looked as if it had been slaughtered, but it was now standing between the throne and the four living beings and among the twenty-four elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which represent the sevenfold Spirit of God that is sent out into every part of the earth. 7 He stepped forward and took the scroll from the right hand of the one sitting on the throne. 8 And when he took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people. 9 And they sang a new song with these words: "You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. 10 And you have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for our God. And they will reign on the earth."

11 Then I looked again, and I heard the voices of thousands and millions of angels around the throne and of the living beings and the elders. 12 And they sang in a mighty chorus: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered - to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing."

13 And then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. They sang: "Blessing and honor and glory and power belong to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever."

14 And the four living beings said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped the Lamb.

Revelation 5:1-14

John wrote revelation from the vision that he had on the island of patmos. He is exiled there likely because of the messages he was speaking, saying Jesus is Lord which means that Cesaer is not. Exile was slow

suffering. He would have been an old man when he was exiled. Patmos becomes a pulpit for John who writes this revelation and sends it to the 7 churches.

The vision that John is brought in to see is the throne room of God - he's in the board room of the cosmos. In the throne room of God, he sees the one on the throne and he has a scroll in hand. John would understand that scroll from the pictures from the old testament (Daniel 7, 12, Isaiah 29, Ezekiel 2, 3). The scroll or the book that God has in his hand has God's plan for all history on it, the names of God's people on it for vindication, judgement to those who do evil, fulfillment of God's promises. We read about this in the pictures of what is mentioned in the old testament but also if we continue to read revelation and see what is revealed to us through the vision. But for John in this moment he just has old testament pictures in mind for what is on the scroll.

There is a problem though - who can open the seals of the scroll for this history to be done. The angels proclamation isn't who is the strongest to open the scroll. The most powerful isn't the one who can fix the problems of this world. It's who's worthy to open and be able to read the rest of creation's history.

John weeps because there is no one at present who is worthy. He has a moment of being human - was their suffering for nothing? Was their trust misplaced? Has sin won? He weeps in that moment for no one is worthy to open the scroll.

If the scroll remains unopened.. Evil suffering faithfulness

What if God's plans don't actually move forward?

What if obedience doesn't matter?

What if power still belongs to those who dominate?

Does following Jesus really shape anything beyond my private life?

Jesus, the lion of Judah, the heir of David, the slaughtered lamb appears and is found worthy to hold this scroll and take the throne with the one who sits on the throne.

To solve the world's problems isn't a matter of strength but a matter of worthiness.

If Jesus is on the throne, worthy of holding all of human history, the good, the bad, the ugly, then how do we live out our lives in such a way as to honour and be faithful to who is on the throne?

How do we live out this reality that Jesus is the lion-lamb king across all of creation right now?

1. STOP WEEPING. LOOK TO JESUS.

John starts to weep. Why? Is all the minister he has done, the faithfulness he has lived, the obedience that he has done been for nothing.

What if nothing changes?

What if evil wins by default?

What if faithfulness is admirable — but ineffective?

You don't abandon faith, it just gets privatised.

Does God's rule actually shape reality — or just belief?

The elder declares to John to stop weeping and to look instead at who is to come. The one who is worthy is the lion of from the tribe of Judah, a heir to King David. John knows who it is.

He looks at who it is - its not a lion but a slaughtered lamb. And he knows that it is Jesus - these pictures are of the saviour he spent 3 years with many decades before.

Why is the king described as the lion-lamb?

The Lion (heard) - powerful, connected to human history through the tribe of Judah, the leader. He is shown to be part of God's plan throughout all of history.

The Heir (heard) - position.

The Lamb (seen) - the sacrifice. Horns are power. Eyes are spiritual wisdom. But he is still the slaughtered lamb who is on the throne. Only he is worthy of unlocking the scroll of history and judgement.

POWER IS REDEFINED

God doesn't just leave the world to its own devices and doesn't let anyone off scott free. He will bring judgement. That's a part of our hope. There will be judgement to be had. Jesus provides the solution through sacrificial giving up of his human life to be the solution.

He is the hope of the world. Not by might. Not by strength. The way of Jesus is to serve.

45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45 NLT

Jesus is reminding those following him that his position as Son of Man isn't about coming to be served as a god but to serve the people through a sacrificial death. He would give up his life as the son of man in the midst of all the strength and authority and power he has. Jesus is our continued hope in a world of suffering.

We don't weep over the circumstances of the world. We follow the leading of the elders to fix our eyes on the one worthy who brings hope into the world.

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. 2 Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.

Colossians 3:1-2 NLT

You don't need to weep over living the life of faith and obedience that you have lived. Faithfulness is not wasted. Obedience is never irrelevant. Suffering is never unseen.

2. LIVE AS KINGDOM PRIESTS.

What I find interesting in this passage is that God never does anything alone. God is called worthy in chapter 4, and so would be worthy to open the scroll himself but he wants someone with him. The father needs the son and the son needs the father. God being relational means that God does his business with people.

The elders sing a new song, a new declaration of what now is to come under the reign of the lamb king - a new people is birthed from the ransom of Jesus to be God's priests throughout all the world - every nation, tribe, people group.

Being a priest though? Isn't that just for the ordained?

What did priests do? They ministered the presence of God?

Whilst we have titled based people who are priests and pastors and the like - we believe in the theology that every person who follows Jesus is part of the priesthood. It means you can minister the presence of God yourself?

What does it require of you? To practice the presence of God day to day.

When we think of kings reigning we think of strong powerful figures able to command people around. But Jesus doesn't show us that power is the way to reign but we reign by serving. We mimic the Lamb king by serving the world not having it serve us.

It's the position of purpose back into our lives.

The kingdom of God's purpose is not the same as any culture or tribe found in the world.

Part of living the lamb-shaped life is to live with a rewritten purpose in life - the live had a kingdom of priests - everything we do now should usher in the presence of God day to day.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

Romans 12:1 NLT

Paul writing to the roman church is encouraging them to give their bodies as a worship sacrifice to God as an act of worship - this means all of your life is given to him. So what does that mean - my life, my family, my work, my household, all that I have and I am is given to God with purpose now - to be priests within the kingdom of God. We are working on bringing heaven on earth with God.

15 Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name. 16 And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.

Hebrews 13:15-16 NLT

What are the sacrifices that are pleasing to God - do good and share with those in need - how do we partner with God in alleviating suffering - if we do good and share with those in need.

How faithfully am I representing the King?

3. SING THE CHORUS

The elders continue to sing to God on the throne - declaring who he is and as it continues all creation is invited into the chorus.

You are invited in to sing that same song that heaven is singing right now.

But this act of singing isn't just a sing along - you making declarations of who is in charge. You are choosing a side.

Worship then isn't a private act. It's not something to hide from.

Worship also isn't some holy escape from the world. It's how we live our lives out every single day.

In the ancient world - worship was about a declaration of who was Lord and who you were in allegiance with. Caesar wanted the worship of himself as god and so worship for him was allegiance to him. Worship was never private.

9 Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11 NLT

When we worship we are declaring that Jesus is Lord of all and will be the hope of salvation. Not the career not the finances not the position or power you might want. It's all Jesus and we're called to join in the singing of the chorus that it's Jesus who holds the power.

Conclusion

Do I have clear sight of the Lamb? If not, what's got my focus? What am I looking at for the hope of salvation?

Do I act like my mundane day in day out life is an expression of Jesus being on the throne? Does it look like doing good and sharing with those in need?

So I sing the chorus of the Throne?