

3rd Sunday of Easter

May 1, 2022

“The Lamb who was slain is worthy!”

(Revelation 5:11-12)

By Rev. Ed Weber

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today’s text for this 3rd Sunday of Easter is from our Epistle reading Revelation 5:11-12.

“Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice:

**“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”**

Here ends our text.

This chapter 5 of Revelation begins with the question posed by an angel “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” In John’s vision he is taken to see a glorious throne on which sits God the Father. And in His hand is a scroll as we heard in the opening verses of our epistle reading.

“And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. 4 So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.”

The scroll – the divine counsel of God. What is His plan for His fallen creation? What lies in their future? If God’s plans remain a mystery, if they remain sealed, then there is no hope for mankind. One could only expect the worst as one’s conscious continually accuses him or her of wrongdoing.

Is God only a just God? Or is He also merciful? One needs to know. Who can open the seal to look into the judgments of God and know the mind of God?

And to John's great dismay, there was no one. No one in heaven or on earth is worthy. We who are sinners are certainly not worthy and even the good angels in heaven are not given the honor of knowing God's plans. But they desire to look into them as we know from 1 Peter 1:12.

This caused John to weep. When the truth is sealed there is no consolation or hope. This reminds us of Mary Magdalene who wept at the tomb. The angels knew of the good news of God's plan of salvation for they had seen this revealed through the ages to the prophets and through Christ Himself. They reminded the women in the tomb in Luke 24.

“Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’ ”

Mary Magdalene didn't remember either. The good news was still sealed to her until her Lord Jesus came and opened the seal by saying her name, “Mary”. Look I am alive!

As we heard last week, the disciples were behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. They too did not remember the many times that Jesus had told them what must happen for the salvation of the world. As sealed as their room was, so was their hearts. But then, Jesus broke the seal and entered the room and showed them His hands and side. He is alive.

For Thomas also, there was no comfort, only defiance of God. The promises of salvation were sealed to him, that is, until Jesus made a special appearance to him and he exclaimed “my Lord and my God”.

But how about us? Yes, until God's plan of salvation was revealed to us, we remained in darkness. Until the seal of God's saving will for the world was broken and revealed to you in your baptism, your soul also longed to know that God is a merciful God in Christ Jesus.

But thanks be to God that the seal has been broken and the Holy Spirit has revealed to you that Jesus Himself is the only One worthy to open its seal. For He is the fulfillment of the Father's plan to save the world by His death and resurrection. The slain Lamb of God shows the marks of His battle which won the world's salvation. And He speaks peace to His church! The Lion of Judah stands victorious, having conquered sin, death and the devil!

Yes, God is just. He had to slay His only Son for the salvation of the world. And God is merciful. He did this for you and me all people. This is the good news that causes the angels and all the church to give Him all praise.

**“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”**

The entire church of God symbolized by the 24 elders, the 12 tribes of believers in the Old Testament and the believers who are built on the foundation of the 12 apostles teachings, sound forth in praise!

Yes, this is the new song. This is the Gospel of Good News that ends all weeping.

And they sang new song, saying:

**“You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
10 And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth.”**

Jesus is worthy because He alone redeemed us by His blood. Salvation has been won for all people of every tribe and tongue and people and nation!

And so, we can be absolutely assured that this new song is our new song also. Our Lord told Thomas in John 20 as we heard last week.

““Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The scroll has been unsealed for you and me. It has been preserved for you and me to hear and read that we too would have life. So, John 20 concludes.

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Jesus tells each of the churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, and all of us at Immanuel Lutheran Church, **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”**

And though we will certainly face tests and persecutions in this life, for that is also included in the future as written in the unsealed scrolls,

“He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” (Revelation 2:12)

To keep us strong in this faith that we may overcome, our slain Lamb of God gives to us His very body and blood that was slain for us to forgive us our sins. Today we receive His Lord’s supper and He makes us worthy as we believe His words, “Given and shed for you.”

Yes, for you also. You join the company of angels and the Christian church in praise of the One who has overcome death.

““Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.”

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)