

I love having puzzles. I picked up this habit from my father. And these are not like the 1,000 piece puzzles I like to put together. These are like brain teaser puzzles. Ones where you have two pieces of metal stuck together and you have to solve how to take them apart. Or a box that you have to find the solution to open up. I have a number of these around my office. I like to watch people, especially my kids, try to solve them.

And what usually happens, is that someone works for awhile, gets frustrated, and then asks for the solution. What happens to me when I first do it is that I often can't do it and I struggle. I get super frustrated and angry, and then I decide to find a solution. Usually they come with one when you buy them. But the last puzzles I got were pretty cheap so the solution they came with didn't make any sense. So I got more angry and frustrated. Then I decided to just search on the internet for a solution and still couldn't find one. Despite all my best efforts I could not solve this puzzle and it just left me dejected and feeling disappointed.

This is somewhat where John finds Himself in Revelation chapter 5. Although it is something much more serious than some simple brain teasers. He is waiting and wondering why God has not solved a serious problem. There is something that needs to be opened and unlocked. But no one seems able.

Turn with me in your Bible to Revelation 5.

I. The world needs to be (fixed) (v. 1-4).

No one agrees on anything anymore.

But all of us can agree that there are problems in the world.

Something is wrong.

Things are not right and as they should be.

We might disagree on all the solutions, but we all know there are problems.

And we need someone or something to fix them.

And it is the central question of humanity.

Who can solve our problems?

Who can fix the economy?

Who can repair the relationships that have been broken?

Who can help me defeat my addiction?
Who can fix the world?
This is the question John is asking.
And it is all centered around a scroll.

Verse 1, **"Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, seal with seven seals."**

The one who is sitting on the throne.
God Himself is holding a scroll.
And the scroll is sealed.
There is clearly writing inside of it.
There is writing on the inside of the scroll, but you cannot make it out.
And there is writing all over the back.
The entire thing is covered with words.
But it is sealed.
Seven differently seals hold it up tight.

Now our question probably is, "What is the scroll?"
What does it represent?
What is inside of the scroll?
And like many things there are different ideas.

One of the main ways that the early church understood the scroll is that they saw it as the Scriptures.
That it is like the Old Testament, which is locked and hidden in mystery and only when Jesus comes and breaks the scrolls can we finally understand what this entire Bible is about.
Definitely true, but might not be what the scroll symbolizes.

Some interpret it as God's plan to redeem the world.
Particularly at least His plan for revelation and for the end.
Because as we see the scrolls open and the seals are broken all of the rest of revelation kind of flows out of the opening of the scroll.

Some see the scroll as God's judgment on the world.
And then when the scroll is open and then finally God's judgment will
come forth on the wicked.

I think in some ways it's all of these things and maybe more we can't see.
But I need the problem is that we can't even know what's in it until Jesus
opens it.

And it makes me think that whatever the question is.

Whatever the problems we have are.

The answer and the only solution is always Jesus.

That there is this deep hurt and brokenness in the world.

The world's struck with sin and we need someone to fix it.

In one sense I think the scroll the answer to all of the problems.

All of them and all of the world.

I think in some sense it is many of these things.

But the important thing is not even what is in the scroll.

Because we will never know unless someone can open it.

The lack of ability to solve the puzzle is the problem.

Verse 2, **"And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice,
"Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?"**

Who is worthy?

Who is able?

Because you see somebody has to be able to open this.

But there is a criteria to who is able to open the scroll.

Just like the puzzles I have in my office there's a trick there's an
understanding that you have to have when you know the trick then you're
able to open it.

But the key to opening this scroll isn't having the right answer.

It isn't having a special key that will unlock it.

The only thing that can open, the scroll is worthiness.

We need a particular kind of person.

We need a particular kind of being.

The only one who can open the scroll is the one who is worthy.

So everyone is looking around asking hoping to find one worthy.

I cannot help but picture other moments in fiction.

Where only the true king is worthy to pull the sword from the stone.

Only the true princess is worthy to put on the glass slipper.

Only the worthy are able to pick up Thor's hammer.

Who is worthy to open the scroll?

Verse 3, **"And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it."**

But there is no one who can open it.

No, I don't know if this is actually happening, but it is painting the picture of everyone coming up one by one and trying to open the scroll and no one can do it.

I don't know if that is what John is seeing

Or if it's just a realization that everyone looks around and thinks "I don't even need to try. I know that I am not worthy.

But the picture is that everywhere. No one on earth is able to do this.

There is not a single being in the heavenly realm who can open this.

Not one of those four incredible creatures they are not worthy to open it.

None of the 24 elders whoever or whatever they are are able to open it.

The angels are not able to open it.

The archangels are not able to open it

The angel with the loud voice who is speaking for God is not able to open it.

The cherubim and the Seraphim are not able to open it.

And all of the other heavenly beings and creatures that live in that room, but we do not know of and we have never seen yet. They are not able to open it.

Includes all of the Saints who have gone before us and our worshiping guard in the heavens.

Even the greatest among us who had a heart after God.

Moses Elijah or the prophets with the kings.

The women who showed incredible faith, and led Israel like Debra.

Or the blessed among all women, Mary the mother of Christ.

None of them even though they are heroes and we love them and we emulate them and we want to have faith just as good as them.

They are not worthy to open the scroll.

And it's not just in the heavens, which is also under the Earth no one is able to open the scroll.

None of the apostles despite their closest to Jesus and their faith and their authority are worthy

There's no leader who is able to open the scroll

This is one of the things that I think that we have to remember.

Because the scroll I don't think is just about God's plan for Revelation of the end I think it really is symbolic of the solution to everything

All of the problems with our world are waiting to be fixed and we need to find someone who is worthy.

But there is no one under the Earth, who is worthy.

Your favorite economist is not gonna be able to fix the economy any depression or recession, poverty extinguished

Your favorite pastor or preacher is not worthy to bring revival and redemption across the entire world until every nation is saved.

Your favorite politician or political leader is not worthy of fixing the problems even in one nation left alone every nation of the Earth.

Your favorite military leader in general is not worthy to defeat all of the evil and all of the darkness in the world.

And this is something that we must remember because too often we look to those in the world and think that they are worthy to open the scroll and they are not.
They cannot.

Verse 4, **"and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it."**

This is a worthy reason to weep.
Sometimes you have dreams of things feel so significant until you wake up.
Or maybe you think of children crying because their socks don't do on their ears or something equally silly.
John's tears and weeping is not superfluous.
It is not the foolish weeping of emotional children.
This is righteous lamentation and mourning.

This is why we should we because no one can do this.
In the weeping in the lamenting is a waiting and a longing for someone to make an appearance who can save us.
A desire for someone to open the scroll.
Someone who can be worthy to do this.
And this is worth lamenting.
Because we need someone to do this.
We need someone to fix our world.
To end suffering and sickness and death.

Calvin was sick this last week.
He had a bad cough and just wasn't feeling great.
And as we drove around in the car, unprompted he said, "Dad, I can't wait for Jesus to come back and make all sickness go away."
He has the longing.
The longing for someone to open the scroll.
And deliver us from our bondage.
We should long and weep.
And look for the one who is worthy.

II. Only the slain lamb is worthy (v. 5-14).

There is someone who is worthy.

Only one who is able to open the scroll.

Only one who is able to fix what is wrong in our world.

Only one who can deliver us.

But is only Jesus.

And in this passage He is revealed to us as a lamb.

Verse 5, **"And 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."**

John is told he can stop his crying.

He may dry his tears and there is no need to weep.

For one has been found who can open the seals.

There is one who has conquered.

And so he turns to look.

He turns to see the Lion of Judah.

The root of David.

The one who has conquered!

Who could this conquering worthy hero be?

I mean John should know it is Jesus.

He followed Him and has given his life to Jesus.

But here in the throne room, what will Christ look like?

He humbled Himself on earth to look like an average man.

But here in this place, what will His form be?

John was there at the transfiguration and saw a piece of His glory.

Maybe he wonders if he will look like that.

Maybe Jesus will come in the form of a lion.

Maybe a grander creature than the ones in the room.

Maybe his brilliance and light will shine as bright as the throne.

Verse 6, **"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 into all the earth."

He sees a lamb.

We need to see how shocking and significant this is.

He expects a lion.

He expects the conquering hero.

He expects something powerful and wonderful and mighty.

Instead, he sees only a lamb.

This is not what anyone would expect.

They would be looking for a king.

They would be looking for an incredible creature.

The disciples and the Pharisees imagined that the Messiah would be a conquering and victorious king, not a lowly carpenter.

But He comes as the lamb.

He comes as the passover sacrifice.

He comes humbly.

And it is not just that He comes as a lamb.

He comes as one who was slain.

He comes as one who died.

He comes as the conqueror even though He looks like He was defeated.

He is the lamb who was slain for us on the cross.

Sometimes I hear people object to focusing too much on the cross.

Or they will say we need to look more towards the resurrection.

But here in the throne room of heaven, Christ is revealed as the slain lamb.

Verse 7, **"And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne."**

Only He is worthy.

Only Christ is able to take the scroll.

Well, we need to see here is that the reason Jesus can open the scroll is because he's the lamb.

And He is the lamb who was slain for you and me.

And He is the one who conquers.

We have seen this over and over through the letters.

I've mentioned the way that we conquer in the kingdom of God is not the way the world conquers.

And the way that Jesus conquered in this world is not the way of the world conquers.

The lion of Judah conquered as a lamb.

Jesus conquered through suffering and death.

He was victorious through defeat.

And we have to remember how Christ did it.

And we have to remember that the image that Jesus wants us to have of Him in the fullness of His glory in heaven is as the risen lamb.

As the lamb who sacrificed His life and died for us.

Because everybody wants to have their own visions of Jesus.

You go down the street and talk to plenty of people who aren't Christians and they'll tell you what they think about Jesus.

You'll have some who like hippie Jesus.

You'll have some who like Jesus is their best friend.

Someone might like Jesus is a wise rabbi or fancy philosopher.

Some like Jesus has to conquer who empties out the tomb and slaughters his enemies.

Some like Jesus as the political revolutionary who defied the empire.

Some like Jesus as the founder of a political movement.

Some like Jesus as the friend of sinner.

And in some ways, Jesus is all of those things, but the way that Jesus reveals Himself in the throne of heaven is as the lamb.

He is the one who dies on the cross for His enemies.

He is the one who goes quietly to slaughter.

He goes as the sacrifice while being mocked by his enemies.

It would've been shocking to John and it should be shocking to us.

It should be one of the principal images that we carry with us.
When we think of Jesus, we need to think of His willingness to die on the cross for us.

He was the lamb who was slain.

All the images and examples in the Old Testament of lambs.

From the passover to the sacrifice were pointing to Jesus.

We will talk more about those on Wednesday night.

But Jesus is only worthy because He is the lamb who was slain.

Verse 9, **"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."**

He is the one who is worthy to take the scroll why because he was slain.

The death of Jesus is what makes him worthy.

The fact that Jesus died and gave up his life is why he is worthy.

The cross of Christ.

The spilling of His blood.

That is for the heart of the gospel, and the reason why Jesus is worthy of all of our praise and all our honor, and He is worthy to open the scroll.

He is the only God who was willing to die for His people.

And His blood ransoms people for God

His blood paid our ransom.

We were trapped.

We were people with no hope

We were stuck in slaves to send forever indebted.

We were like someone who owes millions upon millions and never in their life no matter what they do every day that goes by they just get deeper and deeper and deeper it can never dig themselves out.

But Jesus paid the debt.

Jesus spilled His blood and that paid our ransom so that we could be set free.

He took for himself a People.

And the blood of Jesus is not just spilled for one people.

The blood of the lamb was not just for the sins of Israel or for the sins of the Jews.

The lamb was not just spilled for American Christians.

The blood of the lamb was not just spilled for those who look like you or me for those who speak English.

The blood of the lamb was spilled for people from every single tribe and every single language, every single people group and every single nation.

Our faith, our religion serves a God who dies for everyone.

He did not just die for His people.

He died for His enemies.

He died for those who hated Him.

He died for those who killed Him and betrayed Him.

Even while dying He offered forgiveness for His murderers.

Verse 10, **"And you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth."**

And Jesus took this massive amount of people from all of these different places and all of these different people groups, and all these different tribes and made us a kingdom.

Throughout history empires have tried to draw shapes on the map and throw different tribes together and declare them a nation, but it was only gonna lead to war and division for hundreds of years.

Instead Jesus, takes people who don't even share the same language who don't share the same culture, or values, or songs, we don't share any similarities other than they have been ransom by the blood of Jesus.

And we turned into a new kingdom of God.

And all of us together, you deserve as priests of the most high God.

And then we had to reign with Him forever more.

Verse 11, **"Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads and thousands of thousands,**

Imagine getting to hear that sound.

A wondrous and angelic choir.

The sounds of countless creatures singing with one loud booming voice.

And they sing

Verse 12, **"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!"**

They raise their voice and they sing again of Jesus and lamb who was slain.

Because Jesus died for us because Jesus was returned He's worthy to receive everything.

He is worthy to receive all of the power in the world.

Jesus has the power to kill our souls with a word.

Jesus has the power to end the world in a moment.

Jesus has unlimited power.

But His power does not need to be checked.

We have separation of powers in our government.

The legislature, the courts, and the president are meant to share power and keep each other in check when one of them goes rogue.

Because we do not want all the power locked in one persons hands.

But Jesus does not need checks and balances.

He's the only one who can hold that kind of power.

What does he do with all of that power?

He dies for sinners and for his enemies.

So He is worthy to have all the power in our lives.

He is worthy to have all of our well these worthy to have all of our wealth.

This is why we tithe and why we give to the kingdom of God.

It is why we listen when Jesus tells us to give to the poor without expecting anything back.

It is why we give to missions and those who seek to spread the gospel and to tell people we've never heard of that Christ died for them.

It is why we seek to give generously with a cheerful heart at every opportunity because we want Jesus to have all of our wealth.

After all, what did Jesus do with all of His wealth?

Will all of the wealth and all of the cattle on 1000 hills?

He gave it all up. He walked away from it.

And instead of hoarding it for Himself, He freely shares with us.

Jesus is worthy of all the honor that you can possibly give Him in your life.

You cannot honor Jesus enough.

There is not enough that you can do and how you speak and how you act and how you wake up and you go to bed and how you eat and how you work and you rest and play you can and should honor with all of that and it's still He deserves more.

He deserves all the glory and blessings that you can imagine and that you can muster.

You should continue to glorify and a bless Jesus.

Verse 13, **"And I heard every creature on 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."**

It is everybody who sings and who worships, and who acknowledges for Jesus is worthy of our blessing and honor and glory might.

You notice as well that is not just some creatures.

It is all of them.

It is all of the living and it is all of the dead.

Is all those who are in heaven already worship and it is also those who seemingly are dead and have rejected Jesus they also acknowledge the lamb is worthy.

Because deep down everyone knows the truth.
They tried to deny it,
The devil tries to deceive so that they try to not listen.
We know that Jesus is worthy.
One day, even the wicked will know, and even the wicked will kneel and will bow acknowledge the lamb is worthy.

He mentions that is the one who sits on the throne and the lamb who are both worthy of all of this.
It's just another and 1000s of reminders in the Scriptures that Jesus is God. Jesus is not a created being He is not a lesser God. He is very god of God and light of light in all of the honor and the glory.
The worship that we owe God the father,
We also owe to Jesus who was slain for us.

And His worth is forever and ever because it will not end.
Verse 14, **"And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshipped."**

Again, they bow down and they worship.
They fall on their faces before the lamb, and they worship him.
And again, this is how we should respond because he is worthy.
He is worthy of our praise. He is worthy of our blessing.
He is worthy of our song.

Sometimes when we we talk about singing and worship, we think about the quality of our own voices.
I stay next to my wife and listen to her as I said.
She is incredible. I love listening to her sing.
I'm embarrassed that she has to sing next to me and sometimes I try to harmonize. I don't even know how to do that so I think I mess her up a lot of the time.

And so it might be tempted to think about my own singing ability like oh I don't know if it's worthy.

The reality is none of our voices are worthy, including the greatest singers on Broadway or in the world.

Their voices are not enough for how much Jesus deserves.

Whatever your voice, whatever the quality of it that you think it is, Jesus deserves you to sing.

He deserves your worship.

Imagine standing here at this moment with John.

Seeing the throne and the lamb.

Imagine being there are saying, "Jesus I'd love to bow down and worship you, but I just think my voice isn't great."

The song sounds so nice, I just don't think I should sing right now.

How arrogant would that response be?

Because the beauty of this choir and the beauty of the body of Jesus is that it as our voices raise together.

It becomes one.

And it becomes more beautiful than it ever could be on its own.

So as we enter into worship, you don't have to sing loud, but you do need to worship.

Because Jesus is worthy of it.

Jesus is worthy of your best efforts whatever that is.

Because He is the lamb who was slain

Our world is broken, and only the slain lamb is able to fix it.

Let us respond like the heavenly host and fall down to worship the Lamb who is worthy to open the scroll.

Jesus who sits on the throne is worthy of all of our blessings.

He is worthy of all of our praises.

He is worthy of all the honor we can give Him forever and ever.

Let us worship.