

Easter Sermon – 04/17/22

Text – Revelation 5:6-14

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a 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, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.” 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!” And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!” Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

Theme – “Worthy Is the Lamb”

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Everyone has heard of the Easter bunny, but who has ever heard of the Easter *Lamb*? But that is precisely what (or Who) we will be talking about this morning.

In our midweek sermons this past Lenten season we focused on different sheep and lambs (even a goat) that point us to Christ. We talked about how all those Old Testament sacrifices – from those first made in Eden to provide clothing to cover Adam and Eve’s nakedness, to the Passover lambs, to the Temple sacrifices – how they all really prefigured Jesus. He is the true Lamb, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Lamb who was offered up

for us on the altar of the cross. The Lamb whose blood marks us Christians, so that eternal death passes over us. The Lamb who covers us with His own perfect righteousness, whose holiness clothes us and removes our naked, shameful sin.

On Good Friday we heard again how this Lamb was led to the slaughter. Of how He went the way of the cross, because it was the only way for us to be forgiven. The only way for Satan to be overcome. The only way for death to be defeated. And so this Lamb was stricken, smitten, and afflicted for us. He willingly laid down His life for ours. He picked up our cross, our sin, and suffered the judgment we deserve. He endured the hell that should have been ours.

“Father, forgive them” He prayed. And in that sacrifice of the cross, we ARE forgiven. All sin has been carried. All people have been redeemed, bought back, at the tremendous price of the suffering and death of God Himself. Of course that is more than enough to pay for your sin. For all sin. After all, it is **God** there. And so it is not you or me.

And when He cried *“It is finished!”* it was. There remains nothing for any of us to do. Jesus has done it all. What God had promised in Eden after Adam’s sin – the crushing of Satan and his awful power – has been accomplished. But who knew it? That Good Friday afternoon, Jesus was dead. His lifeless body a ruin: beaten to a pulp, lashed and tattered and torn, full of nail holes, pierced by thorns, thrust through with a spear. He had died alone, shamed, rejected. When Joseph of Arimathea came for the body, he was alone. Only Nicodemus was there to help bury it. Only a handful of women watched to see where it was laid. The Lamb was dead. Just as dead as any of the other lambs we have talked about in this sermon series. And what hope is there in a dead Lamb?

But today, Easter, that all changes. Today we see what was invisible before. Jesus died, yes. But His death kills death. As we confess in the Creed, Jesus descended into hell – not to suffer there but to proclaim His victory. To prove to the devil that he (Satan) had lost and that God (and therefore, man) wins.

Yet in those three days in the tomb, what person knew that? The disciples did not. They were hiding away, locked behind doors for fear of the Jews. The women did not. They went to the tomb Easter morning, fully expecting to find a dead and rotting corpse. The Jewish leaders and Pontius Pilate did not. They put a guard at the grave to make sure no one could steal away a dead body. No, without Easter and the empty tomb no one would have realized what Jesus had done.

And so it was that the stone was rolled away – not to let Jesus out, but to let human eyes see in. To see what had happened: Jesus has risen. The burial shroud neatly folded up. The burial chamber empty. The body alive.

And there is your proof. There is your verification. There is your guarantee. Jesus HAS conquered. He HAS won. He HAS beaten our enemies: sin, death, and the devil. His life means our life. His resurrection assures our resurrection. His victory is our victory.

That's why we hear those songs of joy in our text today. The songs sung by the saints and angels and all the company of heaven. Worthy is the Lamb! Worthy because He has given everything – even His very life – to purchase ours. Worthy because He has fought the great dragon, and won. Worthy because He has restored what Adam and we have ruined by our sin. Worthy because He has given us back our place in God's family. Worthy because He has humbled Himself to the lowest place, to raise us to the highest. Worthy because He gives us a

new heaven and earth, where we will live forever in our own resurrected and purified and perfect bodies when He comes again on the Last Day. (pause)

Easter really is the happiest, greatest, most joyful day of the year. It is the unveiling of what He has accomplished for us. The unwrapping of the gift. The surprise ending that makes sense of the mystery. The sneak preview of what lies ahead for us in our own resurrection.

No wonder the heavens shake with song! No wonder the angels rejoice! No wonder the saints above delight in praising His name! No wonder we, and all Christians, love this day. Can it get any better than this? The Lamb who was slain lives! Our sin is forever gone; death does not win; Satan is crushed and put in his place. Everything and everyone lays at Christ's feet. He is the Conqueror, the Victor, the Savior. He is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. He is exalted above all.

And yet we also thrill to know that He did all this simply because He loves us. It is all for you. His life of obedience. His death of atonement and payment. His suffering of hell. His taking up His life again on the third day. His empty tomb. His rule over all things. It is all for the sake of His Bride, the Church. That is, it is all for you. Because He loves you. Because He wants to spend eternity with you. Because He wants to give you all things.

The Easter bunny brings pretty eggs, sweet candy, and fun trinkets. But the Easter Lamb brings forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, eternal life, and our own resurrection! There really is no comparison. That's why we hear that song of the ages — the song that literally goes on forever and ever — the very song of heaven and all its host: *“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!”*

Worthy, because He has lived. And died. And risen again. All to give YOU eternal life.
Worthy to receive all things, all praise, all glory in heaven and on earth.

That is YOUR song. So, belt it out. Today, tomorrow, every day, and forever. Join with the angels. Join with the famous saints of old. Join with family and friends who are now with the Lord. Join with those here today. Join with all the Church throughout the world. Celebrate the Lamb who has taken away your sin, and who gives you heaven and everything else in return. The Lamb who was slain but lives — now and forever. And because He lives, we do too. Now and forever. Christ is risen, He is risen indeed. Alleluia! Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

OS: Offertory/Offering

FE: Offertory/Prayers