



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

April 28, 2022

Pastor Randy Ott

3rd Sunday of Easter

First Lesson: [Acts 9:1-19a](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 67

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [Revelation 5:11-14](#)

Gospel Lesson: [John 21:1-14](#)

Worthy is The Lamb

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Amen.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

There is a lot of stuff in Revelation that is kind of strange and hard to understand. I don't know how long ago it was now, 5-7 years, who knows? I can't remember that kind of stuff real well. Our Sunday night study went through the [Book of Revelation](#) using a DVD series that was prepared by Pastor Scherbarth who used to serve in Two Rivers. It is called [7 Visions 7 Truths](#). We have the DVD series down in our church library. It's very well done. It was incredibly helpful for understanding some of those more difficult places in Revelation and understanding how to approach the whole book in its entirety.

But I think the part we're looking at tonight is a lot easier to understand. It's a pretty straight forward vision of heaven that God gives to John early on in this book as he begins the first vision. We're in Chapter 5, Chapter 2 and 3 is what we did all through Lent—the seven letters to the seven churches and all the different things that the persecuted church would face. After writing those things, "Here's what I have against you... Here's what I have... Do this..." and all of those instructions for churches that were (like many churches today) struggling and faced with challenges, God gives John a vision of heaven. It's an incredible vision. John sees a Lamb at the center. This Lamb looks like it was killed. It was slain. Around the Lamb are the four living creatures with the face of a man, the face of an ox, the face of an eagle, and the face of a lion. Those four living creatures are worshipping God. The living creatures are kind of a strange vision. That was right before what I read to you.

Then it's kind of like John and his vision gets a wide shot because God pulls the camera back for John from just the four living creatures around the throne that the slain Lamb is

on to outside of that. There was the ring of the 12 elders and 12 others, 24 elders surrounding around the outside of the living creatures—12 patriarchs, the 12 apostles, representative of the New Testament Church and the Old Testament Church, the believers there. Then, as he pans out beyond that, you get the idea that John is trying to express things he couldn't fully digest. He said, ***"Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands..."*** which sounds like a lot. But then he immediately goes to ***"...ten thousand times ten thousand."*** You get the idea there is this panoramic of the angels there in heaven around the Lamb that was slain. The Lamb that had been slain had won the victory over the devil and in a loud voice they are all saying what we sung earlier as our Song of Praise. *Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise.* Then you hear every creature now in heaven and on earth and under the earth say, *"Be praised, this Lamb, forever and ever for He has begun His reign."* That brings to mind the words Handel used, this picture for Handel's Messiah.

Think about it—why would God give John this vision after those seven letters to churches that are struggling? It's the whole point of Revelation, over and over in Revelation. Revelation is not linear. It doesn't start at the beginning and move at a straight timeline. It is circular. It tells the same story seven times in these seven visions. Each one of them focuses on this truth—God wins! The Lamb came to earth—the Passover Lamb that had been pictured on Maundy Thursday, the Lamb without blemish or defect; "Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world," as John the Baptist said and as we sing before Communion. This Lamb was slain.

He was slain because you and I are sinners. He was without sin and yet He willingly left heaven and became a sacrifice. He offered His perfect life and then His death on the cross. The people that are in heaven, the four living creatures, the 24 elders, the thousands upon thousands upon thousands upon thousands of angels, they all get it. **Worthy is The Lamb!** This is a picture of heavenly worship, worshipping the Lamb because He won the victory, because God's people who are living on this side of heaven in this sinful world need this reminder that the Lamb won. He is worthy of our time, our energy, our honor, our glory, wealth, wisdom, strength, power, and praise. That's the meaning of the word "worship." It comes from an old word that means "worth-ship." He is worthy of our honor and our praise. He is worthy of our time and our efforts. He is worthy of setting aside our focus on ourselves to focus on this incredible love that our God has for us.

I just worry about God's people at times. Here is what I worry about. We seem to have become so used to the idea that Jesus died for our sins that we kind of take it for granted, almost as though He owed it to us. Like He HAD to leave heaven because you and I think we're so special that heaven wouldn't be heaven if we aren't there. Get over ourselves! He left heaven because He has a love that passes all understanding. He left

heaven because His intense love wants us there. It doesn't NEED us there. It WANTS us there. So He does all of this.

You and I are holy in God's eyes but only because Jesus' life and death that we were baptized into covers us. We are still struggling with the sinner that is inside of us, the sinner/saint that we are. We struggle daily. We at times don't live as though Jesus is worthy of our honor, our time, our effort or any of it. We fail our God. And our God still says "I was slain for you. I love you. My love is unfailing. It doesn't matter how often you put other things in front of Me, I put you in front of my own life. I put you in front of my own full use of my power and divinity. I set it aside so that I would come and live and die for YOU." If you and I ever stop being amazed at that truth and start taking that for granted, we need a brother or sister in Christ to set us straight.

This love our God has for us is what makes Him worthy of all the time and energy that we put into every area of our life to serve Him. Not just the churchy stuff. If you're at work, work at with all your heart knowing you're serving the Lord because He is worthy of doing your best. When you're interacting with your family members, work at it with all your heart knowing that in doing that you are serving the Lord, who is worthy of you being the best husband, wife, son, daughter, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, whatever the relationship is, that you can possibly be because He is worthy of you giving Him that honor and praise in that relationship. Whatever area of your life you find yourself in, these are the ways that you give honor and glory and praise and worship to God. It's not just here. Sure, you do it here. But it's in every other area of your life that you are saying to God, "You are worthy of this in my life because you were willing to die for me."

I know we fail our God in all those areas. But this is the confidence we have as Christians—our God never fails us. He looks us in the eyes and says "I love you. I died for you. And I forgive you for the times you haven't lived for me." That forgiveness is what moves us to WANT to do what He wants us to do, to give Him that honor and glory and praise, in every area of our life. When we have failed to say "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner" and not make excuses or point fingers or blame someone else or say "I'm doing it better than that person is," take your eyes off of all those people AND yourself and put them on the Lamb. Did you notice that's where every eye in heaven is focused? It's not looking around for our loved ones. Did you notice that in here? Every eye is on the Lamb in the center of the throne. So I suppose if we want to get ready for heaven, the best thing we can probably do is keep our eyes on the Lamb right now as we seek to live to His glory in our interactions with each other. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.