

Easter Sunday
March 31, 2013
Rev. 5:9-14

In Christ Jesus, the Resurrected and ever living Lord whom we praise and honor for our Salvation, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

We bring our Sunday morning study of the Revelation of our Triumphant Savior to an end this morning. And what an end! Our text this morning is a picture of heaven filled with angels and believers. And there in the middle of these ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands is the **LAMB!** The **LAMB** that had been slain but is now alive again: a clear symbolical picture of the crucified and resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.

But for what reason had all of these angels and people gathered? The Lamb had come to open the seals of the scroll which held the revelation of the future. In chapter 5:1-7 we read; **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. THEN I SAW A STRONG ANGEL PROCLAIMING WITH A LOUD VOICE, WHO IS WORTHY TO OPEN THE SCROLL AND TO LOOSE ITS SEALS? AND NO ONE IN HEAVEN OR ON THE EARTH OR UNDER THE EARTH WAS ABLE TO OPEN THE SCROLL, OR TO LOOK AT IT. SO I WEPT MUCH, BECAUSE NO ONE WAS FOUND WORTHY TO OPEN AND READ THE SCROLL, OR TO LOOK AT IT. BUT ONE OF THE ELDERS SAID TO ME, DO NOT WEEP. BEHOLD, THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, THE ROOT OF DAVID, HAS PREVAILED TO OPEN THE SCROLL AND LOOSE ITS SEALS. 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.**

Only Jesus, of all of creation, was worthy to take and open the scroll. This is another symbolic picture to show that the future of the world and of mankind is in His hands, is in His control. Jesus is at the Right Hand of God ruling all things in heaven and on earth. Now when the Lamb had taken the scroll the 24 elders, representing all believers in heaven broke out into a new song of praise; a new song of praise to the victorious Lamb.

In chapter 4 we read of these same believers singing a song of praise to God, a song of praise for His creation. We read in vs. 11 **YOU ARE WORTHY, O LORD, TO RECEIVE GLORY AND HONOR AND POWER; FOR YOU CREATED ALL THINGS, AND BY YOUR WILL THEY EXIST AND WERE CREATED.** But now the song of praise is not for creation, but for redemption, for the salvation of mankind. It is a **NEW SONG OF PRAISE** for all that the Lamb has done. And so on this glorious Easter morning we too are encouraged to join in and

SING A NEW SONG TO THE VICTORIOUS LAMB!

This song is actually two songs in one:

I: PRAISING JESUS FOR HIS WORK OF REDEMPTION.

II: PRAISING JESUS' EXALTATION.

We read the first song again: **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.**

Ordinarily one would not picture a lamb as being the type of animal that would symbolize a great and powerful victor. A lamb is meek, gentle, not ferocious or even able to defend himself. But it took a lamb-like Savior to be able not only to reveal the future, but to perform what was necessary to make it possible for mankind to have a blessed future. It took a lamb-like Savior to be led to the slaughter willingly without complaint; and a spotless Lamb of God to shed His precious blood as full payment for

man's sins and thereby gain the victory over sin, death and the devil. This Jesus, the Lamb of God, did for us. And because of His work of Redemption, heaven is filled with singing.

One can only imagine the angels of heaven and the saints in heaven singing praises to the resurrected Christ. The One who had died on Good Friday and was laid dead in the grave had now burst death's bonds, had conquered one of mankind's greatest enemies, death itself, by rising back to life.

Jesus alone is worthy to rule all history. He alone is worthy to take that scroll and open each seal at its appointed time because He alone redeemed mankind. By His shed blood He bought back all condemned sinners, you, me, the whole world---bought us back to God. Sinners from every tribe, tongue, people and nation have been redeemed. How did Luther put it in his meaning to the second article of the Apostles Creed? **HE HAS REDEEMED ME, A LOST AND CONDEMNED PERSON, PURCHASED AND WON ME FROM ALL SINS, FROM DEATH AND FROM THE POWER OF THE DEVIL, NOT WITH GOLD OR SILVER, BUT WITH HIS HOLY PRECIOUS BLOOD AND HIS INNOCENT SUFFERING AND DEATH.**

Because of this redemption we have been made Kings and Priests to our God and we will reign on this earth with Him. We as believers rule with Christ everyday. Whenever and wherever the message of Christ crucified is proclaimed, wherever and whenever sins are forgiven in Jesus' name, whenever and wherever unbelievers are converted by the power of the Gospel message, there Christians reign with Christ.

We mentioned that last Sunday in our Palm Sunday sermon. This ruling with Christ here on earth can only be seen by the child of God with eyes of faith. Everyday we hear of and see sinful acts---murder, immorality, pornography, greed, rape, robbery, oppression, violence, terrorism, lies, gossip and slander and it appears that Satan is in control of man and his future and rules over history. No one can stop death from taking another victim. And many of these sins we ashamedly see in ourselves.

But, in faith we see that it is the **LORD JESUS** who really rules all things and as God's forgiven children, as His redeemed, blood-bought saints, we rule with Him in His kingdom. Again Luther caught this beautifully in his meaning when he wrote: **HE DID THIS THAT I SHOULD BE HIS VERY OWN, LIVE UNDER HIM IN HIS KINGDOM, AND SERVE HIM IN ETERNAL RIGHTEOUSNESS, INNOCENCE AND JOY; JUST AS HE IS RISEN FROM DEATH, LIVES AND REIGNS IN ETERNITY.**

We have also been made **PRIESTS**. In the Old Testament the Israelites were not allowed to offer sacrifices or to approach God directly in His temple. They did this through intermediaries--the priests. But when Christ died the heavy curtain in the temple was torn in two; from top to bottom; for now the way to God is open to all believers. Forgiveness in Christ's name can be proclaimed by all of you as well as me, the proclamation of a resurrected Lord can be sung by all us.

As a congregation we forgive one another in Christ when a public sin is committed and the sinner repents. As individuals we announce to each other forgiveness in Christ whenever we sin against each other. What a great blessing we have in Christ. We have the power of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. We have been given this power to unlock and open the door of heaven to someone by announcing full and free forgiveness alone through Jesus Christ.

Suddenly John looks up and he now sees hundreds of thousands of angels surrounding the throne upon which the Lamb is seated. They break forth into another song praising the **EXALTED CHRIST: WORTHY IS THE LAMB WHO WAS SLAIN TO RECEIVE POWER AND RICHES AND WISDOM, AND STRENGTH AND HONOR AND GLORY AND BLESSING!...BLESSING AND HONOR AND GLORY AND POWER BE TO HIM WHO SITS ON THE THRONE, AND TO THE LAMB, FOREVER AND EVER!**

After His resurrection, Jesus declared **ALL POWER HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH.** At His Ascension Jesus took possession of all things, having successfully completed His mission of salvation here on earth.

We are here this morning to praise, honor and glorify our resurrected Savior; to join in singing this **NEW SONG** to the Victorious Lamb of God. For the Lord whom we saw die and taken down from the cross on Good Friday and laid into the tomb is now alive. The defeated, helpless looking Jesus hanging on the cross is now the victorious, conquering Christ who rules all things for our eternal welfare.

Christ's resurrection is no fantasy, no make believe story, no mere dream, it is an historic reality. The promise of our Resurrection rests on the surety of Christ's resurrection. We will rise from our

graves, just as surely as Jesus did from His. That is not a fairy tale. As one man wrote: **Now our graves have two doors, one marked “entrance” and the other “exit.”** We are Easter victors!

Thank God that we have a **NEW SONG** to sing.

A song of praise to the Savior who did shed His blood and did die for us to earn for us forgiveness of sins, life and salvation---

A song of praise to a Savior who did rise again back to life and now lives and rules throughout eternity-

A song of praise to the Savior-King who has made us Kings and Priests with Him forever---

A song of praise which will never grow old, which will never die out, which will never cease.

For even as we sing Christ's praises today, so shall we ever sing them throughout endless ages with all the saints around the throne of the Lamb who was slain and is **ALIVE AGAIN!**

BLESSING

AND HONOR

AND GLORY

AND POWER

BE TO HIM WHO SITS ON THE THRONE,

TO THE LAMB,

FOREVER AND EVER!

Amen!