

Advent Devotional December 17, 2021

Scripture

Revelation 5:6-14

6 Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. 8 When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 They sing a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; 10 you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth." 11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 singing with full voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" 13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" 14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshiped.

Devotional

The Rev. Dr. Mark Whitsel '04/'18

There may be no more worship-filled chapter in all of Scripture than Revelation 5. Here we have a picture of the heavenly throne room, filled with mysterious beings of every kind erupting into a chorus of praise. "They sing a new song," we're told, and it is a song of perfection and fulfillment. The Lamb of God is found worthy to receive power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing—a biblically perfect seven. The completeness is striking to us, but not nearly as arresting as it is for those present in this scene. They are compelled to fall down and worship.

In my home, I watch regularly as one member of the family makes a sacrifice for someone else. Often this act is recognized with a great deal of gratitude. However, from time to time someone overlooks the sacrifice that has been made, and the sacrificing party gets "all twisted up." It is never a pretty scene! Frustration and anger can ensue. Clearly, we recognize that there exists such beauty in a sacrificial gift rightly given *and* rightly received. They are two sides of the same God-honoring coin.

Jesus—his life, his death, his resurrection—is God's sacrificial gift to you and me: "for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe." The question in the prelude to Christmas is, "How do we receive that sacrificial gift?" Do we offer ourselves in praise? Do we attribute to Jesus the power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing he so rightly deserves? Do our daily lives reflect a gospel joy and gratitude? Or do they reflect something else?

Even as we celebrate Christ's entrance into the world, we know where this story leads. The Lamb's death and resurrection has reshaped the eternal order of things. In the presence of that truth, maybe the most honest thing we can do is fall to our knees and sing!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, today we give you thanks for your grace—a grace made so apparent in Jesus' resurrection from the dead. We thank you for his conquest of the grave and for the promise of life

eternal. Until that day of entering into the heavenly throne room, may we join our voices with all the faithful in praising you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.