



# Sermon Growth Guide

**June 13, 2021**

**Future Jesus - Jesus Is Worthy**

**Revelation 5:11-14**

**Key Verse:** Revelation 5:12 “In a loud voice, they were saying: ‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!’”

**Big Idea:** Because of his death, Jesus is worthy of all glory in heaven and earth!

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## Foundations

This is week two of our summer series, **Future Jesus**. Last week we focused on the reality that Jesus is, without a doubt, present in the future. And the knowledge that Jesus reigns victorious in the future should bring us peace and should inform the direction of our lives today.

This week, we are focused on the truth that Jesus is worthy of all glory, honor, power, praise and adoration. The scene in Revelation 5:11-14 shows thousands upon thousands of angels and heavenly beings worshipping Jesus. They lift their voices together and give Him honor.

It's interesting that these heavenly beings identify Jesus as “the Lamb, who was slain.” Jesus did and said a lot during His time on earth, and yet, He is worshipped here because of His death.

Jesus's death was a cosmic event, unmatched in the history of time. He gave His life away, and on that basis is now worthy to receive glory and honor forever and ever.

As you begin your group time, enter into a time of prayer, and join your voices together with those of the heavenly host. Thank God for Christ's death and resurrection and offer Him the praise He is due as you prepare for your conversation.

## Understanding God's Word

Reread verse 12. In your own words, why is Jesus' death such a big deal?

Read Philippians 2:5-1. What parallels do you notice in this passage and Revelation 5:11-14?

## Applying God's Word

Because of His death, Jesus is worthy of all glory in heaven and earth!

How should the knowledge that, one day, every knee will bow at Jesus' name shape your life now?

How might this victorious and glorified Christ become more of a part of your life today?

Is there anything that you need to submit to the Lord or change in order that you might better worship this Jesus?

## Witnessing God's Word

Identify one person you are likely to see this week who does not yet know that Jesus is worthy of glory, honor, praise and worship. Again, ask God for an open door to connect with this person, that one day soon they might see Jesus for who He is, and receive the love of Christ.

We are in week 2 of our *Future Jesus* series in the book of Revelation. As we peer into the future, what do we see of Jesus? This morning we gather in this place to worship the living God to give glory to Jesus and to proclaim his lordship over our lives and over the earth, are we on track? Does our worship last into the future? Is future Jesus worthy of honor and praise? In giving us a glimpse of future Jesus, I believe John is hoping to encourage us, to fill us with hope right now.

As we open the word in Revelation 5, let's prepare our hearts to receive the Word of God:

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

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!"

13 And I heard every creature in 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!"

14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Worship. At the end of all things ... we find all of creation (and by all, I mean all) worshipping future Jesus, the lamb who is on the throne.

### **Context**

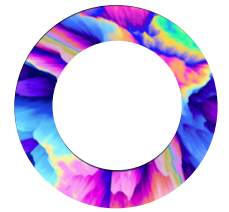
Revelation sits in the category of what is called "apocalyptic

literature"—future-oriented, vision-driven writing. In the Old Testament the book of Daniel sits in this category alongside Revelation in the New Testament. Last week we looked at some of the visions in Daniel that undergird what is happening in Revelation. Revelation draws heavily on the book of Daniel. Our passage today also has some anchor points in Daniel's vision. Daniel writes about one "like the son of man" who is "given authority, glory and sovereign power" (Daniel 7:14). Just like in our passage today.

In apocalyptic writing, something is "unveiled," a curtain is pulled back on our reality to see what is really behind what we see. "Apocalypse" literally means to "uncover," or to disclose something, to see clearly what is not clearly seen. Unlike the *Wizard of Oz* where the curtain is pulled back to reveal the not so "great and powerful wizard," in the book of Revelation, the curtain is pulled back to glimpse future Jesus—who is beyond what our imaginations can capture and is worthy, we read, of all honor and praise.

*So how does this glimpse into the throne room of God, this picture of Jesus as the lamb on the throne connect with our lives today? Why does this vision of future Jesus matter to us?* In John's vision, he is urged to "write down what he sees" and send it to the churches. There is in an urgency here. What John sees, we need. We need to see this picture today of all creation worshipping Jesus in final chapters of the story!

So, what do we see? Close your eyes and picture this: In the chapter just before this, John sets the



throne room scene. He writes about precious gems to illustrate what he sees. Jaspers and rubies and emeralds describe the throne and the one seated there. John writes that the colors of the rainbow encircle the throne, and a sea of crystal clear glass expands in front of the throne. Beauty and color and clarity. Can you see it? John stretches our imaginations to see the most beautiful setting we can imagine and then pushes us to see more.

Surrounding the throne are more thrones where the elders are seated—dressed in white with crowns of gold. There are different thoughts on who these thrones represent, but what seems most important is that they surround the one throne and they are focused on the one seated there. John describes flashes of lighting and peals of thunder coming from the throne—symbols of the power of the Creator, and the magnificent strength of all He has created.

And then in our scene in Chapter 5, a lamb has come to sit on the throne at the center. And not just any lamb, but the lamb who was slain. The crucified and resurrected Jesus, who is the worthy one. Around Him are angels—too many to count (thousands and thousands, myriads and myriads), giving glory to Jesus, the lamb. And not just angels, but every creature that was ever made—on earth, under the earth, in heaven, and under the sea—all giving their worship to God and to the Lamb.

As John describes the throne room scene, you get the sense that he doesn't quite have the language to describe what he is seeing, but he is

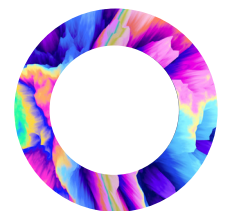
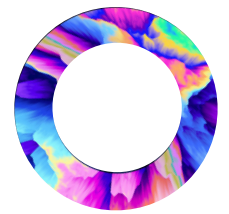
doing his best. What is most evident, most beautiful, most important in his vision is who is at the center. Everything is set up to be pointed toward the lamb. Jesus. And every creature is focused on giving their worship to the one who is worthy. Like our solar system is centered on the sun, and our planets rotate around a center point, so John paints a picture of the future of all creation circling a center point. At the end of all things and all time, there is a center to our existence. In John's vision, all of life looks to the lamb on the throne and, in worship, declares that the one seated there is worthy of all glory and praise. It is Jesus. Jesus. Only Jesus is strong enough to hold everything together. Only the crucified and risen Jesus is able to carry a broken and wounded world to its completion.

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”  
AND

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

What we see in John's vision is the future, final and forever worship of Jesus.

OK, let's take a breath. Remember how we've said Revelation is a hard book? Part of the reason it is hard is that we struggle to visualize what John is describing. If it was hard for him to articulate the vision he was given, it is arguably even harder for us to grasp it, to know what to do with it.



Here's where we need to push deeper and consider how this stunning portrait of Jesus in His future glory applies to us today. And to do that, we need to unpack this idea of Jesus' worthiness as the one, the only one, fit to sit on the throne of creation.

### **What Matters Most?**

You may not realize it, but that word "worthy" is connected to our contemporary word worship. Here's how. The old English word for worship is actually "worth-ship." It means to ascribe "worth" to something or someone, to declare with our words and actions that something has value. As human beings, we have been created to worship—we have been given the capacity to ascribe worth. Every day we are constantly ascribing worth to the things in our lives. Assigning worth is what orders our daily activity.

- Is it worth it to exercise?
- Is it worth it to go to work?
- Is it worth it to get enough sleep?
- Is it worth it to take a summer vacation?
- Is it worth my time to read this book or sign up for that class?
- Is it worth it to be a Broncos fan? Or an Avalanche fan? Oh, too soon?

The truth is that we will worship (or assign worth) to something. We can't not worship. The question is not "will we worship" but "who or what will we worship?" Who or what do you ascribe the most value or meaning to in your life today? It's not an easy question to grapple with, and it may even be an uncomfortable one. But when we gaze upon the beauty, glory and perfection of the Lamb on the throne in this passage,

we realize afresh that Jesus alone is worthy of our worship. The question in Revelation 5 is, "Is Jesus worthy?" And the answer is an unequivocal yes, as a constellation of beings in full view of His glory and perfection forever praise Him in response.

Those in Jesus' glorified presence naturally respond in wonder and worship. But for those of us down here, in our fallen and broken world, we choose to worship Him. In fact, throughout the Old and New Testaments, the Word of God directs us to fix our eyes on Jesus—to worship God and God alone.

King David, sings in Psalm 27:  
Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings,

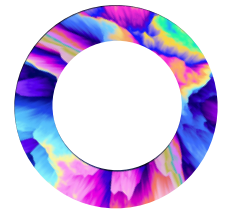
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;

worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness. -Psalm 29, A Psalm of David

As Joshua leads the people of Israel, he puts before them these words: "But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).

Every day is a decision for us: who or what is worthy of my worship? Who or what will I serve today? Seems straightforward when we talk about it here, but lots of things can distract or "choke" out our worship.



In the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4, Jesus explains about the seeds and the soil to His disciples. The seed (the Word of God) is scattered into different types of soil, the nature of the soil will determine the seed's fruitfulness.

I appreciate how Eugene Peterson paraphrases the seed that is scattered in the weeds: "The seed cast in the weeds represents the ones who hear the kingdom news but are overwhelmed with worries about all the things they have to do and all the things they want to get. The stress strangles what they heard, and nothing comes of it" (Mark 4:18-19, The Message)

Worry. Stress. Lists of things to get done. Lists of things to buy. There are always responsibilities and distractions competing for our heart's attention. Another New Testament story focuses us in on how even good things can distract us from the best thing. In the story of Mary and Martha receiving Jesus into their home, Martha is very busy with preparing the meal and being the hostess and she gets frustrated with her sister for not helping her but rather sitting at Jesus' feet. Jesus' words are clear to Martha: "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41).

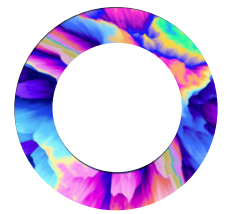
It's not that serving others is not important. Actually it is. But if the most important thing, sitting at the feet of Jesus, is not attended to, then

serving others becomes a chore, a competition, something that I get frustrated by because others are not helping me. Martha has chosen worry. Mary has chosen Jesus. For some strange reason, friends, I often choose worry. I would rather worry about things than hand them over to Jesus.

I've heard it said: look at your calendar or your bank statements, or your internet searches, and you will see what matters most to you. I suppose there is truth to that. Daily we are making decisions about who or what is most important.

A few years ago, our family was part of a camp where we were encouraged to do the "rocks in the jar activity." Decide as a family or as an individual—what are the most important rocks in your life together. Write on these big rocks the top three or four things—and put those in the jar first. The idea being that if we don't make a decision on what is truly worthy of our time and resources first, all the little things that pull at us will take over the jar. And there will be no space left for what really matters.

Worried, distracted, overwhelmed, stressed, urgent, anxious, unmet desires, fighting for breath, discouraged, frustrated. There are so many things clamoring for our attention, our time and our resources. Which is why the commands to set aside a day of worship to gather with the body of believers every week and to set aside a tithe of all you have earned are not merely suggestions. It's too hard to choose these things when they are listed among a myriad of options of



how to spend our time. They don't make earthly sense. So by the grace of God, God simply says let me get you started. It's like on a Monopoly board or in Candy Land game where it's clearly marked "start here." In Rev 5, the curtain is pulled back that we might see the true worth of Jesus and know without a doubt—here is your starting point.

*Write down what you see, John, and send it out!*

### **Choosing Jesus**

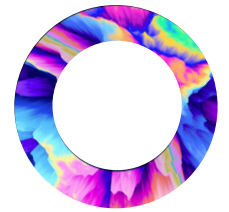
A few weeks ago I was on a global call with some of the leaders of our sister church in Egypt—in Heliopolis. And if you don't know, Egypt has been recently experiencing another wave of COVID which has been quite deadly. At our sister church, people have died from COVID. As we shared prayer requests, the main prayer requests from our Egyptian partners were that those who have lost loved ones would be comforted—and that Jesus' name would be glorified. That the work of Christ in the lives of those who don't know Him would be made clear. Their earnest prayer is that Egypt would come to know Jesus. There is an urgency to their prayers, a desperation for Jesus.

This past week, our kids and youth were up at Camp Elim and in Black Forest for perhaps the most important week of their summer. 135 kids in all. I had the privilege of spending Tuesday of this past week with our Elim kids and Thursday with our middle schoolers. It was great to see our kids having more fun than any kid should be allowed to have and studying Scripture together and praying together. They were drawing closer to Jesus together.

God has given all of us the awesome responsibility of raising these young ones in Christ and welcoming those who aren't yet here into the grip and grace of Jesus. Friends, there isn't a more worthy task we could take on. VBS is coming next month and we have now tipped 400 kids who have signed up. Each of these adventures we put together for our kids are centered around one thing—Jesus. In these experiences as a church we pour ourselves into every aspect, detail, talk, game and snack for the purpose of pointing to Jesus. We've asked our entire church to sign up to help with VBS believing that every station—from welcoming kids in the parking lot to getting them their name tag, to leading a small group discussion to waving goodbye at the end of the day helps them to see the love and kindness and worthiness of giving their lives to Jesus. Every volunteer spot becomes a signpost for Jesus. All you have to do is point in the right direction with everything you've got.

This generation of young people is carrying a lot. This past year was exceptionally tough. And, friends, if Jesus is not the answer, then let's not waste our time or theirs. What they are experiencing and carrying is way too heavy to give them a false sense of security, or something that can't actually help them. But if Jesus is the answer, if Jesus is worthy to hold the weight of the world, the weight of our broken and frantic lives and the weight of our kids' hearts and lives—then let's give it our all.

Is Jesus worthy? The picture John gives us in Revelation is clear. Everything rests on Jesus, the only



one who is worthy of all glory, honor, wisdom, power and might.

I'll close with this. At our house (especially in this past year), we've had more packages coming to our door than in a usual year. The doorbell rings, the dog goes crazy, and we know something has arrived outside our door. Someone runs to get the package and tries to figure out what is inside. But the kids know that they are not allowed to just open whatever comes to the door. They have to wait. Or ask permission. Normally either my name or Adam's name is on the package. And so, there is a common knowledge that unless your name is on that slip—you wait for that person to get home to open the package. Only the person identified has the authority to open the box or decide who gets to open the box. It's a game we've played all year: Who gets to open the box?

Revelation 5 begins with a box that is sealed up and needs to be opened. Actually it's a scroll, but you get the point. And it becomes clear in John's vision that there is only one who worthy to open it. What is contained in the scroll is unclear, but what is clear is that Jesus is the **ONLY ONE** worthy to open it.

Friends, there are many burdens in this world, boxes that are full of despair, destruction, death, injustice, sin and pain. Everywhere we look, damage is being done. Whole systems are broken and we treat one another with disdain and disrespect. Each day those boxes of burden pile up on our doorsteps and the doorsteps of our world. You've got burdens you carried in here this morning that are way too heavy for

you to carry. I don't know what's in them, but I know they are tearing at your heart.

From what John is showing us in this chapter, the address sticker on those boxes **DO NOT** have your name written on them. You have no business opening boxes that are addressed to someone else. Brothers and sisters, the name on the boxes of the burdens of this world is not yours—it's the name of Jesus. And only Jesus is worthy and able to break the seal and open those boxes.

You see it's not just any lamb that sits on the throne, it's the lamb who was slain. Jesus, the perfect sacrifice, obedient to the Father, took all the sin and hurt and injustice and slander and evil and death of the world and of you and me into His own body—and took it all to the cross. And in His death and resurrection, a cosmic event that changed the course of everything, all belongs to Him.

It starts right here, friends. Right now. In worship together. Here we give everything (and I mean everything) to Him. Your life is not yours to carry as you limp along trying to figure out how to live the best way you can.

Your life belongs to Jesus. In worship we offer it all to Him.

Is Jesus worthy?

He is.

And all the elders and angels and all of creation together for all time say "Amen."

