The Only One Worthy

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. We're going to the very back to Revelation chapter 5.

Revelation chapter 5. If any of you don't have your own Bible or have a Bible in your home and need one, you can come by our church office anytime.
We would be more than happy to give you a Bible. Or if there's anything else we can do to help you, if you have a question about how to understand the Bible, how to grow in God's Word, we would love to be able to help you with that.
We have a bookstore right out here in the fore that's got a number of great resources that would help you. And if finances are any issue for you in any way, just let us know. We'll be happy to give you anything that you need that would help you to know God's Word better.
A lot of times it feels like this world is in chaos. I think we could probably all agree on that. We are all aware that the news of death and disasters and disease and dreadful events permeate our lives.
[1:21] It's everywhere around us. If not in your own life, in your own home, certainly in the world around you. Revelation 5, I want to direct your attention here this morning for a couple of reasons.

One of which is because it's a picture of God on His throne. It's a reminder that even when the world seems like it is spinning out of control, it's actually not.
That God rules and God reigns. And the book of Revelation unfolds like this. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the book.
Chapter 2 and 3, we find seven letters written to seven historical churches. It gives them an idea of how the Lord views those churches.
Very instructive for us. But some of the churches aren't doing very well in Revelation 2 and 3. And it can be a little discouraging to think that even churches, places where the worship is supposed to be sincere and where the things of God are being taught and honored and revered, that even in some churches, that's not the case.
[2:38] And we see that in Revelation 2 and 3. And then chapter 6 through the next 12 chapters outlines a period of time known as the tribulation.

And it's really dark. It's really hard. And in between chapters 2 and 3 that deal with the churches and chapter 6 and following that deal with the tribulation, it's as if the Lord says to John, who is recording these events to write the book of Revelation, it's as if the Lord says to John that the state of the churches can be so discouraging and the events of the tribulation can be so hard to read that we just need a glimpse of what's going on in glory.
We just need to lift our eyes up for a minute and consider the greatness of this truth that God rules on His throne. And so that's what chapter 4 and chapter 5 is.
It's a picture of heaven, of the throne of God, where the Lord is worshipped as the God of salvation and the God of creation.
But when you come to chapter 5, there is a question that arises, and the question presents a problem.
[4:01] We're going to walk through this chapter together, and I'll give you a few headings if it's helpful for you to take notes, to kind of think through what is happening in Revelation 5.

So first, if you want to take a note, write down, it's a question of authority. There's a question of authority in verses 1 and 2. Look at it with me. Then I saw in the right hand of Him who was seated on the throne a scroll, written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.
Now some of the wording in Revelation 5 may seem a bit peculiar or strange. We'll walk through it together, and I'll see if I can help you to understand the details of what's happening.

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It's so important that we would grasp this. The picture we see is of a document. The document has writing on it, and it's sealed. It's guaranteed.
It's settled. It's complete. What is written on this document, this title deed to the earth, so to speak, is a settled thing. It's sealed, meaning it's kept private.
[5:09] No one who is unauthorized can see what is written on it. It's got writing on the front and the back, which would be unusual. That's not the way scrolls were typically handled, with writing on both sides.

This is God's decree for all of history. This is God's decree of how all things will come to an end, how all things will be for all eternity.
This is His decree of judgment and of salvation. Verse 2, This is a question of authority.
Who has the authority to open the scroll? Meaning, who has the power to call all things unto their appointed end?
Who's got the power? Who's got the authority? Who's got the dominion to be able to look at this world, how it is today, including how it's going to be at the end of all things?
[6:22] Who's got the power? Who has the authority to say, this is how things will be settled for all eternity? This is a question of authority. Who will really rule and reign for all time?

Because when you look at the world today, it could seem like things are just spinning wildly out of control. Even when you look at churches today, it can seem like that we've just lost our way.
You've got people who call themselves churches who don't preach the gospel. You've got people outside the church who want nothing to do with the things of God at all. And you've got all kinds of events happening in the world that it seems like, at least through one lens of looking at the world, that things have just completely drifted apart from the plan.
And the question of the angel in verse 2 is, is there anybody worthy, powerful enough, strong enough to really rule on the throne?
And at this point in Revelation 5, the only answer given is a deafening silence.
[7:46] At this point in Revelation 5, there's no one worthy enough, strong enough, and the question of authority is met with silence.

That leads to a second thing I want you to notice, and that is a cry of despair. You have a question of authority in verses 1 and 2. In verses 3 and 4, there's a cry of despair.
Look at verse 3. And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll to look into it. This is an exhaustive search.
The angel appears to be looking throughout everywhere. Is anyone strong enough, worthy enough, powerful enough, sovereign enough to truly rule and reign for all eternity?
Verse 4. I began to weep loudly. It's the words of John the apostle seeing the vision. I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.
[8:53] That English word translated as worthy in its original context carries the weight, the idea of weight. Who's got the weight? Who's got the substance?

Who's worthy enough to open the scroll to execute the decree for all eternity? And John says, I began to weep because there was no one found worthy to look into it.
And the weeping makes sense. Because if the world is as broken as it seems to us today, and if there is no one in heaven, and no one on earth, no angel or man strong enough, worthy enough to open the scroll, in other words, it's a picture of taking ownership over all things, then the only logical conclusion would be complete despair.
If you were to come to me today and say, Michael, our world's got a lot of problems. There are things happening all over the world.
There are wars, and there are threats of wars, and there are economic crises, and there are all kinds of issues going on. What are you going to do about it? And if you're looking at me to solve the world's problems, you will leave that conversation with one emotion.
[10:27] Despair. Because I can't do anything about it. I don't have the power. I don't have the authority. I don't have the ability. I don't have the access.

I don't have the knowledge. I can't solve the world's problems. I can't solve the problems of my own life, much less the problems of the entire world, much less the problems that exist that none of us even know about.
If you come talk to me and say, can you solve all this, you will walk away with complete despair, because if the world's hope rests on me, there is no hope at all.

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That's the emotion John feels. Here is this title deed to the earth, wrapped and sealed up, and only the one worthy, strong, powerful enough to own it all can do this, and there seems to be no one that can.
And it's a cry of despair in verse 4, as I begin to weep loudly, because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.
[11:34] But notice, thirdly, the cry of despair turns to an answer of hope in verse 5.

There's an answer of hope. Verse 5, and one of the elders said to me, weep no more. In this vision, John the apostle is interrupted.
He's told to stop crying. He's told to look at something. More precisely, he's told to look at someone. Verse 5, one of the elders said to me, weep no more.
There is one who truly rules and reigns.
And he's described in verse 5 as being from the tribe of Judah. That comes from the Old Testament, Genesis chapter 49, the prophecy about the coming Messiah.
[12:56] It says that he's of the root of David. That takes us back to the Old Testament, Isaiah chapter 11. All of this is prophetic speaking of Christ who was to come.

Remember, Jesus is a legal descendant of David through Joseph's line, according to Matthew 1, and a physical descendant through Mary's line, according to Luke 3, which is why Romans 1 verse 3 says of Christ, he descended from David according to the flesh.
In other words, the hope of Genesis, the law, the hope of Isaiah, the prophets, the hope of all of the Old Testament, fulfilled in Christ, born, lived a perfect life, died on the cross for us, the Bible says is raised back to life, ascends to heaven, where he is seated in heaven, and it is Christ who has the power to take the scroll and to open its seals.
Meaning, it is Christ alone who has the power and the authority to rule and to reign over all things.
Which leads us to a fourth thing, and it's the appearance of power.
We see the true appearance of power. Verse 6 and 7. Look at verse 6 with me. In between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a lamb.
[14:48] Now, this is interesting because if you look back at what we just read in verse 5, it describes Christ as the lion of the tribe of Judah.

So, John in heaven, in the vision of heaven, is looking for a lion, and he finds a lamb. And if you're kind of new to the Bible, you may not understand, but I want to help you understand why that's so important.
Because the picture of the lamb is the picture of sacrifice. In the Old Testament, you would have lambs that were sacrificed. And it was a picture, it was a foreshadowing of a perfect sacrifice that would be required for our sin to be forgiven.
The lamb was a shadow. Christ was the substance. His sacrifice. His death. His death. Is what everything else was pointing to.
This picture of a lamb takes us back to Israel's Passover lamb. It takes us back to the beginning of the Gospels when Jesus begins his public ministry.
[16:02] And a man named John the Baptist, the Bible tells us, sees Jesus and points to him and says, behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And now, in Revelation 5, John is directed to look, and he's told that the lion of Judah, the root of David, is the one who has the power.
And he looks for the lion, verse 6, and he sees the lamb. Now, I want you to notice a few things about the lamb that he sees. This picture of Christ.
I'll show you five things. Number one, the lamb is standing. That's what verse 6 says. I saw a lamb standing. But notice a second description of the lamb.
As though it had been slain. You have a lamb that has been slain, yet standing.
[17:07] How can that be? And this is a most unusual image. A lamb that has been slaughtered, yet standing.

And the answer, of course, is because the lamb, Jesus Christ, was slain for us on the cross. But on that first resurrection Sunday, he was raised back to life.
That's how you have a lamb standing. Through resurrection. Christ on the cross, as the perfect, spotless, sinless son of God, the lamb of God, goes to the cross, dies in our place.
Christ is described as the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Just as in the Old Testament, you would take that lamb and slaughter it as a sacrifice.

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So Christ was sacrificed for us on the cross. But the lamb that was slain today is standing because he has been raised to life.
[18:06] This makes all the difference in the world. If Christ is crucified on the cross for us and slain, but does not rise again, we have no hope.

He may be kind. He may be benevolent. He may have meant well. But if Christ died and stays in the tomb while he may have been a benevolent person, that's no savior that's dead in a tomb.
If he is slain and only slain, then all of this is a giant charade.
All of it. If we serve a slain savior who stayed dead, we have no savior.
But I want you to grasp the picture in heaven. There is a lamb as though it had been slain, but the lamb is standing because the lamb was raised back to life.
[19:17] This is the gospel story. Christ slain for us, laid in the tomb, raised back to life, slain yet standing, slaughtered yet alive.

This is the hope we have as Christians. Raised to life, the tomb is empty, the lamb slain yet standing because he is the one who died yet lives.
So the picture of Christ is he's standing first, second, slain. Third, let me help you with some of the symbolism.
It says he has seven horns. And you may know seven is the number of totality in the Bible or the number of perfection. Horns is a symbol of power.
The picture here is that Christ has all power. It's what we would call in theology, he has omnipotence. All the power. Fourth, it says he has seven eyes.
[20:20] Again, seven the number of totality and perfection. Eyes referring to sight and knowledge.
So Christ is the lamb slain for us, yet standing through resurrection with perfect power, omnipotence, perfect knowledge.

It's what we would call omniscience. And then it says seven spirits, meaning he's everywhere. Totality, meaning omnipresence.
So what's the picture of Christ here in Revelation 5? He is slain for us. That's the cross. He is standing. That's the empty tomb. That's the resurrection.
He has perfect power, omnipotence. Perfect knowledge, omniscience. And fills the entire universe. That's omnipresence.
We started with a question of authority. Who's got the power? Who's got the dominion? Who's got the strength to rule and reign over all things? And the answer from Scripture in Revelation 5 is there is one who rules and reigns.
[21:28] He is the Lord Jesus Christ who died for us, was raised back to life, has perfect knowledge, perfect power. His presence fills everywhere. There is one who is worthy of it all.

And his name is the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the hope of the gospel. Now, if Christ is worthy of it all, and if Christ was sacrificed for sin, and if it's true that one day every one of us will stand before him, then you better be ready.
Acts 17.31 says, He has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed.
And of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. Meaning, God the Father has fixed a day where all of us are going to be.
All of us will stand before the judge, and that judge is the Lord Jesus Christ. If Christ stayed in the tomb, two things are true. Christians have no hope.
[22:53] Unbelievers have nothing to fear. If Christ is in the tomb, if he did not rise again, then we can call ourselves whatever we want. We can sing whatever songs we want.

We can read whatever book we want. We can preach whatever we want. But if Christ is in the tomb, Christians have no hope. And if Christ is in the tomb, unbelievers have nothing to worry about standing before God, a judge who is dead in a tomb somewhere.
However, if the tomb is empty, then those two realities flip upside down.
And if the tomb is empty, now Christians have all hope. And unbelievers have much to dread.
And Acts 17 says that the assurance, that's the words used in verse 31, the assurance that a day of judgment is coming is that God raised Jesus from the dead.
[24:02] The tomb is empty, which means, Christian, you've got nothing to fear. But in love and with grace, I do, I must tell you, unbeliever, that the empty tomb guarantees that you will stand before the Lord one day.

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And there is nothing more frightening than having heard the message of salvation, listened to it, considered it, rejected it, walked away from it.
And one day appear face to face before the very one who died as a sacrifice for sin.
There's a question of authority, who's got the power? There's a cry of despair because no one was found worthy. There is an answer of hope because Christ is worthy.
There is the appearance of true power, the Lord Jesus Christ, slain for us yet standing, the Lamb who died but lives, crucified and yet raised to life.
[25:39] And then in verses 8 to 14 in Revelation 5, we see a fifth thing, and that's the response of worship. And I want to show you just briefly, there's three pictures of worship that are described for us here in verses 8 to 14.

First is what we'll call the song of the redeemed. The song of the redeemed, verse 8. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp.
That's important because a harp is an instrument of peace. It's this picture of total peace in heaven.
And golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.
And they, verse 9, and they sang a new song. You wonder, why does the church gather to sing? Why do we sing all the time? Here's why. That's what the people of God do.
Not just on earth, in heaven. The worship of God leads us to be a singing people. One of the things that happens, and for many, this is a total transformation that we go from people who find it awkward to sing to finding joy in singing, not because our voices are beautiful, but because the gospel is beautiful.
[26:59] Because he's worthy of it all. And just the very reality of the gift of God's people singing together on earth is just a picture, just a glimpse of what goes on in heaven.

It says they sing a new song. It's a new song because there's a new understanding of the power of Christ and the sovereignty of Christ. And so this new song erupts.
Keep looking at verse 9. Here's what they're singing. He was slain.
What are we talking about? We're talking about the cross. We're talking about crucifixion. We're talking about when Jesus goes to the cross and dies for us. But remember, he wasn't just slain.
In Revelation 5, he's standing. Never forget that. A slain sacrifice that's not standing cannot save.
[28:10] But Christ, as our perfect sacrifice, slain in heaven, standing, because the one who died for us was raised back to life.

Let me take you just a little bit behind the scenes here of the language. It says, by your blood, you ransomed a people for God. The Bible is not originally written in English.
It's written in other language translated into English for us. The original word is agorazo. It means to buy, to redeem. This is what Christ has done for us.
He's redeemed us. This is why we sing. This is why we worship. This is why we gather each Lord's Day. This is why Christians love to be together in the church.
This is why we don't think of church as something we have to do or are obligated to do. This is the joy of our lives because Christ has redeemed us.
[29:09] He's transformed us. He's changed us. And the language here in Revelation 5 is he has bought us, redeemed us.

Mark chapter 10, verse 45 says, Even the Son of Man, speaking of Jesus, came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
Two words used here, one redeemed, one ransomed. Both meaning Christ bought our salvation. He paid for it all.
So listen closely. Jesus is being praised in heaven. Not, not just because he was crucified. Countless people were crucified by the Romans. He's being praised and glorified in heaven, not, not just because he suffered.
[30:20] Every person who was crucified suffered. Christ is glorified and praised in heaven because he died for us and in his death accomplished our salvation and was raised back to life.

So the lamb that was slain is today the lamb standing. That's why he's glorified in heaven. And look at the rest of the song of the redeemed here.
It says that he has purchased this salvation. He has paid his life for the salvation of people.
And the people sing, worthy are you to take the scroll and open its seals. You were slain and by your blood you ransomed the people for God. Look at this. From every tribe, that means different

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families.
From every language, that's different speaking groups. From every people, that's groups of humanity. From every nation, that's political groups.
[31:33] So in heaven, you're going to have people from all these backgrounds, every nation, every tribe, every people, every tongue, all of them worshiping through one singular lens.

And that is a central view of Christ, the lamb who was slain and today standing. The worship of heaven is exclusively Christ-centered.
And this is why, whether you go to this church, or maybe you live somewhere else and go to another church, or maybe you don't go to any church and you're looking for a church, this is why you must find a church that the worship of the people is exclusively Christ-centered, because that's the worship of heaven.
That's why you preach about Christ, sing about Christ, teach about Christ, and try to direct everyone's attention not to a man, not to a group of people on a platform, but point people to one thing, the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who is the way and the truth and the life.
And apart from him, no one can know the Father. Salvation is exclusively through Christ. And the worship of the church should be singularly focused on Christ.
[33:13] And that's the song of the redeemed. Verse 10 adds, you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.

Then there's a second song. Not just the song of the redeemed. Verse 11 and 12 is the song of the angels. Look at it, verse 11. And 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.
Here's what's happening, friends. The camera pulls back now. The frame widens. We get a bigger glimpse of what's going on. Verse 12. They were 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.
Do you notice that this picture of the lamb slain keeps recurring? This is why. It's because Christ died for us. But remember, if the lamb stays slain, there's no salvation.
It's the lamb who was slain, glorified, magnified forever because he has been raised back to life. There's the song of the redeemed.
[34:26] There's the song of the angels. Then in verse 13, there's one more song. We'll call it the song of all creation. Verse 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.
In other words, there is no end to his throne. This is the great news of the gospel, that Christ died for us, was laid in the tomb, was raised back to life for us, and as long as Christ lives, he's on his throne.
And as long as he's on his throne, his people are welcomed in heaven. So here becomes the question for us. How long will Christ be on his throne? Everything hinges on that. How long is Christ on his throne?
Because as long as he's on his throne, we're safe. And the answer of heaven is that he is on his throne and he rules and he reigns.
[35:35] Here's the words in verse 13. Forever and ever. That's forever. Forever. So Christ slain for us on the cross, standing through resurrection, ruling today, rules forever and forever, which again takes us back to the two things I mentioned a moment ago.

If Christ is resurrected, then Christians have nothing to fear. And unbelievers have everything to dread.
So if you're an unbeliever, and you think to yourself, I think I may be in trouble. But maybe it's going to work out for me because even though Christ was resurrected, maybe his rule will come to an end.
Here's the testimony of the very word of God. His reign is forever and ever. It has no end, which takes us back to the same twin truths.
Those who belong to Christ have nothing to fear forever and forever. And those who reject the gospel have no hope forever and ever. It's a song of the redeemed.
[36:54] It's a song of the angels. It's a song of creation. What is heaven's response? We see it in verse 14. And the four living creatures said, Amen.

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And the elders fell down and they worshiped. This is a picture of heaven. Christ, the Lamb slain, yet standing.
Slaughtered, yet living. crucified, yet raised to life. Put in a tomb.
And the tomb is empty. So can I just talk heart to heart? We've got hundreds of you in this room this morning.
And as best I can, let me just talk to you one-on-one for just a brief second. Do you know for sure? When you take your last breath, you will be safe.
[38:16] You might be tempted to say, well, how could anybody know that? Here's how you can know. Because there is a man named Jesus who was a lamb slain, who conquered death, was raised back to life.

And he said of his people that because he lives, we live. And he rules in the testimony of Scripture as he reigns forever and forever.
Which means if you belong to Christ, you're safe forever and forever. You can know that. You can rest in that.
And do you notice in the praise and the worship of heaven? This is not man-centered. No one's impressed with each other. Nobody's talking about how smart somebody else was.
Or how gifted somebody else was. Or how much influence somebody else had. Or how large some church was. Or how much money somebody else had. Or how powerful some other man was.
[39:20] The worship of heaven is all about Christ. The only way to know that you belong to God is to be certain you belong to Christ.

Saved by grace through faith. Not of your works. Not of yourself. All of grace. Do you know?
Do you know? That you are safe forever and forever. If your answer is yes, then live your life as though Christ is worthy of it all.
Because he is. Hold nothing back. Worship with your whole heart. Love with your whole heart. Serve people.
Be generous. Live your life as an act of response. That Christ, who died for you, was raised for you, is worthy of your all.
[40:29] And my friends, if your answer is no, you're not certain that you're safe forever. Can I tell you the greatest news I could possibly utter from my lips?

Salvation is available today. This day. Right now. This moment. Your salvation will not come to you because of what you've done.
You won't be saved because of how many times you went to church. You won't be saved because of how much money you gave away. You won't be saved because of how much business acumen you had. Salvation is only by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.
And if this day you would, in your heart, confess that you know that you're a sinner. You know that you've done wrong. And let's just be honest for a moment with each other.
Can't we all say we know we've done wrong? There's nobody among us who would say otherwise. I know my heart too well.
[41:43] You know yours too well. You know you've done wrong. Here's the good news. Today, if you would call upon the name of the Lord.

Today, if you would declare in your heart that you know that you've sinned, you believe that Christ died and believe that he rose again and you ask him to forgive you, the Bible says he is a savior for all who believe in him.
Would you even this day cry out to the Lord Jesus and in the most honest way you can say, God, I'm a sinner.
I know that. But I'm trusting in Jesus. I believe in what he did. And I want to be around the throne. He's been safe forever. Giving worship to the one who was slain and yet stands because he died and yet lives.
[43:11] if we can help you with that, that's why we're here. That's why our church exists. And if you would, you can take that connection card that's in your bulletin there, tear that card out.

Whether you're a member, a guest, you're in church every Sunday, maybe it's been 15 years since you've been in church, whatever it may be, you just let us know today I've asked Christ to be my Savior.
Or I have a question of how to know Christ. Or I'm a believer, but I'm stuck. I need help learning how to grow. Or I just need this church to pray for me.

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Here's my needs. You just let us know what your needs are, how we can help you, how we can pray for you, how we can serve you. And when you exit here in just one minute, would you take that card with your need, with your response, and you just drop it in one of those giving boxes.
If you're a guest of ours, don't you dare put money in there. We do not want your money today. You keep all of your money. We would love, though, to be able to know how we can serve you, how we can pray for you, and more than anything else, how we can help you know Jesus Christ better and better.
[44:26] The one who was slain, today stands, died, is living, crucified, but raised to life, and is worthy of it all. Amen? Lord, we thank you today for your word.

We thank you today for the promise of heaven, the hope that is ours because of the work of your son. Lord, we pray that as we leave today, we would not reject the forgiveness offered to us through the Lord Jesus Christ.
It's in his name that we pray. Amen. Love you, church family. Have a great resurrection day. God bless you. You're dismissed. God bless you.
God bless you. God bless you.
God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. fathers chaff't into you.

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