

Revelation 5 – the Big Event

Coming off the night of the auction, do you ever get the feeling that things around here can be fairly “event driven”? Expansion campaigns, Lenten meals, cantatas, zone events, and let alone the school events – there’s a lot of those going on! But you know what? That’s a good thing.

There is a beauty in a still and calm church. But is there also not something to be said about the body of Christ engaged and active? Helping the needy, teaching the scriptures, and having fellowship? The Church is event driven.

Each Sunday is the resurrection, the day of the Lord. The Church calendar orders our life, whether you know it or not, advent expectation, Christmas celebrate a promise fulfilled. Lent, penitence, Easter, Celebration of forgiveness and life. Summer, Pentecost, a time to be about the work of the Great Commission.

And this isn’t to say we should not be a people who recognize the Lord’s mercys which are new every morning. It’s not to say each day is not the day of repentance and salvation. But it is to say from the Old Testament feasts to the new, there are events for God’s people to be about.

We see one of those events in Revelation 5 today. Revelation 5 speaks of a grand event where two things happen, there is an exhibition of strength and the coronation of a King. There is a crowd, and there is applause. It doesn’t seem terribly quiet, if I can put it that way.

I mentioned it will have an exhibition of strength, that’s from the beginning of the chapter: “ And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” 3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, 4 and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or

to look into it. 5 And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain.”

Will this Lamb, who was slain (we know who that is) will he be able to open it? Yes! And the people of God rejoice! Out of the seals of the scroll come the judgments upon the sinful world (chapter 6), and out of the world then, come (chapter 7) those out of the great tribulation who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb and join the event – the festival.

That’s the exhibition of strength: the Lamb, Jesus who breaks the seal.

Then there is a coronation, this is our text today, the whole host, everyone at the event bows before the Lamb, the King, and sing his praises as the One who is strong enough to break the seal, to oversee the judgments on the world (a Lutheran might call that “law”), and they sing his praises because his blood “ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation...” We would call that Good News, Gospel.

They sing praises to this King. And while we, stick in the muds, may not like “new songs” all the time, this one seems pretty good doesn’t it?

The angels shout, “worthy is the lamb,” and the whole creation, every creature, gives their praise – some willingly? Some by force? And the elders and seraphim bow down in praise before this King, this Lamb, at the right hand of the Father.

What an event!

And I don't know about you but when we have an event here there's usually a couple considerations for a family or an individual. First, "Do I want to go?" Second, "do I *have* to go?" But none of us would ever ask that with any of our events would we!? Surely not!

For this event in Revelation 5, those questions might seem a little redundant because as we read, everyone and I mean everyone will see it. Which means, yes, you do have to go to this event. Everything in heaven and earth and under the earth, figurative for even the spirits in prison, and the demons too will see this event. You have to go whether you want to or not.

But don't you also see that whether you *want* to go or not still makes a huge difference?

God's Word promises that every knee shall bow and tongue confess that Jesus, the lamb, is Lord, is King. But does it not make a huge difference whether the knees and tongues bow and confess freely out of joy, or by force?

And do you wonder then why at this event here, on Sundays, we bow our heads, bow our knees, as we are able, and confess those creeds? This event, each Sunday, is a little celebration, and not wholly disconnected from the celebration in heaven. And so the psalmist says "I'd rather be a doorkeeper here than dwell in the tents of the wicked." And "I long to go joyfully to the house of the Lord!"

And we always go joyfully too don't we? When that alarm goes off, when the kids are fussing?

That's right when it comes to the coronation of a King, we might ask – "why wouldn't everyone want to be there?" But then why do we struggle sometimes to want to do our prayers at night...

Consider a coronation of a king down here, or a presidential swearing in. Not everybody is there... why not? Because they don't have the means to get there. Because they don't care about

politics and avoid it. Because they have more important things to do. Or maybe because they voted for the other candidate, and the one who won isn't the right one for the job! And he doesn't have my best interests in mind! And can't get the job done!

And now we can look in the mirror and maybe confess that we don't on our own, have the means to get to the heavenly coronation. There are times when we take God's Word lightly, "oh I don't care about all that minutia!" There are times we have "more important things" to do than that devotion or those prayers or that service. There are times of doubt and fear and anger where we ask "Do you have my best interests in mind, Jesus? Because I am having a hard time seeing it?" Or "Can you really raise the dead? That seems pretty fairy tale to me? I don't know if anyone can get that job done!"

And now we have reached the point in the sermon where the preacher has maybe made you feel bad because maybe our love for the King isn't as great as it should be, and "maybe if I really shaped-up and did more of this and more of that I'd feel better about it...."

But stop there. Are you the one who can break the seals? Are you the One who was slain but is alive? Are you the One who has ransomed people for God the whole world over? Are you the One with perfect love, or is ours a bit fleeting?

And so why would we think the solution to our problems, why would you think the assurance of where we will be at this event – bending willingly or by force, why would you think the assurance of that would be in yourself?

Jesus, the Lamb, in that event of the cross and empty tomb, where he puts aside his "best interests" to die for you, He has shown perfect love to you. He has made you a part of the royal priesthood that has access to God, he did this in that same event which tore the curtain of the

temple. He has done this in placing his name on you in baptism, by giving you the Holy Spirit through word, and water. He has poured his blood out for you to receive. He is your invitation, he is your RSVP, he is your perfect love, he is the one strong enough to see you there. And he is faithful to do it.

So make no mistake, brothers and sisters, you *have* to be there.

But make no mistake, you will be there in joy! You have seen (and will see even more on that day) the goodness of our King. Who else would we serve? Who else would we praise above him? Armies run headlong to injury and terror and death because of earthly kings, why should we not go boldly forth knowing that our King can raise the dead!

So join now, join now in the festal shout, in the confession of the Name, it is good, it is right, it is true. Jesus will be forever praised, and God be praised, we will do so by his grace. Amen.