

**<sup>11</sup> Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. <sup>12</sup> In a loud voice they sang:**

**“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength  
and honor and glory and praise!”**

**<sup>13</sup> Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:**

**“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
be praise and honor and glory and power,  
for ever and ever!”**

**<sup>14</sup> The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.**

I haven't had the chance to visit it yet, but I'd like to: The Home of the 12<sup>th</sup> man. I know that some of you have been there, so you know what I'm talking about. If you don't: The Home of the 12<sup>th</sup> man is Kyle Field in College Station, TX, where the Texas A&M football team plays.

I've heard seeing a game there is quite the experience. It's the fourth largest stadium in the U.S., so most games have 100,000 fans in the seats. And Aggie fans are special. They'll stay on their feet for the whole game. They make so much noise that the opposing team can't even hear the plays being called out...almost as if they were the 12<sup>th</sup> man on the field helping with the win. Can you imagine how that stadium must explode with excitement when they score a game-winning touch-down? Maybe you don't have to imagine – maybe you've experienced it!

We have an even more wonderful experience in store for us this morning. In Revelation 5, God brings John up to his heavenly throne room, and we get to go with this morning. And the scene is almost like a stadium. Except instead of 100,000 fans, there are ten thousand times ten thousand saints and angels. They're gathered not around a football field to watch a game, but around the Lamb who was slain to worship him. They're exploding with excitement over the victory that he won for us.

It's good to sit in on this heavenly worship service this morning. Through faith in Jesus, it's the worship we'll experience in living color one day when he brings us to heaven. But there are some important things we can learn from it for our lives of worship already now. The Lamb is Worthy of Your Worship.

We're jumping into the middle of John's vision of heaven here. So let me describe for you what John has already seen: The first thing he noticed was God himself, in the center of it all, seated on his throne. Something like a rainbow made of emerald over him, and a sea of crystal clear glass at his feet.

Then, John noticed four **living creatures** around the throne. These appear to be angels – they have six wings, like the angels Isaiah saw when he got a glimpse of God's throne room. But each one had a different appearance – one looked like a lion, another an ox, another an eagle, one

a human. Seems like God was showing John his providence over all creation – whether bird or beast or man, its all under God’s angelic care.

Then, in a circle around that, John sees 24 **elders**, seated on thrones. In the bible, 12 is the number of God’s people. There were 12 tribes in Israel. There were 12 disciples Jesus chose. The 24 elders in John’s vision seem to represent *all* God’s people – 12 plus 12 – believers before Jesus’ coming, and after.

Then, all of a sudden, a Lamb appears at the center of the throne. A Lamb who looked as if he had been slain, but very much alive. I don’t have to explain who that is, do I? That’s Jesus. The Lamb of God slain to pay for the sins of the world, now risen, victorious over sin and death.

That’s where our text begins – and so does the worship. Suddenly John hears the voice of – then sees – angels **encircling the throne and the living creatures and the elders. Thousands of thousands** of them, **ten thousand times ten thousand**. If you’re trying to do the math: That’s 100 million. They all started singing in a loud voice. You think Kyle field gets loud? Think of what a choir of millions of angels singing at the top of their lungs must sound like!

And here’s what they were singing: **Worthy is the Lamb!** This, by the way, is worship. It’s ascribing worth to Jesus; acknowledging his value, his weightiness, his all-importance. Here, the angels are worshiping with words; we do the same on Sunday morning, don’t we? We hear and proclaim who Jesus is and the great things he’s done – why there’s nothing worth more than Jesus.

But we also worship with our lives. The angels sing, **Worthy is the Lamb to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!**” Jesus is God; all power and wisdom and wealth are already his. But the angel said he’s worthy to receive those things, too. From whom? From us! We worship when we use whatever power or wealth or wisdom he’s given us to serve him. We acknowledge Jesus’ great worth by living our whole life to his **glory and honor and praise**.

Apparently, all creation agrees: Jesus is worthy of that. John writes: **Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”** So do the living creatures: They respond with an, **“Amen!”** So do the elders; John says they **fell down and worshiped** the Lamb.

Clearly, this worship scene in heaven shows Jesus is worthy of our worship! But you can’t help but do some comparing when you see it, can you? Between the worship in heaven and the worship that goes on here below.

First, our worship in church. There, every angel is in attendance – none would miss the opportunity! Here? Maybe half come. Maybe. We go if we can. What does that tell us about how much Jesus is worth to us? There, every heart is filled with wonder and awe for the Lamb. Here? Our hearts in worship are often cold and apathetic. There, all eyes are on Jesus, everyone’s attention fixed on him! Here? We can’t even give Jesus an hour of full attention without our mind wandering to something else. What does that say about how much Jesus is worth to us?

And that’s just in here. What about our lives? In heaven, Jesus is at the center of it all. Is he front and center in your life? The thought you wake up with and fall asleep to, where your heart drifts during the day? Or is he sometimes an afterthought? He is worthy to be worshipped with our wealth and wisdom and strength, but isn’t our first priority often how we can use those things for us – our benefit? What’s at the center of our lives is so often...well, us.

Jesus is worthy of our worship. But our worship often shows how little he’s worth to us. And that means we’re not worthy – of him, or of entering into the heaven John describes here.

But look again at the angel's song. There are three words in their worship that tell us what, above all else, makes Jesus worthy: "**Who was slain.**" This Lamb was slain. Earlier in this chapter, the elders and four creatures sang more about that: "*You are worthy,*" they sang, "*because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased people for God.*"

Our salvation doesn't depend on our worship - how much Jesus is worth to us. It depends on how much we were worth to Jesus. How much were you worth to him? So much that he was slain for you. So much that he shed his blood on the cross under the punishment for your sins to save you from sin and death and hell. That's how much he loves you. That was the price he paid just so you could be his own, God's forgiven and dearly loved child.

Look again at the list of things Jesus is worthy to receive: **Power, wealth, strength, honor, praise.** It's not just what he deserves from us as our God - it's what he set aside in love for us to save us. All power is his, but he set it aside to become one of us to redeem us. All wealth belongs to him, but he made himself poor in life and death so that you could become rich with forgiveness and eternal life. All strength is his, but instead of using it to save himself, he died in weakness to save you. He exchanged the honor and praise of angels for the shame and insults on the cross...for you.

He **was slain**, for you. But now he is as John saw him - risen from death and reigning in heaven. The fact that he lives means that the price he paid for you was sufficient. Your sins are paid for and forgiven. He has saved you from sin, death, hell. Through faith, he has made you worthy of heaven.

Can you respond to that in any other way than with the song of the angels? Yes, **worthy is the Lamb who was slain** for me! He is certainly worthy of our worship.

But know why he wants it. It isn't because he needs it. He needs nothing from us! It isn't because he is an egotistical god who for selfish reasons craves our attention and adoration. No, he wants our worship because he loves us. Because living life worshiping him is truly what's best for us.

I don't usually quote atheists in sermons. But an atheist named David Foster Wallace stumbled on the truth, and it fits well here. He said that in the day to day trenches of life, there is no such thing as an atheist. We all worship something. The problem, he said, is if we worship something other than a god - and we would say *the* God - it will eat you alive. If you worship money and things, you'll never have enough. If you worship beauty, physical appearance, you'll always feel ugly and be devastated when you age. If you worship a child or spouse, you'll be devastated when they don't return your love.

In other words: Nothing else in this world is worthy of your worship. If you make it the center of your life, it will leave you empty and ultimately disappoint you. But not the Lamb who was slain for you! He doesn't eat you alive...he gave his life to save yours! He doesn't leave you empty - he fills you with joy and peace. He doesn't disappoint - his love for you never fails and his promises are always faithful. Living life worshiping him is the best and richest way to live.

That's what makes our worship here on Sundays so important. The most important thing that happens here is not what we do for God. It's what God does for us. In the gospel, God holds before your eyes the Lamb who was slain for you and now lives for you. And God the Holy Spirit impresses on your heart once again Jesus' priceless worth, his infinite value - the beauty of who he is and what his love does for you. He keeps Jesus as the center of your life. So that as you head back into your callings for another week, it's not empty life lived for you, not just daily grind, but worship - whatever task is placed before you, it's an opportunity to honor and glorify the Lamb who was slain for you.

What a privilege! When we worship, here and in our callings, we're joining in that endless worship that John describes in heaven. When we sing his praises, we're joining our voices with

those of millions of angels singing before the throne. Can you picture it – we sing a hymn here below, and heaven responds to our praise with a loud, “**Amen!**”

“Because I live,” Jesus once told his disciples, “you also will live.” And Revelation 5 makes it clear what kind of life Jesus won for us by dying and rising again: It’s life lived worshipping him. God grant us this life in greater measure – until we worship him with the saints and angels above. Amen.