

A Vision of the Lamb, Part 1

Revelation 5:1-4

Pastor Bill Farrow

5 *And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ² Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.*

⁴ So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

- Verse 2,
- "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?'"
 - A strong angel with a loud voice.
 - The word "proclaiming" has inherent in it speaking loudly, and when you add loud to loud, you get very loud.
 - This strong angel is shouting, you know why?
 - Because he wants his voice to penetrate every corner of the universe.
- And he is asking, "Who is worthy to come?"
 - Who has the innate, inherent worthiness of character, the virtue?
 - Who is qualified to break the seals?
 - Who is the rightful heir?
 - To whom belongs the inheritance?"
- But there's more than that. The end of verse 3 says he not only has to be worthy, he has to be able. "Who is able? Who can throw out Satan? Who can wipe out demon power? Who can destroy sinners? Who can obliterate sin? Who can reverse the curse, the curse on animals, the curse on plants, the curse even on the human body and mind? Who can do it? Who has the power and who has the privilege?"
- By the way, a strong angel...doesn't tell us who he is, but I suggest to you a little hint, the name Gabriel means "strength of

God." Daniel 8:16 you might compare. Maybe it's Gabriel. And the cry echoes through the whole universe, yet no man moves, no man stirs, no angel stirs, no demon moves because none of them have the right to the throne.

- Who is worthy? Who has the character? Who has the heritage? Who is the divine progeny, if you will, who has a right to possess it? And who has the ability and who has the power and who has the might to overthrow the intruders?
- Michael was there. He doesn't speak. Gabriel was there. And unless he asks the question he doesn't speak either. Myriads and myriads, thousands upon thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand angels are there and none of them speak. Millions of Old Testament saints are there including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Elijah, Elisha, Moses, David, Job, Ezekiel, Daniel, none of them speak. Millions of New Testament saints are there, the Apostles are there, the great missionaries of all of history of the church are there, the great saints, the godly are there and none of them speak. Nobody says anything.
- And verse 3 says, "Why? And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth, no angel, no man and no demon was able to open the book or to look into it. Nobody...nobody." Everywhere in the universe, everywhere...heaven, earth, under the earth, that's simply a way of saying everywhere and every being. A search of the universe physical, a search of the universe spiritual, a search from hell to heaven and all points in between and no one is worthy. No one is able to open it and look into it. What does that mean? Examine its contents and execute them. No one has the right and no one has the power.
- And John's reaction is really amazing. In verse 4 he says, "I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or look into it." There aren't supposed to be any tears in heaven. It's kind of a shame that John introduced them. But he's unrestrained in his emotions and he's really just a visitor there. When it says, "I began to weep greatly," he uses the same verb that's used in Luke 19:41 of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, unrestrained emotion. This is the only time there are tears in heaven, except for those shed by God Himself as they are described in Jeremiah 13, and they were shed, as it were, by

God through the eyes of Jeremiah. In John, a visitor in the vision seeing heaven's throng but perhaps unseen by heaven's throng, his heart is so deeply grieved that he begins to sob. And he sobs because no one was found worthy to open the book and no one was able to execute what was in it. This is sad.

- Does this mean it's just going to go on the way it's always been? W.A. Criswell writes, "These represent the tears of all God's people through all the centuries. Those tears of the Apostle John are the tears of Adam and Eve driven out of the Garden of Eden as they bowed over the first grave, as they watered the dust of the ground with their tears over the silent still form of their son Abel. Those are the tears of the children of Israel in bondage as they cried unto God in their affliction and slavery. They are the tears of God's elect through the centuries as they cried unto heaven. They are the sobs and the tears that have been wrung from the heart and soul of God's people as they looked on their silent dead, as they stand beside their open graves, as the experience and the trials and sufferings of life, heartaches and disappointments indescribable. Such is the curse that sin has laid on God's beautiful creation and this is the damnation of the hand of him who holds it, that usurper, that interloper, that intruder, that alien, that stranger, that dragon, that serpent, that Satan-devil. And John wept audibly for the failure to find a redeemer because it meant that this earth and its curse is consigned forever to death. It meant that death and sin and damnation and hell should reign forever and ever and the sovereignty of God's earth should remain forever in the hands of Satan."
- And he wept. But his weeping was not fitting. His weeping was not fitting. As far as he could see there wasn't anyone. But he shouldn't have wept. He shouldn't have wept because of what was about to happen. As I thought about John's tears being inappropriate, I was reminded of Luke 7, look at Luke 7. There were other people who wept because of the sorrow of the world and they wept inappropriately. Verse 11: "Now as He approached the gate of the city, behold a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother and she was a widow. And a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. And when the

Lord saw her He felt compassion for her and He said to her, 'Do not weep, stop sobbing, it's inappropriate.'" Why was it inappropriate? It was inappropriate because of what Jesus was about to do. "And He came up and touched the coffin and the bearers came to a halt and He said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.' And the dead man sat up and began to speak." And probably said, "Thanks a lot for coming to my funeral, folks." "And Jesus gave him back to his mother."

- It was inappropriate to weep. Why? Because Jesus was going to act. Look at chapter 8 of Luke and verse 52. Backing up from there, verse 49, He was speaking, someone came from the house of the synagogue official saying, "Your daughter has died...your daughter's died. Don't trouble this teacher anymore."
- "When Jesus heard this He answered him, 'Do not be afraid any longer, only believe and she'll be made well.' And when He had come to the house He didn't allow anyone to enter with Him except Peter and John and James and the girl's father and mother. They were all weeping and lamenting for her but He said, 'Stop weeping, it's inappropriate.'" It's inappropriate...why? She hasn't died, she's only asleep, it isn't permanent, she was dead in the physical sense but it was not permanent so it couldn't really be called death, she's just asleep. "They began laughing at Him knowing that she had died. He, however, took her by the hand and called saying, 'Child, arise.'" In those two illustrations, beloved, you have this...Jesus saying your tears are inappropriate because of what I am about to do. And so were John's because of what Jesus Christ was about to do. And if you want to find out what it was, come back next Sunday night. Let's pray.
- Father, what a thrilling adventure we've had tonight in this chapter. We're actually overwhelmed by it. All of the years of tears and death and sorrow and weeping and crying and pain and disease and all creation groaning and waiting for the moment of redemption. All the tears that have fallen into the ground, for all the millennia of human existence have bemoaned and sobbed over the curse and the curser, Satan, Your arch-enemy, and all of creation has longed for paradise to be restored and how thrilling it is to be taken to heaven with

John and to see a scene where an angel cries to the ends of the universe and says...Who's worthy? And no one moves and no one speaks. And for a moment it feels like there never will be a paradise regained and a paradise restored and so we might with John weep and sob and say...Is it always going to be like this? But our tears are inappropriate because there is a worthy One, and there is an able One who will step forward, the rightful heir. It is His by creation. It is His by crucifixion. And He will take it back. It is in that hope that we live and it is for that coming that we plead and must be ready if we're to share in the inheritance and not to feel the wrath. Father, fill us with hope, hope in knowing Christ is our Redeemer who has reconciled us to God through faith in His death and resurrection. We pray in His wonderful name. Amen.