**Revelation 5**

Introduction

I. The power of Revelation is not so much that it gives us brand new information but that it gives us old information in a new way.

II. The powerful images John sees are meant not only to inform our intellect but also engage our hearts and inspire our imagination.

The Passage

I. The scroll (v. 1): A scroll

A. The description

1. Writing on both sides: it contains lots of information

2. Sealed with 7 seals: it is completely protected and sealed shut

B. What does the scroll contain?

= The scroll contains God’s plan for bringing his kingdom, for fixing what is wrong with the universe, for making everything right, and bringing is rule. This plan inevitably involves both judgment and salvation

II. No one is worthy to open the scroll (v. 2-4)

A. This is a devastating reality to John

We all experience the brokenness of this world and we have a deep hunger to see things made right. How devastating to hear that no one is able to do that.

B. This is also a humbling reality

No human being is able to fix the fundamental problems of this world. With all our technology, education, sophistication, we will never be able to solve the greatest problems of this world on our own. Help must come from the outside.

III. Someone is found to be worthy (v. 5-6)

A. What John hears

1. The lion from the tribe of Juda (see Genesis 49:9-10)

2. The root of David (see (Isaiah 11:1-4)

3. Together these two OT references refer to the coming Messiah: a descendant of David from the tribe of Judah who will be God’s anointed king. The expectation was that he would be a powerful military leader who would fight against Israel’s Gentile oppressors and liberate God’s people and establish God’s rule for Israel.

4. He has conquered (Greek = Nike)

B. What John sees

1. A little lamb looking as though he’s been slain

2. What a surprise! John expects to see a Lion (strong, conquering) and instead he sees a lamb (seemingly little, weak, and helpless)

3. The lamb is the lion and the lion is the lamb

4. Victory through sacrifice

a. The lion conquers not by coming as a lion to tear his enemies apart, but by coming like a lamb and sacrificing his own life for his enemies

b. God sent his son into the world to deal with sin and evil not by coming as a conquering messiah to destroy all his enemies, but by coming as a suffering servant to give his life on the cross for his enemies

C. The lamb only appears to be weak, but he’s not

1. 7 horns and 7 eyes = he is perfect in strength and wisdom

2. See 1 Corinthians 1:18-24: “Christ: the power of God and the wisdom of God”

3. He comes right up to the one on the throne and takes the scroll from his hand (v. 7). He doesn’t feel obligated to bow down to the one on the throne!

IV. The response of worship to the Lamb

A. The song of the 4 living creatures and 24 elders (v. 9-10)

1. This is language reminiscent of the Exodus

2. In the first exodus, God rescued the Jews from slavery in Egypt through the Passover Lamb and brought them to Mt. Sinai as his kingdom of priests

3. Now, God has rescued people from every nation from slavery to sin through Jesus the Lamb and brought them to himself as his kingdom of priests

B. The song of the thousands of angels (v. 11-12)

The lamb is worth of all the same things that the One on the throne is worthy of

C. The song of every creature (v. 13)

1. Both the lamb (God the Son) and the One on the throne (God the Father) are together receiving praise

2. Notice the implications to the divinity of Jesus Christ here

Conclusion

I. The One who is now in charge of the universe is one who has suffered and died for the universe

A. Jesus is worthy because he was slain (v. 9)

1. God sees Jesus’ sacrificial love and says, “that’s the kind of person I can entrust my kingdom to because I know he won’t use the power to his own advantage but has demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice for the people he leads”

2. Self-sacrificial love is at the heart of universe

B. This has implications for what it means to be followers of the lamb

1. Self-sacrificial agape love ought to be the hallmark of our lives

2. We overcome (nike) not through power or coercion but through self-sacrifice and faithful service

II. The one in charge of my life is one who has died for me

A. What does it look like to have a daily relationship with someone who died for you?

B. We can live each day in gratitude to him

1. We never have to wonder if he loves us because he has already shown that in the fullest way possible

2. We never have to be afraid to hand our lives over to him because he’s already demonstrated he always has our best in mind

C. See Isaiah 53

**Discussion Questions**

1. Sunday’s message began with the comment that the power of Revelation is not in presenting us with new truths but in presenting old truths in a new way. How did Revelation 5 help you appreciate an old truth in a new way?

2. By way of reminder, discuss again the meaning of the scroll in v. 1 and the reason why the lamb is the only one worthy to open the scroll (v. 9).

3. On Sunday we talked about how having someone die for you is such a radical concept that we have almost no experience of. Practically speaking, how can we allow Jesus’ death for us to shape our daily relationship with him? What does it look like to live daily in relationship with someone who died for you? What issues does that raise for you?

4. After considering the way Jesus, the Lion, chose to become a lamb and sacrifice himself for his people, the following comment was made on Sunday: “If we are to be followers of the lamb, self-sacrificial love is to be the hallmark of our lives.” As you consider your own life or the life of your church body what issues or questions does this raise for you?