

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain Rev. 5:1-14

In this sermon we will focus on the worthiness of the Lamb and put that in the context of what happened the first Good Friday.

In Revelation 5, Jesus is addressed as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David but the dominant title is that of the Lamb which was slain. Note also the word "worthy" appears four times.

I like this piece, by Dr. SM Lockeridge:

Jesus is the greatest phenomenon that has ever crossed the horizon of this world.

He's God's son.

He's the sinner's saviour.

He's the Civilization of Civilization.

He stands in the solitude of Himself.

He's august and He's unique.

He's unparalleled, unprecedented.

He's the loftiest character in literature,

He's the highest personality in philosophy,

He's the fundamental doctrine in true theology,

He is the miracle of the ages.

He is the superlative of everything good that you choose to call Him,

He is the only one qualified to be an all-sufficient Saviour,

I wonder if you know Him today?

Dr S.M. Lockeridge

Jesus is worthy. Please with me, Jesus is worthy.

Now let us say it to Him: Lord Jesus you are worthy

We will not focus on the scroll but on Him who is worthy.

In our engagement with the scripture, we will focus on these three questions:

- i. Why is He alone worthy?
- ii. What has made Him worthy?
- iii. What are the implications of His worthiness?

We will not discuss the identity of the scroll. Some have suggested that it is the title deed of the universe. Others say that it is a scroll which contains judgements. We also note that the Bible mentions another scroll of similar characteristics:

And when I looked, behold, a hand was stretched out to me, and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. And he spread it before me. And it had writing on the front and on the back, and there were written on it words of lamentation and mourning and woe. (Ezekiel 2:9-10 ESV)

1.0 Why is he alone worthy?

1 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. **2** 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."

- i. The reason we are given in this passage is that he has conquered. He fought the battle for our redemption and conquered. This reminds us of his struggle with the cup of suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane:

39 And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. 40 And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." 41 And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." 43 And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became

like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.⁷ 45 And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, 46 and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation." Luke 22:39-46

✚ It was a challenging experience

✚ Humanly he wished there was another way

✚ He conquered fear. He conquered in the sense that he yielded to the will of the Father

ii. He defeated the power of the evil one. He defeated that tyrant over the human race.

He undid the subjugation of the evil one

He broke the chains which held us in slavery

14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, **15** and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. Hebrews 2:14-15

iii. He alone was the fitting sacrifice because in Him was no sin

Jesus was not conceived in sin - David says in Psalm 51, "in sin did my mother conceive me"

The Bible says our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9,10)

Jesus was different. He was fully human but without sin.

He was tempted in every way as we are yet was without sin

22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. I Peter 2:22-24

Therefore Jesus Christ alone is worthy. No one in all creation is like Him.

2.0 What has made Him worthy?

He is worthy because He is victorious. This victory came by way of the Cross. He is worthy because He was slain. He paid the full price of the redemption of the human race

4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:4-6

He took our pain upon himself. He made our griefs and sorrows His own. His compassion moved Him to do something about our predicament

John Stott explains four things powerfully about the significance death of Jesus Christ:

1. Jesus Christ died for us

He undertook for our sake not for His own, and He believed that he could secure for us a good that could not be done in any other way.

He was the Good Shepherd, laying down his life for the sheep (John 10)

Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)

2. Jesus died for us that He might bring us to God

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive 1 Peter 3:18

The benefit of his death was to reconcile us to God

As a result of His death, He can confer upon us the blessing of salvation

3. Jesus Christ died for our sins

He removed the barrier which stood in the way between us and God, and prevented the blessing which God wanted for us

In the scriptures there is a notable link between his death and our sins

11 And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God Hebrews 10:11-12

4. Jesus Christ died our death

"the wages of sin is death" Romans 6:23

In the Bible, Death is linked to sin from the very beginning

Jesus Christ was sinless and had no need to die, but He died our death, the death our sins deserved.

That is why He is worthy.

3.0 Ascribing to Him His worth

Consider the categories which give Him worship before the throne of God

- ✚ The four living creatures and the elders (vs 6,9)
- ✚ Myriads of angels (vs 11)
- ✚ every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them (Vs 13)

What were they saying?

*"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might
and honour and glory and blessing!"*

*"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever!"*

How then do we respond?

- i. Let us look to no other. Jesus Christ is the only one who is worthy, He was slain for our salvation. He is the only mediator between God and man.

The only way to be saved by trusting and yielding to the Lamba who was slain.

Augustus M Toplady put it so well in that hymn *Rock of Ages Cleft for me*:

Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to the cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.

- ii. Let us unreservedly join the worship of all creation.

All we can ever be before God is because of Jesus Christ, so we worship Him.

In our corporate worship services, may we always have Him as our audience

Let our lives be lived in worship of Him and to the glory of His Name

"The Christian community is a community of the cross, for it has been brought into being by the cross, and the focus of its worship is the Lamb once slain, now glorified. So the community of the cross is a community of celebration, a Eucharistic community, ceaselessly offering to God through Christ the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving. The Christian life is an unending festival. And the festival we keep, now that our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed for us, is a joyful celebration of his sacrifice, together with a spiritual feasting upon it." - John Stott