

## “Our Lord and God is Worthy of Glory and Honor”

Ephesians 5:6-21

In our Sunday morning Bible class, we are in the process of going through the book of Revelation. We are currently in chapter 4 with the vision of the throne room of God. Around God’s throne are the four living creatures, which were also around God’s throne when He appeared to Ezekiel. It seems they are always there. The four living creatures are continually proclaiming “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.”

Around them are the 24 elders who are “casting down their golden crowns upon the glassy sea.” And those 24 elders worship God and say, “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power.”

Beyond that is the great multitude of saints, dressed in white robes, “these are they who have come out of the great tribulation, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” And what are they doing? They are worshiping God and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

And the angels who were standing all around the throne room of God fall on their faces and worship God saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Do you sense a pattern? Those who are in close proximity to God are compelled to worship Him. As the 24 elders say, “Our Lord and God is

worthy to receive glory and honor.” He is worthy to be worshiped. Reading our Old Testament text for today, don’t you find it amazing that Joshua had to tell the people to get rid of the statues of stone or wood or metal that they still had in their tents? This is after walking through the Red Sea. This is after being fed manna in the wilderness for 40 years. This is after being punished for 40 years for not trusting in and worshiping God alone.

But this is the foolishness of our sinful nature. This is the struggle of life in the church. The church is holy, “without spot or blemish” as we will hear next week from Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. But the church, the people of God, continually fall short – which is why we come again and again to confess our sins and receive God’s message of grace. We look at the Israelites and say, “How can they do this to God?” How can they put a statue on their mantle and ignore worshiping the One True God?

But I hear it all the time that there are “legitimate” excuses for not worshiping God. “I am going to be out late on Saturday, so I won’t be in church on Sunday.” How many weekends do parents take their children to sporting events so the children can put a trophy on their mantle? It’s not much different than what the Israelites did. Whatever is your higher priority, that is your god.

I know that, like Jesus’ words in John 6, this is a hard saying and there are some who will not want to listen to it. But the truth is that we have a God and Lord who is worthy to be worshiped. He is worthy to receive glory and honor.

C.S. Lewis put it this way: If what the Bible says about God is false, then the Christian faith is of no importance. We are all wasting our time. However, if what the Bible says about God is true, then God and faith in

Him is infinitely important. The one thing God cannot be is marginally important.

Either He and His church are a complete waste of time and we all should be somewhere else, or there is nothing that could possibly be more important than what we are doing right now. There is no middle ground.

Our Old Adam always wants to take us away from the truth. Our Old Adam loves the lie of the middle ground being OK. In his letter to the Ephesians, we heard Paul's words, which were written to Christians. "Let no one deceive you with empty words . . .do not even associate with them . . .they will drag you into darkness. Walk as children of light. . . Look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time . . . be filled with the Spirit addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart."

Worship. This is Paul's advice for those struggling with the foolishness of the world. "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead." In the same way that God cannot be marginally important, you cannot be marginally faithful. When you read Christ's letters to the seven churches in Revelation, the most harsh criticism is toward those who were "lukewarm."

Either God is infinitely important or He is of zero importance. Either He is worthy to have songs of praise sung continually, or the hymns and liturgy of the church are meaningless. Either you are going to take the actual flesh and blood of the Son of God into your mouth, or you are going to walk up here and receive a very unsatisfying snack.

There is no middle ground. There is no lukewarmness within the kingdom of God. However, there is no pure church here on earth. We are God's saints, only because we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

We have washed our robes in the blood of the Lamb. We sin; we fail to live up to God's commands; through our words and actions, we teach our children false things; unimportant things; half-truths.

We are all guilty, which is why we need to worship. God does not need your eternal flattery. As Scripture says, He desires "a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." Other than receiving the body and blood of Christ, there is nothing you will do today more important than confessing your sin and receiving the absolution. "In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all of your sin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

"Our Lord and God is worthy to receive glory and honor." He does not come with some lukewarm, feel-good remembrance meal. He offers His real broken body and His real shed blood. Just like we see in how God deals with sin, Jesus does not offer up a half-hearted symbolic gesture for the forgiveness of sins. He offers up His real hands and feet to be pierced. He offers His real blood to be poured out. His life had to end so that your life can continue forever.

I can't explain how God could die and rise again, but He did. I can't explain how the body and blood of Jesus Christ will be right here for you to eat and drink, but it is.

It is a miracle beyond our understanding. It is infinitely important for you to hear this and receive this. And because He has done this for you and continues to do this for you, "Our Lord and God is worthy to receive glory and honor." Amen.