



Around the Throne of God

Series: The Wonder of Worship

Revelation 4-5

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We are going to begin today to wind down our sermon series on the wonder of worship and we are going to do it by looking at three scenes of worship, over the next three weeks, that are described in Revelation. Worship looms large over the entirety of the Book of Revelation. It is far more than a book about the last days. It is a book that emphatically answers the questions of who is truly worthy of worship, who is truly Lord of Heaven and Earth, who must reign supreme in our heart and affections if we would be delivered from the wrath to come. The churches receiving this book from John needed it. They lived in a socially and politically perilous time, in the midst of a corrupt world system, in a time when God and His Christ were openly opposed, in a time that, quite honestly, sounds a lot like our own. They desperately needed to be enabled to live faithfully, courageously, and obediently during the days in which they found themselves. That would only happen if the Lord and the Lamb consumed their vision, if God was glorified, praised, as the only Lord and as the faithful source of hope, of overcoming power, and of grace – and we find ourselves, today, in a similar condition.

As we look at this scene that unfolds before John in Revelation 4 and 5, there is no way that we can deal with every single detail in a thorough and exhaustive manner but that is not our goal this morning. Instead, our goal is to see how the worship of God and of His Christ is at the very center of the Creation, how the worship that is in heaven, worship in the unseen realms, is to inform our own – the lessons that we can learn from this text, the hope that we can find in it, to understand that when we gather as the people of God to worship God the Father and to worship His Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, that what we are doing has significance that far outstrips the here and now. So let's look at this text and see what we can glean from this incredible scene. Pick it up in verse 1 of chapter 4. Let's...

Behold the Throne and the One who Sits Upon It (Revelation 4)

“After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.” (Revelation 4:1–2, ESV) John had just recorded the letters that were to be written and sent to the churches in Asia and now the voice of the Lord calls to him to see and to behold in visions, all that is yet to take place in the eternal plan of God. Those visions are recorded for us in the rest of the book, right? But before he is given those visions, he is first given a glimpse into the very throne room of God. And the first thing that grips his attention is the throne of God itself, standing in heaven, and the One who is seated upon it. The throne of God and this vision of God upon it dominate his view. In fact, everything in chapter 4 is seen in relation to the throne and the One who sits upon it – everything is described according to its position around the throne and all worship is directed to the One who is on the throne.

Here’s why that is. At the very center of the universe are the throne of God and the worship of God. All authority, all power, all reign, all rule lies with Him. The inescapable center of the entire universe is the throne and the One who sits upon it. In John’s day, the might of the Roman Empire, was very real, warring together with unbelieving Jews against the church, against the gospel of Christ. Persecution was a daily reality, severe and difficult and deadly. In our own day we live in a world much the same – the world system, evolutionary humanism, materialism, sensuality, the celebration of perversion and godlessness by the media, the reality of political persecution, the reality of social persecution, the expansion of Islam and the murder of Christians in massive numbers, the growing cloud of persecution in our own nation – we see these things and it is a great temptation to despair. But then we turn to Revelation 4 and we are reminded, as John was, that our God reigns, that He is gloriously transcendent, and that His sovereign rule extends to everything that transpires on the earth. It is a powerful and glorious picture that John tries to explain. The scene is so incredible.

“And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.” (Revelation 4:3, ESV) John writes a description of the One on the throne, but words fail Him. He does not have the vocabulary to describe the glory that he beholds. All He can say about God is what He is like. He’s like gemstones shining in brilliance, like jasper and carnelian. Jasper was a translucent stone,

kind of like a diamond when the sun hits it – all kinds of colors shining with brilliance indicative of God’s holiness, purity, and majesty. Carnelian was a fiery looking red stone – a picture of judgment and justice. This is symbolic imagery. It’s John trying his best to describe the indescribable. Like Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:15-16, God is **“the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.”** (1 Timothy 6:15–16, ESV) John’s words are intended to stir our imaginations, to inflame our hearts, to stir us to awe and wonder at this scene that is before him.

He tries to describe the scene around the throne. He sees an emerald colored rainbow surrounding the throne and the One who sits on it. That it is a rainbow speaks of God’s mercy, of grace, of long-suffering. But there is more. **“Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads.”** (Revelation 4:4, ESV) Arrayed around the great throne of God are these lesser thrones, with beings that he calls elders, clothed in white garments – symbolic of purity and righteousness – and crowned with golden crowns that speak of authority and reign, reigning with God. Who are these guys? Theologians are split on whether they are actual humans or they are angelic beings, but I agree with the vast number of scholars that, whatever they are, human or angelic, they represent the people of God – representing the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles, representing the redeemed throughout the ages, symbolic of the church from all across history.

John sees the elders but then quickly His attention is drawn back to the throne of God. **“From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.”** (Revelation 4:5–6a, ESV) Flashes of lightning, rumblings, the crash of thunder explode from the throne. It’s like what took place at MT Sinai when Yahweh’s presence dwelt there with the Israelites – glory, weightiness, splendor, grandeur, the divine authority to judge all creatures – the all consuming majesty of God on display. Everything is centered on this throne.

His attention shifts once more to what is around the throne and John describes these burning torches of fire that represent the seven spirits of God – the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not seven different spirits of course. John has in view the sevenfold description of

the Holy Spirit described in Isaiah 11:2. We'll look at that in a moment. Then he describes what the throne sits upon – something like a sea of glass. It's hard to know exactly what this is. I take to be a picture of the firmament, the sky/sea pictures an expanse that separates heaven and places all of creation under God's feet, as it were.

Then John describes these creatures that almost defy imagination. ***“And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!””*** (Revelation 4:6b–8, ESV) What are these creatures? They remind us of the seraphim in Isaiah 6 and the cherubim described in Ezekiel 1 and 10, but in their function here, they seem to be another class altogether. Their appearance is intended to communicate something to us. In the ancient world, people categorized creation according to four spheres: wild animals (lion), domesticated animals (ox), birds (eagle), and humanity (man). These creatures represent the strongest of each sphere. These beings represent the greatest of all created beings. And these beings, we are told, are “full of eyes all around and within” – that speaks of full understanding, of full perception of reality and worth, of full comprehension of eternal realities, and complete consciousness of what they are doing.

And here is the point. These creatures, these glorious, powerful, awesome -- the greatest creatures in the universe, no other created thing comes close – are utterly self-forgetful. They spend no time looking at themselves, no time reveling in their greatness, no time doing anything but worshipping God. That's what they do. There is no focus on themselves, no thought of what they may or may not gain from worshipping God. Despite their own creaturely glory – and they are glorious – their entire focus is on worshipping and exalting God. As great as they may be in the created order, they behold God in Heaven and declare: ***“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”*** They know they are nothing compared to the One who is the epitome of holy – altogether unique, altogether in a class by Himself, altogether worthy of praise by the greatest of beings. They worship God. They worship God because He is the “Almighty” – the “*Pantokrator*,” which means “All-Ruler.” God rules every reality in his universe, including us and it is only sheer and willful blindness that refuses to see this. They worship Him for His eternity, for His indispensable centrality as the One who was and is and is to come. They understand reality – that the highest, greatest, most needful, most important thing that any creature can do is to worship

the only great God, the holy, all-ruling, eternal God. These representatives of the entire created order lead in the eternal worship of God.

And John continues to describe the scene. **“And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.””** (Revelation 4:9–11, ESV) The worship is irresistible. As these living creatures are giving to God glory and honor and thanks, the 24 elders follow suit. They were seated but now they get up from their thrones and fall down and worship. They prostrate themselves before the Lord in humility, casting their crowns before Him in glad recognition of His majesty, acknowledging His worth, and they offer their own song of praise to the Lord. **“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”** They worship because they know that God is worthy, that no one else can bear such a name – Lord and God. The glory, honor, and power that belong to their Lord and God, these representatives of all of the redeemed for all of eternity, they know, belongs to no other. They worship God as Creator by whom all things were made and to whom all things belong. They worship Him as central to everything and His glory the goal of the entire universe. Does that describe our worship, beloved? Do we worship like this?

This is where worship begins, in the throne room of heaven where God reigns in supremacy over the universe. All who see God as He is, sovereign over all, will praise Him as they should. For the beauty of God and the reign of God, the servants of God are caught up in adoration and praise. This is a glorious scene... and then the scene shifts our attention from God the Creator, to God the Redeemer, from the Father to the Son, from the majesty of God to the glory of Christ.

Behold the Lion Who is the Lamb (Revelation 5)

“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.” (Revelation 5:1, ESV) After this incredible description of God on His throne, the worship by the glorious creatures and the elders around the throne, the focus shifts to something in the hand of God, a scroll, sealed with 7 seals. What is

this scroll and why is it important? CB Caird describes the scroll as “God's redemptive plan, foreshadowed in the Old Testament, by which he means to assert his sovereignty over a sinful world and so to achieve the purpose of creation, from its beginnings in the Cross to its triumphal culmination in the New Jerusalem.” It describes the history of the world, the redemption of God's people, the judgment of God’s enemies – Satan and his followers, the creation of a new heaven and new earth, and the eternal glories of God’s Kingdom – the very plan Paul wrote of in Ephesians 1:9-11, **“the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,”** (Ephesians 1:9–11, ESV) But it was sealed. Sealed by God the Father to authenticate that it is His. Sealed until the One who is worthy, the One who is able to accomplish it all, the One who is righteous both to judge sinful humanity and to redeem sinners from God’s eternal justice and wrath can be found, the One who will undertake and bring to completion the will of God.

“And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.” (Revelation 5:2–4, ESV) A mighty angel with a loud voice, asks the question, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?” This mighty angel, despite his power, knows his own unworthiness. The worthiness to open the scroll required absolute faithfulness to every responsibility entrusted by God, righteousness and power, inherent and underived glory. The entire universe is searched “And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.” No one was found. No one was worthy to approach the throne and bring to completion the scroll of God’s will. John wept. Who would accomplish the will of God, to rescue His people and to complete their redemption; to avenge those martyred for their faith in Christ, and to bring judgment on the unjust, to accomplish the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, and fully realize the Kingdom of God? Who is worthy for such things? He wept.

“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.”” (Revelation 5:5, ESV) This is classic “Messiah” language, isn’t it? **The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered!** The word is “nikao” meaning “to win in the face of obstacles, to be victor, to triumph, to prevail, to overcome.” He is the Lion of the tribe of

Judah. ***“Judah is a lion’s cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.”*** (Genesis 49:9–10, ESV) He is the root of David and the Spirit of the Lord rests upon Him: ***“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.”*** (Isaiah 11:1–2, ESV)

He is the Lion of Judah, having immeasurable power and majesty and might, the one in whom is uncompromising holiness. He is the One with the power to bring in the kingdom of God by triumphing over every one of the enemies of his people – sin, Satan, the world, the false prophet, death and the grave. John turns to see this great Lion of Judah.

“And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” (Revelation 5:6, ESV) He looks and at the very center of the throne room of heaven, he sees, not a Lion, but a Lamb. He sees a Lamb, bearing the marks of sacrifice, bearing the marks of having been slain, but He is standing. He has been slain and raised from the dead. What does this mean? How does the Lion of Judah triumph? He triumphs by becoming the Lamb, by the cross and by His resurrection from the dead never to die again. That is how He breaks the power of sin, Satan, death, and the grave. Only this is no ordinary Lamb. He has seven horns and seven eyes. Horns are the ancient symbol of power – He has seven – the number of perfection – power unlimited to accomplish the will of the Father. This is a Lamb with Lion-like power. And He has seven eyes, the Spirit of the Lord – the Spirit of ***wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.*** Jesus who conquers by the cross, now rules by the Spirit of perfect power and infinite wisdom. One day He will execute His rule as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, terrible in holy justice. And all who will not trust Him now will face His wrath then one day. But now He sends His Spirit forth into all the world to bring men, women, boys and girls to trust in Him, to free them from the oppression of sin, from false religion, from the enemies of God and to bring them to God. He alone is worthy to execute God’s plan of the Ages, this Lamb-like Lion and Lion-like Lamb.

“And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.” (Revelation 5:7, ESV) In one dramatic moment, Jesus Christ, the Lion-Lamb, boldly approaches the throne of God. He demonstrates His worth by coming and taking the scroll out of the Father’s right hand. It symbolizes a transfer of authority from the Father to the Son to accomplish His entire plan. And worship erupts in heaven.

“And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.” (Revelation 5:8–14, ESV)

Oh picture the scene beloved. Worship cascades from the feet of the Lamb of God starting with the living creatures and the 24 elders, through the innumerable angels of heaven, through all of the creation and back to the foot of the throne again! It’s awesome. The four living creatures fall on their faces. The 24 elders, the representatives of the redeemed of every age, prostrate themselves before the Lamb, harp in one hand and golden bowls of incense – the prayers of the saints yet on the earth in the other. The “prayers of the saints” mingled with the worship offered by the 24 elders pictures our communion with the saints in heaven in the worship of Christ. Bruce Metzger says, “This communion of saints is not just the fellowship we enjoy with other people during a service of worship, but it includes also the idea that John expresses here—the unity of worship of the church militant on earth with that of the church triumphant in heaven.” We join the chorus of heaven in worship when we worship here together.

Together with the living creatures, the 24 elders sing a “new song,” the song of redemption, the song of salvation, the song of the worship of the Lamb. ***“Worthy are you to take the***

scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” It is a song of worship for all that Christ has done – ransoming for Himself, purchasing from sin and acquiring as His own possession, a people comprised of the elect from throughout the peoples of the earth and making them members in the Kingdom of God and worshippers of the Lord, who will reign with Him forever. It is a new song, a song not of the old creation, attained and corrupted by sin, but of the new creation, holy and beautiful unto the Lord. Christ is worshipped.

The shock waves of this worship reverberate throughout heaven, and the angels, millions upon millions upon millions, join in the worship of the Lion-Lamb crying out in thunderous voice: **“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”** Worthy is the Lamb! All power is his, all the riches of the universe His own, all wisdom belongs to Him, all might resides in Him, all honor belongs to Him, all glory, the public display of adoration and weighty worth should be given to Him, all blessing and praise for His works of redemption and the reclamation of all that is rightly God’s.

And then this scene closes with the universal acclamation and acknowledgement of the worthiness of the Father and the Son, as the entirety of creation, every created thing, **every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth** confesses, **“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”** That is every created being, animals and all, and every human tongue - -those of the saved who declare it with everlasting joy, and those of the condemned who confess to their own shame what Paul describes in Philippians 2: **“so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** (Philippians 2:10–11, ESV) This worship cascades from the throne, to all of creation and boomerangs back again. **And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.**

What Should This Text Do in Our Souls?

What an amazing picture that John draws for us in this text. For the churches in Asia who were enduring such severe persecution and heresy, political and social opposition, these words from John were a great encouragement. It opened their eyes to a greater reality overshadowing everything else. Here in this scene from heaven, John was showing them that God's answer to their confusing and difficult questions under the heaviness of trial – what would happen to them, how would this all turn out, how would God be glorified, how could they continue to endure – was found in passionate, God-centered, Christ-exalting worship. In all things, they were to trust in the sovereign rule and reign of their Lord, the sufficiency and glory of Christ's redemptive work, and His power as the Lion-Lamb who would bring all of the purposes of God to pass. These words from Paul opened their eyes to a reality beyond what they could see, something grander, something eternal, something far more important than anything else on this earth. God reigns, the Lamb is victorious, worship God!

It should be the same for us in this early 21st century, as we see the mounting opposition to and rejection of God, of His truth, of His gospel, of His Christ, of His people. God still reigns. His power, glory and might are invincible. Christ is Lord and will be confessed as Lord by all – by those He redeems and by those He vanquishes. The worship of God and of His Christ reverberates through heaven; it sends shock waves throughout Creation. We must join in the songs of the elders, the angels and the living creatures. We must bow before Him in surrender. These kinds of texts are meant to stoke worship in our own souls, awakening our hearts more and more to eternal reality, to the majesty of God and to the victorious Lamb. In worship, we see things as they really are, not as they appear to be. We see God's sovereignty. We see that Jesus is all we need. We see the end of the ages and glory that will be revealed. This present reality is passing, but the eternal reality we glimpse here is sure and certain.

Here, we see that worship is the occupation of the redeemed in heaven, of the holy and unfallen angelic beings of all description, one day of the whole universe and it should be our occupation now. Worship, we are meant to see, is the central issue of life, the centerpiece of creation. And this text demands that we join the eternal song and cry out with our lips, our lives and our hearts from this day until the moment we bow before our Triune God and cry out, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" The worship we offer to God now foreshadows the perfect worship we will offer to God when the Lord brings to pass the new heavens and the new earth and for that reason the worship

we offer now should mirror what we see in the elders and heavenly beings in this text. We are called to join the eternal worship in heaven, to join with the church triumphant in glorying in the Lord. That is why worship is so important.

This picture of the eternal worship of heaven provides for the church in our day a picture of the theocentric worship that we so badly need. This worship in heaven is not man-centered and narcissistic. The Lord and the Lamb are at the center, not human experiences, human feelings, or human needs. It is God to whom glory is to be given, God who is to be feared. God who is to be served. God-centered worship is different than man-centered worship in that we don't start by asking what pleases us, but what pleases God. We make no demands but we give to God what He demands. We worship for an audience of One!

When this kind of worship is pursued and experienced by the church, our human needs will be met – not because we aimed at meeting them, but because we aimed at worshipping the God who alone can satisfy our souls. The centrality of Father and Son in worship is established in this text, for us, forever. All of our life is to be taken up in worship and praise to God, making Him central to everything and His glory the goal of the universe, of our church and of our lives, and then we will see and savor the Lord and the Lamb and then we will be truly satisfied.

This picture shows us of what true worship consists. We see adoration, submission, exaltation, humility, self-forgetfulness, and God-obsession demonstrated by creatures far greater than we, by those who understand the worth of God the Father and Christ the Son. We see that those who know Him best worship Him most. The elders, the living beings, the angels – they know God most and they worship him best. Worship is the response to the vision of God. The elders saw the glory and splendor of God and of His Christ and they worshipped with all their might. Worship is a response to the worth of God. What do fallen men worship? They worship what they can see. They either worship the creation or they worship what they can make. Worship is always a response to what you see and what you value as worthy.

Oh, how we need to become preoccupied with seeing and knowing God and His Christ. What is the remedy, what is the preventative, for dispassionate worship? A fresh and

growing vision of God. That is why our worship must be theological. The worship we see in this passage is extremely theological. To Him who is seated on the throne,” cannot be fully grasped apart from consciously contemplating God’s sovereignty over the universe.

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain” demands that we consider the reason Christ is called “the Lamb,” as well as the reason He was slain. What does it mean that Christ “ransomed for God” with His blood people from every tribe, nation, people and tongue? It demands we get a fresh view from Scripture of the who, the how, and the why of redemption. Worship demands that we fill our minds with a fresh and greater view of our God and Christ so that our hearts will be filled with adoration, thanksgiving, and praise as our voices and souls are lifted in worship even as we bow with reverence for such an incomparable God. Worship requires work, even as we rest in Christ.

It is this kind of worship that fuels mission, that makes the fame of Christ’s name to spread throughout all of Creation. The God-focused, Christ-entranced worship that we see in this picture from heaven leads to the renown of God and of His Christ proclaimed throughout the entire creation. Minus this kind of worship, missions will lack power. I so agree with John Piper when he says: **Where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak. Churches that are not centered on the exaltation of the majesty and beauty of God will scarcely kindle a fervent desire to “declare his glory among the nations” (Ps. 96:3).** Missions exists because worship doesn’t. We want to see God on the throne and the Lamb that was slain worshiped by every tribe and tongue. Our worship and this vision of worship is what will provide the fuel of our individual and corporate mission for Christ.

Oh beloved, we must see the momentous nature of what we do when we worship. We are gathering to approach the awesome, only, God Almighty and the Lion/Lamb. We come only by the blood of Christ and this is a holy moment not to be taken lightly but to be embraced as the very gift of God that it is to enter His presence as heaven touches earth and we worship and commune with our only God and King.

In corporate worship, we are doing what Calvin described as the greatest of Christian privileges, to enter the presence of God and be numbered among the assembly of those who are allowed to worship the creator of the world and the redeemer of the saints, those who enter His eternal presence forever when Christ comes for His church and we add our voices to the heavenly choir, singing praises to the One who sits and the throne and to the Lamb. So let us do it now in glad anticipation and in communion with the worshippers in heaven, let us worship gladly, faithfully, and fervently, now and forever.

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