

August 15, 2021

Revelations 5:1-11

**Children's message:** The passage this morning is about sacrifice. Most importantly the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross so that you and I could be free from sin. Jesus said that the greatest thing someone could do was to lay down his life for his friends. Jesus was actually talking about Himself. John 15:13," Greater love has no one than to lay down one's life for his friends."

Sometimes in life people are willing to sacrifice their lives for their friends, family and country. People who join the military are willing to do just that. They do it to protect our freedom. In a way it is similar to what Jesus spoke about but it is not the same.

There will be times in your life when you may have to make sacrifices for the good of others. These may be sacrifices of time, energy and money. Hopefully not your life. Jesus is celebrated today as the One who sacrificed His life on the cross so we may be free from sin. That is why He is celebrated as the Lamb of God who was worthy to open up God's scroll with the seven seals. To reveal God's plan and the next steps in our salvation.

When thinking about sacrifice for others the story of the San Patricios come to mind. They were a division of Irish Catholic immigrants in the American army. They came to America to escape the famine at home. Their commanding officers were not Catholic and treated these men terribly because of their faith. They were scheduled to go into battle against Santa Anna Mexican army one day. The San Patricios decided

not to fight against another Catholic army and they deserted. Many joined the Mexican army. In later battles with the Americans, many were captured and executed or facially branded as deserters. Their story of sacrifice would have been lost to time if it was not for a song that celebrated their faith, courage and sacrifice. To find it, do a Google search for the Chieftains with Ry Cooder and the song is San Patricio. It is a powerful and moving song. St. Patrick's Day is a huge celebration in Mexico because of these men.

**Adult's message:** Things only get stranger as we progress deeper into this book. If you understand some of the symbols then it starts to make some sense. Many of the symbols have meanings that have changed greatly over time. Not to mention the many layers they contain.

This week as I mentioned is about the Lamb of God. What the Lamb of God meant to the first century Christians and Who the Lamb was. In Christianity we have called Jesus the Lamb of God. We do it very routinely and almost mindlessly. We are introduced to the term very early on John's gospel. Mind you he is also the author of this book. John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." When John said these words, I wonder if he knew the fullness of what they contained. I suspect he may have.

There was a lot of Jewish apocalyptic writing after the Old Testament and before the New Testament. The culture and people's mindsets were truly consumed with these types of thoughts. These writings portrayed the Messiah as a horned lamb with seven horns. Told you it would get strange. This seven horned lamb would fight for His people and conquer the forces of evil. Most likely the Romans. The Jews at

this time did not expect this warrior lamb to suffer and die. They also did not consider Him to be God. If you were a Jewish person at this time in history, prepare to have your mind blown.

The warrior lamb described in this morning's passage is both God, in the midst of the Throne of God, and with humanity and in the midst of the elders. This warrior lamb is the union of God and humanity without merging the two natures. John presents a very interesting way to think of the incarnation. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God while being God and man at the same time. He is the warrior lamb of the Jews and much more. He is God, which the Jews did not expect. As I have said many times before, God always exceeds our expectations of Him and what He can and will do.

The other titles used to describe Jesus the Lamb of God, are the Lion of Judah and the Root of David. The Lion of Judah is a Rastafarian term still used today to describe Jesus. He is the one who will lead us out of Babylon and back to Zion. Just listen to Bob Marley to get an understanding. The Root of David is one title we sometimes hear. Both titles are very messianic and appear in the Old Testament: Gen 49:9, Is 11:1-10.

The One who conquered evil and destroyed sin through His self-sacrifice on the cross and in His resurrection is only worthy to open the scroll. Then to reveal its mysteries and carry out its words. Only the Messiah, the Lamb of God can do this. The central theme in Revelations is victory through sacrifice.

John's imagery of the Lamb goes far beyond that of the Jews. Jesus is the fullness of what a Messiah should be. The strange imagery of the seven horns represents the fullness of Christ's power and the seven

eyes represent the fullness of His knowledge. That the Holy Spirit was sent upon Him to carry out His mission to the world. We see this at His baptism with the dove descending upon Him. John is also expressing that Jesus is all these titles rolled up in One person who is the Messiah. Yet He is God and man and all these passages point to the incarnation. The same incarnation that existed before Genesis and at Bethlehem and who now sits at the right hand of God. There should be no doubt in your mind who the Messiah is. It is Jesus the One who died and rose from the dead. He is the Lamb of God and that old image has been greatly expanded to its fullness. All done through the incarnation. God far exceeds our expectations of Him and His involvement with us. John vividly portrays that to us this morning. So are the images we have of Jesus going to be greatly expanded again when He returns? They have in the past. Wait and see. Pastor D