

Order of Worship for May 1

Prelude

P: Alleluia, Jesus Christ is risen!

C: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Opening Hymn: “Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds” – Hymn #465

Confession and Forgiveness p. 203

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: All Your works shall give thanks to You, O LORD,

C: and all Your saints shall bless You!

P: One generation shall commend Your works to another,

C: and shall declare Your mighty acts.

P: On the glorious splendor of Your majesty,

C: and on Your wondrous works, I will meditate.

P: They shall speak of the might of Your awesome deeds,

C: and I will declare Your greatness.

P: They shall pour forth the fame of Your abundant goodness

C: and shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.

P: The LORD is good to all,

C: and His mercy is over all that He has made.

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: All Your works shall give thanks to You, O LORD,

C: and all Your saints shall bless You!

Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy) p. 204

Hymn of Praise (*Glory to God in the Highest*) p. 204

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray: O God, through the humiliation of Your Son You raised up the fallen world. Grant to Your faithful people, rescued from the peril of everlasting death, perpetual gladness and eternal joys; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

First Lesson: Acts 9:1-22

R: But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And Saul said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to Your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine to carry My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of My name." So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened.

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?" But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Revelation 5:8-14

R: 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.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia p. 205

Holy Gospel: John 21:1-14

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 21st chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord

P: After this Jesus revealed Himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and He revealed Himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, “Children, do you have any fish?” They answered Him, “No.” He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after He was raised from the dead.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ

Nicene Creed (11:00) (on screen)

Sermon Hymn: “*Crown Him with Many Crowns.*” -- **Hymn #525**

Sermon: “*Worthy Is the Lamb*”- **Revelation 4-5**

Last Saturday, Miguel Cabrera became just the 33rd member of the 3000-hit club in baseball history, hitting another opposite-field single early in the Detroit Tigers’ 13-0 win over the Colorado Rockies. Cabrera didn’t need to join the 3000 hit club to cement his status as a future

Hall of Famer, having long since stamped his Cooperstown ticket with 500 home runs, a Triple Crown, multiple MVPs, four batting titles and more than a decade's worth of All-Star nods. His latest accomplishment just adds to the fact that he's worthy to be in the Hall of Fame.

That's the key word in this section of the book of Revelation: worthy. Worthy, *axios* in Greek, means to bring into balance, to praise. And while we just heard the end, where we're told that Jesus is worthy, that's not how it starts.

We're spending this Easter season looking at the book of Revelation. Last week, Pastor Mark went through the first three chapters of Revelation, which focuses on seven letters to seven churches in Asia Minor, modern day Turkey. Here in chapters 4 and 5, though, we start to get into the things that we stereotypically know about the book of Revelation. We start to see a vision of heaven. We start to get strange creatures and people in white robes. We start to get into the strange, mysterious, confusing imagery that makes Revelation famous, or infamous.

The challenge comes because of that strange imagery, the strange looking creatures and fantastical descriptions, which can obscure the wonderful message of hope we find here. When I first came to Ames, I led some internationals through a study called "Eight Bible Lessons for New Christians." In the second lesson, we talked about the characteristics of God. One of the readings was from Revelation 4:8, when John has a vision of God's throne room in heaven. While the question in the study focused in on the words of the angels, that God is holy and powerful and was and is and is to come, that reading always caused distraction. The description of the creatures surrounding God's throne, with six wings and full of eyes, always caused us to go off track. The students were always more interested in discussing what those creatures were than their message.

It's not that those questions aren't important. It's not that knowing and learning about the details of Bible passages isn't important. But it can be easy to get distracted by the details away from what's going on.

What's going on here as we begin to move into the next part of Revelation is that a question is asked. Who is worthy? Who is worthy to open a scroll? The question is not who is bold enough or who is strong enough or who is willing. The question is who is worthy, completely and fully qualified. At first, no one. No one in heaven or on earth or under the earth. No one is worthy. John bursts into tears at this. What can be done?

But then comes the good news. Jesus is worthy. Throughout Revelation, John refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God. It's a striking image of the sacrifice God provides for the salvation of humanity. The brokenness of creation is revealed in the sacrifice of Jesus. And yet, in the midst of sorrow all of creation rejoices. We rejoice because in Christ's death there is new life and salvation for all who believe! More than that, we rejoice because while none of us is worthy, yet God in his grace loves us, hears us, and answers our prayers. We are not worthy, but Jesus is.

Today is Confirmation Sunday. Some of you may remember your own confirmation. It used to be more common to have some sort of questioning, to test those who would be confirmed to see if they had learned what they were supposed to. It was a way of seeing if they were worthy to be confirmed. Now, they get tested and taught in other ways.

But the point is not being worthy on their own. The point is that Jesus is worthy, and because Jesus is worthy, we are made worthy. The blood of Jesus has ransomed us, people from every tribe and language and people and nation. Jesus is worthy; we are not. Jesus was willing to go to any lengths to bring you near to God. And he did. The blood of Jesus covers your sin and makes you worthy in a way that no amount of good works or bargaining ever could. So regardless of what you have done or haven't done in life, regardless of your background, the only thing that makes you worthy is Jesus, trusting in Him.

Jesus is worthy because he was, and is, the slaughtered Lamb. This worth is attested to by the craziest collection of diverse creatures joined by the common characteristic of praise. By heaven's standard, there is nothing more remarkable and valuable than the free confession of gratitude by those who have suffered. By heaven's standard, the thing most highly valued as praiseworthy is the double confession that moves from admission of guilt to the expression of gratitude for the transfiguring grace of the resurrection.

Because Jesus is worthy, we can join in this song of praise. When we sing "This is the Feast" when we do setting one of the Divine Service from our hymnal, we sing this song of praise. Contemporary Christian singer songwriter Andrew Peterson wrote a song called, "Is He Worthy?" that was later covered by Chris Tomlin, based on this passage. He summarized this section by saying, "Revelation 5 contains one of the most beautiful and dramatic scenes in scripture, and is centered around the question, "Is anyone worthy?" The resounding answer is, "Yes! And his name is Jesus.""

The song of praise we hear today, that continues throughout the book of Revelation, never loses its thrill. That's because the one, the Lamb of whom we sing, is the only one who can claim such a feat, dying and rising again for us. The Lamb is then worthy to receive such words of praise. Jesus lives, never to die again.

Each week we gather for worship reminded of the fact that Jesus is not just another figure in history. He has made history. He has been raised from the dead. And each week we celebrate a mini resurrection acknowledging this great day, that the Lamb sits on the throne and is worthy. Because He lives, we too are made worthy, and one day we will join Him and all the heavenly chorus in singing, "*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain...to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever. Amen!*"

As we go through life, we can feel lost and unworthy. We can feel like we aren't worthy to come close to God. That's when God comes to us. God the Father gives us all that we need. God the Son came into the world to show us the path to the Father, and continues to come to us in Holy Communion. God the Spirit comes when God's Word is read and proclaimed, when the waters of Baptism are splashed on a baby's head.

We may not get into the hall of fame. We may not always feel worthy of whatever honors we receive. But we know that Jesus is worthy, and has made us worthy to be with him. That's good news.

Confirmation Hymn: (8:30 only) "*Thine Forever, God of Love*" – **Hymn #687**

Rite of Confirmation (8:30 only) (on screen)

Prayer of the Church

P: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Sharing Our Ministry

Offering & Voluntary

Service of the Sacrament

Preface: p. 208

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should in all times and in all places give thanks to You, Holy Father, Everlasting God for You offered up for our sins the most worthy sacrifice of all, Your Son Christ Jesus, who went to the cross, died, and rose on Easter. He is most worthy to receive all honor and praise. Therefore with angels and all the army of heaven we praise and make great Your name, evermore praising You and singing . . .

Sanctus (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) p. 208

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: Blessed are You, O Lord God, for You have given us Christ Jesus who alone could break the seals and open for us the way to heaven. Send us Your Holy Spirit to trust in Jesus' Words that He, the Lamb most worthy to be praised, truly gives us His true body and blood in Holy Communion to take away our sins. Be with us as we share in the prayer He taught us . . .

Lord's Prayer and Words of our Lord, and Peace of the Lord p. 209

Agnus Dei (*Lamb of God*) p. 210

Distribution Hymns:

"Awake, My Heart, with Gladness" – **Hymn #467**

"All the Earth with Joy Is Sounding" – **Hymn #462**

Song After Communion: Nunc Dimittis (*Song of Simeon*) p. 211

Prayer After Communion

P: Almighty God, You show the light of Your truth to those in darkness, to lead them into the way of righteousness. Give strength to all who are joined in the family of Your Church, so that they will resolutely reject what erodes their faith and firmly follow what faith requires, through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Benedicamus and Blessing: p.212

Closing Hymn: *"Christ the Lord is Risen Today; Alleluia"* - **Hymn #463**

Postlude: