

## Who Is Jesus?

On Sunday, we talked about the core essence of who Jesus is, using Revelation 4-5 as our guide.

1. Warm up question. Today's Scripture describes a magnificent worship experience in heaven. Tell us about one of the most memorable worship experiences you've ever had.
2. Read Revelation 4:1 – 5:14.
  - a. What detail in this vision (other than the appearance of Jesus) do you find most intriguing?
  - b. In verse 3, God is described as looking like “jasper and carnelian.” What would you guess God looked like in this vision? What did John see?
  - c. What's the significance of the rainbow over God's throne?
  - d. What might be the symbolic significance of the following details. (Hint: If you have a study Bible, take a look at the notes.)
    - Rev. 4:4 – the 24 elders
    - Rev. 4:5 – seven spirits of God (see Rev. 1:4)
    - Rev. 4:6 – the crystal sea of glass (see Exodus 24:10)
    - Rev. 4:6-8 – the 4 living creatures (why the different faces?)
    - Rev. 5:1 – the sealed scroll (see Rev. 4:1)
    - Rev. 5:6 – the 7 horns of the Lamb
    - Rev. 5:6 – the 7 eyes of the Lamb (Zechariah 4:10)
  - e. If you were to pick a word or phrase to describe this worship scene in heaven, what would it be? If you were there, what would you be feeling?
3. The climax of this worship scene is the appearance of Jesus in a stunning form.
  - a. Before Jesus appears, two other metaphors are used to describe him: Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Root of David. What might these two metaphors signify and symbolize about Jesus?
  - b. Jesus appears in the form of “a lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered.” Jeff used a picture on Sunday to help us imagine something like what John saw. See that picture on p. 3. How do you think the worshipers in heaven reacted when Jesus appeared in this form? What feelings do you imagine this evoked in them?
  - c. Jesus could have appeared on heaven's stage as the Lion of Judah or Kingly Heir to David. Why did he instead choose to appear as a severely wounded little lamb? What are we supposed to learn from this? What does it tell us about him?

- d. Henri Nouwen refers to Jesus as the “Wounded Healer.” What does that phrase mean to you? What are the characteristics of a “Wounded Healer”?
4. Jeff suggested two meanings we can draw from Jesus’ core identity as a severely wounded little lamb. The first is: “We do not serve a God whose existence has been so charmed as to be untouched by grinding suffering. We serve a God who understands suffering like only one who’s been there can.”
    - a. To the extent you’re comfortable, share something that has caused you great suffering?
    - b. How have your moments of greatest suffering affected how you feel about others who suffer?
    - c. Close your eyes. Think of yourself in the midst of one of your times of great suffering. Picture Jesus, the Wounded Healer, putting his arms around you, tears in his eyes, silently hugging you. Meditate on this image, in silence, for 30 seconds. Is there anything you’d like to share about what you just experienced?
  5. Jesus’ appearance as a wounded lamb, of course, reminds us of his crucifixion. This is a second meaning we can draw from John’s vision. Jeff said, “The greatest, most powerful, most transformational event in the history of humanity occurred when the Son of God, the Lion of Judah, the King of Kings, Root of David, laid aside all cosmic power, and became a meek, weak little lamb and, for the sake of his great love for us, allowed himself to suffer profoundly at our hands. Instead of fighting, he chose – deliberately and intentionally – the path of sacrificial love, knowing that by doing so he would release into the cosmos something far more powerful and transformational than even an army of angels could accomplish.” The point being: Only love has the power to transform evil, and we are called to live in that love. “Take up your cross and follow me.” Mark 8:34.
    - a. Jeff told the story of an historic conflict between two Irish families – the Butlers and Fitzgeralds – that gave rise to the phrase “chancing your arm.” Who is someone you’re in conflict with? What might it look like for you to “chance your arm” in that situation? What might happen if you did so?
    - b. Jeff also shared the story of an abused dog named Jasmine who, after being rescued and healed, has become a wounded healer of other animals – comforting and befriending puppies, a rabbit, a baby deer, even an owl. Who in your life needs you to be a wounded healer toward them? Are you ready to embrace that role?
    - c. Sacrificial love is the essence of who Christ was, and we are called to follow that same pattern in our lives – tapping into the power of sacrificial love, if we have enough faith. Close by reading Isaiah 53:1-12.

