

Worthy Is The Lord – Revelation 4:11

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *The Center Of Power*

1. In terms of Earthly-power, the *Oval Office* in the *White House* is probably the today's primary location.
2. With the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the United States emerged as the premier Super-power, and to this day, some 10 years later, our nation still sits as the leader in terms of military & economic power.
3. And the President, as the symbolic head of our country, sits in the seat of the greatest authority.
4. Nearly every person whose been in the Oval Office admits it was an awesome experience; there's a palpable *feeling* of power.

B. *The Nixon White House*

1. Charles Colson tells how things worked around the Nixon White House.
 - a. when some diplomat or favor-seeker was scheduled to visit the President, aides would take them on a tour of the White House *first* – showing them the complex arrangement of offices and all the staff working diligently on important issues.
 - b. then, as the time drew near for their appointment, they would be ushered past the Secret Service offices and introduced to a couple agents who would look them over with a practiced eye.
 - c. then they would be led down the final hall past the offices of well known advisors to the President.
 - d. Colson said that as each minute passed, you could see the apprehension and sense of smallness being pressed on the visitor.
 - e. then, duly humbled, they would pause outside the door to the Oval Office where they would be instructed on the proper etiquette to use when greeting and talking to the President of the United States of America.
 - f. Colson remarked that this routine nearly always reduced even the most arrogant and vocal visitor to a meek and quiet *spectator* who would walk in, mumble a greeting, have their picture taken shaking hands with Nixon, and then be ushered out.
2. Now – most of us have probably thought at one time or another how we'd like to sit down with President Bush and have a heart to heart chat.
 - a. we think about how good for him it would be to receive our counsel –
 - b. how we'd tell him a thing or two.
 - c. some of us would like to tell him we think he's doing a great job – keep it up!
 - d. others would like to make a few suggestions about foreign policy or how to better the economy.
3. But if somehow these rather absent-minded musings were to be miraculously granted and we suddenly found ourselves sitting in the Oval Office across from George W., we'd probably lose all nerve and forget everything we'd planned to say!
4. Why! – Because that's the President of the USA and this is the Oval Office, the power center of the world!

II. TEXT

A. *The Throne Room Of Heaven*

1. In Revelation 4, John tells us about his visit to the Oval Office of heaven.
2. He was on the island of Patmos, having been imprisoned there by the Emperor Diocletian.
3. And suddenly, instantly, he's caught up in the Spirit and finds himself standing in heaven.

4. In fact, not just heaven, but the very center of heaven – the throne room of God; the power-center of ALL CREATION!
5. You’ve seen pictures of the Oval Office in the White House and probably the most notable piece of furniture in it is that big desk behind which the President sits.
 - a. that desk is a *symbol* of his power
 - b. it’s the place all the work is made official!
6. John sees a piece of furniture – in fact, it’s the very first thing he describes – a throne.
7. And on the throne is One who is so awesome, all John can do is describe the light that radiates from His presence.
8. Then his vision widens out and he sees what’s *around* the throne;
 - a. he sees 24 *lesser* thrones, occupied by *elders*
 - b. in our study last Wednesday we saw that these elders represent *all of God’s people* in all ages.
 - c. hovering around the central throne are 4 *living ones* that from the book of Ezekiel we learn are called *Cherubim*
 - d. they’re heavenly beings of great intelligence and ability.
 - e. and they are constantly engaged in a unique occupation –

B. V. 8

The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!”

1. We took a look at this last Wednesday, but I want to return to it this morning because we find something *crucial* here –
2. Without pause or ceasing the cherubim say -

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!”

3. If the Bible says something *once*, it’s important.
 - a. if it’s *repeated*, it’s of *special* emphasis.
 - b. but when we find something spoken *three times* in succession – it’s elevated to a place of primacy!
4. God is Holy!!! This is the *main declaration* of the cherubim, of those *living ones* who surround God’s throne and constantly behold His glory.
5. Day and night, without rest they say the same thing over and over - **“Holy, holy, holy.”**
 - a. and *never* is it with a sense of mere duty
 - b. they do not say this because it’s their *job*; as though this was some kind of assignment –
 - c. “Here stand here and say this over and over again *ad nauseum* – ‘Holy, holy, holy.’”
 - d. no – this is the heart-felt and sincere cry of the cherubim,
 - 1) for every moment, they are realizing something *even more* praiseworthy about God.
 - 2) because God is *infinite*, the wonders of His grace and glory confront them with *more* reasons to worship.
6. Last Wednesday evening in the Q & A there was a question – Will we still *learn* in heaven?
 - a. the answer to that is, *certainly*!
 - b. human beings are by nature *finite* – we don’t know everything.
 - c. yet God is *infinite* – which means our experience of God in heaven will never grow stale, never get boring.
 - d. there will always be *more* to learn about God,
 - 1) more of His love and grace to enjoy
 - 2) more of His truth to search out
 - 3) more of His glory to honor
 - 4) more of His wisdom to be amazed by
 - 5) and more of His holiness to worship.

7. This is the experience of the cherubim, of those unique living ones whose very existence is tied to the throne of God – they are unceasing in their awe of God – and it comes forth as their heart-felt worship in the words – “**Holy, holy, holy!**”

C. Holy Is The Lord

1. The word “holy” means set-apart.
 - a. when we say something, like a human being or a piece of furniture in the temple, is holy, we mean it’s set apart from everyday use for the special purposes and service of God.
 - b. the ark of the covenant was holy, the table of showbread was holy, the golden altar and garments of the high priest were holy because they were only to be used in worship.
 - c. when God calls us as His people to *be holy*, He means that we’re to distance ourselves from the sin and base pursuits of rebellious mankind and give ourselves without reservation to Him.
2. But when we talk about the *Holiness of God*, we mean something a bit different.
 - a. it still means to be separate, set-apart –
 - b. but God’s holiness refers to the fact that He is *wholly other*.
 - c. His existence is on a completely different level from the rest of creation.
 - d. He is the Creat**OR** and all else is the creat**ED**.
 - e. and in His holiness, He is the SUM of perfection.
 - 1) He is all-wise, all-powerful, all-present
 - 2) everything good and right finds its origin and inspiration in Him.
 - 3) the very essence of all that is lovely, attractive and beautiful, is summed up in Him.
 - f. Psalm 29:2 says –

Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

- 1) the holiness of God is an awesome, beautiful thing
- 2) when at last we stand before the throne as John was here in Revelation 4 we’ll realize that the most beautiful things we’ve ever seen on earth were but dim and imperfect reflections of the beauty of God.
3. And so the cherubim constantly cry out -

Holy! Holy! Holy! • Lord! God! Almighty! • Who was and is and is to come!

D. A Truth To Be Emphasized

1. The *holiness* of God is a truth that needs to be emphasized in the Church today!
2. It needs to be emphasized because there are not-so subtle forces at work in our culture that have infiltrated the church and are seeking to cloud our vision of God.
3. I’m referring to the influence of what is known as *existentialism*.
 - a. men like Jean Paul Sartre and Soren Kierkegaard led the attack on the idea of Truth.
 - b. they said that no one can really know what is true – you can only be true to yourself!
 - c. so whatever you desire, whatever you *want* to be true is true for you
 - d. and in order to be a person of integrity, you must chose that!
 - e. we see how existentialism plays out in the main slogan of the 60’s, “If it feels good, do it!”
 - f. it doesn’t matter any longer if something is true, only if it *feels good*.
 - g. in fact, truth has become whatever feels good, whatever works.
4. Existentialism has had a negative impact on the Christian faith in that people look to God more as a therapeutic solution to their guilt and depression than as Redeemer and Savior.
 - a. God becomes *cosmic Prozac*, a deity to make them feel happy –
 - b. rather than the Sovereign Creator whose aim is to make them holy so they can fulfill their destiny as His creatures.
5. Existentialism turns everything around and makes God the *means of our happiness*.
6. The song of the cherubim reminds us that God does not exist for us – we exist for Him and His

glory!

7. Our true happiness is contained in *joining their song!*
8. Look at what happens –

E. Vs. 9-11

- 9 **Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,**
- 10 **the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:**
- 11 **“You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”**

1. When the cherubim worship God, which is continually, then the 24 elders who represent God’s people of all ages, also worship.
 - a. they leave their thrones and fall on their faces, taking off their crowns and casting them at the feet of God.
 - b. these crowns speak of their rewards for the faithful service they performed for God while on Earth.
2. What I want to focus on is the *song* they sing.
3. Chapters 4 & 5 are John’s vision of heaven.
 - a. and 5 times in these 2 chapters he witnesses the hosts of heaven *worshipping* God.
 - b. each time it’s a larger group.
 - c. first it’s the cherubim, then here it’s the 24 elders.
 - d. then it’s the cherubim **&** the 24 elders.
 - e. then it’s 10, 000 times 10, 000 of the angels
 - f. and finally it’s *every* creature in all creation.
4. From chapter 6 through 19, as John describes the judgments that will come upon the earth during the Tribulation, he gives us little snapshots of what’s going on in heaven during that time,
 - a. and nearly every time we see one of these heavenly vignettes, what do you suppose the hosts of heaven are doing?
 - b. they’re worshipping God! [\[1\]](#)
5. You don’t have to be a genius or Bible scholar to figure out that the primary occupation of those in heaven is **WORSHIP!**
 - a. but please don’t think of that worship like the worship we so often engage in.
 - b. we meet here at 8/9:30/11:15; the band comes out and leads us in a few songs.
 - c. if we know them, we sing along, if not, we listen and try to pick it up.
 - d. I know there are some folk who don’t sing – ever.
 - 1) for whatever reason they just never open their mouths and sing - they don’t even hum.
 - 2) they just stand or sit and listen; never participating in worship
 - 3) maybe they’re unsure of their voice and think it too poor to sing out.
 - 4) listen – God isn’t concerned with whether or not you can carry a tune – He looks on the heart.
 - 5) you might say – “Maybe God doesn’t care, but what about the person in the next seat or row?”
 - 6) I remember being at CCCM one night many years ago with a friend from work.
 - a) she was as tone deaf as a log
 - b) but she loved God and when we sang, she belted it out – and it was, well, hideous!
 - c) people would turn around and look at her with this expression of “What in the world?!”

- d) but one look at the sincere adoration on her face, with her hands in the air, and a smile of joy on her lips and they felt the immediate rebuke of the Holy Spirit.
- e) God was well-please with her worship – even if it sounded like a cat pinned under the wheel of a cement truck.

- 7) and may I say – hearing her worship with such abandon, encouraged those with better voices to sing all the louder and worship all the more intensely!
- 6. The worship of heaven will be significantly different from what *we* call worship.
 - a. we won't line up before God's throne at 8/9:30/11:15 and then when Gabriel starts strumming the harp we'll sing some slow dirge!
 - b. when we see God, we'll be moved with an irresistible urge to worship!
 - c. it'll rise up from within us and come out in the most eloquent and beautiful sounds.
 - d. those who are tone deaf will sing like Andrea Boccelli or Sarah Brightman!
 - e. and we won't depend on song sheets, overheads, or LCD projection!
 - d. the words will come from our hearts as the perfect expression of what we're thinking and feeling.
 - e. and as we articulate them, we'll realize we've joined a grand choir of the heavenly host, all singing one majestic piece of worship that in itself is a thing of august beauty.
- 7. Look here at what the elders sing –

You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power;

- a. the emphasis is on the first word – “YOU!”
- b. “You are worthy O Lord! YOU!!!!”
- c. for centuries, rebel man has turned his attention to all the things God *made* or that he's made with his own hands.
- d. ever since the Fall, mankind has withheld from God the glory and honor due Him,
- e. and instead spent it on petty, vain, and worthless things.
- f. men and women have worshipped the creature more than the Creator.
- g. they've built stadiums, theaters, and vast arenas all so they could honor & applaud the performance of some actor or athlete.
 - glory has been heaped on a man or owman
- h. but throughout the generations, they've not given God His due.
- i. “No longer,” the elders say, “For here we are to worship—here we are to bow down, here we are to say that You're our God.”
- j. “You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy, altogether wonderful to me!”
- k. and that “me” will be taken up into a mighty “us” as they are joined by all of creation.
- 8. Look at the reason they worship -

For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.

- a. they worship because God is the Creator
- b. and as Creator, He has the *right* to the worship of the creation.
- c. in fact, here we learn *why* God created it all in the first place – because He willed it!
- 9. Really, the Old King James translation is preferred at this point because it gives us the proper *understanding* of the words –

Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

- 10. God's will IS His pleasure!
 - a. the creation was brought into being by God and for God!
 - b. and it exists FOR Him.
 - c. He is both its origin and its object.
- 11. As Paul says in Colossians 1:16

All things were created through Him and for Him.

12. As you well know, there's a tremendous debate today between Creation & evolution.
 - a. the problem with the debate is – it doesn't really deal with the issues of origins as it claims to.
 - b. you see, even if we grant the evolutionist his premise, he still hasn't answered the biggest issue of all – "Where did it all come from?"
 - c. "The Big Bang they say." But a big bang requires something there to go "bang!"
 - d. where did it come from?
13. Logic and reason dictate that there is Something that has always been; something that owns it's own existence. "Who was & is & is to come."
 - a. and this something must be all-powerful in that it gave rise to everything else! "Almighty"
 - b. oh! And it must be fundamentally *different* from all that it made because it made it! "Holy, holy, holy"
 - c. and since the stuff that was made possesses complex levels of design and information, then that something that made it must possess an infinitely higher degree of intelligence –
 - d. It must be a PERSON! "Lord God"
14. The Cherubim cry out -

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

15. And the elders join in –

You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.

16. Heaven is a place filled with worship.
 - a. and whenever we worship God here on earth – we make that place an outpost, and alcove of heaven.
 - b. do you want your home to be more heaven-like – worship God there.
 - c. if you lament the worldliness of your workplace? Worship at work!
 - d. do you regret the godlessness of your school? What can keep you from worshipping God there?
 - 1) let the school boards pass their rules
 - 2) let them ban prayer and religious discussion
 - 3) God's glory cannot be regulated by the ordinances of man and no one can stop you from worshipping God!

III. CONCLUSION

A. *You Are Here For Him!*

1. As we end today, let's personalize v. 11.
2. "You are worthy O Lord, to receive **MY** glory and honor and power – because You created **ME**: **I** came into being and continue to exist for Your pleasure!"
3. "In fact, not only I, but as I look around and see all these other people, and all this wide world, I realize that all of it exists – for YOU! For YOUR PLEASURE, for Your glory, for Your honor!"
4. "So, am I living that way, for Your pleasure – or do I live for my *own* pleasure, heedless of the glory, honor and pleasure of my Creator?"
5. "Do I treat other people and use the things of this world with the awareness that it's all *about* and *for* You?"
6. Since we exist for God's pleasure, the way to true satisfaction and pleasure for us is to seek and worship Him!
7. This is built into the very fiber and core of our being.
8. Since we exist for God's pleasure, we will never know true contentment and fulfillment until we have been restored to fellowship with Him.

B. *The Longing*

1. There is deep in the heart of every man and woman a passionate longing to know who they are and why they are here.
2. It's the lingering echo of the Creation and the voice of God calling us to Himself.
3. But sin has twisted the call and the world has designed and placed before us many distractions which all aim at keeping us from discovering the true purpose for our lives.
4. We go through life buying in to the distractions of the world, its many promises of satisfaction and fulfillment.
5. But none of them truly satisfy; fame, power, wealth, romance, sex, or possessions --
6. They all prove to be fun *diversions*, but none of them answer the deepest longing of our hearts.
7. And all they end up doing is mocking that desire to know who we are and why we're here.
8. We are here, YOU are here to know God and to worship Him forever!

[1] Rev. 4:8, 11; 5:9-13; 7:12-17; 11:15-18; 12:10-12; 15:3-4; 16:5-7; 18:2-8; 19:2-6