

Sermon Discussion Guide

February 25, 2024

Revelation 5:1-14

“Grace, Gratitude, and Generosity” (Hope Overflowing Sermon Series)

Hope is continuing a sermon series alongside our Hope Overflowing Initiative. We are looking together at what the Bible has to say about why and how we spend what we are given (our time, money, abilities, etc).

We’re spending 6 weeks tracing how *God’s grace* stirs up *our gratitude*, and how this gratitude overflows into *generosity*- a generosity poured out into this world and into the lives of others. These are actions we’re calling “grace, gratitude, and generosity.” This 3rd Sunday we will look at what gratitude looks like.

Leader’s Notes:

(1) Even if you’re familiar with the Bible, this passage can feel very different. As you pay attention to the scene John describes, the sights and sounds can and should feel overwhelming. In this chapter of the Book of Revelation God pushes back the curtain: He wants us to see the more glorious, heavenly reality at work- above and behind the everyday world we live in.

A poet who converted to Christianity later in his adult life (T.S. Eliot) puts the point of Revelation Chapter 5 beautifully: “To believe in the supernatural is not simply to believe that after living a successful, material, and fairly virtuous life here one will continue to exist in the best-possible substitute for this world, or that after living a starved and stunted life here one will be compensated with all the good things one has gone without: it is to believe that the supernatural is the greatest reality here and now.”

(2) Please read through all the questions ahead of time. You will need to be selective, and not ask all the questions. There are more than a healthy discussion can handle.

Also, the un-bolded and un-numbered questions that are indented-to-the-right and below are meant as follow-up questions for the main questions that are bolded and numbered. Use the follow up questions if the main question are too difficult or too easy, or to take the conversation deeper.

Examine. Taking a closer look at the passage

Read aloud Revelation 5:6-14 two times, each time in different translations.

1. What is one emotion that hearing this passage twice made you feel?

- Did you feel something different the first versus the second reading?
- Was there a feeling you had that changed based on the translation you read?
- What other emotions do you feel about this scene?

2. What seems like the main idea or take-away in your own words?
 - Or, why do you feel like God included this passage in the Bible?
 - What do you think Revelation 5:6-14 has to do with the week you just had or your week coming up?

Discuss. Studying the passage (using the sermon) to observe and interpret

± Apply. Making the connection from thinking to action, from their lives to ours

3. Imagine this scene's setting: the Lamb of God (with 7 horns and 7 eyes) standing between a heavenly throne and 4 living creatures as well as among 24 elders.
How do you square this heavenly reality with what you feel and hear on an average Monday at 2pm?
 - Which feels more real: the heaven described by John or your office or home?
 - Why does one feel more real than another? (And if so, is that true?)
4. How could John's vision of a simultaneous heavenly reality change our lived reality?
 - What does this glorious and strange picture do to our repetitive, ordinary moments?
 - What do our repetitive, ordinary moments do to this glorious, strange vision?
5. In this scene the Lamb of God (Jesus) is found worthy to open the scroll with its seven seals. Using Sunday's sermon, what is significant about the scroll?
 - What's in the scroll?
 - What is the scroll about?
6. If the scroll reveals God's sovereign plan for history (how God is purchasing a people for Himself by Jesus' self-sacrifice), why does that matter for your life?
 - Where are you in that story?
 - How can that storyline shape how you live on Monday at 2pm?
7. Verses 9-14 describe 3 praises of Jesus in a row: the song of the elders and 4 living creatures, the saying of the thousands of angels, and the saying of every creature in heaven, on earth, and under the sea. Pick the prayer of praise that you'd like to say or sing to God right now. Now say it or sing it to God.
8. Why do you think you chose that particular prayer to say or sing to God?

- What is going on in your life that you thought of as you picked that prayer or expressed it to God?
 - How did worshipping God in light of that circumstance or relationship change your perspective on it?
- 9. The three prayers describe King Jesus as worthy and the God who gives himself away. What do you think it means to befriend and follow this kind of God?**
- How can you imitate Jesus' self-sacrifice with your life right now?
 - Pick an area of your life that you feel especially blessed in. What would it look like to practice Jesus' self-sacrifice in that area of life?
- 10. Revelation 5 tells us the secret to true happiness: "it is more blessed to give than receive." Why is that so hard for you to believe?**
- How does the biblical story of Jesus (ending in resurrection and ascension) push against our doubts?
 - How does the following quote- from a non-Christian perspective- push against on what we believe instead: *"All of the data points to the undisputable fact that we would all be happier if we were more generous but...our lying minds keep telling us to spend our money on ourselves!"* (Dr. Laurie Santos, Happiness Lab)

Prayer. How does this topic or passage lead me to pray and how can we pray for each other?

- Are there specific ways that God has reminded you of His forgiveness?
 - Take a few moments to name those people, places, and times to God.
 - And give thanks for them and for God using them in your life.
- Ask God: how can I worship You with what I've been given?
 - King Jesus, how can I better use my time in this season?
 - King Jesus, how can I better use my money in this season?
 - King Jesus, how can I better use my abilities in this season?
- Pray again the prayer you chose earlier (in Question 7) from Revelation Chapter 5.