

Seven Summits: Elevating Our Worship Life
Part Seven: Worship Humbly
Revelation 4.1-11

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Here's the question I want us to wrestle with this morning. It may sound like a theoretical question, but it's actually a question we all try to answer every single day.

The question we're wrestling with is . . . God has given us amazing capacity as human beings: initiative, freedom, power, potential, ability, capacity. As it says in Psalm 8, we are only a little lower than the most glorious heavenly beings, and we are crowned with glory and honor.

What is the right way to think about all of that power and potential, all of that capability and capacity, we have as a human being?

Why do we have that power?

How do we faithfully exercise that power?

The Scriptures recognize this amazing capacity and ability that we have as human beings, and trace it back to the God who created us as image bearers. When God first created humanity, the creation account says God called humanity, the crown of his creation, to *rule* over the earth.

Genesis 1.27-28

God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. *Rule* over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

That word "rule" in Genesis 1 is meant to capture our God-given capacity to influence our world and the various arenas in the world that we occupy.

When we rule, we are exercising *dominion* – power, influence – over a *domain* – a sphere, a realm.

Think of the various domains, the various "rooms," in which we exercise dominion. Here are a few of many examples:

Untitled Slide: Our View of Reality

classroom conference room family room
locker room board room waiting room chat room
play room bedroom work room

Which are the rooms, which are the domains, in which you exercise your rule?

For some people, this is the basic frame of reference they carry with them through life. There's me, and there are the various domains in which I live and move and have my being. And that's it.

You could call this the graduation speech version of reality. It has no reference point outside of us.

"You have limitless potential. You can be whatever you want to be! The sky's the limit. Follow your dreams! Go for it!"

But is that the most faithful way for me to understand my life and my capacities?

What is the right way for us to think about the God-given power and potential we have as human beings in each of these various arenas of our lives?

More to the point . . . is there some point of reference outside of myself, something deeper or truer than me, that should inform the way I live within these domains in which I exercise my dominion?

Modern science is obsessed with discovering the unseen reality that lies behind the world we see and experience.

Think of the herculean efforts made to understand ultimate reality, like the Hadron collider at CERN, over five miles across, buried under the city of Geneva, or the Webb Space telescope in an orbit that is almost a million miles from the earth – both designed to help us see into the deepest unseen reality of things.

But the Bible points us in a different direction in order to understand the unseen realities that lie at the heart of existence.

Throughout the scriptures, from the front cover to the back, we encounter glimpses of the truest reality of all . . .

Shielding Eyes from Light



Unfolding glimpses and hints and foretastes, all seeking to capture something beyond our seeing and beyond our imagining . . .

These are not glimpses of something that comes later – earth now, then heaven when we die.

And these are not glimpses of some spiritual realm separate from our physical world.

No, these are glimpses of eternal reality, truer than and deeper than and behind and over and defining of all other reality.

Listen to these glimpses . . .

Exodus 24.9-10

⁹ Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up
¹⁰ and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as bright blue as the sky.

Psalms 99.1-5

¹ The LORD reigns,
 he sits enthroned between the cherubim,
 let the earth shake.
⁴ The King is mighty . . .
⁵ Exalt the LORD our God
 and worship at his footstool;
 he is holy.

Isaiah 6.1-8

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

Ezekiel 1.22-28 (also 10.1,4)

²² Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked like a vault, sparkling like crystal, and awesome. . . . ²⁶ Above the vault over their heads was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. ²⁷ From what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. ²⁸ Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.

Daniel 7.9-14

⁹ “As I looked,
“thrones were set in place,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.
His clothing was as white as snow;
the hair of his head was white like wool.
His throne was flaming with fire,
¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing,
coming out from before him.
Thousands upon thousands attended him;
ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

Then finally . . . the passage we’re looking at today, from the Book of Revelation.

For many of us the Book of Revelation is a baffling mystery, but it doesn’t need to be. It’s just a wide angle view of human history that uses symbolism to convey truth.

When we approach the book, we often try to figure out what it means in terms of time – what happens *when*. But I think it is more helpful if we start by trying to understand what it means in terms of place - what happens *where*.

The Book of Revelation is a two-views way of seeing the world: it captures in the beginning and end, in chapters 1 through 3 and in 22, what we see with our eyes, in this realm of life and death, in our physical this-world experience, where it isn’t always obvious that there is order or purpose to life.

Then in the middle chapters, in chapters 4 through 21, it takes us further in, and lets us see through to the deeper reality of existence, to see things as they really are.

Here’s how chapter four begins.

Revelation 4.1-2

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

What unseen reality lies at the heart of the universe?

Not quarks and bosons, not black holes and dark matter. But a throne room.

In case we have any question about what the theme of this passage is, a quick count reveals that the word "throne" is repeated ten times in these eleven verses.

Here is the defining center of reality. Verse two: "there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it."

The most important *place* in existence is not any of those small rooms that we busy ourselves in as human beings, but the heavenly throne room

And the most important *person* in existence is not me, or any of us, or all of us together, but God who is on the throne

All other reality is defined by that reality, and all other rule by that rule.

Untitled Slide: A True View of Reality

THRONE ROOM

classroom conference room family room
locker room board room waiting room chat room
play room bedroom work room

The only way I can properly understand my gifts, my capacities, my life, is if I see myself and my dominion, and I see the various domains in which I rule, beneath the One who sits on the throne. And what a One he is!

Revelation 4.3

And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne.

It wasn't uncommon to compare glimpses of God's glory to the brilliance of gems and precious stones. As we saw in our series on God's encounter with his people at Mt

Sinai, biblical writers who have visions of spiritual realities always grope to find some earthly point of reference to give at least a hint of the wonders they have seen.

Revelation 4.4

Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.

Numbers in the Book of Revelation almost always have symbolic meaning.

Clearly the twenty four elders are representative of all of God's redeemed people, twelve representing the tribes of Israel, and twelve representing the disciples of Christ, all of them together, in a sort of federal way, representing the entire new humanity, God's redeemed people.

The thrones they sit on and the crowns they wear are symbols of humanity's rule over creation described in Genesis 1.

Revelation 4.5-6

From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

Lightning and thunder hearken back to Mt Sinai and the first glimpse we're given into the heavenly throne room.

The seven lamps are a symbol for the one Holy Spirit. Seven is the divine number. It comes from the seven days of creation.

So God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, is seated on the throne. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is present before the throne.

And in chapter five of the Book of Revelation the second person of the Trinity, Jesus, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, enters the throne room and takes his place, in the middle of the throne. Check out verses 6-12 in chapter 5 when you have a moment.

The sea of glass is one of the most fascinating symbols in the whole book. Many scholars trace this back to the wash basin in front of the tabernacle and the temple, which was called "the sea."

But I think it should be connected back to the creation story in Genesis. In the ancient world water was called the Abyss. Bodies of water were feared; they were understood as the realm of chaos and of evil and of death.

In the starting moments of creation, in Genesis chapter 1, God drives back the chaotic waters and plants his creation, the expression of his order and his rule, right in the middle of them.

Then, throughout redemptive history, God is always displaying his power over the abyss, parting it and leading his people through it in the Old Testament, and walking across the top of it in the New Testament.

I believe the Sea represents the forces of chaos and evil and death in creation. The fact that the Sea is before the throne shows God's rule extending even over all that is turned against him. In Revelation 20, we're told that at the end of human history, all evil, and all who are given over to evil, will be thrown into the Sea, and then at the start of the new creation, in Revelation 21, we're told that there is no more Sea – one of the most powerful and hopeful lines in all of Scripture.

Revelation 4.6-8

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings.

In many of the Old Testament visions of the throne room we are given figurative descriptions of angelic beings who surround God's throne and serve him night and day. They are called cherubim in the Psalms and seraphim in Isaiah.

The number four is associated with the four corners of the world or the four winds. It is meant to convey the entirety of creation. So these four, with their different features, are meant to represent together every single angelic being who honors and serves God throughout existence.

Revelation 4.8

Day and night they never stop saying:

“Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.”

Remember “holy” doesn't just mean morally perfect, though it certainly includes that. It means set apart from and set above everything else. What is holy occupies a separate realm from the rest of existence. It is distinctive, separate, transcendent, unlike anything else that is.

In Hebrew, repeating something three times was a way of giving it the greatest possible emphasis. It was like underlining it and highlighting it and italicizing it.

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty’ – it’s the same phrase the angels call out in the heavenly vision in Isaiah 6 – “who was and is and is to come,” – not just expressing that he is eternal, that he has always existed, but that he is always present, another way of saying that he is the great “I Am.”

Revelation 4.9-10

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever.

Because the angelic beings never stop worshiping God, night and day, that means the echoing worship of God’s people is unceasing.

And they aren’t just standing and singing along with a chorus or sitting and listening to an anthem.

It says they “fall down before him and worship him.” It’s not a coincidence that this pair of words is by far the most common expression for worship in Scripture.

It means flattening yourself in front of a king, getting down on your hands and knees, with your forehead to the ground, as an expression of:

worship – “You are rightly above me in a position of glory and majesty”
and submission – “I rightly place myself beneath you in a posture of humility and self-diminishment”
and service – “Every part of my life is relinquished and available to you.”

Without ceasing, the people of God throw themselves down from their thrones, utterly submitted to the King on the throne, their lives yielded up, turned over, to Him.

Have you ever actually gotten down on your hands and knees and put your forehead on the ground before God in that way? If you haven’t, and if you have for that matter, I really want to encourage you to do it before the sun goes down today. You’re welcome to do it this morning in worship if you want.

This is one of those passages that really challenges the world’s way of thinking about what happens when we die. I’ve heard so many people say something like, “Gosh, we sure will miss Sam, but we know he’s in a better place, and someday we’ll get to be with him again.”

As though heaven were a park with a bunch of people sitting around in folding chairs patiently waiting for their loved ones to arrive so they can get on with their family reunions, Smith Family Reunion here, Jones Family Reunion over here, and God not really anywhere in the picture.

No, *this* is what heaven is like. The essence of heaven is a throne room, where God is seated on the throne, and all of creation ceaselessly bows before him.

But that is not just the essence of heaven. That is the essence of *reality*, the heart of existence, the truest of all things:

Crown Logo

God is on the throne. That's why we use a crown as our logo as a church. Everything else about our church spills out from this one reality, that God is on the throne.

Revelation 4.10-11

They lay their crowns before the throne and say:
"You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being."

Laying your crown before a king was a familiar symbolic gesture in the ancient world. As one of many examples, Tiridates, the Prince of Parthia, bowed down and laid his crown at the foot of Nero in 63AD, symbolizing his submitting to the Emperor's rule.

Casting Crowns logo



The redeemed people of God don't just lay their crowns down at the foot of the throne. The text says they cast them. They throw them there. They cannot put them at God's feet fast enough. Why?

Because they see God clearly, and they clearly see what he deserves.

You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,

This isn't just a philosophical statement: God is worthy of humanity's worship. It is an expression of personal devotion and allegiance. God, you are worthy of *my* worship!

The one who is just a little lower than the heavenly beings, and crowned with glory and honor, and is called to rule over creation, gets down on his face, and says to the one who is seated on the throne:

You are worthy to receive glory.

According to Augustine, our lives boil down to the way we answer a single question: who gets the glory? In his book *The City of God*, he writes:

There can only be two basic loves. There is a love of God that leads to a forgetfulness of self, and a love of self that leads to a forgetfulness of God.

The former, in a word, glories in itself; the latter in the Lord. For the one seeks glory from [human beings]; but the greatest glory of the other is God.

You are worthy to receive honor.

II Corinthians 5.9 says,
For the sake of God's honor we aspire to please him.

Honoring God is prizing him, cherishing him, treasuring him, seeing him as the greatest thing we have, and living in a way that reflects that and helps others prize him as well.

And *You are worthy to receive power.*

I was always curious about how this one got into the line-up. Glory and honor I get. But power?

Then I realized studying the passage this week that the word for power in Greek is directly related to the word for rule, in just the same way that dynamite and dynasty are related.

God has called us as human beings to rule, to exercise our power and initiative and creativity and influence in the various domains in which we live and move.

But when we see through to the deepest realities of this world, when we glimpse God on his throne, we realize that the only right way to exercise our rule is from our knees, relinquished before God, our lives yielded up, seeking to bring him glory and honor through the way we exercise our dominion in the various domains in which we exercise our rule.

God calls us to rule even as he rules over us. Throughout the ages conquering kings have defeated rivals, and then, having conquered them, placed them back on the throne

as tributaries, vassal kings, free to exercise their rule as long as they give their ultimate allegiance to the conquering king. That's exactly what goes on here, as you look at this sweeping perspective from Genesis to Revelation. God calls us to rule. God calls us to be ruled.

Each of those rooms in which we live out our calling to rule – the classroom, the locker room, the board room, the family room, and so on – each of those presents a choice. Is this an arena in which my rule will be about my glory and honor, about my rule, or will it be about the glory and honor of the one who rules over me?

The Scriptures tell the story of the choice Herod Agrippa made in Acts chapter 12.

An envoy from the neighboring regions of Tyre and Sidon came to seek an audience with Herod.

Acts 12.19-23:

²¹ On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. [It obviously was overwhelming to the visitors, because] ²² They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." ²³ Immediately, *because Herod did not give praise to God*, an angel of the Lord struck him down.

Herod carried out his rule in a way that denied ultimate reality.

As you think about your influence in your home, your work, your school, does your dominion over the various domains reflect the ultimate reality that God is on the throne?

Every Sunday morning, when we gather for worship, we reenact Revelation 4.

Worship together, in person, is so important, because we realign our lives to what is truest of all. We recalibrate our lives to reality, remembering that God is on the throne.

Because we don't live in a monarchy, with a king or queen ruling over us, it might not occur to us that a church sanctuary is meant to echo the architecture of a throne room.

When we enter into worship, we approach God as subjects approaching our king, coming together to honor God as the one seated on the throne in our midst.

Seeing him high and lifted up, seated on the throne, we are reminded again what is true, that God is worthy of our worship. We join with all God's heavenly servants through all of creation in bringing him the glory and honor and thanksgiving that are his due.

And, as part of worship, we bring him ourselves. We slip down off our throne once again, flattening ourselves before him, throwing our crown at his feet, laying our lives before him in a fresh act of relinquishment and submission, bringing all that we are and all that we have back under his rule and reign.

God is on the throne. Would you join me in worshiping him now?

As we do that, you are welcome to stand, remain seated, raise your hands, kneel, get on your face on the ground before God.

Lord God Almighty, our king, we bow down, we hail you as king, we give you everything.

Closing Songs

You are Worthy of My Praise

I will worship (I will worship)
With all of my heart (with all of my heart)
I will praise You (I will praise You)
With all of my strength (all my strength)
I will seek You (I will seek You)
All of my days (all of my days)
And I will follow (I will follow)
All of Your ways (all Your ways)

I will give You all my worship
I will give You all my praise
You alone I long to worship
You alone are worthy of my praise

I will bow down (I will bow down)
Hail You as king (hail You as king)
And I will serve You (I will serve You)
Give You everything (give You everything)
I will lift up (I will lift up)
My eyes to Your throne (my eyes to Your throne)
And I will trust You (I will trust You)
I will trust You alone (trust You alone)

We Fall Down

We fall down
We lay our crowns
At the feet of Jesus
The greatness of
Mercy and love
At the feet of Jesus
And we cry holy, holy, holy
We cry holy, holy, holy
We cry holy, holy, holy
Is the lamb
We fall down
We lay our crowns
At the feet of Jesus
The greatness of
Your mercy and love
At the feet of Jesus
And we cry holy, holy, holy
We cry holy, holy, holy
We cry holy, holy, holy
Is the lamb

Chris – rotates off serving as the chair of the Mission partnership Team
Beth – stepping down from supporting the wide swath of ministry we support in the middle east and north africa

Chris, you jumped into a daunting task in with eagerness
Gathering together a dedicated team
Leading with great energy and enthusiasm
You have served faithfully, unwaveringly,

Our glory and honor and thanksgiving rises before the throne echoes through the sanctuary. And

That's part of why we say that the offering is one of the most important parts of the service. It's the time set aside to say, "All that I am I lay at your feet. All that I have is yours."

If you are joining us online, we love that you are with us, but you can only partially experience at best the reenactment that we share together.

It also teaches that as long as we look only at ourselves and our small domains, we will have a distorted understanding of our own importance.

Go

Worthy: worship = worthship, deserving of, warranting of, what is rightly his:

Not a neutral truth statement, an action statement
Worthy to receive not just "the world's" praise, praise in general
Not a philosophical statement but an act of praise

Worthy to receive glory, honor, and power from *me*, from *us*
This is what is rightly due you and I give it to you now

Glory: his gravity, his reputation, his being known – we live to be forgotten, we live that he would be remembered

Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory. Psalm 115.1
Your name and your renown are the desires of our hearts. Isaiah 26.8
I will not share my glory with any other. Isaiah 42.8
I jealously guard my holy reputation! Ezekiel 39.25
As it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." I Corinthians 1.31
I seek to live in a way that increases your reputation and not my own.

Robert Melick, in his book, *The Glory of God*, gets at the heart of what it means in practical terms to live for God's glory:

Our ultimate destiny as Christians is to contribute to God's glory. . . . The primary concern of Christian people is furthering God's reputation. (100)

Honor: seeking to please him, NT word for ambition is "seek-honor", we have made it our seek-God's-honor to share the good news"

Worthy to be valued, esteemed, treasured, above all others

I prize you, I value you, above all others and all else.

So II Corinthians 5.9

In order to bring honor to God we aspire to please him, whether at home or away.

Power: capacity to carry out something

Related to the word "dynasty" – ruler, sovereign

I place my rule under your rule

My domains under your dominion

for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being."

You created all that is: it exists by your decision, your choice

Sustains all that is: it exists by your act of creation

By your will = for your pleasure = for your sake

I don't exist by my own choice, for my own sake

I exist by your choice and for your sake

This brings us into the Psalm 8 paradox of what the bible teaches about us as human beings

On the one hand, symbolized by crowns and throne, we rule

On the other hand, symbolized by thrones vacated and crowns thrown down, before another throne and crown, we are ruled over

Our domains are brought under his dominion, our rule under his

You in your place is inadequate view of reality

God in his place over me in my place is the heart of a faithful view of reality

The height of human arrogance is when we deny that reality and seek to hold onto our own throne and crown

Example Herod

We reenact that every time we gather to worship
The sanctuary is meant to hint at the heavenly throne room
We join around the throne and bow in worship

X: the throne room of Constantine in Trier from the fourth century looks just like a church basilica

“The Image of the Throne Room” by Albrecht Durer



Then the story goes on in chapter 5, bringing Jesus into the heavenly throne room alongside the Father and the Spirit

Last time I was with you I told you about a conversation I had on the plane a couple of weeks ago with a really bright and reflective young woman who has been struggling with her Christian faith. We talked for three hours straight, from before we took off to after we landed, and it was such a rich conversation.

At one point in the conversation I said something like.

“I always find it interesting when people say something like, “If that’s what God is like, I don’t want to believe in that kind of God.” Well, yeah, but that’s what God is like. Doesn’t it make more sense to change your view of your life and adjust it to reality than to deny reality?”

“It seems to me the question of authority is the key spiritual question of the age. Will I submit to what is real? To what is true? Or will I just try to opt out of it and live life on my own terms?”

"I mean, I don't like the idea of being mortal, but I *am* mortal. I'm going to die some day. Doesn't it make more sense to come to a place where I happily accept the fact that I'm going to die?"

She laughed and said,

"I'm never going to be happy about being mortal!"

I laughed too.

"Fair enough. Wrong way to say that."

Then I said,

"Same goes with God. If that's what God is like, I want to learn how to relate to God as he is, not as I wish he was."

And then, in a moment of incredible candor, she laughed and said,

"But sometimes I like to ignore reality!"

The paradoxical biblical view of humanity

On the one hand

Incredibly gifted powerful free capable

Kings over our own dominions

On the other hand

All subject to the one true king

Created to be ruled over by God

Created to serve him – to be sub-servient to him

not even remotely a rival to the one true king

So we exercise our dominion under his dominion

Tributaries

Anna Reid's Book *Borderlands* about Ukraine

Described how in 1237 Mongols/Tatars swept across the Urals into Ukraine from the steppes of Central Asia, withdrew into what is now Russia and for two

hundred years ruled over Russia by proxy, with permanent tributaries, granting

charters to local leaders to rule, maintain order, keep security, in exchange for

allegiance and tribute in terms of money and manpower

You've heard me describe the suzerain/vassal treaty of the ancient Near East

Conquered a ruler and then put him back on the throne, giving him freedom to rule as long as his allegiance was fully with the conquering king

Rulers who rule over and are ruled over: tributaries

Tributary: a branch river or stream that flows into a larger river

A ruler who pays tribute to another ruler/a conqueror

Acts 12.19-23

19 Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while. 20 He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply. 21 On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. 22 They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." 23 Immediately, *because Herod did not give praise to God*, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. 24 But the word of God continued to increase and spread.

Ultimate reality that needs to inform our earthly physical reality: God on the throne

Revelation 5.6-7

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. . . . He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.

Revelation 5.8-9

And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. . . . And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation."

Revelation 5.11-12

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

We are king of these realms.

Crown logo

Closing Song

You are welcome to raise your hands, kneel, get on your face on the ground before God

You are Worthy of My Praise

I will worship (I will worship)
With all of my heart (with all of my heart)
I will praise You (I will praise You)
With all of my strength (all my strength)

I will seek You (I will seek You)
All of my days (all of my days)
And I will follow (I will follow)
All of Your ways (all Your ways)

I will give You all my worship
I will give You all my praise
You alone I long to worship
You alone are worthy of my praise

I will bow down (I will bow down)
Hail You as king (hail You as king)
And I will serve You (I will serve You)
Give You everything (give You everything)
I will lift up (I will lift up)
My eyes to Your throne (my eyes to Your throne)
And I will trust You (I will trust You)
I will trust You alone (trust You alone)

We Fall Down

We fall down
We lay our crowns
At the feet of Jesus
The greatness of
Mercy and love
At the feet of Jesus
And we cry holy, holy, holy
We cry holy, holy, holy
We cry holy, holy, holy
Is the lamb
We fall down
We lay our crowns
At the feet of Jesus
The greatness of
Your mercy and love
At the feet of Jesus
And we cry holy, holy, holy
We cry holy, holy, holy
We cry holy, holy, holy
Is the lamb

Notes

But we live best when we live in the world as it really is, and not just as it seems.

X: conversation with Anna

But sometimes I like to ignore reality!

if we don't "look up" we miss a crucial, the crucial, part of reality
When we don't pull back the veil, we miss a crucial part of reality

But the bible offers us a more accurate view of ultimate reality
It is one that is echoed every time we gather for worship.

I'm in my home, I head off to work or school, I go to my meeting.

In each of these we loom large as human beings.
We have a gifted church. Often we are the most important person in the room,
exercising considerable influence or sway.

The challenge is for us to root this floating view of self – me in my rooms – to
some larger dimension of reality

The thrones and crowns represent all of the power and capacity that has been entrusted
to us by God as beings created in his image with creativity and mobility and ability

Humility is seeing ourselves in proper relationship and proportion to God

Psalm 8

³ When I consider your heavens,

the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,

⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?

⁵ You have made them a little lower than the angels^[a]
and crowned them with glory and honor.

⁶ [And yet], you made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet:

⁷ all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,

⁸ the birds in the sky,

and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.

Crown:

1. power and rule – the gold crown
2. reward/honor – a laurel crown I Peter 5, I Thessalonians 2, Philippians 4, etc

You may be aware that there are two kinds of crowns used as symbols in scripture. The crowns that express God's reward, mentioned in I Thessalonians 2 and Philippians 4, are laurel crowns like the prizes received by Olympic athletes. These crowns in Revelation 4, gold crowns, represent humanity's rule or dominion.

So the elders' thrones and crowns are word pictures pointing to the Genesis 1 dominion of humanity over the various domains of earth.

The question of authority

Lining up my life with reality

What has the last word? Shouldn't it be reality?

Conversation with Anna

"I don't want to worship a god like that." Yes, but what if that is what God is like?

It seems to be we'd want to line up our lives with reality.

We need to answer to God. One day we will die. I want to line up my life with that reality.

Yes, but sometimes I just want to ignore reality.

When we worship, we realign ourselves to reality

Get our lives in line with what is real and true

See things truly, line our lives up with what is true

Who God is, what is true about him, who we are, what is true about us

Sunday morning

Physical setting, people who surround us, reminded physically of what is true

Genesis 1-2

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and

made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Isaiah 58.13-14

“Keep the Sabbath day holy.

Don't pursue your own interests on that day,
Honor the Sabbath in everything you do on that day,
and don't follow your own desires.

¹⁴ Then the LORD will be your delight.

“If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath
and from doing as you please on my holy day,
if you call the Sabbath a delight
and the LORD's holy day honorable,
and if you honor it by not going your own way
and not doing as you please,

¹⁴ then you will find your joy in the LORD,

Seated on thrones

Rule

Lay throne down

Rhythm: The psalm 8 paradox about humanity at the heart of creation

Exalted and nothing

Made man little short of the gods, and yet nothing

Called to rule, called to relinquish

Tribute government under Tatars/Mongols in Russia in *Borderlands*

History of Ukraine and Russia: under the Mongols from 1300 to 1700

A church sanctuary is a replication of the heavenly throne room

A huge court of great beauty with a throne, and God seated on the throne, and his servants attending to him

in this world there are

playroom, conference room, classroom, board room, chat room, party room, family room, press room, bar room, locker room, bedroom, waiting room

work room, store room, show room

the places where we exercise our dominion as human beings
use our wisdom, exert our influence, make our decisions, use our power, express
our capacity, express our will

in that world, there is only one room – **a throne room**

Exodus 19-25

Every writer reaches for the most lustrous and brilliant and bright and colorful of what
creation offers and says it was like that only more

traveling through 12 states, saw state flags

a flag makes a statement about ultimate allegiance

a crown a throne and crowns around the throne

crown:
position
possessions
power
potential

all that I have, all that I am, all I have control over, all I have been entrusted with

sixth day: man the highest
seventh day: man on his knees, bowing, yielding

the reason Sunday morning is so important – we walk back into Genesis chapter 1 and
Isaiah chapter 6 and Ezekiel 24ish and Revelation chapter 4

the truest of all views of reality
God on the throne
Ruling

Exalted

Worthy of worship and service

Answers the questions: how should I see my life? What matters most?

I see – God for who he is. Things as they really are

I lift - my praise and worship

I give – my life, my allegiance

Sabbath: a part of my time representing all of it

Tithe: a part of my resources representing all of them

Gifts in service: a part of my ability representing all of it

We have said the offering is the most important part of the service