Easter 3 Revelation 5:11-14
May 1, 2022 143-160-158/1565-166

You Just Gotta Sing When You See This!
I. See our Savior alive and triumphant!
II. See our Savior in control!

Dear Christian friends,

I like to sing but I'm NOT REALLY MUCH of a singer. I can't read **music**. The notes tell me to GO UP or down but I don't know **how much** up or down. I can't sing a NEW, UNFAMILIAR song until I've heard it **several times**. Singing can be VERY FRUSTRATING for me.

That's **me**. **Other** people have beautiful voices. They can quickly pick up a song – harmonize WITHOUT BLINKING an eye. There are also others who **say** they CAN'T sing. They may enjoy listening to music – going to a **concert** – but THEY THEMSELVES don't sing.

Whether a person CAN OR CAN'T sing there are times you **can really** FEEL LIKE singing – and **times** when you're **just** NOT IN THE MOOD to sing. That's just another way of saying SOME DAYS you can be flying higher than a kite – and **some days** you are just SO, SO DOWN. Nothing seems **right**. EVERYTHING is wrong. You're FRUSTRATED – **discouraged** – **disgusted**. ALL YOU CAN SEE is the bad – the negative – what's **wrong**. Reading the Book of Revelation is **like that**. You're **either** WAY DOWN terrified and confused by what you're seeing **or** you're FLYING HIGH so excited by what you're seeing. These verses are an EXAMPLE of that.

Last week's sermon was "YOU GOTTA SEE THIS!" Today it's, "YOU JUST GOTTA SING **when you see** this!" Yes, that's still poor English grammar but once again John's SO EXCITED he's not worried about **proper grammar**. You JUST GOTTA SING **when you see** 1)our Savior alive and **triumphant** – 2)our Savior in control.

I. See our Savior alive and triumphant.

Last week in chapter 1 **John saw** the risen Lord Jesus IN ALL His glory. That sight SO OVERWHELMED John that he ***"fell at Jesus' feet like a dead man."*** Chapters 2 and 3 are letters Jesus addressed to EACH of the ***"seven churches in the*** (Roman) ***province of Asia"*** – the west coast of Turkey today.

In chapter 4 John SAW A VISION that took him into **heaven's throne room** and it was QUITE THE SIGHT! ***"Around (God's) throne there was a rainbow that looked like an emerald. In front of the throne was something resembling a glassy sea, which was like crystal. Out of the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings, and crashes of thunder."*** God's throne was surrounded by ***"twenty-four thrones, and sitting on those thrones were twenty-four elders dressed in white garments, with gold crowns on their heads."*** Those ***"twenty-four elders"*** picture the OT and NT Church. John also saw ***"four living creatures"*** – perhaps cherubim. John hears the ***"four living creatures"*** praising God – he sees the elders ***"bow down before the throne – worship God – lay down their crowns in front of (God's) throne."*** Read chapters 4 and 5 in your devotions this week. You GOTTA SEE IT for yourself!

At the start of chapter 5 John notices ***"a scroll in (God's) right hand …sealed with seven seals."*** You can just imagine John's EXCITEMENT and ANTICIPATION. He had been summoned up to heaven with the promise ***"I will show you what must happen after these things."*** John hears ***"a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll by breaking its seals?'"*** Put yourself in John's shoes! That scroll records ***"what must happen"*** in the future. BUT ***"No one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll."*** You can just

imagine John's DISAPPOINTMENT – FROM that big build-up **to such** a LET DOWN. ***"I began to weep bitterly because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll."***

AS JOHN SEES all this he's in exile on the island of Patmos. The Church is being **severely** persecuted. All the other apostles and who knows **how many** other Christians have been martyred – KILLED! – for their Christian faith. We may have our **pains** and problems – **frustrations** and **disappointments** – but they just don't compare to WHAT JOHN and those **first Christians** – to what many Christians today around the world are **dealing with**.

Our pains and problems – our struggles and **hardships** – ARE REAL. They can so frustrate – discourage and **upset** us. We CAN ONLY SEE things getting worse – there's **no** UP-SIDE. LIKE ELIJAH in the OT we may feel like we CAN'T TAKE it anymore – **like Elijah** we want to pray, ***"Take my life, Lord!"*** Like John here we're SO FRUSTRATED and disappointed we ***"weep bitterly."*** That's just BEING HONEST, isn't it? **If** you've never had days **like that** you better get down on your knees and THANK your gracious God!

Now remember why God is SHOWING ALL this to us – NOT TO DEPRESS us but to comfort and **encourage** us! Revelation confronts us with the REALITY that life now isn't always **easy** – **pretty** – **fun** or **fair**. But there's another reality **Revelation shows** us – our Savior ALIVE and TRIUMPHANT. Oh see and savor what **comes next**!

An elder tells John, ***"'Stop weeping. Look! The Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed and is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.' I saw a Lamb standing in the center, near the throne. The Lamb seemed to have been slain. The Lamb came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne."*** That's where these verses PICK UP. John hears angels ***"Their number was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands upon thousands. With a loud voice they were saying: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing."*** Seeing this you JUST GOTTA SING with them!

See Jesus – ***"a Lamb that seemed to have been slain, standing in the center, near the throne (of God)."*** What a perfect summary of the gospel! Jesus – the eternal Son of God born a true man to take the place of **all** people under God's law – to be for all people the PERFECT PERSON we **never could** be and the PERFECT SACRIFICE that really does ***"take away the sin of the world."***

"Lamb slain" recalls all those **lambs sacrificed** in OT worship. God was very picky about those lambs. They had to be perfect IN EVERY WAY – not some diseased, **half-dead** animal. Perfect **in every way** because that's the life we owed God – a whole life of PERFECT LOVE for God – perfect trust in God's **ways** – perfect obedience to God's **will** and **commands**. That's exactly the life JESUS LIVED for us.

Jesus – perfect IN EVERY WAY – yet just like those OT lambs He was ***"slain"*** – sacrificed on **the altar** of the cross. Those lambs had DONE NOTHING **wrong** – nothing deserving of **death**. SO TOO Jesus! JUST AS those innocent OT lambs had pictured – **Jesus died** IN OUR PLACE – punished for our sins – His blood shed to ***"cleanse us from all sin."***

AND NOW see Jesus standing ALIVE IN HEAVEN **before the throne** of God. We're moving farther and farther away from **Easter Sunday** but the facts and joy of Easter are FOR EVERY DAY of our lives. We have a RISEN Savior who has triumphed over sin and death, the devil and hell. Look again at what WE ALL HAVE in our **living Lord** Jesus! Forgiveness full and free for all our sins – peace with God – a whole new relationship with God – life now as a **redeemed, beloved** child of God – the privilege and power of prayer – the comfort of God's UNFAILING **promises** - His ALMIGHTY **power** – His ABIDING **presence** – eternal life in heaven the **very moment** we die – our own resurrection on the Last Day - life forever in that ***"new heaven and new earth, where God will have made everything new."***

The devil wants us to FORGET all that. He wants to rob us of the PEACE and JOY of our **risen Savior**. So he uses **persecutions** and problems – troubles and **hardships** – disappointments and **frustrations** – whatever it takes – to DISTRACT us. The devil wants us focused on the BAD – what's WRONG – what HURTS – what's NOT FAIR – instead of focusing on our **living, triumphant** Savior. Our problems are **real** – though maybe not AS BAD as we **sometimes think** they are. But EVEN MORE REAL is Jesus risen triumphant from the dead – Jesus' love for us – Jesus' promises to us. With our ***"eyes fixed on Jesus"*** we too JUST GOTTA SING ***"with a loud voice: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing."***

II. See our Savior in control.

Don't just see WHAT JOHN SEES – also hear what JOHN HEARS. ***"I heard every creature that is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on 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."***

We live in a world OPENLY REBELLING against God's **authority** – FLAGRANTLY DEFYING God's **will**. Revelation pictures the Church UNDER ATTACK **on every side** – the devil launching VICIOUS – often seemingly successful – **attacks** on God's people. Revelation shows us **times when** it LOOKS LIKE the devil is going to **win** – the Church go down **in defeat**. That's LIFE NOW. That's REALITY today. But then Revelation ALSO SHOWS us our Savior alive – **triumphant** – IN CONTROL. God will have the FINAL WORD, not the devil. God will make sure His BELEAGUERED PEOPLE **come out victorious** and the devil and **his followers** are defeated and condemned to hell's eternal fire. That DAY OF VICTORY **is coming** – the day when ***"at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*** We Christians will JOYFULLY and TRIUMPHANTLY make that confession. The devil and **all unbelievers** will HAVE TO confess it and admit their **defeat**.

Revelation shows us that OVER and over in different striking visions. We don't need to WAIT until heaven to start celebrating the victory. We can sing – we JUST GOTTA SING – already now – ***"To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever."***

And when we're not IN THE MOOD to sing – when we're overwhelmed by our **problems** – when we're so discouraged and **frustrated** and **disappointed** – we JUST GOTTA take another look at what we see here – our Savior alive – triumphant – IN CONTROL.

"The four living creatures said, 'Amen,' and the elders bowed down and worshipped." Amen.

NICENE CREED