

How to Display Jesus' Worth in Your Daily Life!

By Rev. Paul R. Shockley

www.prshockley.org

Revelation 5:1-5

I. Introduction:

- A. In his book, *What We Can't Not Know*, J. Budziszewski acutely observes that one of the reasons why morality is in decline in our Western culture is because we've culturally come to the mindset that to think about God adequately--no preparation is needed. For example, when parents say, "*I want my children to make up their own minds about religious instruction*" deciding not to teach religious instruction to their children, they are in fact, teaching them a powerful set of beliefs with terrible consequences. They are in fact, saying:¹

1	It is not important for children to know anything about God	What adults think about Him makes no difference.	6
2	The questions which children naturally ask about Him requires no answers.	By implication, God does not make any difference either; God is not treated as God.	7
3	Parents know nothing about God that is worth passing on.	If anything is to be treated as God, it will have to be something other than Him.	8
4	To think about Him adequately, no preparation is needed.	*There is no important connection between one's spiritual life and behavior (e.g, the adolescent years).	9
5	*The physical body is more valuable than the immaterial soul.	This is the true creed, and all other creeds are false.	10

The point is: *We teach our kids the most important things and what we do not teach them implies its lack of importance.*

But there are also other times where we settle for what is good rather than what is best. Let me unpack this second statement by drawing upon two stories, one by Ravi Zacharias and the other by Voddie Baucham.

- B. In his latest work, *The Grand Weaver*, Ravi Zacharias tells the following story:

¹ J. Budziszewski, *What We Can't Not Know* (Dallas: Spence, 2003), 162-3. *are my additions to Dr. Budziszewski's list.

Some time ago, I attended a Bible study session with some sports professionals. The speaker that morning challenged the players to leave a legacy that they could be proud of. He began by asking them how many knew the name of their great-grandfather. A handful of hands went up. Then he asked how many of them knew where their great-grandfather was buried. Most of the hands stayed down. With each more specific question, fewer hands went up. He then made his point: 'Each one of us is just three to four generations away from extinction....How sobering to think that, just a few generations down the family tree, no one would even know I had ever existed! Then the speaker challenged these men about the legacy they would leave behind.

One player responded to the challenge by saying: I 'Really, I don't care whether or not my great-grandson or great-granddaughter knows I played ball professionally. It really doesn't matter that much. I just want them to know the God I served and loved.'

- C. Lastly, Voddie Baucham reminds us of an all-too often event seen in our evangelical circles. A family sought to raise up their "*born-again*" son to be a committed follower of Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding, in his first year of college the freshman quit going to church. It wasn't that he was against God in rebellion in view of fleshly, sensate pursuits. Rather, his life simply became pre-occupied with other college events. As a result, he didn't make the time to dynamically grow in His intimacy with Christ. The parents were heart-broken at their son's lack of commitment to Christ in college. Once again, it wasn't that the kid was "*wild*" or anything of that sort. Rather, there was just no overriding commitment to God when he left home.

What happened? As the family sat down with Voddie they came to the realization that the young man's displacement of priorities didn't start at college, but began at home when he was a young boy. See, the young boy loved baseball and he was pretty good at it. So, when the long practices and the Sunday games conflicted with opportunities to seriously spend time with God both individually and corporately, baseball became the top priority. To be sure, if one is a baseball player and a believer, He should do it to the glory of God- that is not the point. Rather, the shifting of priorities, i.e., choosing other options over spending time with God, became a habit whenever there was a conflict of interests.

- D. What should be our response to these types of challenges? See, there is a rippling effect that occurs in what we treasure and how we behave, day-to-day, moment-by-moment....the choices we make impacts not only ourselves, but others as well.
1. In the first case, **our lack of attention to Christ informs our children that He really isn't important.** Even when we marginally pursue Him we are telling others that He is only worth a marginal pursuit. For example, God you are worthy of our focus only on Sunday mornings.
 2. In the second case, **when we settle for what is good but temporal, our impact will be short-lived.** But when we demonstrate that Christ is life, our passion, and our purpose, that He is the utmost object of our affections, we exchange the unimportant and mundane, for the eternal.
 3. And in the third case, **when we shift our priorities, we reveal where our loyalties truly lie.** Just consider: In today's world, under Satan's domain, people are warring for the hearts and minds of others to share in their unbridled lusts, their destructive beliefs, and their deceptive plans. So, we need to demonstrate unfaltering loyalty to

Christ. As Martin Luther states, “Where the red battle rages there the loyalty of the soldier is proved and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.”

- E. Well, in our study of Revelation 5 we come to a profound truth: ***Jesus Christ is worthy of creation’s worship. If Christ alone is worthy of this type of worship, then we should offer him no less; He should be the object of our utmost affections.***

In our study of Revelation 5 we will quickly see that heaven does not ignore Christ. We don’t see heaven either exchanging what is important for what is unimportant or heaven shifting loyalties. Rather what we see in this future revelation, the prologue to the Great Tribulation, is that the Lion, from the tribe Judah and the Root of David, is the Lamb standing, as if slain; He is worthy because He is both the Lamb and the Lion. He died to pay the ransom price for the sins of the world, positioned us in the present as a kingdom of priests before God, and gave us a promise of reigning on the earth in the future with Him who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

II. Exposition of Revelation 5:1-5:

- A. After having studied the setting of the heavenly throne room, John now directs our attention to a remarkable new scene whereby our focus shifts from the One who sits on the throne, and those who surround the throne, to a remarkable scroll and a single individual who is exclusively qualified to take and open the seven-sealed scroll from the One who is holding it in His right hand. We may break this chapter down into two major units of thought:

- (1) Revelation 5: 1-7: The Lamb Takes the Scroll because He alone is worthy
- (2) Revelation 5: 8-14: Worthy is the Lamb because He is the Overcomer

- B. Revelation 5:1-7:

1 And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ² Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. ⁴ So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵ But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” ⁶ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. ²

After our exposition of 5:1-5 we will ask ourselves how we should respond to this revelation. But for the sake of time next time we meet we will focus on verses 6-and following:

- C. Let’s begin by making some observations regarding verse 1:

² *The New King James Version*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1982, S. Re 5:1-7

1. In this first revelatory scene our focus is upon what is in the Father's hand. It may seem that the scroll is actually lying on the open palm of one sitting upon the throne. Others have argued that it was held in his hand, arguing that the scroll, in a form of a roll, could rest upon an open hand by an act of balancing. I simply take it that the hand is cupped to retain a round object without balancing, yet still be open.³ Nevertheless, what is important to note in this vision is that a scroll is in the Father's right hand.⁴
 2. Since this scroll details the prophetic plan of the Great Tribulation, George Ladd offers an interesting insight. He writes, "What simpler or more sublime way of picturing God's ultimate sovereignty over all history could be found than this picture of the scroll resting in the hand of God?"⁵
- w
3. *Why the right hand?* The "**right hand**"—implies authority and power as He who sat on the throne. Interestingly, in Hebrew the "*right hand of God*" is an idiom for the "*strength of God*."
 4. Regarding the scroll itself, we know from history that a scroll was made by processing either papyrus or skins from various kinds of animals. Some have argued that if the palm of the hand is opened, with the scroll sitting on the palm, then the scroll must be in book form. This may seem to be reaffirmed by verse 2 & 3 when it states, "*Who is worthy to open the book?*" or in verse 3 "*no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or look into it.*"
 5. But as I mentioned earlier there is the possibility of a scroll, not a book with folded leaves, bound together, resting on an open hand. I think this is reaffirmed when we consider that the scroll is in roll-form because of the expression in verse 1, "**written inside and on the back**." "**Inside**" means inside the scroll before unrolling it and "**on the back**" refers to the back side of the scroll after it is unrolled. In other words, the scroll is double-sided. But there is a historical reason to consider this scroll to be scroll and not a book as well. Bruce Metzger states that books with folded leaves and bound together did not originate until the 2nd century. So, more than likely, it is a scroll because that is all John would have known. Though typical scrolls were written only on one side, occasionally scrolls were written on both sides, thus double-sided. Double-side scrolls are called an "*opisthograph*." 0-pistograph. Thus, we have a scroll full of words.
 6. "**Sealed up with seven seals**" [**"Sealed up**" is *katasphragizō* from meaning "down" and *sphragizō*, "to seal"]. There are three things that are important to note:
 - a. First, this compound verb, "**sealed up**" means "*tightly sealed, firmly sealed,*" and so, "*very hidden, very secure.*"
 - b. Secondly, the word "**seven**" is the number of perfection or completeness.

³ Robert Thomas, *Revelation*, 1:375.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:375.

⁵ Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, 82-3.

7. And third, Dr. John F. Walvoord notes that in John's day people used a seal to keep the contents of a document secret, unchangeable, and free from tampering until some authoritative person broke the seal. In this case after Jesus broke the first seal the scroll unrolled until the second seal made it impossible to open it further. Then He had to break the second seal that revealed more of the contents, and so on. Probably the seals were on the edge of the scroll.⁶ So, the seven seals apparently were fixed on the edges of the scroll in such a way that the seals must be successively broken if the scroll is to be unrolled and read.

Thus, looking at the aspects altogether, “*sealed up with seven seals*,” this phrase expresses the perfection with which the hidden counsels of God are securely hidden.

8. Moving to the scroll itself, there are at least 7 major interpretations regarding what the scroll is. I want to mention these views and show you why I believe context favors the last view.
 - a. Some say it is the book of the New Covenant (Robert Govett). That seems unlikely because the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 is one of mercy; the setting here is dominantly one of judgment.
 - b. Others say it is a will assuring the inheritance reserved by God for the saints. This view lacks substance (outside of an incidental passage in Rev. 21:7).
 - c. A third view says that the scroll represents the Lamb's book of life (Robert Mounce).
 - d. A fourth view is that it represents God's redemptive plan foreshadowed in the O.T. and completed in the N.T. (One problem with this view is that the opening of the seals do not relate to the past but to things yet future).
 - e. A fifth view is that the scroll represents Christ's title-deed to the world (Ironside).
 - f. A sixth view is that it is the Torah the Law.
 - g. A seventh view: The scroll is a comprehensive account of the future wrath of the Lamb. Like James Moffat titled the scroll, it is “*the scroll of doom*.”⁷
1. The relation of the scroll to the vision of chapter 4 makes clear the plan of Revelation: The eternal and almighty God of Revelation 4 presents in this seven-scrolled the decrees of His will regarding the consummation of His kingdom. Subsequently, when the Lamb breaks the seals, it is not merely a disclosure of the scroll's contents, but an activation of those contents.⁷

Though some of the other views may have some merit, I agree with this last view because it best explains what follows the breaking of each seal; it is a scroll of doom: Let's consider the following:

⁶ Tom Constable, *Expository Notes on the Book of Revelation*, 5:1, pg 58.

⁷ Thomas, *Revelation*, 379.

- h. Consider the following (6:1-8:6):⁸
1. Revelation 6:1: Following the breaking of the first seal by the Lamb we have the conquering Antichrist;
 2. Revelation 6:3: Following the breaking of the second seal by the Lamb we have open war;
 3. Revelation 6:5: Following the breaking of the third seal by the Lamb we have famine;
 4. Revelation 6:7: Following the breaking of the fourth seal by the Lamb we have death;
 5. Revelation 6:9: Following the breaking of the fifth seal by the Lamb we have martyrdom.
 6. Revelation 6:12: Following the breaking of the sixth seal by the Lamb we have physical disturbances;
 7. Revelation 8:1: Following the breaking of the seventh seal we have silence for about a half an hour because the seventh seal introduces the seven trumpet judgments (Revelation 8:7-9:21)
 - a. A third of vegetation will be burned;
 - b. A third of the sea judged;
 - c. A third of fresh water judged;
 - d. A third of the luminaries darkened;
 - e. Increased demonic activity;
 - f. A third of humanity killed;
- g. But then we also have the seventh trumpet which contains the seven bowls of wrath (Revelation 15:1-16:21):
- 1) Malignant Sores;
 - 2) Sea turned to blood;
 - 3) Fresh waters to blood;
 - 4) Men scorched with fire;
 - 5) Darkness over the kingdom of the Beast;
 - 6) Invasion from the east;
 - 7) Greatest earthquake and widespread destruction
9. Let's imagine for a moment at what is about to happen by the disclosure of the scroll:
1. The destiny of the world and the events of the last days spoken of in Scripture is about to end; the contents are about to be revealed in history.

⁸ Adapted from a chart in Charles Ryrie's, *Ryrie Study Bible: Expanded edition*, pg. 2024.

2. The purging of God's wrath upon the unbelieving world will be consuming. The effects of sin will disappear and the earth will be restored to its rightful owner. Israel will be restored, glory will be returned, Satan will be bound, sin will be restrained; there will be no corruption in Christ's government, the earth will prosper, and not one child will hunger.

10. Consider this interesting insight as well:

The Jewish Custom: W.A. Criswell points out that if a Jewish family were to lose its property or possessions by some kind of misfortune or distress, their property could not be permanently taken from them (the Old Testament law of Jubilee and the kinsman redeemer protected them against this). However, their losses were listed in a scroll and sealed seven times. Then the conditions necessary to purchase back the land and their possessions were written on the outside of the scroll. When a qualified redeemer could be found, who could meet the requirements of reclamation (a kinsman like Boaz as in the story of Ruth), the one who had taken the property was required to return it to the original owner.⁹

- a. The earth and its dominion properly belong to Adam and to his descendents for they were to be the rulers of God's creation. In Genesis 1:26-30 we see the divine purpose for mankind decreed.
- b. The earth and the human race was not meant to be ruled by angels, i.e., Satan, who has become the "*prince of the air*" and his demons. As a result, the divine purpose is delayed.
- c. Therefore, someone must be found within humanity, a "Kinsman Redeemer," one who is qualified to reclaim the lost inheritance, someone was true humanity, yet free to redeem; not a sinful man, nor an angel. As promised, we see the divine purpose for mankind accomplished; the paradise and rule that was lost will be regained at the millennial reign of Christ following the events that will take place as written in the scroll of doom.

1. Listen to the author's words in Hebrews 2:5-17.

D. All of I have said so far is developed from verse 1. Let's now to consider verses 2-3:

Vs. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book (literally scroll) and to break its seals?"

Vs. 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it.

E. All of a sudden our attention is moved from the scroll to a loud voice, a strong angel, who proclaims "***Who is worthy to open the scroll, even to break its seals?***" In other words, "*Who has the credentials to open this scroll?*"

⁹ J. Hampton Keathley, "The Seven Sealed Book and the Lion Who was Also the Lamb" at www.netbible.org.

1. Whether this strong angel may be Gabriel because he is noted to be messenger of God elsewhere in the Bible (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19; 26) or Michael, because he becomes prominent in the events of the last days (Daniel 12:1-3; Jude 9), we don't know, but what we do know is that this angel (denotes active power rather a reserve of secret strength; *Ischyron*), proclaims an articulate message in a very loud voice. In fact, anytime you see the phrase "*loud voice*" (Gk, *phone*) it always deserves special attention.

F. Who is worthy to open the scroll, even to break its seals (vs. 2).

1. The word "**worthy**" (*axios*) originally meant "*of proper weight.*" But its meaning developed to cover qualities other than weight. And so it became a synonym of "*sufficient,*" "*competent,*" or "*fit.*" This words then deals with the qualities of a person, power, or attainment. So, who has qualities to open this seven-sealed scroll?¹⁰
2. A search was made in every conceivable place in the universe, but there was no one capable and qualified; no one has the credentials to break the seals, open the scroll, and read the contents. In fact, the tense of the verb "*was able*" (imperfect tense), shows that all creation's inability and unworthiness to open the scroll is a chronic or continual problem, whether in heaven, on earth, or under the earth. The fact that "**no one was able**" describes the unaltered and complete impotence of created beings to perform the function. "*No one ... was able.*"¹¹

Consider some of the great saints of God in our past, all who were denied the opportunity and or ability to receive the scroll:

Enoch: who walked with God;
 Abraham: the Father of the chosen people.
 Isaiah: the prophet whose lips were cleansed;
 Jeremiah: who wept for Israel;
 John the Baptist: the forerunner to Christ Himself;
 Mary, the godly mother of the Savior of the world;
 The Apostle Paul: who wrote most of our N.T. and who seized Christ in the manner Christ seized Him.

Any of the souls since then who have been mightily used by God, even John, the disciple whom Jesus dearly loved, who happens to be standing right there, all are unworthy!

3. What is John's response: He *weeps*. This word, "*I cry*" or "*I weep*" seems to be a loud wail, an outcry of mourning; a weeping of unrestrained emotion.
4. Why did he weep; why did he cry out in mourning? I don't really know, I just know he wept. So let me speculate:

¹⁰ Thomas, *Revelation*, 1:384.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1:384.

- a. It might seem at first that he wept because all created beings are morally incapable. But he already knew that people are naturally depraved and that we live in a sin-cursed world. So, it shouldn't surprise him that no one is worthy.
- b. It might seem that he wept because he feared that the hoped-for revelation, "*I will show you what will take place*" as promised in Revelation 4:1 was about to be forfeited. I don't think disappointment is the answer either.
- c. I submit to you (and I am taking this view from Robert Mounce) that it is possible that the outcry is more than a withholding of revelation. John was not weeping for his own sake, but over the indefinite postponement of His decisive final action to bring God's kingdom on earth; no one was worthy to open the seal¹² "*He did not want to see God's vindication of His people as a part of the OT Messianic hope deferred for an undetermined period* (Caird)." So he broke out in tears."¹³ In other words, He wept for His people because of another delay. See, as the seals are broken and the contents of the Great Tribulation are fulfilled, the earthly kingdom reign of Jesus Christ draws even closer.

G. Verse 5: And one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

- 1. The only one is who is worthy, by both office and by moral excellence, is Jesus Christ.
- 2. The elder sees beyond John's perspective and instructs him to cease wailing; such sorrow is not needed.
 - a. Interestingly, in two other places in Scripture do we see the command, "***not to weep.***" In Luke 7:13, Jesus told the Widow at Nain "*do not weep*" and then He proceeded to touch the coffin and said, "*Young man, I say to you, arise!*" The dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave Him back to his mother.
 - b. Then in Luke 8:52, He told the mourners not to weep for Jarius' daughter for she is not dead, but asleep. They laughed at Christ knowing that she had indeed died. He, however, took her by the hand and called, "*saying, Child, arise!*" And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and He gave orders for some food to be given to her.
- 3. In the same way, there was no reason for John to weep because the "***Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David,***" has overcome so as to open the scroll and its seven seals." Both of these titles ascribed to Jesus are taken are Messianic.
 - a. First title: "***The Lion who is of the tribe of Judah***" comes from Genesis 49:9-10 "*where in Jacob's final blessing on twelve sons Judah is called a 'lion cub' and is promised that the scepter shall not depart from him 'until he comes to whom it*

¹² Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 131.

¹³ Thomas, *Revelation*, 1:386.

belongs.”¹⁴ “It aptly pictures kingly might and boldness (cf. Prov. 18:1). So, the lion is the king of beasts and Judah is the royal tribe. Here, we have Christ who fulfills the O.T. prophecies as the Messiah; He is able to open the scroll for He is the line of David, a legal descendent by adoption through Joseph (Matthew 1) and is a physical descendent of David through Mary (Luke 3:23).

- b. Second title: “***The Root of David***” is an allusion to Isaiah 11:1 where it says “*A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse*”, describing Christ’s headship in the Davidic Kingdom whereby He will judge with righteousness and usher in an era of peace.

- 4. “*The Lion that is from the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David,*” two titles linked together only here in the N.T., **conquered** (He didn’t merely overcome; he conquered...in the strongest sense; it is a culminative, consummative aorist verb which views an event or series of events from the standpoint of an accomplished act). He didn’t just overcome, He conquered! It indicates a climax and accomplishment!

John, there is no need for weeping, for Jesus has conquered. Christ’s victory was one at the cross and here is the scroll that details the execution of the enemies of God. Thus, He alone is worthy to break the seals, open the scroll, and read the contents.

III. What is Our Response to this Revelation?

- A. It should be the same type of response as given by the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, the angels, and all of creation. Worship! In our last lesson I gave a list of applications to help us to worship well.

- B. So, this time I would like to focus the remainder of our time on the unworthiness of ourselves and compare that to the worthiness of Christ.

- C. Ladies and Gentlemen: We need to come to the honest appraisal of ourselves: We are an unworthy sort!

- 1. Since we are unworthy, this can be taken as both bad and good news. It is bad news in that we are reminded once again that we are sinners; we truly are dust. It is also bad news for some who don’t like to be at the mercy of someone else.

It also bad news for any of us who are seeking acclaim by our own means; self striving is simply “*spitting in the wind.*”

- 2. But it is good news in that we are at the mercy of someone who is greater than ourselves; and the God of the Bible is good.

Did you know that Jesus reserved His strongest and longest sermon not for struggling or discouraged disciples but for hypocrites? And you know, as Swindoll has observed, show-offs are terribly hard of hearing.

¹⁴ Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 131.

Oswald Chambers puts it this way:¹⁵

We have to get rid of the idea that we understand ourselves, it is the last conceit to go. The only One Who understands us is God. The greatest curse in spiritual life is conceit. If we have ever had a glimpse of what we are like in the sight of God, we shall never say - "Oh, I am so unworthy," because we shall know we are, beyond the possibility of stating it. As long as we are not quite sure that we are unworthy, God will keep narrowing us in until He gets us alone. Wherever there is any element of pride or of conceit, Jesus cannot expound a thing. He will take us through the disappointment of a wounded pride of intellect, through disappointment of heart. He will reveal inordinate affection-....”

3. Since the most brilliant, most wealthy, the most beautiful, and the most popular, are not qualified to even touch the scroll, then we shouldn't seek to imitate them. Rather, we should be imitating Christ for He alone is worthy. This should be freeing to those of us who feel pressured to conform to the trends and personalities of our culture.
4. On the other hand, we need to truly recognize that our value, our worth is two-fold. We are God's handiwork and secondly, He purchased our redemption by His own person, the second person of the One and Only Triune God. Consider for a moment at your worth, your significance, by looking at Christ's ministry on earth...what He did for you!
 - a. In the incarnation He was born to die for us
 - b. He lived in the midst of sinful humanity;
 - c. He hungered for us;
 - d. He thirsted for us;
 - e. He fasted for us;
 - f. He suffered for us;
 - g. He was rejected by His family for us;
 - h. He was betrayed for us;
 - i. He was ridiculed for us;
 - j. He was abandoned for us;
 - k. He was abused for us;
 - l. He was mocked for us;
 - m. He who was innocent was declared guilty for us;
 - n. He was tortured for us;
 - o. He cried out in pain for us;
 - p. He took our sins away;
 - q. God turned away from Him for us;
 - r. He died and was buried for us.
 - s. He arose bodily for us;
 - t. He ascended to the right hand of the Father for us;
 - u. He sent the Holy Spirit for us;
 - v. He intercedes for us;
 - w. He united Himself to us (Romans 6:5)

¹⁵ Oswald Chamber, January 12th, *My Utmost for His Highest*.

- x. He is preparing a place for us;
- y. He will come back for us or our bodies if we are already dead at the Rapture;
- z. He will even reward us at the Bema Seat;
- zz. He will restore the Kingdom and bring in the eternal state and we will be in His company for eternity.

Put differently, in exchange for our wickedness, He gives us His righteousness. Since our worth is only found in His worthiness, then the best way to allow Him to live through us by means of dependency. Well, how can we do so?
Relinquish, Cultivate, and Remember: RCR.

5. **Relinquish all claims to our rights to ourselves.** In other words, sign away all our rights to God and Him alone. When we see ourselves in the light of Jesus' worth, the "*I, myself, and me*" fades; we have no leg to stand on. How? By relating everything to Christ by making it our aim to please Him; it is not by pleasing ourselves that we display Christlikeness. We need to really realize that selfishness or self-absorption produces so many of the problems in our lives: "*If it is not about me, it's not worth talking about!*" See, we don't begin to really live out our new identities in Christ as a saint, as a child of God until we sign our rights away and become a slave unto Christ and we do so by yielding to the Holy Spirit.

But let's be warned. The sin nature in us, our former rule of life, as much as it hates God and as deceitful as it is, doesn't throw up its arms in surrender at this first line of defense. The flesh has its explosives ready to undermine the wall. Its first and most wretched attack is to abuse God's grace in order to make sin seem less sinful, less dangerous, less threatening. We must understand this: the flesh weakens conviction against sin by separating the *remedy* of grace from the *design* of grace.¹⁶ So, anything that is promoting or exalting "*me, myself, and I*" needs to be dealt with.

6. **Cultivate Humility.** I think it is only in a disposition of humility that we really see the glory of Christ. Selfishness so clouds our sight, obscures our path, and limits our visibility—the focus is on us. It fosters famine in the soul and dissatisfaction towards the blessings He has already given us: our spouses, our children, our homes, etc. And false humility invites the scourging of God; He hates deception.
7. **Remember** it is not what you do for Him but what He does through you that reflects His worthiness. So many of us gauge spiritual success by what we do for God, but see, every person in this room is unworthy. Relishing in our own glory or even in someone else's success, as profound as it may be, is unfortunate: If we do it will be wood, hay, and stubble, in the end; we will have robbed the glory that is due Him. Rather, we are called to abide, to bend low, to be dependent upon Him.

Let me now try to take these three points: relinquish your rights, cultivate humility, and remember that continual dependency, yielding to God, is pivotal for spiritual success... by giving two illustrations:

¹⁶ Kris Lundgaard, *The Enemy Within*, p. 64.

Gardening. Fruit produced only brings attention to the meticulous gardener, never the simple tools he uses. Though the tools are privileged to be used in the hands of the gardener, they are only tools. A person doesn't walk into a garden and say how he owes it all to a quality spade or hoe. A good gardener could use a stick and a spoon-for that matter. Rather, all the credit goes to the gardener. *Southern Home and Gardens* doesn't come walking into a backyard garden to admire a well-worn shovel. No, they want to interview the home gardener.

Candle. The characteristic of a candle is to consume itself in order to bring forth light.

So, it is clear that Jesus alone is worthy to receive the glory to open the scroll. If He is the only one worthy, we shouldn't have a lower view of Jesus than heaven does. As I said in the introduction, we don't see heaven exchanging what is important for what is unimportant, and we don't see heaven shifting loyalties. Rather what we see in this future revelation, the prologue to the Great Tribulation, is that the Lion, from the tribe Judah and the Root of David is the Lamb standing, as if slain, He is worthy to take the scroll from the hand of the one sitting on the throne. He is worthy because He is both the Lamb and the Lion.

Before my conclusion, let me try to put all these three points of application together by drawing from C.S. Lewis' brilliant illustration in his book *The Screwtape Letters*.

The senior demon is coaching the younger demon on how to seduce a person who hangs between belief and disbelief in their enemy, God. So the younger demon sets to work on keeping this man from turning toward God. But in the end, after all the tricks, temptations, and seductions, the human is "*lost to the enemy.*" When the defeated junior demon reports back to the senior demon, the senior demon asks, "*How did this happen? How did you let this one get away?*"

"*I don't know,*" says the young demon. "*But every morning he used to take a long walk, just to be quiet and reflective. And then, every evening he would read a good book. Somehow during those books and walks, the Enemy must have gotten his voice through to him.*"

"*That's where you made your mistake,*" says the veteran demon. "*You should have allowed him to take that walk purely for physical exercise. You should have had him read that book just so he could quote it to others. In allowing him to enjoy pure pleasures, you put him within the Enemy's reach.*"¹⁷

Lewis' insight applies to our topic as well. When we are self-righteous, self-serving, arrogant, and independent, it points us to ourselves. But if we can come to a point where we take pleasure in the worthiness of Jesus Christ *as a way of living*, our lives will point others to Him – and He is Most worthy!

Duty, while important, is insufficient alone to cultivate utmost affections for Jesus Christ in our lives; See we must take pleasure in His person, His worth. For example:

If I buy a bouquet of tulips for my wife and come to the front door, ring the door, and place the tulips behind my back to surprise her. She opens the door and says, "*Why did*

¹⁷ Cited from Zacharias, *The Grand Weaver*, 89-90 cf. C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters* (1942); repr. New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 63-67.

you ring the door bell?" I pull out the tulips and hand them to her. Then she says, "What is the occasion for these tulips; why did you do you this?" I say to her, "It is my duty." How will she respond?

But if I were go back in time and re-do the event and repeat the same sequence but this time after she asks the question, "*What is the occasion for the tulips, why did you do this? And I say to her "Because I couldn't help myself,"* I think my wife will know that I am relishing in who she is.

While it is our responsibility a duty to relinquish, cultivate humility, and yield to God, it is not merely for duty sake; that alone is insufficient to allow Him to be the utmost object of our affections; we need to take pleasure in the worthiness and glory of Christ.

IV. Conclusion:

In conclusion I want to quote again from Oswald Chambers:¹⁸

Have you the slightest reliance on anything other than God? Is there a remnant of reliance left on any natural virtue, any set of circumstances?...It is quite true to say - "I cannot live a holy life," but you can decide to let Jesus Christ make you holy. "Ye cannot serve the Lord God"; but you can put yourself in the place where God's almighty power will come through you. Are you sufficiently right with God to expect Him to manifest His wonderful life in you?

[And when we say]"Nay, but we will serve the Lord." [we need to remember that] It is not an impulse, but a deliberate commitment. You say - But God can never have called *me* to this, I am too unworthy, it can't mean *me*. It does mean you, and the weaker and feebler you are, the better. The one who has something to trust in is the last one to come anywhere near saying - "I will serve the Lord."

We say - "If I really could believe!" The point is - If I really *will* believe. No wonder Jesus Christ lays such emphasis on the sin of unbelief....If we really believed that God meant what He said - what should we be like! Dare I really let God be to me all that He says He will be?

May our answer be yes...please, God, display your worthiness through our lives; we yield to you.

¹⁸ Chambers, January 9th, *My Utmost for His Highest*.