

Sermon: Faith That Finishes**Text: 2 Peter 3:17-18****Discussion Questions:**

The Book of Revelation chapters 4 and 5 describe what will take place in heaven in the last days, when the scrolls of God's wrath and judgment will be opened. The Apostle John was taken up into the very throne room of God prior to his death, and was allowed to view these scenes of incredible glory and grandeur. He was then commanded to write down what he saw, so that we, too, can have a glimpse into the things that are yet to come.

On the center stage of these events is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the One who alone is worthy to take the scrolls of judgment and prophecy, and reveal their contents. It is impossible for anyone else to break the seals on these scrolls, and open them. Jesus is the **ONLY ONE** who is truly worthy of this honor—and it is because of what He accomplished on the cross. John sees Jesus as the Lamb of God, looking as though it had been slain, and whose blood has purchased for God people from every tribe and language and people and nation—made to be a **NEW** kingdom (erasing all previous ethnic, national, and language barriers) and priests to serve God the Father. Read these amazing words from **Revelation 5:6-10**:

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. And when He had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. 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. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

The simple truth of this scene is that Jesus is absolutely and eternally worthy of praise and worship. He is worthy to receive praise and worship from me and you—and He is worthy to receive praise and worship from people who speak every language on earth, and who live in every remote tribe and village and nation. Pastor John Piper has said that "Missions exists because worship doesn't." We are given the task and great privilege in the Great Commission to GO on God's behalf into every one of these tribes and villages, and point people to the Son of God who alone is worthy of praise. We do this because we believe to the core of our being that Jesus deserves their worship. His blood and grace extends to the furthest corner of the earth—and it is from these furthest corners that praise and worship will come.

- Take some time as a group to discuss these things.
 - Do you believe that the heart of missions is the worship of Jesus?
 - Do you agree with John Piper that "Missions exists because worship doesn't"?
 - What is our responsibility to take the message of the Gospel to the unreached people living on this earth?
 - What priority ought we give to the world's unreached people groups?

Examination:

- **Read 1 Peter 3:13-18:**
 - Peter tells us that “in our hearts” we are to “revere Christ as Lord.” What do you think this means? What does this have to do with worship? What does it look like for us to truly worship Jesus in our hearts—revering Him as Lord?
 - According to verse 13 and 14, what are some possible outcomes when we take this message of the worthiness of Christ and share it with others?
 - Why do you think the unsaved world threatens those who share their faith in Christ?
 - According to verse 15, who is it that does the actual work of opening up hearts to the Gospel—is it us or God? What is Peter telling us our job is? How are we to go about doing this job?
 - According to verse 18, what has Jesus already done and how did He do it?
 - The New Living Translation of the Bible states verse 18 this way: “Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God.” Talk about what it means to be “brought safely home to God.” Who is this verse talking about—what is the scope of this invitation?

- **Read 2 Peter 1:16-21**
 - What is Peter trying to establish in our minds in verse 16? Why is it so important that we know and understand that he was an actual eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus?
 - When Peter talks about the “Prophetic message” in verse 19, what is he talking about? What does Peter want us to understand about this message?
 - What do you think he means when he calls the prophetic message “a light that shines in a dark place”?
 - How might we view the Word of God as a “Key” that unlocks the door and can bring us safely home to God?

- **Read 2 Peter 3:8-9**
 - What “promise” is Peter referring to in verse 9?
 - What does it mean that “God is patient”? What is He waiting for?
 - How does the patience of God connect with the work of missions?
 - When Peter says that God wants “everyone” to come to repentance, do you think he literally means everyone—as in EVERY person on earth? Is this why God is waiting to send Jesus back to this earth?

- **Read 2 Peter 3:17-18**
 - What is Peter “forewarning” us about?
 - Peter’s final words are for us to “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” What does this look like? How are we to do this? Discuss with the group what this means to you—and how you find this happens in your own life?

Application:

Give serious thought to what it means for Jesus to receive worship from people from every tribe, tongue and nation. Do you truly believe that Jesus is worthy of this worship? What are you willing to DO in order to be a part of making this happen?