

Group Bible Study/Discussion:

1. Read Revelation 6:1-11 & 7:9-17. What questions immediately come to mind? What do you find most challenging? Why? Read also Rev 2:18-26. How do these texts relate?
2. If someone asked you, "How could you believe in a God who allows suffering – even of His own people?" – How would you answer them? Why do we so often treat suffering in our lives as a deviation or anomaly? Why does suffering often make us question God?
3. The opening of the seals represents the unfolding events of history during the age of the church. Why is it significant that "the Lamb" is the one opening the seals?
4. What is the progressive pattern in the first 4 seals that is repeated throughout human history? Why would the revelation of the 5th seal bring comfort to those who have suffered for their faith in Jesus?
5. Rev 6 & 7 reveal a back-to-back contrast of judgment & blessing. Can you think of other places in Scripture that offer similar contrasts? What is the purpose of revealing these two themes in this manner? How is that a word of hope & encouragement?
6. Who is present before the throne? Who makes up this group of people from every nation and tribe that in Heaven?
7. What has happened to them? How are they different from any others who have died during this period? How does this answer the question from Rev 6:15-17? Where else do you find "blood" mentioned as having a cleansing or healing power?
8. How does knowing Christ as your "shelter," "protector," & "provider" also point to him as your ultimate hope? How do you practice (live) that reality in the face of your struggles, challenges & disappointments or suffering?
9. Is the safety, security & service of these Christians a present life experience for them or only a promise to be realized in some vague or distant future? Why do you say that?
10. Why is worship depicted as a key activity of the redeemed in 7:9-17? How does this shed some light on the previous question?
11. What pain do you carry that you are eager to have "wiped away"? How does this image of God affect how you pray? How does it affect how you live?
12. With whom can you share the hope of the redeemed in Christ?

Living Water Fellowship

5th Sunday in Easter – 15th May 2022

COME TO JESUS

PRE-SERVICE MEDITATION A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD (MATT BOSWELL)

SONG: Come, Now is the time to worship (P&W 900)

WELCOME & PRAYER:

GROW IN HIS GRACE

BIBLE READING: Revelation 6:1-11

¹As I watched, the Lamb broke the first of the seven seals on the scroll. Then I heard one of the four living beings say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" ²I looked up and saw a white horse standing there. Its rider carried a bow, and a crown was placed on his head. He rode out to win many battles and gain the victory.

³When the Lamb broke the second seal, I heard the second living being say, "Come!" ⁴Then another horse appeared, a red one. Its rider was given a mighty sword and the authority to take peace from the earth. And there was war and slaughter everywhere.

⁵When the Lamb broke the third seal, I heard the third living being say, "Come!" I looked up and saw a black horse, and its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶And I heard a voice from among the four living beings say, "A loaf of wheat bread or three loaves of barley will cost a day's pay. And don't waste the olive oil and wine."

⁷When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living being say, "Come!" ⁸I looked up and saw a horse whose colour was pale green. Its rider was named Death, and his companion was the Grave. These two were given authority over one-fourth of the earth, to kill with the sword and famine and disease and wild animals.

⁹When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of all who had been martyred for the word of God and for being faithful in their testimony. ¹⁰They shouted to the Lord and said, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you judge the people who belong to this world and avenge our blood for what they have done to us?" ¹¹Then a white robe was given to each of them. And they were told to rest a little longer until the full number of their brothers and sisters—their fellow servants of Jesus who were to be martyred—had joined them.

FIRST CENTURY NEWS:

BIBLE READING: Revelation 7:9-17

⁹ After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they were shouting with a great roar, "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!"

¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living beings. And they fell before the throne with their faces to the ground and worshiped God.

¹² They sang,

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and strength belong to our God forever and ever! Amen."

¹³ Then one of the twenty-four elders asked me, "Who are these who are clothed in white? Where did they come from?" ¹⁴ And I said to him, "Sir, you are the one who knows."

Then he said to me, "These are the ones who died in the great tribulation. They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and made them white.

¹⁵ "That is why they stand in front of God's throne and serve him day and night in his Temple. And he who sits on the throne will give them shelter.

¹⁶ They will never again be hungry or thirsty; and will never be scorched by the heat of the sun

¹⁷ For the Lamb on the throne will be their Shepherd.

He will lead them to springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

FAITH CHAT:

1. What comes to you when you think of the last promises in Rev 7:15-17 where God provides shelter, satisfaction, protection, provision, and relief?
2. "While other worldviews lead people to sit in the midst of life's joys, foreseeing the coming sorrow; Christianity empowers its people to sit in the midst of this world's sorrows, tasting the coming joy." (Tim Keller on today's Growing Praise) Comment?

THE MESSAGE: *IN CHRIST'S HANDS: REDEEMING SUFFERING*

OFFERING SONG: *Blessed Assurance Jesus is Mine (LHS 863)*

PRAYERS:

THE COMMUNION:

Words of Institution & The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, & the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Worship Video during Communion: ALL BECAUSE OF THE CROSS (PAUL BALOCHE)

GO IN HIS POWER

THE BLESSING:

(Name), † child of God,

The Spirit of Christ seals you & keeps you safe forever. Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SONG: May the Lord Bless you today (AT 408)

SHOW HIS LOVE