

**<SLIDE 1>May 13 Sermon on Revelation 19:1-10 –  
Celebrate! The Day is Here!**

1. 19:1-5 Celebrate God's Justice
2. 19:6-10 Celebrate the Wedding of the Lamb

It is an honour to give us our message this morning on this beautiful Mother' Day! We will be continuing in Revelation this morning and as we near the end of the book the action will be slowing down a little bit today, which is nice because for the last several weeks we have been in the midst of intense images, strange beasts, powerful angels, wrath, and judgment.

Therefore, I think it is good pause and remember the overview of this book. Revelation was originally written to 7 churches in Asia Minor, most of whom were experiencing varying degrees of persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ! Many Christians had the choice of bowing down to Caesar or face the consequences of Rome's brutality.

Yet this book pulls back the curtain to allow these churches to see things from God's point of view, a heavenly perspective if you will! And God is showing these struggling believers that it is **God Himself who is on the throne**, God is in **control** and that in the end **God's justice will prevail, evil will be dealt with forever**, and those who **overcome** the allure of this fallen world will **reign** with God **forever** in the **new heaven** and the new earth!

A central theme in Revelation is worship! **<SLIDE 2>** And as I read through Revelation this week a question continually came to my mind: ***Whom or What do YOU Worship?*** **<SLIDE 3>**

Is Jesus on the throne of my life? Or am I bowing down to modern day Babylon at the alters of Comfort and Consumerism? I moved to NVan from Abby 4 years and I didn't even know what a Tesla was ...

- LOUI GIGLIO says, "You my friend .. are a worshiper! Every day, all day long, everywhere you go, you worship. It's what you do, it's who you are... it's what you were made to do. **Worship is our response to what we value most.** Worship is about saying, "This person, this thing, this experience is what matters most to me...it's the thing I put first in my life. That "thing" might be a relationship, a dream, friends, status, stuff, a name or title, or some kind of pleasure."

Revelation serves as a **warning**: If you **deny Christ** and **worship** anything else, and your fate is the same as Babylon; Death & Destruction. BUT if you overcome the world, and Worship God, and put Jesus on the throne of your life, salvation is gifted to you.

Last week in chapter 17+18 the beast and the Great Prostitute were judged and the great city of Babylon was destroyed in a matter of an hour. And that destruction is the background to this passage!

READ 19:1-10 <SLIDE 4 FOR 19:1-5> <SLIDE 5 FOR 19:6-10>

### 1. 19:1-5 Celebrate God's Justice

<SLIDE 6> In differing translations of the Bible, there are many different sub-headings over this passage: "Songs of Victory in Heaven" "Hallelujah" "Celebration in Heaven" "Rejoicing in Heaven" "Threefold Hallelujah over Babylon's fall"

Whatever the title, we know WORSHIP is happening! For us a common word we use in our worship songs is HALLELUJAH. Hallelujah simply means Praise God!

Does anyone know how many times this word is used in the NT?

- 4 times and only in this chapter!
- In the OT it is most commonly used in the Psalms. The book ends with a number of Hallelujah's in Psalms 146-150.
- But there are also a group of Psalms that were sung at **Passover that remembered the exodus story.** <SLIDE 7> During this passover meal Jews would sing Psalm's 113-118. The interesting thing is that all the Hallelujah Psalms are remembering their deliverance by God from their slavery in Egypt!

John is purposeful in his choice of words, So why the Hallelujah in this chapter? John has just described the fall of Babylon, the empire that opposes God and oppresses His people! And now God's people are singing a new song of worship for this new deliverance and a little later on they will celebrate a new meal together instead of the Passover – the wedding supper of the Lamb!

But before the wedding the first 5 verses are looking backwards to the last 2 chapters while verses 6-10 is looking towards the end of the book.

- <SLIDE 8> In VERSE 1 the great multitude ( ) is shouting PRAISE GOD! The first hallelujah is about the "salvation and glory and power belong to OUR GOD", NOTICE **OUR GOD!** God is personal and we have a relationship with Him! Yet **Salvation** here in verse one is more than personal deliverance but about the restoration of ALL creation.

- In verse 2 this new song of celebration sings for **true** and **just** are his judgments: reminding us that God's judgment is fair and valid. The empire that seduced the nations into idolatry got exactly what it deserved!

In Verse 3 we get the second HALLELUJAH! <SLIDE 9>

- This second praise is because the smoke from Babylon goes up for ever and ever. This means the judgment is final, eternal! No more will the nations be seduced to worship anything or anyone other than God!
- <SLIDE 10>After these two sets of praises in verse 4 the heavenly court echo in agreement with the multitude of God's people: they join in the worship of the saints crying out AMEN! HALLELUJAH!
- And if you can remember back to chapter 4, these are the same creatures and elders who sit in the presence of God and praise Him day and night!

When we experience the presence and power of God it is our natural response to worship! <SLIDE 11>

A few years ago I was **backcountry ski touring** and the only people in the area were my good buddy and I. Everything was completely pristine with a beautiful white blanket of fresh snow shimmering over the mountains! The landscape was completely pure; nothing had touched it! The sun had been out before a cool breeze picked up. The breeze froze water into crystals on the surface of the snow and they were flung heavenward into the air, where the sun shone through the clouds the air was literally sparkling, a beautiful reminder to us that God's Spirit is always present! Our response was awe and wonder and we proclaimed the awesomeness of God out loud!

Other times reading Scripture it is just so clear that God is good and is the Truth!

Or in times of worship proclaiming the splendor of God's Majesty or in those moments when you connect deeply with friends or family the joy of God can well up inside of you! And thankfulness and peace can flood your soul! This is what worshiping the true God can bring about!

<SLIDE 12>***How do you respond to God's goodness and presence in your life?*** I believe this passage calls us to slow down, stop and ponder the goodness of God even in the midst of the chaos of life! This chorus of praise reminds us that God is going to make everything right again in the end.

In verse 5 a voice from God's throne calls out to all God's servants on the earth to Praise Him! We are all invited to join in the worship of God!

## 2. 19:6-10 Celebrate the Wedding of the Lamb

The first 5 verses the multitude is praising God for **what he had done**, HE brought justice to the wicked! These next verses are praising God for what was coming: The marriage supper of the Lamb, where the people of God who make up the church – the bride of Christ would be finally and permanently in the presence of Jesus, the Person of highest value and affection! **<SLIDE 13> In verse 6 a great multitude spoke**, like the roar of rushing waters and loud peals of thunder! Who else has a voice like this? **God does**, the church is sounding and acting like God and they are shouting; “Hallalujah! The Lord God Almighty Reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory – he deserves it – for the wedding of the lamb has come, **<SLIDE 14>** that day we have been waiting and waiting for is here! The bride has made herself ready, the gown of righteousness is on! The wedding day is here!

It was the end of 2010, I was smitten, completely in love. And I had been working hard to save up for something special, a gift that sparkled almost as much as my beloved! **<SLIDE 15>** I had a beautiful **ring**, made and I got off work early to pick up my purchase, I remember driving through Vancouver shouting at the top of my lungs, “I’M GETTING ENGAGED!” I was so pumped and I couldn’t wait to propose! I had just two more things to do, I had to ask her father’s blessing and then I had to set up the perfect place to pop the question! **<SLIDE 16>** Her dad gave me his blessing and she came running up those stairs I had carved out of the snow repeating yes yes yes before I could say anything! We were engaged and we celebrated together and with friends and family! WE got on the phone later and called all the friends and family we could think of! Then for the next four months we eagerly planned our big day, the day that we pledged ourselves together to be with one another permanently as long as there was breath in our lungs! What excitement, and you can feel that excitement in this text! This big day that God’s people had been waiting for was finally here!

**<SLIDE 17>** Given the nature of our text I have had some study and time to reflect on **marriage** this week! I just had the privilege of celebrating one of my youth leaders’ marriage 3 weeks ago! What a great celebration that was! A month ago Emily and I celebrated our 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary! And we got to reflect on the life that we have shared in together so far!

What I hadn't realized before this week was how much the theme of marriage runs throughout the Bible! The first chapter of Scripture ends with God creating man and woman and commanding them to be fruitful and multiply! **<SLIDE 18>** Theologian NT Wright says, "we are, after all, made male and female in God's image, and in Genesis that is the climax of the whole of creation. [Therefore when] a man and a woman to come together in marriage, whether they know it or not, is to plant a signpost, which says: God's creation is wonderful! God's purposes for it are not over! His plan is going ahead, and we are a part of it." One of the ways God has designed and created is that we can join with Him in continuing his creative work by producing children (mother's day plug)!

Then in the second chapter of the Bible we have the marriage of Adam and Eve including the first love poetry! So the Bible begins with the marriage of the first human couple and ends with the marriage of Christ and His Church as well as the marriage of heaven and earth at the end of Revelation.

Throughout the Bible the relationship between God and His people is described as a husband and wife. **<SLIDE 19>** In Isaiah 54 we read, that Israel's husband is her Maker!

In the book of **Hosea** God calls the prophet to marry a prostitute as a picture of God and Israel. Hosea representing God and his wife Gomer representing Israel. After Hosea and Gomer are married and have children, Gomer goes off to sell herself once again to the men of the town as a prostitute. A complete betrayal of the marriage covenant, which is a picture of what Israel has done to their God! But Then God tells Hosea to go and buy her back! It's a powerful image of how God's pursuit of humanity is relentless even after our complete rejection of him! Think about it, Hosea is there standing, in front of another man's house, waiting to pay for the woman that he had already married! I cannot imagine the emotions that Hosea would be feeling but that begins to give us a glimpse into what God feels when humanity rejects Him. Yet God is devoted to us with an unconditional love!

And that husband-like love comes to full measure in the NT! God comes to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

In John 3 John the Baptist, the prophet who comes to get the people ready for the coming Messiah calls himself the friend of the bridegroom referring to Jesus as the groom who came into the world to gather his bride: the people of God.

Then in John 4 we have the story of Jesus and the woman at the well. This story is connected to other biblical stories where someone goes to a well to look for a bride! Then the woman whom Jesus meets there has already had 5 husbands and is living with a man she is not married to now! This is a classic story of someone trying to find fulfillment apart from God and falling short every time. Then in comes Jesus seeking this woman out as her true husband, the one who can offer her true fulfillment and eternal life!

This idea of Jesus pursuing us as a husband would come to life for me from A commentary by Darrel Johnson that talked about first century Jewish Wedding Customs. Weddings at the time of Jesus had 3 main steps:

1. engagement (technically called betrothal) <SLIDE 20>
2. preparation for the wedding
3. wedding supper itself

As I hope we will see, there is a reason why the wedding supper is portrayed in our passage this morning:

**1. Betrothal Ceremony:** the prospective groom would leave his father's house and travel, accompanied by his best man, to the prospective bride's house. There the groom would finalize arrangements with the bride's father, in particular coming to an agreement on the **purchase price**. In that day a woman was bought with a price. As soon as the price was paid the marriage was technically done! The man and woman were legally married, although they would not live together yet. She was declared to be consecrated to the groom or set apart exclusively for him. **A new covenant was established between them, sealed by drinking a cup of wine, over which a betrothal benediction was pronounced: "This cup is a new covenant."**

Then the groom would return to his father's house and would be away from her for around a year. This is that in between period of separation, the groom would prepare a room for the bride in his father's house. And during the separation, the bride would prepare herself for the wedding. During this time, they would not see each other and would not have slept together yet, but they were legally and spiritually bound to one another. To break this betrothal was considered **divorce!**

At the end of the betrothal period, the bridegroom, dressed in festive attire, and accompanied by his best man and friends would go back to the bride's house. Although everyone had a rough idea of when the groom would come, they did not know the exact day or hour. Usually, to add the element of surprise he would arrive around midnight. His arrival would be preceded by

the shout, "Here is the bridegroom! Come out! Come out to meet him!" Then with great joy, the bride, veiled and accompanied by her maidens, who were carrying lamps, would come out to join the groom and his attendants. Then the feast itself would begin!

First, a brief ceremony would take place involved the word "take!" After the groom would "take" the bride, the whole bridal party would make its way to the groom's father's house. There they would find all the wedding guests dressed in special robes **and the feast would start** lasting 7-14 days! (You wouldn't want to take that tab!)

**Now think back to Jesus: <SLIDE 21>** It's Passover time! He has sat down with his disciples in the upper room! Jesus takes a cup of wine and gives it to His disciples saying, "This cup is the new covenant of my blood." Then Jesus tells them he is leaving and that they cannot come with them yet will come later. In John 14:1-3 Jesus says, "My Father's house has many rooms ... I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and **take** you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

- Jesus is talking wedding talk!! He is the groom! He is proposing to His followers! Then He sealed the engagement with a cup of wine! Then He went out to pay the price, with his blood, with his very life. And now he is preparing a place for us at His Father's house! And he is going to come back to "take" us so we can be with him forever in the new creation!
- We have been betrothed to Jesus! Word's cannot express how amazing this is! Think about it, I mean when I married Emily, I had definitely married up! But Jesus, the Creator of the Universe, that's really UP!

So let me offer a few conclusions this morning: <SLIDE 22>

Because of our betrothal to Jesus we need to know that we are embraced by Jesus' love! He has paid the price! We are secure, he has given everything to get us, to buy us back! He is the one who offers us HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. He offers to clothe us with His purity! **<SLIDE 23>**

Pay attention to vs 7-8: and his bride *has made herself* ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, has *been given* to her to wear.

- We have been given the righteousness of Christ to wear, but are we putting it on? Are we walking and worshiping in the truth that God's word lays out for us? In the truth that we are Christ's and that He is ours? If we are not we must ask ourselves, why am I denying the gifts of our Saviour? Why am I turning back to Babylon?! Let's tune into the

guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives to bring about real life transformation?!

Because if we are engaged to Christ, sin is actually worse than we thought! SIN = ADULTERY! <SLIDE 24> “It is not only missing the mark, or stepping over the line, or the “twistedness” of our desires and affections. It is adultery. It is profoundly relational. And devastating!

This shows us the seriousness of who or what we worship! In verse 10 when this scene finished playing itself out, John fell at the feet of the angel to worship him! The angel quickly scolds him and commands John to Worship God! <SLIDE 25> And this same command is for us today! Worship God with all that you are! (to inspire a passion for Christ in all of life) Turn your heart and affections towards Jesus. The Spirit of God who brought you in tune with Jesus is now at work in you to worship in Spirit and truth! The call to worship is the call to evangelism! Worship bears testimony to what Jesus has done for the world and for you personally! Amen!

<SLIDE 26> So we come to table this morning, the meal that Jesus is offering us is a foretaste of the wedding supper of the lamb to come. This cup is the cup of the new covenant that proclaims you are one with Christ! The bread is the symbol of Jesus’ body that was broken for you, It is the price He paid for you. And this meal reminds us to put on the robes of *righteousness*. Let’s put it on together and see what God does through us. This meal today serves as a reminder that Jesus is coming back for us! And we are preparing ourselves for that wonderful day when we will feast with Christ and all of God’s people in the new heavens and new earth!

**Instructions:** its best to let the front rows come first.

There is also a few people in the back who would love to **pray** for you during communion as well.

BENEDICTION and Call to Prayer:

Mother’s Day is a day for joy and celebration. But for some, it is a day that can bring up pain. Whether or not today is a painful day for you, please know that you are loved and valued by God, and by your church family. Today we are not just celebrating mothers. We are celebrating *all women*. As you leave the sanctuary, we will be handing out a carnation to each woman, please take one as a token of how special you are to us.

May you lay aside every weight and sin, to run the race with endurance looking to Jesus, the author, and perfecter of our faith!



