All Creation Joins in Giving Praise to God and the Lamb

A study of Revelation with focus on Earthcare—Week 3

Leader: As we begin this session, everyone stand up and stretch. Now sit down, placing feet on the floor and hands at your sides. Close your eyes and take a moment to sense your breathing. Listen as chapter four is read (leader reads chapter 4).

Join together singing Holy, Holy, Holy (LBW #165) verses 1-2

Who is Lord? The true God is depicted in Chapter four. Others compete for our loyalty. Who really is your God? (rhetorical question)

As we work through the book of Revelation, this is the situation. We cannot be neutral. We serve and revere something—What? (rhetorical question)

As we move into Chapter 5 we see the scroll with seven seals. As the angel seeks to find the one who is worthy to open the seals an elder says who can.

Leader: Have someone read Rev. 5:5

Leader: Notice that he hears about a lion, the lion of Judah.

Leader, Have someone read Rev. 5:5-14

Leader: Notice that what John sees is the lamb. Is Jesus a lion or a lamb? (rhetorical question) It is the power of the lion through the death of the lamb. The power of God’s kingdom is hidden under it’s opposite.

As we are in the midst of all the creatures singing praises and being rightly ordered around the savior, we are moved to a sense of the well-ordered creation. What is amazing is that this isn’t only a future hope, it is right here and right now! The whole of creation praises the Lamb who was slain, Jesus.

Just a note about the Left Behind series, none of what we have read up to chapter 4 is in the series.
In the Chapters that come next we hear about the seven seals and the seven trumpets. We see cycles of disturbing words and comforting words. We will look at the first four seals and at the witnesses at the end of chapter 11.

Leader: Put up the Durer overhead with the four horsemen.

Leader: The four horsemen are placed strategically in this woodcut. The horseman in the back, most away from us, came out conquering and to conquer. These represented the safety the churches of the Roman Empire experienced as part of a powerful empire. Those that placed their faith in that power were deluding themselves. The second horseman we see has a great sword. He would take peace from the earth so that people would slaughter one another. This horseman represents the threat to security within our own borders. Can we find safety even within our own borders? The third horseman holds a pair of scales. His is a threat of economic hardship. He speaks of prices that would be harsh on the poor. The fourth horseman represents death.

The question for us is, How secure are we? Where does our security come from? (these are all rhetorical questions)

How is it that our search for security drives us to misuse the environment? Spend five or six minutes in discussion on this point. (So much of what drives our misuse of the environment is precisely because we want more money, more national security, more personal security, and better health. We have landfills full of trash, rainforests destroyed, spent nuclear waste—for a start).

We see these seals, we think, where is God. If we had time to read through all the seals and trumpets we would see that there is no attempt to explain evil in the world. There are threats that can be ascribed to God, to human sin, and to Satan.

We can recognize God’s power to threaten. We can’t explain it. We can respond with repentance. The limits of our knowledge don’t change our response. We turn to God. We can do this because when God threatens, God can save. When sin or Satan threatens there is no hope.

When asked who can stand at the end of chapter 6. We learn in chapter seven that there was a great multitude from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and nations standing before the throne and before the Lamb. The cycle of hope is present—all creation joins in giving praise to God and the Lamb. The living and present Christ is among us.

There are threats because the danger is real and the hope is real. We are called to persevere in faith.

In chapter 11 we see two witnesses. These witnesses prophesy. We hear again that prophesy is witness to God and the Lamb rather than a portent of the future.
As we finish this cycle the seventh trumpet blows. There is silence and then there were loud voices saying....

Play an excerpt from the Hallelujah Chorus to end the session.