



Greetings my brothers & sisters in Christ, what a joy that we can come together to worship and give thanks and celebrate the 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany.

I know many of you will be watching via live stream, are unable to be here today, and we continue to pray that, we will be restored to normal daily lives, that we will be able to once again come together each Sunday for worship and fellowship.

I pray, that today's message, will lift all our spirits, and encourage us, as we live out our lives as Christians, committed to lives of service, in God's Kingdom!

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, as we gather together as living stones, part of your Church, we ask the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts, kindling in them the fire of your love.

Almighty God, speak to us through your Holy Spirit, and as we walk in the light of your Spirit may we grow in wisdom, always rejoicing in the comfort He brings, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Well, what a challenge for yours truly in preparing today's message, especially anything from Revelation.

I also learnt something new from my research, that our liturgy for Holy Communion, is based on the Book of Revelation.

Why am I not amazed, how the Holy Spirit, guides & inspires us, teaches and reveals truths to us, as we go about our preparations, and then links both our Gospel & New Testament readings with Chapters 4 & 5 of the John's book of Revelation!

You will recall last Sunday, how Rev Melinda in her 2nd message in the series from Revelation on chapters 2 & 3, spoke on how Christ stands at the door knocking, waiting for us to open it to him.

We all sang a new song, and thankfully led for us by Keith, was a wonderful blessing to us all, and maybe brought back some childhood, Sunday school memories!

So now we come to today's passages from Revelation, and almost before we can respond to the invitation, Revelation 4:1 shows us a door opening into heaven itself.

It's quite strikingly a parallel to the moving parable that Jesus' tells, in St Luke's Gospel, of the father who runs to meet his prodigal son. Here, in Revelation, Jesus pre-empts our response by opening a door of his own and revealing more of himself to us. What we discover when we peer inside that open door is the heart of the book, the throne room 'vision'.

It is the heart of the text that it reveals to us God the Father and Jesus his Son, the end and beatitude of the human person. These represent not only the "end of the journey" but also the "source" of all that is to come later in the book.

From the heavenly throne will come both the judgment of the wicked and the joy of the redeemed, all things radiate and flow from this central core — a Revelation of the sovereignty

of God over all creation and all human history, the throne that represents him to whom this world really belongs.

John frequently has drawn upon the more ancient "revelations" to the Old Testaments prophets to help explain what he is seeing.

The Old Testament prophet most connected to the Book of Revelation is the prophet Ezekiel, there are over one hundred specific references to Ezekiel in Revelation. This shouldn't surprise us since both authors trace the events that led up to the destruction of the earthly Jerusalem and both give us the hope of the return of the shining city and its Temple.

Finally, in Revelation, chapters 4 - 5 presents two distinct liturgies to us, the readers. Chapter 4 is a celebration of the liturgy of creation, while chapter 5 reveals a liturgy of redemption. Both visions follow a similar pattern that contains a most important revelation of its own, to us all.

That is, all the glory, worship, and honour given to God the Father in Revelation 4, is given to his Son, Jesus, the Lamb in Revelation 5.

That inaugural vision shows us that Jesus is "the first and the last, the alpha & the omega, and chapter 5 teaches us that he, Jesus, is fully God.

It's important that we take from these two chapters, the following, points on our Worship –

- Worship, centres, gathers, reveals, sings and affirms us all!
- Worship is a meeting, with God at the centre, so that our lives are centred on God and not lived eccentrically, or "out of kilter" with our Creator!
- Worship is not just coming together and doing whatever we want, but about recalibrating our lives in accordance with God's will – putting our life back in order.

And that connects us to our Gospel reading about the wedding @ Cana, and the first of Jesus' miracles, the turning of water into a wonderful wine.

John tells us that this miracle at Cana was a revelation and a confirmation of faith for the disciples. They saw the exuberant, creative power of God at work in bringing uncomplicated human joy to this wedding. Through the rest of their time with Jesus they had to learn many other kinds of things about God's power, not all of them palatable, but this moment of unbridled joy, is characteristic of God, as we encounter him through our Lord Jesus.

It is the point that is affirmed for us by the reading from 1 Corinthians.

That God works in a wild variety of ways, and does not always follow our rules. Although there is an inherent consistency in our encounters with God, we will see it only if what we are looking for is the shape of Jesus.

The point of our faith is to enable us to say and live, ***'Jesus is Lord'***.

Sometimes, as St Paul tells us, this will be accompanied by very satisfying gifts of power, but they are not the point.

The point is to build a worshipping community, made up of people whose lives are directed to God. This community will rejoice in the use of gifts that help it to grow, but they won't care,

- who has the power to speak,
- or who heal or work miracles,
- so long as the community as a whole is learning to say, 'Jesus is Lord'

To see the Holy Spirit at work, building a people to praise and worship. To recognise this power, that is the true spiritual gift, one that we, that's you and I, are all called to exercise, to the best of our abilities! **Amen!**