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Revelation

Chapter 17 - Revealing that Which Allures Men The Vulnerability of the Capricious (vs. 13-18)

Revelation 17:13-18: “These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.” And he said to me, “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled. The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

Revelation 17- This book is about revealing, and God is unveiling for us the things that in many respects allure us. Man has these allurements within the world and they draw us; the lust of the flesh; the lust of the eyes; the boastful pride of life. There are things that call us, and we're easily sucked into them. This particular chapter begins to reveal those things that allure man. And as we've been going through, what we've seen is the scope of the seduction, how massive it is. It's all over the world. The same things that tempt one man over here is the same thing that tempts man over there. There's nothing new, as Corinthians says, about the temptation, such as is common to man. We realize that we're drawn in by the things of pleasure and so easily taken in. The description that's given of the nations of the world is "sea," which we oftentimes make reference to the "sea of humanity". And it is an appropriate word that is used in the sense that, well, humanity is volatile and easily dissuaded, easily swayed, easily moved. They are unpredictable. They are stirred up so easily and agitated by things that happen.

There's an interesting passage in Acts 17. In fact, there are quite a few passages in Acts 17 that just reveal the volatility of people and the masses. And in Acts 17, you see how easily they are stirred up. I mean, they don't actually have to have a reason to riot. They just have to have someone leading them to riot.

In Acts 17, if you look with me in verse 5, it says the Jews are becoming jealous at this stage of the gospel and those that are proclaiming it.

(Acts 17:5) “... taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob...”

How hard was that?

It says, if you look at the next phrase- they were able to set the whole city in an uproar. Where did that come from?

You'll see the same thing happening in Chapter 14, if you back up in Chapter 14 of Acts.

It says in verse 19, as they were coming after Paul, wanting him dead,

(Acts 14:19) “But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.”

How quickly the multitudes could change.

And you see that in the city of Ephesus in Acts 19. I don't know, would it surprise you that this particular riot is based on money? So, they're upset because people are burning their idols and their books. We see that in the same Acts 19:17,18, and 19; you see them burning the books and the magic things and all of that.

Because of that,

(Acts 19:23) “About that time there occurred no small disturbance concerning the Way.

(Acts 19:24) For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis...”

Well, there's the problem.

“... was bringing no little business to the craftsmen;

(Acts 19:25) these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, “Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business.”

It's just business, right? Yeah, don't mess with the union.

(Acts 19:26) “You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia...”

I like the generality here.

“... this Paul...”

“Just one man, has messed up all of our business.”

“... this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all.”

Imagine that. Who would think that? “I made a god and why would they say that it wasn't a god at all? Why would he say that?”

(Acts 19:27) “Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute...”

“Which we're really honorable men; it really has nothing to do with money.”

“... but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless...”

Of course, she can't protect herself, even though she's a god.

“... and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned...”

How could somebody that powerful be dethroned by little Paul?

(Acts 19:28) “When they heard this...”

Well, it didn't take much to get them mad.

“... and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

(Acts 19:29) The city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia.”

But it says in verse 32,

(Acts 19:32) “So then, some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion and the majority did not know for what reason they had come together.”

Of course, that doesn't sound like a mob, does it? What it's displaying is just how capricious the world is. So, when Scripture talks about the sea, and “don't be driven and tossed by every wind and wave of doctrine,” of course, the treachery of the sea is that whichever way the wind blows is where that sea is going. And oftentimes, it's the way of least resistance. Oftentimes, it's the way of self-preservation. Oftentimes, the wind is blowing in the realm of self-gratification. But it always feeds that selfish ambition and desire for personal gain. And they always put that proverbial carrot out there to allure man into his pleasures.

And this is why, as Revelation begins to give us the imagery, it gives us pictures like the harlot, it gives us pictures like the beast, and then it begins to pull them together, and then it shows kings worshipping these. You go, “Well, what is He talking about?” Well, the pictures are pretty clear. That what you have are the masses that are easily lured away. And what's interesting, as the beginning of Revelation 17 starts, it tells us where the harlot's coming from. It's coming from the sea. So, you

have this mass of capriciousness and volatility, and out of that will come this great harlot, which is a symbol of what? Your pleasures, the symbol of your desires, your cravings. And so, you have this interesting thing that's coming out of humanity that is very volatile and “I want” centered and focused. And you begin to realize that they begin to build, well, structures in worship to this thing. They call this structure a city. The city is this picture of this symbol that man has accumulated wealth and power. We build skyscrapers and we call our cities after women oftentimes. And certainly, that was true in biblical times. So, as the passage ends, if you look in verse 18 of Chapter 17 of Revelation, it says,

(Revelation 17:18) “The woman whom you saw is the great city...”

And that great city came out of that sea of humanity. But this great city is that symbol of all the things that you and I need to have and want that allure us. And when you think about it, it's that which draws us into pleasure and promises prosperity. And it's one of the reasons why the name “harlot” is used. You sell yourself. She sold herself

for money. So, man does that. He sells himself, right? It's for money. He'll give up relationships for money. He'll give up everything that's really meaningful in life for money. I've heard people say, "Well, I can't come to church. I've got to work for money." He'll put God on the back burner to do everything. It's all about the money. And it's the seeking of pleasures, and it's the seeking of prosperity that easily entangles us. It's the affairs of everyday life, and that begins to entangle us. Well, the harlot is that picture. What you don't oftentimes comprehend is how that leads to savagery. And this is why the beast is interjected. The initial thought is, "Well, I'm just pursuing my selfish desires. Who could be hurt by that?" But the pursuit of selfish desires, as James 3 and 4 states, creates hostility. And the way that it creates hostility is that it creates within us... Well, I mean, if you pursue more for you, what begins to happen? Well, I can tell you what happens. You become, first of all, impatient. Watch. Start getting what you want all the time and watch what happens. You'll start getting impatient. You'll start feeling entitled, "Well, I deserve more." "Why?" "Because I have so much more." Not only that, but then you become cold

and indifferent, and you'll become demanding. Scripture says that the rich man answers harshly. So, you'll become demanding and you'll become hostile. You'll become condescending, and you'll look down at all those little people. But it'll begin to detach you from everybody else and from relationships because, why? It's all about you. Well, once that begins to happen, then that pride and greed go into this kind of fluid morphing into hate and murder. And that's where you come into James 4. He says, "What's the source of your quarrels? Isn't it your greed? Isn't it the things that you're going after?" And then what happens? Well, you actually become a beast. And more specifically, the beast takes over.

And that's what this particular passage is about. It's about the beast taking over. The perception is at first that "It's just about pleasure and the woman's in control and it's just about getting what I want. And nothing bad's going to happen of that," not to mention that it's immoral and all the terrible things that are drawing you away from God. But the initial response is, "I'm just going after what I want and I'm free to do that and I'm not hurting

anybody.” You haven't done it long enough; you're going to hurt somebody. You're going to give up people. You're going to be cruel to people. You're going to see people as things and money as something to have a relationship with. So, you begin to turn your whole life upside down and all you have to do is look at the carnage behind you. Look at the heartache, look at the pain, look at the suffering behind you. You're not building lives; you're not helping lives; you're just feeding your desires. And you'll see people as just getting in the way. This is why when usually they have a murder, one of the first things they say is, “Follow the money. Where's the money?” Because that's what starts. I mean, it may have started off with, you know, “I just want to buy a new car,” but it ultimately ends in that kind of heart.

So, this passage is demonstrating this. In the context as well, the capriciousness of society and how easily they are moved into this. Their perception is, “Well, we're just going after what we want.” And God says, “But it's creating a monster.” And how bizarre it is that this monster that is created, actually, when you thought

everything was being under control, is now consuming you. And it's impossible for hatred and all these things to come into your life and you to not be consumed about it. Proverbs 1 starts off by warning the son. And he says, "Son, there's going to be some people coming up to you, and they're going to say, "Why don't you pool your money in with mine? And we're going to get really rich." But he says, "You know what they're doing? They're laying a trap. They're going to kill you." So, it's an interesting picture. You start off going, "Well, I'm going to be pleased. I'm going to have all these wonderful things." And God goes, "They're going to kill you. They're going to kill you." And this is what Revelation is about. God is revealing what the world does and how they think. There's a force behind this that is moving the nations. In many respects, if I can use this word, they're victims themselves. They don't know what's behind all this, but they're falling for it. And because they have not made Christ- and this is going to be the key- because they've not made the Lamb of God their only hope and put their trust in Him and anchored themselves in the relationship with

God, they become very capricious and volatile. That is to say, very highly unpredictable, highly vulnerable in everything that goes on, so that they're easily allured and easily manipulated. It is with this point that we come within the passage, and we begin to see that.

Now, with that in mind, and I don't want to get too preachy about this, but one of the bad things that's been happening lately within the church is that the church has become almost an entertainment source. And they perceive that they're running a kind of business. Of course, when you look at the seven churches in Asia Minor, there was one church that was dealing with the whole business aspect, another church dealing with having a name for themselves. So, you get caught up into all these things. The problem is that your perception is, "If we can allure people in the church with the things of the world..." So, like one church did, they had lottery tickets under the pews or under the seats of people as they came in. This actually happened about two years ago. If you sat in the right seat, you won a Mercedes-Benz. Well, it filled the church. But what you're doing is you're alluring them

with the things of the world, and you're perceiving that this faith will keep them. But what you're creating is a false love, not for God. They loved the Mercedes. They didn't come for God. I'm going to use it again, so you might want to mark it down- This faith is not sustainable. This is an unsustainable faith because you're rooted in those things.

And when you see in John, just to give you an example, John 6; I don't want to spend all my time talking about the vulnerability of mankind, but you look in John 6, and Jesus is feeding the 5,000, right? Well, I mean, Jesus feeds the 5,000; these people are going to be loyal. Right? They're going to hang in there until “death do us part”. But Jesus rebukes them for that.

Because it says,

(John 6:26) “Jesus answered them and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.”

“You reaped some sort of benefit out of it.”

(John 6:27) “Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.”

(John 6:28) Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?””

And Jesus said, “You need to believe.”

Our whole faith is that we present the gospel of Christ. And we say, “Do you believe?” And you say, “Yes.” And guess what holds you? The Spirit of God. Not my personality. What keeps you is the love for God. The love of God constrains me. It's the Spirit of God that holds me. If you're alluring people into the gospel for any other reason, they're receiving that other reason. That's not going to hold them. This is why you and I have to believe in the power of the gospel of Christ, that it's the thing that changes lives; that to the world, okay, I'll admit it with Paul, 1 Corinthians 1, it seems stupid. But to us, it's the power of God for salvation.

So, in Romans 1:16, of course, we're not ashamed of this, right? It's the power of God. We believe that.

So, if you look within Matthew 27, just to nail the last nail in the coffin, if I can put it that way. Matthew 27- As Jesus is coming before Pilate and He's brought up on trumped up charges. If you look in Matthew 27, Jesus stands before the governor. And the question is, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "It is as you say." But despite the fact that He has no guilt, despite the fact that He has not committed a crime, Pilate's afraid of the multitudes. They've been stirred up. I wonder who stirred them up? So, they've been stirred up and once the multitude is stirred up, wait a minute, do you think there might be some people in the crowd that maybe ate some food from Jesus? Or was healed by Jesus? What are they doing right now?

Well, the passage says in verse 15,

(Matthew 27:15) "Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the people any one prisoner whom they wanted."

And so, they could actually choose. So, of course, to Pilate, it would be a no-brainer, "This guy's innocent. And this is the guy that has fed you. This is the guy that has

done wonderful things for you. He hasn't done anything. This is not an insurrectionist. This is not somebody that's mistreated you.”

(Matthew 27:20) “But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds...”

Don't tell me that the multitudes aren't vulnerable. This is one of the big problems with “majority rules”. I mean, it sounds like a great idea, doesn't it? Majority rules. Unless the majority's wrong, then we're in trouble.

“But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to put Jesus to death.”

Which they did.

And it says in verse 22,

(Matthew 27:22) “Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Crucify Him!”

(Matthew 27:23) And he said, “Why, what evil has He done?” But they kept shouting all the more, saying, “Crucify Him!””

He goes, “Well, this isn't good.” They go, “No problem.”

(Matthew 27:25) “And all the people said, “His blood shall be on us and on our children!””

Now, this is the multitude. And this is how easily they're stirred up. I mean, it starts with acceptance by the leaders, you know, that allurements of prosperity, “You go along with us; we'll take care of you guys.” “Okay.” Then they'll wish anything. It doesn't matter. It's whatever way the wind blows. If it's blowing efficaciously for them, if it's a benefit to them, then that's the way they're going to go. And we wonder, “Why is our country going in this direction?” It's a path of least resistance. Somebody's promising them something. Somebody is saying something. It's a lie, but it sure sounds good to them. And they begin to go with that wind.

It is that picture that we're seeing in Revelation 17. And what's bizarre about the transition in this is it starts off, in Chapter 17, with a harlot who allures in the prosperity and in the pleasures. And it ends with the hostility and the hatred taking over. And so, now the beast is now taking full control of people's lives. You think that innocently, “Well, I'm just pleasuring myself,” it's not

going to end well. Nobody's going to be happy in the end, especially you.

So, the passage then picks up in verse 13,

(Revelation 17:13) “These...”

Responding to now verse 12, as we bounce off of verse 12, the ten kings that are now reigning on the world.

Now, you have to go all the way back to verse 18 to fully appreciate this.

So, if you look with me in verse 18,

(Revelation 17:18) “The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

That's a little jab by God to let you know. God goes, “I thought the woman was reigning, but now the kings are going to destroy the woman.”

Read the passage with me.

(Revelation 17:13) “These (the kings) have one purpose...”

He's talking about these in the context of verse 12.

One purpose, “*gnōmē*,” in the Greek; one intent. They have a resolve.

“... they give their power...”

Power is dealing with ability, strength, and resources.

So, they gave their ability, strength, and resources.

“... and authority (“*exousia*”) to the beast.”

Their influence and their rights. So, they're giving up everything, basically. They're giving up everything to who? The beast. So, they're going from pleasure to savagery. Everything. All the money; all the resources. Well, it's a picture, in a way, of Hitler. He starts off promising all the unions, “You're going to have lots of money. You're going to have a lot of things, and we're going to supply all these things.” And then it ends up where all the money of the government was thrown into war. Because he wanted to win. He called himself the “Third Reich,” right? Why? Well, because he saw the Holy Roman Empire as the First Reich. He saw Germany as the Second Reich, and Germany under Nazism as the Third Reich, which basically means Reich Realm. It's a realm that he is building this kingdom. It was an interesting picture. It's almost a pre-filment of some of the things that are going on in this time of Revelation. That what

we're seeing; that it starts off with alluring with things, and before long, it turns into a machine of war, and the savagery begins to take over. Not unlike Alexander the Great, or you can go down the list.

So, the beast is now taking over because all the resources of the kings are going to... Look at verse 18 again,

(Revelation 17:18) “The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

But now, the kings and the leaders and those that are in power are giving all the resources over to war. And for what purpose? Look at the passage.

(Revelation 17:14) “These will wage war against the Lamb...”

How bizarre is that? “Let's go fight something innocent.” See, this is the picture of Christ going to the cross, right? One of the great pictures that you have all these generals and governors and kings and the mobs, and Jesus is standing there and going, “I'm not fighting.” “Yeah, I know, we've got to kill You.” “But I'm not fighting. I came to save you.” “That's why we have to kill You.” And

there's this one mind, as Scripture tells us with Peter, he says, "You know what? God was using Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Jews, the Gentiles to accomplish His will." So, the passage begins to, in many respects, mirror that time in which Christ was crucified, doesn't it?

"These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them..."

Remember the tennis shoes? Nike? That's a Greek word, "we'll overcome; we'll win; we'll be victorious." The Lamb will become victorious over all of these powers. A lamb. Now, at this juncture, that doesn't make sense at all. I mean, a lamb doesn't even have horns yet. And we're talking in the terms of the diminutive, which means a little lamb. But the little lamb wins!

So, the passage reads this way,

"... and the Lamb will overcome them..."

Because, unbeknownst to them, He is God. "Oh, it's just Jesus. Just Jesus." People make fun of "just Jesus." Yeah, unbeknownst to you, He's God in the flesh. God. And the One you crucified is God.

The passage reads,

“... He is Lord of lords...”

“Possessor, controller” - would probably be the best description of “*kyrios*” within the passage.

“... and King of kings...”

The One who is sovereign ruler over all things.

“... and those who are with Him...”

I love this phrase,

“... are the called...”

The ones that have been invited.

And if you look at the passage,

“... and chosen...”

It's kind of where we get the word “*ekklesia*,” the church.

It's “called out ones” or the best description would be

“picked out”. So, church, you're the picked out ones; we come together for the Lord. And that which describes

them as what? Faithful. Right. Which would be what?

Opposite, antithetical, to what? Volatile, capricious, the world. See, the one thing different about us is that the

world is ever-changing, it's ever-moving. At one moment something is right, another moment is wrong; the standards are always and ever-changing. Situation ethics are going all over the place, but not with us. We worship the same God today, yesterday, and forever. We believe that truth is an absolute; it never changes. And we are marked by this declaration. We don't change. That's one of the things that makes us so different from the world. "You mean you guys still believe that old message?" Yeah, tell me the old, old story. Because I don't believe there's another one. Paul will say in Galatians, "If somebody else comes to you preaching another gospel, let them be accursed. Because there is no other way and no other name given among men." So, the foundation of our faith is that we are faithful to it. It's never changing. And I'm so glad because it couldn't be absolute if it did change. It couldn't be an anchor for your soul if it was ever moving. But we have something that's immovable. So, the picture of us is, "We win." Why? Because we've anchored in the real. Everybody else is anchored in a fake. Now, this is what makes the picture so interesting. The perception is, "Well, I went with pleasure and I went with prosperity

when it was in vogue. But when the kings begin to take control, okay, I go into savagery.” And He goes, “You guys don't know what you want, do you?” And what Scripture is going to reveal is that there's no security in moving around. You have to believe in something with your heart, and that something has to be true.

And so, the passage begins to describe,

(Revelation 17:15) “And he said to me...”

“You want to know what the waters are?” And of course, you go, “Yeah.” Of course, your pastor has already told you.

But He says,

“... “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples...”

“*Laos*”. These are people with the same stock and same ideology. You know how peoples gather together, and they go, “Yeah, I think the same way. So, we might form a perfect union.” Okay, I’m trying not to quote things.

“... are peoples and multitudes...”

There's a gathering together in some place. It's just a gathering together. Sometimes, people are gathered together. They don't even know why they're there. "So, why did you decide to live here?" "I don't know." "So, you're part of St. John's County?" "Yeah, I guess you could say I'm part of St. John's County. I don't know how I got here, but here I am." So, these are peoples and multitudes.

Now, what's the next one? Nations, that's "*ethnos*". So, different ethnic groups. Those different people are joined for purposes of ethnicity and they have the same nature, oftentimes the same ethnic background. And so, they come together and they celebrate other things besides Christmas. But anyway, they begin to pull in their ethnic beliefs, and that's what unites them. And what does it say, "tongues," "*glōssa*," which makes reference to the same language. They speak the same language and dialect and probably have a lot of the same culture as well.

What is He saying? And this is a point I want you to see. You've got a modge-podge of people that have divided and separated for all kinds of various reasons. Some

people won't unite because of their ethnicity. Some people won't unite because their language. Some people won't unite because, “Well, it’s just not the same ideology that I have.” There'd be different reasons why people don't unite. But on this day, they're all going to come together. They're all going to come as one from every tribe. Who says we can't get along? On this day, the world's going to come together and get along to destroy the Lamb. You don't believe it? It's happening.

(Revelation 17:16) “And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot...”

Now, the kings that were at one time under the auspice of the woman of pleasure, of prosperity, will abandon pleasure and prosperity, and go, “You know what? We just want to go to war.” And they're going to swallow up the woman.

Now, what's the woman?

Well, look in verse 18,

(Revelation 17:18) “The woman whom you saw is the great city...”

So, what are they going to do? They're going to take all the resources out of the city. The city's going to look naked. It's going to look bare. And they're going to use all those resources for what? War.

You're going to see in Chapter 19 that the nations are going to gather together and they're going to ultimately surround little Jerusalem and declare war on God at that moment. What an interesting picture that is. It's like a bully getting 500 other bullies, and going, "I think we can do this now."

But the passage says,

(Revelation 17:16) "And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire."

People oftentimes look at the last days, and they go, "God's going to be mean in those last days." No, God's releasing your meanness. You'll do it for Him.

And that's the point of the passage,

(Revelation 17:17) "For God has put it in their hearts..."

“Put it in their hearts,” the word is actually “given” in there. And the point of the text is like in Romans, he says, “He gave them over to the lusts...” So, the passage really would probably better read, “For God has given them up to their heart.”

“For God has given them up to their heart,” watch the passage,

“... to execute His purpose...”

You think God has lost control of this, even though that's a mob out there? No, His hand is accomplishing exactly what He wanted to do right from the start. He's working to save you.

But it says,

“... to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.”

Now, once again, if you put this in the context of the Book of Revelation, what would you say would be the main purpose of God? And I'm going to answer it for you before you even say it. To reveal. And God is revealing the

hearts of men. He's revealing the volatility of the capricious in the sense that they're being moved and motivated by forces that will self-destruct them. See, their thought is that they're forming this “perfect” union for protection and security. But what it's going to do is it's going to implode on them. The very cities that they built for their magnificence and their strength, the kings of the world will come and eat them up. It will almost be as if you placed a diamond in front of a thief and began to wave it in front of his nose. And that's what will begin to happen. And what you'll see is that the whole volatility of man will be that very thing that destroys him. Galatians 5, Paul says, “It's a wonderful thing, the freedom that you have in Christ, but make sure that the freedom isn't used in such a way that you devour each other.” And the end times is really revealing in which man says, “We have the greatest power,” and God says, “Greatest power? It's a destructive power, and you're going to destroy yourselves.” And He reveals this. He lets them have the common purpose so as to reveal what happens when man has a common purpose. It's not a utopia. It's destruction. Just ask Alexander the Great. Ask Hitler. We

go down the list of those great powers, Nebuchadnezzar, those great powers that have been in the past, what happens when power gets on the throne? The power eats up everything else. And it destroys everything else. And there's never enough. I mean, Alexander, had he lived longer, probably would have kept conquering if there's anything else to conquer. And that's the desire of the heart. So, what Scripture is doing is it's revealing to us the course of man and his source of power.

Now, in parallel to this and in contrast to this, it's also revealing to us the greatest power. And what He's telling us right smack dab in the middle of it, "The Lamb won."

You have to understand the context. Once again, if you look with me in Revelation 5. Remember John, as he stands before the throne and the title deed of the earth, "Who is worthy to receive the title deed of all creation? Who can claim this?" And there's no power in all of heaven that would be powerful enough to claim it. So, John begins to weep in such a way that it is almost uncontrollable.

So, the cry in verse 5 is,

(Revelation 5:5) “and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.””

You go, “A lion? I don't see a lion.”

(Revelation 5:6) “And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God...”

Which oftentimes people quote from Isaiah 11, but it's displaying the power of God and the completeness of God. And He has all authority. And you go, “Yeah, but that Lamb looks almost dead.” And He goes, “Precisely. Because He was willing to give His life. All power and all authority go to Him.” Now, at this moment, we begin to understand that the greatest power and the greatest authority in heaven is love.

And as you go on and read,

(Revelation 5:9) “And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals;

for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”

We can join together for the right reasons.

(Revelation 5:10) “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

(Revelation 5:11) Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

(Revelation 5:12) saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

He wins. And that literally is the theme as you go into the epistles. You perceive and the world says to you that this gospel is a vulnerable, easily destroyed power. And God says, “No. Love never fails.” You slay love; it will resurrect. The power of God cannot be thwarted.

If you'll look with me in Philippians 2, it gives that wonderful truth that, well, how wonderful selflessness is. The world says, "If you're selfless, you're weak." God says, "No, that's strength." And you and I take on the mind of Christ, which is the power of God.

(Philippians 2:3) "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

(Philippians 2:4) do not merely look out for your own personal interests..."

Well, that's the opposite of the power of the world.

"... but also for the interests of others.

(Philippians 2:5) Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

(Philippians 2:6) who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

(Philippians 2:7) but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

(Philippians 2:8) Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death...

That's so weak, isn't it? Multitudes go, "We won."

(Philippians 2:9) "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

(Philippians 2:10) so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

(Philippians 2:11) and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord..."

King of kings. He's in charge. Isn't it amazing?

Colossians says the same thing,

(Colossians 2:13) "When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

(Colossians 2:14) having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to

us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

(Colossians 2:15) When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."

They can't touch you. Now, here's the point of the passage. You want to know why the world is going into destruction? Because they never trusted anything valuable. It was all about them. And they were ever moving and ever shifting, never going on to anything with any absolute power or truth. But you know why we're protected? Because we believe that the Lamb, as silly as it looks to the world, is the power of God. We believe. And though the world will try to knock us off that thought, though the world will threaten us, try to intimidate us, in fact, though the world will put us in fire and will chop off our heads, we will not deny that Jesus is Lord. And God says, "Because of this, you're going to be with Me. They can't touch you. We're going to win. Because faith in My love..." Let me just make sure I get this right- not faith in your love. I've oftentimes heard people, "You've just got

to love people.” Well, you need to love people for Christ. But it's not your love that changes people's lives. It's the love of God. That's very clear in Romans 2, “knowing the love of God,” see, in the passage. The lovingkindness of God is that what changes the lives, not mine. But it's because of His love that I put my trust in Him and something that never moves. And because of that, I'm safe and we will win. We've got this. God's got this because our trust is in an never-changing, immutable love of God. And the surprise to those that have lived this volatile life in that last day is going to be shocking. And as you go on to read and Revelation 18, many are crying, “The city's burning, the city's burning. What's happening? Why is the world imploding?” And God says, “Why wouldn't you trust in My love? The only thing that could be an anchor for your soul both sure and steadfast.” God is wanting the church to know you can't anchor in the things of the world. They're here today, gone tomorrow, and never is there anything that is stable or secure in anything that the world does. Don't go with the fads. Don't go with the ever-shifting winds. Stay true to the gospel and to the love of Christ.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word that strengthens us in this faith of ours. For we know there's no other name given among men by which we must be saved, not under the heavens or on the earth or anywhere. There's only One who saves; it is Jesus Christ our Lord. And Father, though the world sees this crucified One as weak, we know He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. And every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that this power of God's love will reign in the heavens.

If you have never submitted to this one power that can save your soul, well, you need to do that. And when we live in a world that's concerned about their health and security, here you have the answer. He's here.