

Revelation 4: 10 and 11; "Casting their Crowns before the Throne", Sermon # 37 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 22nd, 2006 in the Afternoon Worship Service.

Chapter 4 of the book of Revelation is all about what worship during the Church age should look like. Worship is to be given to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by the Church of Jesus Christ who will lift up and preserve the true worship of God, as the Church gathered, in every generation in this age. But true worship is not only the gathering together of the saints to proclaim the praises of God and to receive His Holy Word. Worship is taking place constantly, as those who have gathered together on Sunday, go back to their homes and live out the life of praise and holiness in the community before a watching world. The worship of God in spirit and in Truth is preserved and protected, nurtured and established, by both the pastors and people of each local church. They both have their God given responsibilities. The minister and the ministry is symbolically represented by the Living Creatures who have six wings, four faces, and eyes all around and within them. The 24 Elders are seated on thrones with crowns upon their heads. The Elders respond to the words and ministry of the Living Creatures who are declaring that God is Holy, by falling down before Him who sits on the Throne and worshipping Him who lives forever and ever. And then it says finally, "They cast their crowns before the Throne." This is the symbolic word picture whose meaning we want to explore this afternoon. What does it mean for the Church to "cast their crowns before the Throne?"

We have seen in past sermons that the crowns on the heads of the 24 elders represent the fact that all worship and the acceptance of the believer's work in righteousness and holiness is based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. All believers in Him are currently reigning in heaven with Him. But in casting their crowns before the Throne, each believer and every true church is saying something about themselves in the sight of the Holy God. We are declaring that God alone is worthy to receive the glory for any goodness or truth in us. God alone is worthy to be praised for anything we are or become or attain to, in this life or in the world to come. Worship is taking the crown off of our head and casting it before His feet. We lay our glory in the dust in order to worship Him. And by this action we show that we who are presently reigning because of Christ, bow to God's sovereign right to our obedience and allegiance in the cause of holiness which He represents. What can you and I as believers in God and Christ do in practical terms to "take the crown off of our head and cast it before the Throne"? There are 2 things from verse 11 that show us what we can practically do.

1st- We can declare God's worthiness to receive all of our best thoughts and efforts.

"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power..." To ascribe greatness to our God is an essential part of the worship that we uphold and promote. People in every generation need to understand His worth. I think that the word worship itself comes from God's "worth-ship", ascribing to Him, and proclaiming to other people His infinite and transcendent value. God, as the Westminster Confession states, "is Infinite, Eternal, and Unchangeable in His Being; Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, Goodness, and Truth. He is worthy of our worship entirely independently of what He does for us. We certainly do praise Him for what He does for us, but we also worship Him

because of Who and What He is. The Living Creatures declare His Holiness and His Eternity in verse 8. The 24 Elders declare that He is worthy to receive 3 things from His people, and indeed all men if they would consider. They are glory, and honor, and power.

Worship is giving God the glory due His Name. Psalm 29: 1 shows this truth, of what God expects from His people. "Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." God expects His people to worship Him in this way. He seeks such people to be His worshippers. When His people come and gather together to worship Him on the Lord's Day, they come there to praise Him and to hear His Word spoken to them. He expects their hearts and minds to go out to Him. God reveals His glory through His Word at those precious times, and in the worship His people then respond to Him and to His Word by "giving to Him the glory due His Name." It is something due to God; it is something that we owe Him, and those who are walking in obedience to God and walking in the Spirit conscientiously perform that duty with delight. In Psalm 62: 1 and 2, we are told, "Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!" "Sing out the honor of His Name; make His praise glorious. This is how worship brings glory to God, when you think of it as an excellent desirable thing to be with His people gathered as the Church, in His Presence, thinking of and glorying in His greatness and His Holiness.

To give glory to God is to praise Him, but it is also to boast in Him as it is written in Jeremiah 9: 23. "Let not the wise man boast(or glory) in His wisdom, let not the mighty man boast(or glory) in His might, nor let the rich man boast (or glory) in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that He understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness judgment, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the Lord." This is the kind of worship that God receives; that "our soul shall make its boast in the Lord." "The humble shall hear of it and be glad." "Oh magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together." And in Psalm 44: 8 it says, "In God we boast all the day long. This is God's glorious worship. Let us resolve in our hearts, that by His grace we will do that very thing, that we will give Him glory.

Worship is also giving God honor. Giving God honor is giving Him the reverent respect and regard that He deserves. He is the greatest and best of beings. He is the King of glory, He is the Father of lights, He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. To honor God is to give Him respect and regard by approaching Him with reverence when you come to worship Him in the assembly of the saints. Psalm 89, verse 5 and following say this. "And the heavens will praise your wonders, O Lord; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the saints." "For who in the heavens can be compared to the Lord?" "Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the Lord?" "God is to be greatly feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around him." We honor Him in having regard and respect to His commandments as well. A sample of this can be found in Proverbs chapter 3, verse 1, where it states, "My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you." This is Solomon speaking to his son. And he goes on to say in verse 9, "Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine." This is how his people honor him very practically in their worship of Him. They bring their tithes and offerings into the storehouse of the church so that God's worship and work will continue.

Worship is also giving God power. Now we know that this cannot mean that we give Him the ability to do anything. Psalm 62: 11 says, "Once God has spoken, twice I have

heard this; that power belongs unto God." He has all power, He is all-powerful, and nothing is too difficult or impossible for Him. But to give God power is for His people to say that He has the right to rule over them, and to do for them and to them what is right in terms of His good and perfect will. It is as it says in Roman chapter 12, "presenting your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship." It is "not being conformed to this world," but allowing God "to transform you by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." These responses of giving God glory, honor, and power are all an integral part of casting our crowns before God's Throne. I pray that this is what each of us is giving to Him.

2ndly- The next thing that we can do to practically "take the crown off of our head and cast it before His Throne is to declare God's worthiness as the Creator of all things.

Indeed this is an act of worship. Verse 11 says, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for You have created all things and by Your will they exist and were created." Our God is to be worshiped and adored and His Name magnified because He has created all things. This is where all of our worship begins with His creating all things. This is what we were created for; to worship and serve God. Isaiah 40: 25 and 26 say, "To whom will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?" says the Holy One. "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing." When we look up at the stars as God asks His people to do; and we remember that God has created all the stars and planets that we see there, it ought not to cause us to worship those things which God has place there and which He created. It ought to lead us to worship Him who made them and who brings them out in their season, the One who calls all the stars by name and who knows all of their locations. Not one of them is missing. "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your finger, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" "For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned Him with glory and honor." "You have made him to have dominion over the works of your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen--even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas." This leads the psalmist to praise. "O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth."

We should see that God is worthy of worship even if we cannot rise up in our praise and adoration to the level that we would desire. Someday we will be able to do so. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." There is an interesting comment from James Durham in his commentary on Revelation at this point. He says, "The manner of the Elders acknowledging what is due to God is observable: for they say not, we give unto Thee glory, honor, and power, but rather--Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor, etc. which is done, not because of their unwillingness positively to ascribe the same to Him; but because their hearts, being warmed and affected with zeal to the thing, could not come up as they desired in the expressing of the same: and therefore (as it were) they say, although we cannot give Thee glory, honor, etc. as becometh; yet Thou art worthy of the same, and it is becoming, that

Thou should have it, and we are so far convinced of the same, as, by this acknowledgement, to put our seal to this truth that Thou art worthy to have all praise, honor, and glory given unto Thee." "And thus they rather express their affection to that work of praise, than their satisfaction in attaining any length therein." "In which we have an excellent copy of a heart affected with God's honor, to wit, it is always desirous that He should be glorified, and yet never satisfied with its own glorifying of Him." Do you see what Mr. Durham is trying to say? We understand that God is worthy of our praise, and we are willing to praise Him. But we understand that our desire to glorify and to praise Him, and our actually engaging in that good work will not measure up to how great God is and how much more worthy He is than we are able to express. Psalm 106, verses 1 and 2 say, "Praise the Lord!" "Oh give thanks to the Lord for He is good!" "For His mercy endures forever." "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord?" "Who can declare all His praise?" Let us understand this afternoon that the work of worship by God's saints upon the earth is something that is very pleasing to Him when it is conducted in the right way and when worship carries itself over into our life during the other 6 days of the week. It was "by God's will that we were created, and we were created for this purpose. Let us be Christians who are worshipers of God in praise, and prayer, and thanksgiving every day of our lives and let us declare Him to be worthy of so much more than we give Him.