

## Worship 101: The Hymn Of Praise

This month in Worship 101 we continue through the Divine Service with what is known as the “Hymn of Praise” which follows the Kyrie. We use two of the hymns of praise: the Gloria in Excelsis and This Is the Feast. We will be looking at This Is the Feast.

The words for this hymn are a paraphrase of Revelation chapter five where the church in heaven is singing praises unto God. We are introduced to someone known as the Lamb back in chapter 4. The Lamb refers to Jesus who sits on the throne of God reigning over the entire universe (Rev. 5:6). In the creeds we speak of Christ’s reign as His “sitting at the right hand of God the Father almighty.” In Revelation 5 the saints in heaven are primarily praising Christ although the Father is mentioned briefly. The “feast” looks ahead to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper later in the service. The word “Alleluia” that we sing is Hebrew for “praise the Lord.”

The hymn This Is the Feast praises God for the victory over death that he has given us through His Son, Christ Jesus. Using the imagery of Revelation 5, Jesus is described as a Lamb that has been slain, reminiscent of John the Baptist declaring of Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). We sing of Jesus the Lamb, stanza 1: “Worthy is Christ, the Lamb Who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.” Jesus being slain and His blood being shed points to the cross where He was the Lamb sacrificed to pay for our sins. When it says “His blood set us free” this suggests the word redemption which means to pay a price so that someone might be set free from slavery or some other bondage.” The blood (death) of Christ sets us free from both death and eternal death, that is, eternal damnation in hell. Having been purchased by God through the blood of His Son we can now belong to Him. Christ’s blood “sets us free to be people of God.”

In stanza two Christ is praised with the words, “Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, honor, blessing, and glory are His.” Stanzas three and four continue in this praise of God and the Lamb for all they have done for us. In stanza five, Christ the Lamb is worshiped because He was slain for us and is “reigning” over all creation for our benefit.

Once again we see that our Divine Service is based upon God’s word. In the hymn of praise, This Is the Feast, we give praise and honor to God for sending His Son, Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God Who by His shed blood has made us the people of God who by faith, will spend our eternity with the Triune God in heaven!

In Christ,  
Pastor Bloom