

Our Mission:

*To share Christ with the world
and grow disciples for Jesus*



Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

Background:

We are introduced to the proverbial four horsemen of the apocalypse. Today we might joke that there are only two things certain in life, death, and taxes. In this text, we see a similar view of the world. There is no escaping the rule of power, the wages of war, plagues, and pandemics, and ultimately death. Yet, John pictures for us the promise of Christ. That no matter the reign of these horsemen, Christ has triumphed, and those who follow him, while still of this world, will nonetheless triumph over their destructive rule.

Theology Connection:

This is not some theology of glory. John recognizes the destructive powers of this world and the impact they have on all people including believers in Christ. Yet, he offers a vision of a world that awaits us on the other side of this hell-like destructiveness. We as followers of Christ do not escape hardship, but we can endure the difficulties of life because we know that there is more to the story.

Application:

Again, we know that life can seem at the worst of times to be senseless and devoid of meaning. John does not deny us our despair. Yet, he offers us a promised hope that exists beyond our dismay. As we know from other passages in the New Testament (Hebrews 11.1), hope is not easily seen, but nonetheless persists. We simply are asked to trust (have faith) in God's good work even if it is disguised.

The Text: Revelations 6: 1-8, 7: 9-14

I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.

When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine, and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

"Amen!
Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!"

Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

ADULT

There is an old saying that says, 'Why pray if you worry, and why worry if you pray.' If it was only so easy. The world is under the sway of despots, war, disease, and death, but we are asked to see in Christ the one who has conquered these dominions. Knowing the power of Christ's love at work, give us the freedom not to live in the fear of these worldly agents.

YOUTH

Please read Revelations 6: 1-8 and 7: 9-14

Chapter six of Revelation continues John's vision in the throne room of heaven. His eyes fix on the Lamb who is Jesus as he opens the first of the seven seals that had sealed the scroll with writing on both sides.

What do the seals represent?

The first four seals can be seen as portraying problems such as war and famine that have always been with us. Could they represent the terrible effects of man's way in the world?

Have you ever wondered "How could you believe in a God who allows suffering?"

Let us pray,

Dear God, please help us understand these consequences. We pray that you use us to spread the truth and the good news. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

CHILDREN'S

Have you experienced times in your life that were hard, sad, or difficult? What were they and how did you handle these situations? Who did you talk to? What brought you comfort during those times? There are many people and things that may bring us comfort, but do you know who the ultimate comforter is? That's right! It's Jesus! No matter where we are, what we are doing, or how far we may be from home, God is with us. He is with us always and all we need to do is turn to Him in our times of need. Jesus is our best friend, and He wants to know when we are happy, as well as when we are not so happy. When we pray and put our trust in God, that shows Him that we love and trust Him! How amazing is it to know that we have a friend in Christ? I know it brings me warmth and comfort knowing that I have a Heavenly Father that loves me despite my sins and worldly struggles.

Think:

1. What are some ways that you show trust in God?
2. Is it easy or hard to turn to Jesus during hard times?
3. What is your favorite way to be with God? (Reading your Bible, praying, singing)

Pray:

Dear Lord,

We know that we have struggles and sometimes forget to lean on You. Please help us to turn to You for all things, the good and the bad. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.