



When some people set up their home entertainment system they want to make sure that they have SURROUND sound. They put speakers in the back of the room so that not only is sound coming at them from the TV it is also coming from behind them as well.

In this vision from Revelation John was experiencing the ultimate SURROUND sound. Verse 11 says, “**Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They ENCIRCLED the throne and the living creatures and the elders.**” (Rev 5:11) If you have the printed sermon you see a visual layout of what John saw. What we are reading is part of a vision of heaven that began in chapter 4. The first thing John saw in chapter 4 was a THRONE. On the throne was God and the Lamb. The Lamb is a reference to Jesus. The throne is at the very center of the diagram. Then John saw around the throne four living creatures encircling the throne. Then he saw 24 elders also encircling the throne. And now John saw thousands of angels also encircling the throne. Everything John saw was encircled around the throne. The throne with God and the Lamb was at the center of it all. What John is saying to you is: **Keep the Lamb at the center** Just like the Lamb is at the center of this diagram, John says make the Lamb the center of your life.

But we are always tempted to move something besides the Lamb into the center of the circle. What’s in the center of the circle for you? What does your life revolve around? Very easily our lives can revolve around sports, or our families, or our jobs.

And you might say, “Yes Pastor Waldschmidt I know God should be number 1.” But I really think that if you have something beside Jesus at the center of your life, sooner or later it is going to hurt you.

Let’s take good grades. If you make that the center of your life you will run into a class and a professor who no matter how hard you try, you can’t get an A. And if you’ve built your life around getting an A it will destroy you inside. This is important for young people trying to get into college. There will always be a school that you can’t get into, and if you’ve made grades and school the center of your life, it will eventually hurt you.

Let’s take family. If you put your family at the center of the circle. How long can you go, every single weeknight taking your kids to some activity? How long can you go before you burn out. And eventually you become bitter. How do you solve that? You can start by taking family out of the center. Family is a great thing but it’s not worthy to be at the center of the circle. Because if you put family at the center of the circle it will burn you out and you will become bitter.

Or take sports. If you put sports at the center of the circle you are asking for trouble because there will always be someone better than you. Eventually there is going to be a team that you can’t make. If you put sports at the center of your life eventually it is going to hurt you. If you put anything besides Jesus at the center of your life, eventually it is going to hurt you.

There’s a novelist named David Foster Wallace. He’s a postmodern thinker. He is very much NOT a Christian which makes what I’m about to read you even more interesting. He was giving the graduation address at Kenyon College in 2005 and he said this:

“Here's something else that's weird but true: in the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of god or spiritual-type thing to worship is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive. If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly. And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you.”

Now I don’t agree with everything he says in there. He seems to think it doesn’t matter what god you worship, and it very much matters. But he certainly understands the problem, doesn’t he. He says if you worship anything in this world, it will eat you alive. He understands the problem. From what I know about him I don’t think he understood the solution. Revelation 5 gives us the solution. The solution is to put Jesus at the center of the circle. And you might, say, won’t I eventually let Jesus down too? Yes of course. But he’s the Lamb who was slain. When you let him down, he died for your sins. Your good grades weren’t crucified for you. Your family didn’t die for your sins. Sports certainly didn’t die for your sins. The Lamb is the one thing that if you put it at the center of the circle won’t destroy you because the Lamb is the one thing that died to forgive your failures.

So you might think, “Pastor Waldschmidt are you saying that working hard at school is a bad thing? Or working hard as a mom is a bad thing? Or playing sports is a bad thing?” No I’m not saying that at all. In fact if you move those things from the center of the circle to being part of the circle. If, instead of being worshiped, those things are worshipping, then they can be very good things. In fact it says in the text: **“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”** You see all those things like effort at school or sports or parenting, and wealth. All those things are pulled out of the center and they are now used to worship the Lamb.

Imagine that your life is like this diagram and the Lamb is in the center. And everything that you are is in a circle around the Lamb. The text says that the Lamb is worthy to receive “power.” So when I’m a Christian and I go into work in the morning I come with the mindset that I am going to do my very best. But at the end of the day work is done. Because work is not in the center of the circle. Work is not being worshiped. Work is worshiping. I’m using my work to worship the Lamb. The text says the Lamb is worthy to receive wealth. Someone once said if you want to find your false god ask yourself, “What keeps you up at night?” Because if it keeps you up at night it’s at the center of the circle. Take money out of the center of the circle and you’ll sleep better at night. The Lamb is also worthy to receive wisdom. So a Christian goes to school in the morning with the mindset, I’m going to do the very best I can on my math and my science, but if I get a lower grade than I wanted then that’s ok because grades are not being worshiped, they are worshiping. You see how your whole life is a circle around the Lamb. If you keep the lamb in the center then life is as it should be. You get stressed when something moves from the circle into the center. You get stressed when something stops worshiping and instead starts being worshiped.

What we do here on Sundays morning is a vital part of worship but it is not the only part of worship. Worship is you doing your best in every part of life. But the trick is doing my best is not oriented toward me, it’s oriented towards Jesus. **“Because he is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise.”** When you get really stressed out as a parent or at your job, that’s an indication that something has moved from the circle to the center. Something has stopped worshiping and has started to be worshiped. Tell yourself, I’m going to do my best at this because I’m going to offer it to Jesus, but I’m not going to become stressed because it is not in the center. Our text says, **“Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever.”** This is a fascinating verse because even all of the animals are praising the Lamb. All of the sea creatures are praising the Lamb. When I first read this I couldn’t help but picture in Little Mermaid all of the fish singing “Under the sea.” The point is all of creation worships the Lamb. Just like the entire solar system revolves around the sun, all of creation revolves around the Lamb. If all of the sea creatures praise him, then how could we ever think that worship was only what we do on Sunday morning. I’m not saying that Sunday morning worship is unimportant. I am saying that Jesus doesn’t just want Sunday morning. He wants your Monday morning and your Tuesday morning. When you go to work, say to yourself, “I’m going to worship God. And I’m going to worship God by doing my very best.”

Keep the Lamb at the center of your life, and worship him with your whole life. Amen.