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## *The Slain Lamb is King* BY PAUL ANLEITNER

We are making our way through the season of Lent on our spiritual journey to the commemoration of the Cross and the Resurrection, and for many of us who have spent decades living in the Christian story, our familiarity with the details of Jesus' death and resurrection can numb us to the potency and radicalness of Easter's claims. Perhaps a picture from outside of the Gospels may help us grapple with what all of this means with a fresh sense of awe, terror, and joy.

Consider the picture recorded in the fifth chapter of the Revelation of John (sometimes known as the "Apocalypse of John" or "unveiling"). Using the apocalyptic literary conventions of his day, John describes a scene in the courts of heaven where angels are wondering who is worthy to bring about the final setting right of history. Looking around at all the agentic beings that fill the heavens and the earth, they lament that they can find no one worthy. But then, appearing in the center of the throne of God is a startling figure. John sees a slain lamb. The angels then declare that this slain lamb is the only one worthy.

That's quite the claim. A slain lamb is the ruler of the cosmos? I mean, wouldn't we think that whoever killed this lamb is the one really in charge?

Certainly, this is what it felt like for the disciples between that first not-so-good Friday and the realization of the empty

tomb on Sunday. They had followed a Messiah who they thought would set the world right and overthrow unjust governance and powers. But those powers conspired together, coalesced their power, and killed Jesus. The images that must have filled their imaginations of a Moses-type figure dispensing plagues upon the unjust powers or a David figure that slew giants were now dashed along with their hopes. Maybe the bad guys do win because they simply have more power?

The 19th-century German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche thought this was the case. He considered the story of Jesus and the ethical implications of Christianity to be just a "slave morality"-they were nice stories people without power told themselves to feel better about their lot in life as the people in power continually dominated them and set the rules of the game. What humans really needed was not sacrificial love, charity, and forgiveness, but a "will to power" so they could no longer be servants and slaves on the underside of history. From Nietzsche's point of view, it is not a slain lamb enthroned as ruler of all, but rather it is that which does the slaying who's truly in charge.

If we're honest, we must confess how tempting this "will to power" is. Turning the other cheek, loving your enemies, and forgiving others of their sins feels like a huge risk, especially when doing the

right thing according to Jesus doesn't feel like it yields immediate results. In fact, the Apostle Paul goes as far as to say this kind of faith is "worthless" and that those who seriously believe this stuff "are to be pitied more than all men,"...if not for the resurrection! (1 Cor. 15:12-19)

The resurrection of Jesus is not only a sign that the Slain Lamb is truly king but it is a promise that the Way of Jesus actually wins in the end. When we celebrate Easter, we celebrate what we deeply long to be true about every story with a happy ending that we've ever read or watched before. Evil empires do not reign forever. Yes, plagues do eventually end too. The righteous are vindicated. Death does not get the final word.

Christian, you are called to play by an entirely different set of rules than the rules of the will to power game. "We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly." (1 Corinthians 4:12-13) By following the Way of the Slain Lamb and carrying your cross, you break the escalating cycles of sin and destruction. It's not a pragmatic strategy for getting ahead in life. It's a recognition that the Slain Lamb is enthroned as king of the cosmos. It's a calling we receive by grace through faith to participate in his redemptive work as agents of renewal. The Slain Lamb is risen!

**GOOD FRIDAY  
SERVICE 7:00 p.m.**



**EASTER 9:00 & 10:30 a.m.  
SERVICES**



**OUR MISSION:  
TO HELP  
INDIVIDUALS  
BECOME  
CHRIST-CENTERED  
& CHRIST-SENT  
TOGETHER**

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**VACATION BIBLE CAMP 2022**

**Vacation Bible Camp has seen many changes over the last number of years!** In years past, we packed 300+ kids in the gym and had well over 100 volunteers helping to make the week possible. Because of COVID-19, the last two years have caused us to switch things up. In 2020, we pivoted to have a StayCation Bible Camp. We had a drive-through pick-up line to grab materials for a week of activities at home. We provided daily videos and tried to keep the excitement of VBC, but from a distance.

*"Regardless of the changes that we've seen over the years, the mission of VBC has not changed."*

Last year we limited the number of kids we had at church during the week of VBC to 120. Everyone had their own supplies, kids were socially distanced, we provided take home snacks, and we didn't gather as a large group during the morning.



We had anticipated being back to a "normal" VBC this year, but we are making a big change once again. Because of the Minneapolis Teachers Strike, kids in Minneapolis will still be in school until June 24. **We are going to have an EVENING VBC from 6-8:00 p.m. for four nights: June 20-23.** We're anticipating being able to gather all together for exciting times of singing and excitement in the gym, while having the kids in small crews with a leader. Regardless of the changes that we've seen over the years, the mission of VBC has not changed. **We want kids to know God and experience Him during the week of VBC.**

**This year's theme is MONUMENTAL - Celebrating God's Greatness. The rock solid Bible points for the week are:**

- God loves you no matter what.
- God is with you everywhere.
- God is in charge.
- God is stronger than anything.
- God is surprising.

We look forward to an amazing week of VBC this year. Pray with us that God brings the kids who need to hear this message of hope and God's greatness to First Free for VBC. Pray too that we'll have plenty of volunteers to fill roles and that it will be an exciting week!

Contact Jessica McWilliams, VBC Director at [vbc@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:vbc@firstfreechurch.org) with any questions or to sign up to volunteer for VBC.

Mark your calendars!  
June 20-23, 6-8:00 p.m.



**GET TO KNOW YOUR MISSIONARIES**

**DAVID & JUL STONE**

**What do you do?**

Knowing that the non-western church today is majority and growing, our main focus is equipping missionaries from Asia and Africa with cross-cultural skills. Normally this means traveling to their locations, but during the pandemic, we instead are putting our teaching into video format to be used in Asian and African missionary training programs. We also have been able to do some online teaching where internet is good enough.

**What is your favorite food?**

Favorite foods are hard to say, because we've tasted so many types. We could probably say North Indian and Italian, but then, how could we not list Indonesian opor ayam and others?

**How have you seen God use you in the last year?**

We have seen God work as the lights seem to go on as students process what we're teaching. Some whom we helped train years ago are asking for our materials or for us to come teach in their own training programs. God is multiplying our efforts.



**TAKEOUT ON CHICAGO**



**Thank you so much for your support of our incredible youth heading on some fantastic trips this summer!**

Takeout on Chicago was a huge success! Let's pull back the curtain to give you a glimpse of how those incredible pizzas came to your table. First, Vanessa Beckett put tons of hours into fine tuning recipes and calculating just exactly what was needed to make this event run smoothly!

Secondly, we had a bunch of parents rolling out doughs on Thursday night. Doug Nelson and Nate Wagner put in some long hours on Friday grilling up those pizza doughs, (not a traditional way to cook pizza!) Then on Friday night we had most of our team (students and adults) prepping and being trained for the big day. Saturday is when all the magic happened. Pizzas were assembled, orders were processed and kept cold in a classroom turned into a makeshift fridge.

Later that Saturday you came and picked up your tasty pizzas and heard from some of our students about the trips they will be able to experience this summer. We know many of you gathered with friends and family and enjoyed these pizzas in homes all across the Twin Cities. **Thanks to your generous donations we were able to raise \$14,723 to help students go on trips this summer!**

**CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

- Marilyn Fisher's memorial service is on Saturday April 23rd at 11:00 a.m.
- Emma Burns' wedding shower is on April 24th at 2:00 p.m. Emma is registered at Target, Crate & Barrel and Pampered Chef.
- Congratulations to Mallory and Seth Hueckman on the birth of their daughter, Otilla Kim Hueckman!

**Addition to last months issue:**

If you are interested in learning more about the history of First Free Church, visit [www.firstfreechurch.org/about](http://www.firstfreechurch.org/about) and click on the pdf below "Our History".