

There's nothing like that. It's remarkable. Korban said a few weeks ago that we sang the word Emmanuel like 93 times. We're pretty close to that with hallelujahs this morning. I stopped counting after 70, but we're way, way up there. It's a marvelous word. In Revelation 19, you can take a look at the page in front of you and you can circle the hallelujahs. There's four of them in Revelation 19 in those first ten verses. It's the only place in the whole New Testament where that word is used. And it's used four times in this passage. Hallelujah is a Hebrew word which means praise the Lord, praise to Yahweh. Let's find out why they're praising and why they keep breaking into song and saying these marvelous, marvelous things. Let's pray together as we start. I want to encourage you because Christmas is now in the rearview mirror, at least as far as the calendar is concerned. But I want to encourage you to let this be a springboard for the new year and that these things would captivate you from God's word and launch us out together in the new year with a sense of obedience and purpose in all of it. We would see things as God sees them. Let's pray to that end. Father we wing with the angels and with the living creatures, your holiness, your absolute moral perfection, we proclaim the blessing and glory and power and honor, they belong to You and to You alone. This morning, Father, I pray that we together would be given ears to hear and eyes to see what you have said to Your servant John through Your son, Jesus, we pray in His name. Amen.

There's an outline in your bulletin if you'd like to follow along and fill in some of the blanks as we go. The New American Standard Version calls this section the four-fold hallelujah, which seems wildly appropriate because there's four hallelujahs in this section. The first Roman numeral there is hallelujahs #1 and #2. Let's read again the first couple of verses and talk about them just for a minute. Verse 1 begins, after this I heard. If you flip through the book of Revelation and go back to Revelation chapter 1 for a moment if you would please. Go back to Revelation Chapter 1, the first verse of Revelation describes that John is given a vision from Jesus. It's the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show to His people. John is in a prison, as you well known, on an island in the Mediterranean Sea, the island of Patmos. John is in his cell, probably down on the ground looking up, I'm not really sure, we're not really told. But John, it's like he sees a parade past his cell, if you can envision it that way. After this I saw, if you flip through Revelation, every chapter after the first three chapters, I saw this, after I saw this, after I saw this. It's like John has a parade marching past his cell where God shows him the way that things actually are. I have a rant, like a jukebox of rants in my classroom. I press the button and here's rant A or rant B or rant C. One of my favorite rants is about this phrase the real world. I'm not a fan of that phrase. I've probably talked to you about it with you before. But quickly, if the real world is what I saw in the news this past week, I'm not interested. I should get a gallon of ice cream and go sit on my bed. It's bleak. If that's real, if the real world takes little girls from their bedrooms two days before Christmas, if that's real, if the real world is air planes being hijacked or tried to be hijacked flying into Detroit, if the real world is any number of endless sufferings and pains and abandonments, I'm not interested in that reality. What Revelation 19 is doing, Revelation 19 is doing it like a bull's eye is God showing us the real world. This is what's real. 1st Corinthians 13 says that we see things now through a glass darkly. We see things like far, far away and John is in this chapter bringing it right up close in high definition, what is real. Jesus tells John, John you know what's real, is that one day all the evil forces in the world, all the enemies of the gospel will be forever, completely, and totally destroyed. That's real. All the pretended sovereignty of Babylon, the great prostitute Babylon, that steals our affections and wants our money, and our time and talent, our treasure, all those things, will one day the smoke from that will go up forever and ever. That's reality, not what you see on the news. We are strangers, guys, we are passing through. We are aliens and sojourners in the world. We don't belong here. We are citizens of a different country and Revelation 19 brings that to full expression. I can't wait

to talk about that to you. It's all out ahead of us. Revelation chapter 17 comes before chapter 18 and 18 before 19, just trying to be helpful. Revelation 17 and 18 describe the prophesy of Babylon's destruction. It will take place. Revelation 19 says, now its happening. So 17, 18, and 19 are all about the destruction, the judgment, the forever annihilation of all those forces in the world that line themselves up against God and His people and His saints. My friend, Jane Walters, a teacher at the school with me, has posters in her classroom of the persecuted church. There people still dying for the name of Jesus in the world today. We forget that sometimes. People are still persecuted for their faith in Christ. We haven't been given that honor in the states like we might otherwise have been given it, but one day it says in Revelation 19 that those that murdered the saints, that dismissed them, that scorned them, that mocked them, that threw them in prison, one day they will be destroyed forever. God will avenge the blood of His children. God is good father. More on that later. Look at verse 1 with me again. After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude. It's something like the mega voice of a much crowd. That's what the language is, very peculiar, because there's no way to explain it. Have you guys ever been at a football game with lots and lots of people? Raise your hands. Football game or basketball game? Lots and lots of people, like 50,000 people, and something happens, wshhhhhh, the crowd rises up. The crowd roars. The NIV says that. The NIV says, the roar of a great multitude. The crowd rises up at a rock concert or a football game, wshhhhhh, touchdown. Your favorite song comes on and the crowd rises up. This is multitudes of those, like a wave cresting, the loud voice, the mega voice of a much crowd, yells out for much more than a touchdown or a great song. They shout hallelujah to the Father. Letter A in your outline, they're shouting hallelujah four times in this passage for these reasons. Letter A, because salvation, glory and power belong to Him. I am so glad at this church that we're steadfast, that worship isn't just singing music. Worship is what we're about to do right now. OK? I'm going to define for you what those words mean as they are used in the New Testament. Salvation, glory and power. And I invite you to worship with me as I read to you that these things belong, guys, to Him. They are the core of who God is in His person. Worship with me as I read these things to you. Salvation. Salvation is the sum of benefits and blessings which redeemed persons will enjoy. Freed from all earthly ills, they will enjoy those after the visible return of Christ from heaven in the consummated and eternal kingdom of God. Salvation. How great a salvation. The author of Hebrews says, how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? Did you hear that definition just a moment ago? I think sometimes we sell the salvation that we enjoy from God short, especially in a place where we talk about Christianity very casually. But this is the salvation that God has offered. It's not simply, I'm not going to hell and that's really great. Salvation is the sum of all the blessings that we enjoy in the person of Jesus, not just that you won't go to someplace where you'll be suffering. That is true and that's awesome and a reason to sing, that I'm a ruined sinner and that's not what I'm going to get. Ruined sinners to reclaim, hallelujah, what a Savior. That's worth rejoicing about. But friends, it's so much more. We're saved from things but also to things. Whew! Glory. Glory is a thing belonging to God. It's His kingly majesty. Next to glory you can jot that down. God's kingly majesty. It's the absolutely perfect inward and personal excellency of Christ. The absolutely perfect inward, personal excellency of Christ. It belongs to Him. Power. The Greek word for power is dunamis from which we get dynamic. You'll forgive me. It's a very explosive word. It is. It's a word that means like it sounds. What is that when a word means what it sounds like? Onomatopoeia. Thank you Claire. OK. Power. Salvation, glory, and power belong to Him. Power. The moral power and excellence of soul. Power and resources arising from numbers. Power consisting in or resting upon armies, forces, and hosts. Go with me to Luke chapter 2. I can't resist. It's still the season of Christmas. I said Merry Christmas to folks this morning even though we're two days past it. I think it's OK to still do that. It's interesting when you say Happy Holidays, people often do that in place of Merry Christmas, you're really saying, Happy Holy Days. So no one is getting fooled. I just

thought you should know. Verse 13, Luke 2, And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army host praising God and saying Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased. God has power made manifest in the hosts of angels that proclaim the birth of His Son. We proclaim hallelujah to Him because salvation, glory, and power belong to Him. We proclaim hallelujah for His truth in verse 2. We proclaim hallelujah, friends, letter C, for His justice. Letter B for His truth, Letter C for His justice. Revelation 15 speaks of this again. My prayers have absolutely been taken over by this idea that all of God's judgments are true and just. All of God's judgments, I'll allow you to respond, are true and just. When you pray that way, your prayers will change. God, thank you that all of your judgments are true and just. When I sat in the room with my fellow teachers this past two weeks and listened to their accounts of their suffering in their families, real suffering, disease, all manner of things. I won't give myself permission to share with you in a big room, and I proclaimed with those people, perhaps with a bit of fear in my voice, but I proclaimed it in my weakness, I said God, all your judgments are true and just, especially when I don't get it. Especially when I don't get it. In Revelation 15 there's seven angels and there are those who are victorious over the beast. In Revelation 15:3 they say this, Great and amazing are Your deeds, O Lord God, the Almighty, just and true are Your ways, O King of the nations. It's a theme in Revelations. In Revelation 16, the heavenly altar itself busts out in singing. The altar starts singing. It's almost like it can't help itself. It's like there's a rushing river behind a dam and it can't break and it spills out everywhere. A real sense of that in Revelation, a sense of energy and of force and movement. It's beautiful. Sixteen, verse 7, "Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments." There is no circumstance in my life, friends, and I imagine in yours, where that will not apply to you in the new year. Because you're going to get a phone call and that phone call will knock you on the ground. You've had those phone calls before. I have. I remember the sound of my wife's voice, the sound of my mother's voice when you get those bad phone calls and you're around and witness that. In the face of that, friends, don't be a prisoner to your circumstance. In the face of great suffering and abandonment and pain, proclaim that all His judgments are true and just. God has His hands on the wheel of the universe and He has not let go. Amen. I hope we believe that. I think we sometimes act like we don't. His truth and His justice, all His judgments are true and just for His children. Romans chapter 8 in light of that. Romans chapter 8, verse 26, The Spirit helps us in our weakness for we don't know what to pray for as we ought. The Spirit Himself intercedes with us. He takes our prayers and translates them to the Father with groanings too deep for words. He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God, and we know that for those who love God all things work together for good. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose. Those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. Watch. From Ephesians, those whom He predestined, He called; those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified. There is an unbroken line, friends, from my predestination to my glorification, to my seat at the table. That's how God sees this salvation and we slough around like, "yea, I'm not going to hell, that's great." This is how God sees the salvation that has worked out in you. A ruined sinner like me who has been reclaimed. Oh, that's what God describes myself as, an unbroken line from predestination to glorification. Roman numeral II, there's more hallelujahs coming because the reign of Babylon has come to an end. Look at verse 2. His judgments are true and judge. He has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality and has avenged on her the blood of His servants. That's real. Once more they cried out hallelujah. The smoke from her goes up forever and ever. A powerful message, friends. Roman numeral II is the next set of hallelujahs. Hallelujah #3, look at verses 4 and 5 with me together, moving through the passage. The 24 elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was

seated on the throne saying, Amen, hallelujah. The four living creatures and 24 elders represent two separate things. This is a long conversation that I'll make as brief as I can. Twenty four elders represented probably all the redeemed people of God throughout all time, 12 tribes of Israel, 12 apostles, Old Testament, New Testament saints together, all the redeemed persons of God throughout all history. The four living creatures are from Revelation chapter 4 and they represent all of creation, all of God's created order. So all of the redeemed, all of creation, all breaks out in singing, hallelujah. They can't help themselves. They rejoice over what God has done. Praise our God, all you His servants, you who fear Him, small and great. All the redeemed, all of creation, resound with a song, Amen, hallelujah of praise to God for His victory. Letter B in your outline is the word Amen. Simply. OK. This is going to be a little interactive but you can do it though. You guys are a good crowd. Here we go. The word Amen is a remarkable word. It's a remarkable word. It's come down to us from Hebrew into Greek into Latin into English, unbroken. Probably the most spoken word in language across cultures everywhere, Christian cultures, is this word Amen. It's related very nearly to the Hebrew word for believe and so the word Amen means something like, and you've all said the word Amen, many, many times and some of you have said it this morning a few times. I'm delighted. Something like, Yes, truly. In fact, in the Greek when Jesus says, truly, truly I say to you, the Greek word there is Amen. Amen, Amen I say to you. It will be. It will be. So the word Amen is something like an expression of confident certainty. It's an expression of strong agreement when you hear something with which you strongly agree or you're confidently certain in, don't withhold your Amen. Do not withhold it. OK, let's practice. This is a great gift. A great gift to give Kelly in the new year. OK. It's the gift that keeps on giving. Here we go. Let your Amen rise to the One to whom and to whom alone belong salvation, glory and power. Amen. Let it rise to the one whose judgments, all of whose judgments are true and just. Amen. Let it rise to the one who will avenge the blood of His suffering bond servants for millennia of dismissals, scorn, rejection, and murder. Amen. Let it rise to the one who uses and has used, and is still using at every turn, the seemingly weak, improbable, barren, poor, and insignificant to accomplish His purposes. Amen. It is good to bear witness of God's goodness, of His love, of His faithfulness, of the greatness of His salvation. Amen. Letter C, stand in awe of Him is a word I took out of the phrase in verse 5, but you who fear Him. The sense of fear, people like to soften that a little bit and say, well, it means respect. It does mean respect but there are people that I respect that I also fear. One time, I raised my voice to my mother and my dad picked me up off the ground against the wall and said, son, you will not do that again. And I didn't. Amen. We're rolling now. You see, I respect my father but I feared him too because my feet weren't on the ground anymore. Psalm 22:23 says, You who fear the Lord, praise Him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify Him! Stand in awe of Him, filled with wonder, awestruck wonder at the mention of Your name, all you offspring of Israel. OK. Psalm 113. Would you all stand with me. Psalm 113. We're going to do a little responsive reading. Don't be afraid. It's going to be fine. Psalm 113. I will read the odd verses. You read the even verses. They'll be on the screen. You can do it. There is one word in Hebrew for praise the Lord. It's the word hallelujah. So I'm going to substitute praise the Lord with hallelujah because that's what it says in Hebrew. So I'll read the odds. You read the evens and it'll be on the screen. Here we go. Praise the Lord. Hallelujah, Praise O servants of the Lord, Praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forever. From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations; His glory is above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high, Who humbles Himself to behold The things that are in heaven and in the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of His people. He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. And all together, praise the Lord! Hallelujah. You may be seated. There's no doubt that passage is at work in Revelation 19. I'll take you lastly,

friends, letter C in the outline “Stand in awe of him.” Roman numeral III comes very much to the point. I was talking with some friends recently. It’s been a year of weddings for Jody and I. The elders of this church have given me the privilege of doing a few weddings this year. Some students of mine are getting married, they’re getting married soon, or they’ve been married this year and getting to that age when it’s happening and its fun to watch. I was talking with some friends recently who said that they want their wedding to be a demonstration, to be a working model of the marriage supper of the Lamb. I just thought to myself that is fantastic. I have to talk about that so here I am talking about it with you. You know it says marriage supper in the text but I think marriage feast is better because everybody has supper but we don’t usually have a feast. So can I say feast? Is that OK? I’m going to anyway. So the marriage feast of the Lamb. Every year my wife and I have a dinner with her two sisters and their husbands and her mom and dad. The eight of us are around a table and we did it this past week and it was great, a big tab. It was fun around a table the eight of us talking about the year and enjoying each other. I just felt joy, very pure pleasure, very real and good and right pleasure. That’s a great gift from God and I felt it with those three couples and my wife and I around the table that we loved, just being together and enjoying each other. And I think about this passage and that one day you and I, friends, the redeemed ones, will be at a table, a really long table, with all of the redeemed of all eternity with Christ at the head of the table and the joy I felt around that table this past week will not compare. It was great joy I felt but it will be a candle in the sun. Do you live with that sense of expectancy? Do you live in that spirit, in that season of waiting, of hopefulness? The marriage feast of the Lamb. Look at verse 6 with me in Revelation 19. “Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude like the roar of many waters, like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out.” You can hear this like a cascading sound. Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, said Handel. Let us rejoice and exalt and give Him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come. I thought about Korban and Tonya and their little girl and they have to wait six more weeks. When they hold her in their arms, it’s going to be a happy day. The crowd is singing, friends, because that time of waiting, thousands and thousands of years, is done. My kids have a hard time waiting for Christmas and so do I’m not very good at giving gifts; by December 19th they’re all given away. I can’t wait until Christmas to give them to our kids. It drives my wife crazy. It’s hard to wait. It’s hard to wait. But when the waiting is over, that’s what they say. The marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. It was granted her, a very important phrase, “it was granted her to clothe herself with fine line, bright and pure.” Isaiah 54 and 61 have pictures of God as a husband and his people as a bride. I’ve mentioned that this year that God calls Himself a husband. He uses metaphors to describe Himself. Letter A under Roman numeral III is hallelujah #4. It’s the last hallelujah. The hallelujah there is occasioned by all obstacles have been removed. All the things that we were waiting for have now arrived and the crowd breaks out in one more hallelujah. It is fantastic. Amen. Revelation 19, verse 6, “Hallelujah! For the Lord God, the Almighty, reigns. This word, the Almighty, in the Greek is a great word. It’s like a transformer character or something. It’s pantokrator. Isn’t that a fun word to say? It sounds like something marching around, you know? It’s the Greek word for Almighty. It means that God holds sway over all things and it’s used ten times in the New Testament. It’s used nine times in the book of Revelation. The people who are suffering at the hands of wicked world system that hates them, hates their gospel, and John says, through Jesus by the Holy Spirit, God is the Almighty. God is the one who holds sway over all things, not the Romans. In Isaiah the suffering exiles were told, “I will redeem you like a wife who is cast off and take you to Myself.” Letter B, “Readiness and righteous deeds.” “Readiness and righteous deeds.” Friends, I want to share with you something here about this: “It was granted her to clothe herself.” The ability to put on those garments is a gift from God. You can’t do it yourself. Ephesians 2 describes that faith itself even is a gift and Revelation 19 expresses that again. “It was granted her to clothe herself with linens, bright and pure.”

Shining, radiant garments. God deserves that. That great salvation deserves that kind of a gift in return. Write this down on your notes if you would please. Obedience is its own blessing. Obedience is its own blessing. One day those who are in Christ will enjoy forever blessings at His right hand but now in the meantime obedience to God is its own blessing. Like disobedience is its own curse. We get the great joy some day of doing the things, those righteous deeds, giving them over to Him like a bride is given to her husband. Who gives this woman to be married to this man? It's a wedding picture, a fantastic picture, of the way God loves His people. We are called as husbands to love our wives the way Christ loved us and purchased us by His blood. Jewish weddings are wonderful images of this betrothal period, then the interval of waiting, then the dowry is given, then you have this great day long feast. Not supper, a feast, a long table. Good stuff. This picture is being painted, this dowry is given in the person of Christ. Look at letter B in your outline again. "Readiness and righteous deeds." C.S. Lewis said this in Mere Christianity. I think it will be on the screens. When we talk of a man doing anything of God or giving anything to Him, I will tell you what it's like. It's like a small child going to his father and saying, Daddy, give me sixpence to buy you a birthday present. Of course, his father does and he is pleased with the child's present. It's all very nice and proper but only an idiot would think the father is sixpence to the good on the transaction. When I give my righteous deeds over to Him as a gift I am the better for it, not Him. I can't improve God by my obedience. He gives me the great joy and pleasure of participating in His kingdom with my righteous deeds. The application as we walk out these doors in a few moments is to make yourself ready in the new year. Let that be our resolution together that we would resolve to participate in what is described in Romans 12 offering our bodies as living sacrifices to Him. In Philippians 2, Paul says that God works in us to will and to work for His own good pleasure. We're involved in that process together folks and it is the great joy of our lives. Lastly, letter C, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Do you see what it says there in verse 9? The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Verse 9 says, "The angel said to me, Write this, Blessed." Blessed is the same word in the beatitudes, makarais, happy, the blissful and contented condition of the redeemed soul. Blessed. These are the true words of God. Any journey through Barnes & Nobel will let you know that there are lots of people who do not think the Bible is the true words of God. There's a bookend here. All his judgments are true and just. These are the true words of God. The Bible is not a work of fiction. OK. I was a little nervous there for a second. Wow. Despite what Babylon says, it's thousands of years old, it's outdated, it's been copied thousands of times, it's not reliable. What does the Bible say about itself? That's a conversation for another day. As Melissa comes this morning, verse 10 says, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." I will share with you something about that. It means something like this. All the things that Jesus says are true and the things said about Him from His word are also true. All the things that He says are true and the things said about Him in His word are also true. Melissa is going to sing for us a song that paints this picture of the wedding feast of the lamb. I invite you to enjoy as she sings and respond to God in that way. Enjoy His great goodness.

Would you pray with me? My sin, O the bliss, this glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole, has been nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul. Together Father we proclaim your Excellency and your beauty this morning. May we moving forward in 2010 adorn the gospel, make it beautiful, by our obedience. Thank you, as the 23rd Psalm says, Father that you prepare a table before us in the presence of our enemies. That table is wedding feast that you've prepared for your bride. Thank you for your goodness. Thank you for your word. Thank you that all your judgments are true and just. We all together with great conviction say Amen. Happy New Year. Grace and peace to you.