Cuyahoga Valley Church

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

Week of 11.8.26

Revelation 8 -9 // Tony Scialabba

Please take the opportunity to revisit the CVC Equip Portrait of a Healthy LifeGroup on a regular basis

CONNECT (10 MIN)

1. Can you think of a season in your life when you were especially prayerful and dependent on the Lord? What circumstances or occurrences in your life at that time helped you to be or to become prayerful and dependent in this way?

EXPLORE (30 MIN)

Create Context (5 min):

HERE is the Sermon Recap video playlist on Vimeo.

Study & Discussion (25 min)

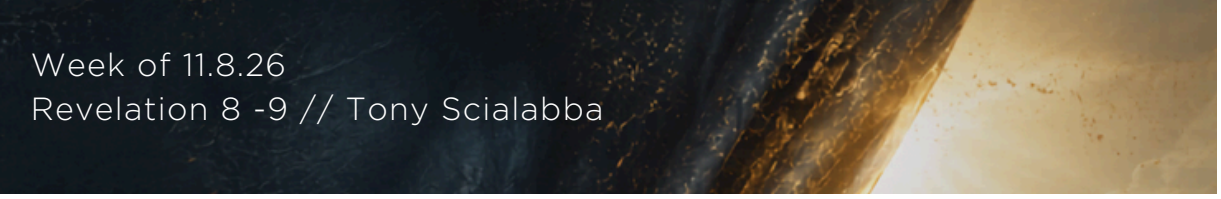
Read Revelation 8-9.

2. On Sunday, Pastor Tony used the story of Polycarp to show an example of prayerfulness and complete dependence on and trust in God no matter one's circumstances (for more on Polycarp, you can read Pastor Joe's blog post from earlier in our Revelation series at https://cvconline.org/faithful-witnesses-polycarp-of-smyrna/). What part of Polycarp's story stood out to you during or after the sermon, and why?

3. In his work "On the Incarnation," the church father Athanasius makes the point that Christian martyrdom (like Polycarp experienced) points to the work of Jesus Christ in the Incarnation, specifically his defeat of death. Christian are able to face death in this life without fear, because of Jesus and what He accomplished in his death (and resurrection). We can follow in our God's footsteps because our God has taken the teeth from death itself. Our fear of death is replaced by our trust in God. Athanasius writes that this is the natural bent of the true Christian - to no longer be afraid of death because of the One who has defeated it once and for all. What good news it is that Jesus Christ, God and man, made a way for us to follow in His footsteps and live for eternity with God!

   - Think about the good news that Jesus has defeated death. How does this good news bring you hope that can be applied specifically to where you are today (consider your circumstances, your health, your emotional state, etc.)?

   - Read Isaiah 55:6-7. Consider God's goodness in calling people to repentance and to relationship with Him in Christ. Who is someone around you that you can share this good news with today in some way?



Cuyahoga Valley Church

4. Reflect on Revelation 8-9. Our chapters from Sunday contained a lot of complex symbolism. In the midst of seeking to understand what these chapters mean, Tony reminded us again and again that there is only one person who knows all things, directs all things, and holds all things - God Himself. As Tony put it, God reigns over creation (8:6–13), God reigns over evil (9:1–12), and God reigns over judgment (9:13–19). Nothing that happens is outside of His knowledge or His plan - though we may not always see in this life what it is He is doing in a given circumstance, situation, or struggle.

- Which of these realities of God's reign (the truth that He reigns over creation, evil, or judgment) is most difficult for you to remember in the midst of hardship or suffering in your life, and why?

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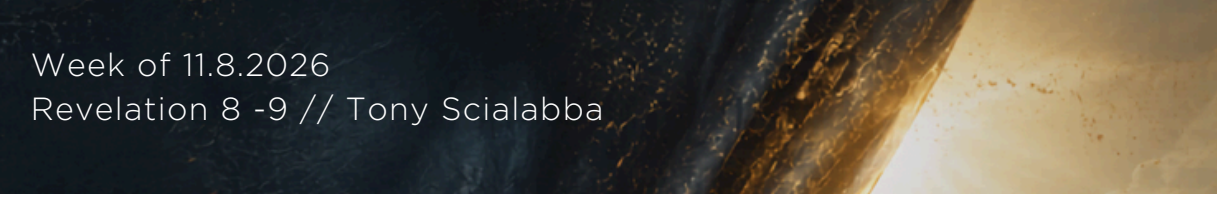
- On Sunday, Tony said that our response to all of this is to persevere - we must continue to obey Jesus, return to His Word, and stay close to believers who will remind us of what is true. What does it look like for you to remain faithful in these three action steps today? Which of these do you do well right now, and where do you have most room to grow?

- Consider together this question that Tony asked us on Sunday: Where do I need to trust that Jesus still reigns, even when following Him is costly? Talk about your answer with your LifeGroup.

5. Read Joel 2:12-14. Tony said on Sunday that in Revelation 9:20-21 we see that our idols cannot save us. And, as Tony put it "Idol worship is alive and well in this country (our country) today." Our idols may not be physical images or statues made by human hands. They may look more like the idols of success, health, safety, security, popularity, etc.

- What are you holding onto today that God might be calling you to release to Him? What is your first step in giving this to God and depending more fully and hopefully in Christ alone?

- Take a moment to reflect on the grace and mercy of God that we see in Joel 2:12-14. God invites us to turn to Him and repent, and He has already mediated the means for our forgiveness in Him. We don't have to do anything other than trust Him and let go of the rest. Why do you think it can be so difficult to do this continuously? Why do you think it can be so easy to return to the "idols" that call to our hearts most effectively?



Cuyahoga Valley Church

6. On Sunday, Tony stated that the lamb is our hope. Polycarp would not abandon Christ, even when threatened with death (Revelation 2:10). We, too, can remain faithful—not because of our strength, but because Jesus holds His people.

   - What does it look like for you to remain faithful to Jesus today?

   - What is something you are walking through right now that is making it hard for you to really trust that Jesus holds the world, and that He is holding you? How can you invite others to pray with you as you seek to cling to Jesus and to remember that He is holding you fast?

   - Who is someone you can pray for right now who needs encouragement as they seek to remain faithful to Jesus? Take a moment to pray for some of these names together as a LifeGroup.

RESOURCES

- CVC Govember page: https://cvconline.org/events/govember/
- A Tale of Two Kingdoms Recommended Resources: https://cvconline.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/TaleOfTwo_Resources_CVC.pdf
- CVC Blog: https://cvconline.org/category/articles/

PRAY AND APPLY

- Pray for believers facing persecution to remain faithful to Jesus.
- Pray for God's kingdom to come: for justice, salvation, and the defeat of evil.
- Ask God to expose anything you are trusting more than Him.
- Pray for hearts willing to repent and for courage to keep obeying Jesus.
- Pray for those who have not trusted Christ to turn to Him while there is time.

Cuyahoga Valley Church

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please take a moment to share
these announcements with your group.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Baptisms - November 15

Click here to learn more about baptism and apply for upcoming opportunities. Baptism dates will be available for registration until two weeks before the scheduled baptism. At that point, the date will be removed from the registration form. Please submit your baptism registration no later than two weeks before the baptism date so we have enough time to prepare and make the necessary arrangements.

Pizza with the Pastor - November 22

We'd love the opportunity to get to know you and help you get to know us. Join us for Pizza with the Pastor, It's a relaxed, informal time to connect with one of our pastors, hear more about CVC, ask questions, and discover your next steps. Join us at CVC in Lower Level 114 at CVC after the 11:15 service. We look forward to meeting you! Register HERE.

INVITE

Widows/Widowers Luncheon with CVC Staff - November 17

On Tuesday, November 17 at Noon, our CVC staff will be hosting a luncheon for anyone in our church family who has lost a spouse – whether recently or many years ago. This will be a time to enjoy a meal together, find encouragement, and connect with others who understand that kind of loss. If you are a widow or widower, we would love for you to join us. You can sign up HERE. And even if you're not able to attend the luncheon, we'd still love to know who you are, so that we can stay in touch, care for you, and walk with you in meaningful ways.

CVC KIDS

Child Dedications - November 29

Child Dedication is a time where parents declare their commitment to raise their children in the ways of the Lord. It's a beautiful moment for families to publicly affirm their dedication, and for the church to pledge its support in this important journey of faith and upbringing. Together, let's embrace this sacred calling. Next opportunity: Sunday, November 29 at all services. Apply here!