

Crowns and Rewards

Notes by Franklin

I. Introduction

There is a vast difference between **salvation** and **rewards**.

- **Salvation** is **the gift of God, not of works** (Ephesians 2:8-9). Salvation is received **by faith** in the **finished work** of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:36). Based on **HIS work, not ours**.
- **Rewards** are according to **the works** of the **believer**. Works **do not** in any way qualify a person for eternal life. **The Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then will reward every man according to his deeds**. Matthew 16:27
- Eternal Destination depends on what you **believe** on earth.
- Eternal Compensation " " how you **behave** on earth.

Here are some very important foundational Scriptures:

Revelation 11:15-18 **The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our LORD and of His Christ, (I pray for and look forward to this day.) and He will reign for ever and ever. . . . The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great** NIV

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 Therefore we also have as our **ambition**, whether at home or absent, **to be pleasing to Him**. ¹⁰ **For we must all appear before the JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST**, so that each one may be **recompensed** for his **deeds** in the body, according to **what he has done**, whether good or bad.

Romans 14:9-12 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the **LORD of both the dead and the living**. ¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? **For we will all stand before God's judgment seat**. ¹¹ It is written: As surely as I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God. ¹² So then, **each of us will give an account of himself to God**. NIV

A clarifying Scripture concerning **rewards** is 1 Corinthians 3:8-15

Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but **each will receive his own reward** according to **his own labor**. (9) For we are God's **fellow workers**; you are God's field, God's building. (10) According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But **each man must BE CAREFUL how he builds on it**. (11) For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (12) Now if **any man builds** on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, (13) **each man's work will become evident**; for the day **will show it** because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will **test the quality of each man's work**. (14) **If any man's work** which he has built on it remains, **he will receive a reward**. (15) If any man's work is burned up, **he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved**, yet so as through fire.

- Every believer will be rewarded according to **his own work** (vs 8) in the Kingdom and for the Kingdom, "planting and watering."
- All believers are workers together with God (vs. 9) to accomplish His purposes. **Not for salvation but for rewards**.
- The believer is to build only on The Foundation - JESUS CHRIST.
- The believer has a **choice** of two kinds of building materials: **gold, silver, precious stones** – they are very valuable and always with us - eternal materials. Or, **wood, hay, straw** – of little value and soon vanish - temporal materials (vs. 12).

2 Corinthians 4:18 **we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

Your choices on earth have a direct consequence on your life in eternity.

- Life on earth is a mere dot on a timeline. Life in eternity never ends >>>>

Each man must BE CAREFUL HOW he builds on The Foundation (as instructed by His Word) but also **WHAT** we build.

Our buildings, businesses, professions, inventions and creations will all finally be burned and of no eternal value.

The labors that will have lasting, eternal value and reward are the spiritual lives and character of PEOPLE. This is **what** we are to build on the foundation of JESUS CHRIST.

The believer who builds on "**the foundation**" - JESUS CHRIST - with eternal materials, **gold, silver, precious stones**, **shall receive a reward**. Those who build with temporal materials, **wood, hay, straw** will **receive no reward**.

The **wood, hay, straw** works will be destroyed at the "JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST," (2Cor.5:10) and the believer will suffer loss - **NOT THE LOSS OF SALVATION, but the loss of his reward**.

(15) If any man's work is burned up, **he will suffer loss; but he himself WILL BE SAVED**, yet so as through fire.

Some believers will be **ashamed** at the "judgment seat of Christ," ashamed of their works of "wood, hay, stubble."

1 John 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and **not shrink away** from Him **in shame** at His coming.

Revelation 3:11 I am coming quickly; **hold fast** what you have, so that **NO ONE WILL TAKE YOUR CROWN**.

There are many references in the Scriptures to Judgment and rewards. And every person knows in his heart that there is a judgment day.

Psalm 58:11 And men will say, **Surely there is a reward** for the **righteous**; Surely there is a God who **judges** on earth!

II. Rewards will be given for:

1. Living a righteous life:

Psalm 1 **Blessed** is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. Or stand in the path of sinners . . .

Matthew 5:11-12 **Blessed** are you when people **insult** you and **persecute** you, and **falsely** say all kinds of **evil** against you because of Me. (12) Rejoice and be glad, for **your reward in heaven is great**; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Proverb 11:18 The wicked **earns** deceptive wages, but he who sows **righteousness** gets a **true reward**.

Matthew 6:1 Beware of practicing your **righteousness** before men to **be noticed by them**; otherwise you have **no reward** with your Father who is in heaven.

- The LORD is concerned about **our motives**, why we do what we do. We should always ask ourselves, "why am I doing this? Who am I trying to please?" (Galatians 1:10; 1 Samuel 16:7)

Hebrews 11:23-27 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, **refused** to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, (25) **choosing** rather to **endure ill-treatment** with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, (26) considering the **reproach of Christ greater riches** than the treasures of Egypt; **for he was looking to the reward**. (Matthew 6:19-21)

The issue is: earthly treasures or Heavenly treasures?
Which treasure do your **choices** reveal that you are seeking?

2. Rewards will be given for: **Obedying the Word of The LORD:**

Psalms 19:7-11 The **law** of the LORD is perfect, . . . The **testimony** . . . (8) The **precepts** . . . The **commandment** . . . (9) The **fear** of the LORD . . . The **judgments** of the LORD . . . (10) They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. (11) Moreover, **by them** Your servant is **warned in keeping** of them there is **GREAT REWARD**.

3. Rewards for: **Treating others as JESUS would treat them:**

Luke 6:35 But **love your enemies**, and **do good**, and **lend**, expecting nothing in return; and your **reward** will be **great**, and you will be **sons** of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.

- It requires maturity, "sons" to live this way.

Proverb 25:21-22 If **your enemy** is hungry, give him food to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; (22) for you will heap burning coals on his head, and **the LORD will reward you.**

"Burning coals on his head," meaning "conviction" by a living example of what is right as compared to the way of the world.

Matthew 6:2 So when you **give to the poor**, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, **they have their reward** in full. (4) so that your giving will be in secret; and **your Father** who sees what is done in secret **will reward you.**

We always have **a choice** as to if we want **earthly** or **heavenly rewards**. It is a matter of **WHO** we want to Please.

Luke 14:13-14 When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and **you will be blessed**. Although they cannot repay you, **you will be repaid** at the **resurrection** of the righteous. NIV (1 Thessalonians 4:16 Revelation 20:6)

Matthew 10:40-42 He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. (41) He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's **reward**; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's **reward**. And whoever in the name of a disciple **gives** to one of these little ones **even a cup of cold water** to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose **his reward**."

The smallest acts of kindness and concern for others is desired, seen, appreciated and rewarded by our FATHER.

Mark 9:41 For whoever **gives** you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose **his reward**.

Hebrews 10:34-37 For you showed **sympathy** to the **prisoners** and accepted **joyfully** the **seizure** of your **property**, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. (35) Therefore, do not throw away your **confidence**, which has **a great reward**. (36) For you have need of **endurance**, so that when **you have DONE the will of God**, **you may receive what was promised**. (37) for yet in a very little while, **He who is coming will come**, and will not delay.

4. Rewards are given for being faithful in Prayer and fasting:

Matthew 6:6 But you, when **you pray**, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and **your Father** who sees what is done in secret **will reward you**.

Matthew 6:18 so that **your fasting** will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will **reward you**.

5. Rewards are given for being faithful in your ministry and not doing it for monetary gain:

1 Corinthians 9:17-18 For if I do this **voluntarily**, I have a **reward**; but if against my will, I have a **stewardship** entrusted to me. (18) What then is my **reward**? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

Colossians 3:23-24 Whatever you do, **do your work heartily**, as for the Lord rather than for men, (24) knowing that from the Lord **you will receive the reward** of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Matthew 24:44-47 For this reason **you also must be ready**; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.
⁴⁵ Who then is the **faithful and sensible slave** whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?
⁴⁶ **Blessed** is that slave whom his master finds **so doing** when he comes. ⁴⁷ Truly I say to you that **he will put him in charge of all his possessions**. NASU

- We MUST be FAITHFUL now in our ministry of serving others and giving them what they are in need of. Because **when he comes** our **responsibilities and position for eternity** will be **determined** by our faithfulness now.
- Revelation 5:10 **You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.**
 (2Timothy 2:11-12; Revelation 11:15; 20:6; 22:5)

Our position for reigning in eternity will be determined by how faithful we are now in meeting the needs of others.

The PARABLE OF THE TALENTS teaches us that our REWARD in Eternity is determined by what we do with what has been given us.

How faithful and diligent we are with what we have been given.

Matthew 25:14-15 It will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and **entrusted his property to them.** ¹⁵ To one **he gave five** talents of money, to another **two** talents, and to another **one** talent, **each according to his ability.** Then he went on his journey.

- The LORD has returned to heaven and left us with what He has given us
- 1 Corinthians 4:7 **What do you have that you did not receive?**
- Romanas 12:6 Since we have **gifts that differ** according to the grace given to us, **each of us is to exercise them accordingly**
- 1 Peter 4:10 As each one has **received a special gift**, use it in **serving one another** as **good stewards** of the manifold grace of God.

¹⁹After a long time the master of those servants **returned and settled accounts with them.**

- After the LORD JESUS returns and we rule and reign with Him (Rev.20:6) our position will be according to how faithful we are now with the gifts and responsibilities He has given to each of us.

²⁰The man who had received the five talents . . . said, **I have gained five more.** ²¹ His master replied, Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been **faithful** with a few things; **I will put you in charge of many things.** Come and share your master's happiness!

²²The man with the **two** talents also came. He said, **I have gained two more.** ²³ His master replied, Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been **faithful** with a few things; **I will put you in charge of many things.** Come and share your master's happiness! NIV

Luke 19:11-27 He told them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. ¹² He said: A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. ¹³ So he called **ten** of his servants and gave them **ten minas**.

- Each given three months wages. All given the same amount

Put this money to work, he said, until I come back. ¹⁵ When he returned, . . . ¹⁶ The first appeared, saying, Master, your mina **has made ten more**. ¹⁷ And he said to him, Well done, good slave, because you have **been faithful** in a very little thing, you are to be in **authority over ten cities**. ¹⁸ The second came, saying, Your mina **has made five** minas. ¹⁹ And he said to him, **you are to be over five cities**.

The LORD indicates that when He returns our **position** in ruling with Him will be determined by how we **increase** what has been given to us now.

Matthew 19:27-30

Then Peter said to Him, Behold, we have **left everything** and followed You; what then will there be for us? (28) And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His Glorious Throne, **you also shall sit upon twelve thrones**, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (29) And **everyone** who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, **will receive many times as much**, and will inherit eternal life.

- This is speaking of our future position, authority, activity and rewards given in the next life according to our **sacrifices made now** to serve the LORD and the people He loves . . . **will receive many times as much**

With all the above in mind, John has a warning for us:

Watch yourselves, that you **do not lose** what you have accomplished, but that **you may receive a full reward**. 2 John 8

- **full reward** indicates that the amount of reward will vary from large to small depending on what you are doing now.

Our Savior and LORD also has a warning for us:

Behold, **I am coming quickly**, and **My reward** is with Me, to render to every man **according to what he has done**.

Revelation 22:12

What the Rewards might be is not clarified in the Scriptures. But there appears to be many Rewards, some given here on earth and some having to do with our **position** and **responsibilities** in Heaven.

The most Special Rewards given to believers are CROWNS.

III. THE CROWN OF LIFE

James 1:12 Blessed is a man who **perseveres under trial**; for once he has been approved, he will receive **THE CROWN OF LIFE** which the Lord has promised **to those who love Him**.

The SON OF GOD, JESUS CHRIST became a man and **persevered under trial**, and was given A CROWN OF THRONES by mankind:

John 19:1-5 Pilate then took **Jesus** and scourged Him. (2) And the soldiers twisted together **a crown of thorns** and put it on His head, and put a purple robe on Him; . . . (5) Jesus then came out, **wearing the crown of thorns** and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!"

But because HE persevered and was faithful unto death HE was given A CROWN OF GOLD by His FATHER:

Revelation 14:14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a **golden crown** on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.

Jesus wore our "crown of thorns," and our sin, so that He could give us "**the crown of life**." Knowing this: **the love of Christ** controls us, (constrains or captures us) **having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; (15) and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him** who died and rose again on **their behalf**. 2 Corinthians 5:13-15

The believer finds strength to **overcome temptation** and **endure trials** through his **love** for The LORD JESUS CHRIST.

1 Peter 1:3-9 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who** according to His great mercy has **caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) **to obtain an inheritance** which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) who are **protected** by the **power of God through faith** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (6) In this you greatly rejoice, even though **now** for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by **various trials**, (7) **so that the proof of your faith**, being **more precious** than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in **praise** and **glory** and **honor** at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (8) and though you have not seen Him, **YOU LOVE HIM**, and though you do not see Him now, but **believe in Him**, you **greatly rejoice** with joy inexpressible and full of glory, (9) obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

Matthew 5:11-12 Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. (12) Rejoice and be glad, for **your reward in heaven is great**

Romans 5:3-4 we **rejoice** (or boast) in **tribulations** (or sufferings), knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; (4) and perseverance, character; and character, hope. (5) Now hope does not disappoint, **because the love of God** has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

The **greater** and more **passionate** the **love of God** in the heart of the believer becomes, the greater trials he can overcome. Otherwise the trials can cause him to become bitter and critical.

Revelation 2:10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. . . . you will be tested, and you will have tribulation . . . **Be faithful until death, and I will give you THE CROWN OF LIFE.**

- JESUS Himself will set this crown on your head.

To receive the CROWN OF LIFE, the believer **must LOVE the LORD more than his own life.**

Luke 9:24 **Whoever will save his life** (live for self) **will lose it; but whoever loses his life for my sake** (live for Christ at all cost), **he is the one who will save it.** As our love for Jesus grows, our love for our self diminishes.

This reward will be given to those who **live for Jesus Christ** and **endure temptations**, motivated and empowered by the **love of God**.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and **God is faithful**, who **will not** allow you to be tempted **beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation will provide **the way of escape** also, so that **you will** be able to endure it

I am coming soon, **hold fast** what you have, **so that no one will take your crown**. Revelation 3:11

IV. THE WINNERS CROWN

Paul uses the example of the Greek games to illustrate the spiritual race of the believer. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 **Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.** (25) Everyone who competes in the games exercises **self-control in all things**. They do it to receive a **perishable** wreath (or crown), but we an **imperishable**. (26) Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; (27) but **I discipline my body** and make it **my slave**, so that, after I have preached to others, **I myself will not be disqualified**.

- **those who run in a race all run** No person could contend in the games unless he was a Greek citizen, born of Greek parents. No unsaved person can participate in the ministry of the Lord for rewards; only those "born of God" (1 John 5:1) are eligible.
- According to Paul's analogy every believer is in this race. The question is: are we running, are we walking, or are we sitting and watching?
- They ran to win a "*perishable crown: but we an imperishable crown.*" We strive so very hard to be competitive and win in our sports and many other areas all for a medal or reward to hang on our wall which really has little and no lasting value.
- Just as the athlete must **deny himself** many nice things, so the believer must **exercise self-control in all things** and **discipline my body and make it my slave** or he will **be disqualified**. He **WILL NOT lose his salvation**, but he will lose the "WINNERS CROWN."

I am coming soon, **hold fast** what you have, **so that no one will take your crown.** Revelation 3:11

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also **lay aside every** encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us **run with endurance the race** that is set before us, (2) **fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of faith, who for **the joy** set before Him **endured** the cross, **despising** the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the Throne of God.

- Jesus, our example, endured horrendous suffering and won His race. We must do likewise.
- The believer must find his strength in the Lord.

Ephesians 6:10-18 Finally, **be strong** in the Lord and in the **strength of His might**. (11) **Put on** the full armor of God, so that you will be able to **stand firm** against the schemes of the devil. (12) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (13) Therefore, take up the **full armor** of God, so that you will **be able to resist** in the evil day, and having done everything, to **stand firm**. (14) Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with **truth**, and having put on the breastplate of **righteousness**, (15) and having shod your feet with the preparation of the **gospel** of peace; (16) in addition to all, taking up the shield of **faith** with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. (17) And take the helmet of **salvation**, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **Word of God**. (18) With all prayer and petition **pray** at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, **be on the alert** with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

- The believer must not try to run in the Lord's race and also in the world's. You cannot please two masters (Mt.6:24).
Romans 12:1-2 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies** a living and **holy** sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (2) **And do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

- The believer must, by faith, **refuse** anything that would impede spiritual progress. Hebrews 11:24-27 By **faith** Moses, when he had grown up, **refused** to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, (25) **choosing** rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, (26) considering the reproach of Christ **greater riches** than the treasures of Egypt; **for he was looking to the reward**. (27) By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for **he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen**.

Do not watch from the sidelines, RUN TO WIN your eternal winners crown.

1 John 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not **shrink away** from Him **in shame** at His coming.

I am coming quickly; **hold fast** what you have, **so that no one will take your crown**. Revelation 3:11

V. THE CROWN OF REJOICING

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 For what is our hope, or joy, or **crown of rejoicing**? **It is you!** Yes, **you** will bring us much joy as we stand together before our Lord Jesus when he comes back again. (20) For you are our pride and joy.

The **crown of rejoicing** is for **winning people to the Lord Jesus Christ**. The greatest work you are privileged to do for the LORD is to "gather for The LAMB the Reward for His suffering."

A portion of our joy in heaven will be determined by the people you have helped to bring to Christ.

Paul tells the Thessalonian believers that they are his **hope, or joy or crown of rejoicing** (KJ; NKJ) now and when Jesus comes.

- **Crown of exultation** – NAS
- **Crown in which we will glory** – NIV
- **What is our proud reward and crown** – NLT

Bringing people to Jesus is the reason we are here on earth.

Acts 1:8 you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My **witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the remotest part of the earth.

Matthew 28:19-20 Therefore go and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

- It is wise to win people to Christ. Proverb 11:30 The godly are like trees that bear life-giving fruit, and those who save lives are wise.
- It is a work against sin to win others to Christ. James 5:20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. NLT
- It is a cause for joy in heaven to bring His sheep to Him. Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.
- It is eternally profitable to bring His treasure to Him. Matthew 6:19-20 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; (20) but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.
- Witness with your life - live that others may see Jesus in you. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. . . . I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. (23) I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it. Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me . . .
- Witness with your words - trusting the Holy Spirit to give what you should say. Luke 12:11-12 When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; (12) for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say. Luke 21:15 I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.

- Be a good steward with what the Lord has given you by supporting His missionaries. Luke 12:42 Who then is the faithful and sensible **steward**, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?

Philippians 4:15-17 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel . . . no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; (16) for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. (17) Not that I seek the gift itself, but **I seek for the profit which increases to your account.**

2 Corinthians 9:6-9 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. (7) Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for **God loves a cheerful giver.** (8) And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, **you may have an abundance for every good deed.**

- God has promised that your labor will not be in vain in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that **your toil is not in vain** in the Lord.
- The one who brings others to Christ will not rejoice alone - all of heaven will rejoice with him when he receives the "Crown of Rejoicing." John 4:36 Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps **may rejoice together.**

1 John 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, **we may have confidence** and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

Revelation 3:11 I am coming quickly; **hold fast** what you have, **so that no one will take your crown.**

VI. THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

2 Timothy 4:5-8 But you, be **alert** in all things, **endure hardship**, do the work of an **evangelist**, fulfill **your ministry**. (6) For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. (7) **I have fought the good fight**, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; (8) in the future there is laid up for me the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also **to all who have loved His appearing**.

The **crown of righteousness** is a reward, and not to be confused with the "righteousness of God" which is given as a **gift** to all that believe.

The **crown of righteousness** is a reward to be **earned** by the believer. If the believer loves, looks for and yearns for the second coming of Christ, it will affect the way he lives his life and "fulfills his ministry."

Matthew 24:14 This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, **and then the end will come**.

This truth had a powerful impact on the life of the Apostle Paul and that is why he could say:

- **I have fought a good fight**: He fought a spiritual battle throughout his Christian life, focused on Jesus Christ and fulfilling his ministry. He never surrendered to the enemies of righteousness because of his overpowering LOVE FOR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.
- **I have finished my course**. He had a path to follow, a calling and mission to accomplish. He did not turn from the hard places; neither did he look back. He finished his course with his eyes fixed on Christ.

Hebrews 12:2-3 **fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (3) For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

- **I have kept the faith**. He preached the full counsel of God, never betraying any of the truths given him by the Holy Spirit.

Acts 20:24 I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may **finish the race** and **complete the task** the Lord Jesus has given me the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. . . . (27) For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

The apostle looked ahead to the **judgment seat of Christ** where the **crown of righteousness** will be given to those who **love His appearing**.

If we **truly love** the LORD JESUS CHRIST and desire earnestly to be with Him and see righteousness reign on earth, we will sincerely pray: "*Come LORD JESUS, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is on heaven.*" And **it will change our priorities and the way we live our life**.

How important it is for the believer to look with a heart of **love** for the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that he may receive the **crown of righteousness**.

1 John 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

Revelation 3:11 **I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.**

VII. THE CROWN OF GLORY

1 Peter 5:1-4 I exhort the **elders** among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, (2) **shepherd** the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; (3) nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be **examples** to the flock. (4) And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading **CROWN OF GLORY**.

The **Crown of Glory** is a reward for the faithful and obedient shepherds that the LORD has placed to lead and teach His people. They will receive this reward when the **Chief Shepherd appears**. It is eternal; it is **unfading**.

They will earn this **Crown of Glory** by:

- Feeding the flock of God. They are to proclaim the Word of God without fear or favor; and, when necessary, **reprove, rebuke and exhort with great patience and instruction** (2 Timothy 4:2-5).
- Taking the spiritual oversight of the church. They are responsible to God for the message preached to His people. No pastor should preach to please the people; he is to please his Lord. **For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.** Galatians 1:10
- Being an example to the church. They are not to serve for the reward of money. Yet, the church is responsible to care for the pastor or pastors needs. He is to be a spiritual leader, and not a dictator. 1 Timothy 5:18 **For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."**

1 John 2:28 **Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.**

Luke 17:10 **So you also, when you have done everything** you were told to do, should say, **We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.** NIV

Revelation 3:11

I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

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