

Open in prayer and thanksgiving.

Welcome to all the visitors. A nice warm Christian Heritage Welcome.

If you want to close your eyes for a moment and let us imagine something. Imagine being a king or queen, royalty, and royalty wears a crown. Imagine having a crown for a moment... Imagine taking care of it, keeping it clean and polished to a bright shining lustre. Imagine placing it on a velvety cushion at night before you sleep. How lovely it must be to own and wear a crown, this thing made of solid gold and adorned with valuable jewels and diamonds. Imagine it being placed on your head every morning, imagine it being placed on your head right now, you would actually be able to feel the weight of solid gold and all that glittering splendour upon your head.

I trust that today's message is from the Lord and at the correct time. It also fits in to our conference theme last month of Kings and Priests. We are going to be looking at promises in the Word of God and truth in the Word of God.

A crown is defined in the dictionary as follows:

: a decorative object that is shaped like a circle and worn on the head of a king or queen for special ceremonies

: a ring of leaves or flowers worn on the head of someone who has won a game, contest, or award

: a reward of victory or mark of honour; especially : the title representing the championship in a sport

: a royal or imperial headdress or cap of sovereignty : diadem



Clearly a crown is something that imparts splendour and honour to the wearer. But what does the Holy Bible teach us about crowns?

As I searched for scriptures on crowns I was quite alarmed to find that there is much said about crowns in the Bible.

In Exodus 28 The Lord God Himself instructed Moses on how the priests should wash and be clothed. Let us read out loud the Word of God because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Exodus 28 and in verse 36 "You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 37 And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. 38 So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.



unto God.

As a priest, Aaron, walked around all day with a large gold plate on his forehead proclaiming HOLINESS TO THE LORD. When people saw him they knew he was a priest of God. This was not a thing that could be erased, it could not be wiped off. It was not temporary, it was permanent. Those words were engraved into that gold plate.

Today we are ministers of Gods Word, every one of us has the ministry of reconciliation, we are to reconcile people to God. In our everyday lives do people around us recognise us as ministers of God's Word? We do not walk around with gold plates on our foreheads but do our lives always proclaim HOLINESS TO THE LORD? I know my life does not. In many areas I fall short but I ask God to help me change. I want to have those words engraved in my life so I cannot rub them out. We should ask

So here God was ordaining the priesthood to wear a crown, a thing of great beauty and value. But with it came an equivalent responsibility. That responsibility was for Aaron to carry the iniquity, the sin of the children of Israel. The sin that they would commit against the Holy things of God. With rights comes responsibility, as the high priest he could come into the presence of God and make offerings on behalf of the people once a year, and that came with the responsibility of remaining Holy

God to help us polish our lives so they can shine for Him and brightly proclaim HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Paul is speaking in this text about 2 crowns. The first is the earthly crown bestowed upon winners of events. The honour and glory for being the best amongst your peers and fellow competitors, for being the first to the finish line, for being the one to jump the highest, run the furthest or be the fastest round the track.



But the actual crown is also symbolic of this type of glory and honour. This crown is made from thin branches of the Laurel Bay, Pine or celery that are woven together to form a crown. But being of a natural substance it tends to wilt and wither. Just as the honour and fame of being a winner fades away. You are only at the top of the podium till someone better and faster comes along. This is a temporary crown.

Paul urges us to strive for an imperishable crown, with vision and certainty of our final goal and destination. That being with our Father in Heaven. The aim of the Christian must be sure and certain, not like a boxer who misses and strikes the air!

Paul writes a farewell letter to Timothy

2 Timothy 4:6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

He is speaking here of the crown of righteousness, a crown reserved for those who live righteously in the sight of the Lord. Paul had **fought** the good fight, which in Greek is the word

agōnizomai

ag-o-nid'-zom-ahee

To struggle, literally (to compete for a prize), figuratively (to contend with an adversary), or generally (**to endeavour to accomplish something**): - fight, **labour fervently, strive.**

He lived his life striving fervently to live righteously before God, his race was finished and he had kept the faith. It is not a race unless we are challenged by someone, it is not a fight unless we have an adversary, an opponent who seeks to take away the prize from us. An adversary that throws everything against us to prevent our victory.



Paul withstood against all odds,

5 times the Jews beat him with 39 stripes

3 times he was beaten with rods

He was even stoned once

3 times he was shipwrecked

This is over and above the dangers, sleepless nights, weariness even nakedness and hunger he often faced.

When we have passed away what will people remember us for? Will they say so and so was a good man, or woman, or will they say that they laboured fervently to live in righteousness in the eyes of God? What will be written on our tombstones? What will be your epitaph? Something clichéd that normally adorns empty graveyards, or here lies someone who fought the good fight.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those

who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.



Temptation, trials and tribulation are part of the Christian life – but we are called to endure all. Since Jesus Christ walked on the face of this planet He was a hated person. He will still be hated by the world until the end of time. As the people who bear His name we will also be hated and persecuted. God keeps all his promises and He promises a crown of life everlasting to those who endure and are proven acceptable under the duress of temptation. Besides the word tells us that He will not give us anything that we cannot handle, plus He will be able to make a way out for us.

1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

When we die we will leave all worldly things here on this earth. All our possessions, money, property, cars, anything of a worldly nature must remain here where it belongs. But there is something that we can take with us to heaven...

STAND FIRM
in the Lord

Philippians 4:1



Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

1 Thessalonians 2:17 But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. 18 Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. 19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy.



The only thing we can take with us into the life everlasting are other souls. It is one of our responsibilities as ministers of reconciliation to usher others into the presence of God. For this the Lord has crowns of joy in store for us. There is nothing more lovely than leading

someone into a relationship with Jesus Christ and knowing that they will be with us in heaven for eternity worshipping God.

But there is still another crown that is mentioned.

1 Peter 5 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.



This text is addressed to shepherds, or pastors of flocks, but it can be applied to all of our lives. In a way we are all responsible to shepherd those around us, in our homes, in our workplaces, whoever God puts in our path. As a reward for this we will receive a crown not made of laurel wreaths, or gold or jewellery but of GLORY. Just have another look at that photo, I want us all to just understand something, from this point of view it looks like the shepherd has turned his back on the sheep, he has not he has just turned his eyes to the Lord.

The last crown I want to mention today is the one that is the most special crown. It is saved for the grandest of affairs. A crown that is only used for that special occasion, perhaps something that is used only once in a lifetime! A crown that is stored up for only the best, only the purest, only the MOST righteous of righteous.

This crown does not perish like the laurel wreaths and fame of sporting heroes. It does not shine with the polished lustre of solid gold and precious stones. It is even more special than the crowns made of glory!

This is the crown that was fit only to be worn by one man!

This special crown was stored up until that special occasion came along, until that moment here on earth was just right. The correct person had to come along that would be able to stand up for the honour of wearing this crown.



This person would also have to be able to bear the responsibility that came with this crown, to carry the sins of the world. There was none that could do this so God had to do it Himself. When He sent the only person capable of doing the job, this crown was then custom made to fit by the experts and masters of their profession at the time. It was not made to gently rest upon the head but to be embedded deeply into the flesh to cause the most pain and suffering. This crown did not have a gold plate on the front proclaiming HOLINESS TO THE LORD! The wearer Himself had lived a life of HOLINESS TO THE LORD. Although this crown was made from natural plant material it has already lasted for thousands of years and the wearer will be remembered for eternity. This crown shone and glistened not with precious stones, and polished gold, but with the blood of Jesus Christ. This crown was worn by the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Prince of peace. He wore this crown of shame and mockery so we can get crowns in heaven.

When we think of all the crowns that lie in wait for us in heaven

Incorruptible Crowns

Crowns of Righteousness

Crowns of Life

Crowns of Joy

And Crowns of Glory

Let us not forget who made it possible for us to receive crowns in heaven.

I do not believe we will be able to wear a crown before Jesus Christ. Only He is deserving to wear a crown in heaven. Only He is worthy to receive such things. But never the less, God has written that we will receive such things and when we receive any crowns in heaven we too will humbly kneel and cast them down before His feet remembering what our King Jesus has done for us.

I trust that the Lord will prepare the hearts of those present so we can call people forward for prayer, even if it is just to stand at the altar and pray a prayer of thanks to God who has done it all through Jesus Christ.