

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Will You Receive The Crown?

(Jerry Fite)

The crown? I am not royalty, nor the family of royalty. What do you mean I will receive the crown? If you mean a “reward” for living for Christ, I want you to know that I do not serve my Lord for “reward.” I serve my Lord out of love for redeeming me from sin, and eternal death. Submitting to the commandments of our great Lord surely manifests love, according to our Lord (*John 14:15*). However, receiving the crown after a life of faithfulness is also a Scriptural motive.

Facing imminent death, Paul writes, *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved His appearing (2 Timothy 4:7-8).* Notice that *“the crown”* is connected with Paul’s faithful walk with the Lord. He *“fought,”* he *“finished,”* he *“kept.”* Therefore, the crown is laid up for him. It is laid up for you and me, who are also fighting the good fight of faith, and finishing the course by keeping the

faith. We, who are looking forward to “that day” of the Lord’s return, can anticipate receiving the crown, like Paul.

The crown that Paul knew was laid up for him, was not one of royalty, but of “victory.” Paul exhorted all the Christians in Corinth to run the spiritual race set before them, exercising the spiritual discipline necessary for victory. In the ancient games, the Corinthians knew that *“...they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth a prize.”* But Paul follows this fact with the exhortation, *“Even so run; that ye may attain” (I Corinthians 9:24).* Unlike ancient races, when “perishable” wreaths were placed on the victor’s head, the crown waiting for the faithful saint is “an incorruptible” one.

The crown awaiting us is *“the crown of righteousness.”* The victory is not based upon our righteousness, for none of us are righteous based upon our own record (*Romans 3:10*). We are righteous before God because of our faith in Christ. The good news of Christ’s redeeming sacrifice and resurrection is the foundational message for righteousness before God. In the Gospel *“is revealed a righteousness of God*

from faith unto faith: as it is written, ‘But the righteous shall live by faith’” (Romans 1:17). God’s righteousness by not overlooking sin was satisfied in the offering of His Son; and His wrath upon sin was satisfied through His Son’s death. Therefore, we, who have *“faith in His blood,”* can be *“justified”* before the righteous God (*Romans 3:25-26*).

What awaits the faithful is *“the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).* When faith is tested through persecution, the Christian remains *“faithful, even unto death.”* Before the eyes of the world, the martyr’s death appears as “defeat.” But, before God, the Christian has *“overcome”* Satan himself. Christians overcome the Devil *“because of the blood of the lamb, and because of their testimony; and they loved not their life, even unto death” (Rev. 12:11).*

Elders, working tirelessly in shepherding souls, will receive the unfading glorious crown when the Chief Shephard returns (*I Peter 5:4*). While the victorious crown would not exist if it were not for the sacrificial work of Christ, our receiving the crown is conditioned upon our remaining faithful unto the end.