

## Chat With The Chaplain

We've talked about heaven before, but I think I'll touch down on this again since you just can't exhaust the subject. This time I thought we'd wander around in the area of the word 'crowns'. A crown represents dominion, reward and honor, and God promises every believer a crown. In fact, He promises 5 different kinds of crowns. Before we go on any further, we should probably set a foundation first. In Revelation 22:12, Jesus says, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done". He's telling us something very important here. To 'render' is to 'pay', and the 'reward' speaks of 'crowns'. Heaven has an amazing culture of honor, and to be rendered a heavenly crown by the King of Heaven Himself is no small thing. And, here we're also told that we actually have to 'do' something to earn the reward. Don't get me wrong here. We don't really have to 'do' anything to gain a 1<sup>st</sup> class, front seat ride into Heaven, except "...if you Confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved" (Romans 10:9). If you have done this from the heart, then you have salvation and a home in Heaven. However, the Christian life is much more than gettin'saved. It's also about service, which in a real sense is a type of race. In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:24,25, the apostle Paul writes, "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. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath (crown). But we an imperishable". Also, in Hebrews 12:1,2 it says, "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 which is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith ..."

The 'race' here is the life of a believer, and like I mentioned before, God has promised us crowns of reward based on what we have done, and they are:

- 1) The incorruptible (imperishable) crown ( 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9: 24,25 ) ; This is given to believers who faithfully run the race ; run whatever God has set out for you to do. This does a nose-dive right smack-dab into your God ordained 'calling'. For some folks, determining their calling is more difficult than for others. And that's a whole 'nother subject to bat around. But, as one man has said, I wasn't called (or chosen) because I was a mechanic ( or fill in the blanks), I am a mechanic because I was called. Another way to put it is something we've said before, and that is that God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called. Am I making any sense here?
- 2) The crown of life ( James 1:12 & Revelation 2:8-11 ) ; This is for those believers who endure trials, tribulations and severe suffering, even unto death. This is also referred to as the martyr's crown. Not a pretty picture here, but ample evidence in today's news about Christians dying for their faith.
- 3) The crown of righteousness ( 2 Timothy 4:8 ) ; This is for those who are ready and waiting for the return of Jesus. When the Creator and Sustainer of the universe places this crown on your head, He's saying that everything is good between you and Him.
- 4) The crown of Glory ( 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:2-4 ) ; This crown is for those leaders, pastors, elders and teachers who have been Godly examples to the 'flock' of believers entrusted and assigned to their care.
- 5) The crown of rejoicing ( 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 2:19,20 & Daniel 12:3 ) : This crown is for those believers who have been faithful in obeying Jesus' Great Commission ( Mathew 28: 19,20 ) ; Also known as the 'soul winners' crown.

A lot more could be said about this but you might consider checking out Revelation 3:11 where Jesus says “ I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown”.

This means that at any time, the ‘enemy’ can trip you up and cause you to lose your crown(s). He’s a liar and a deceiver and will mess you up if he can. 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8 says, “ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”. So, in view of that, what could your defense look like? We can begin by drawing close to God, and as we do He will draw close to us. So now, what does that mean really? It’s called prayer. And plenty of it. In this world as we know it, when we come under attack by an enemy, we break out the cannons to destroy him while he’s out there at a distance .. before he gets up close and personal. God has provided for us a 2 way comm. Line that’s always open and our ‘Big Gun’ is prayer – right to the top – right away! And, if you happen to take a look through your rifle scope to see what’s happening down the line, all you should be seeing is Jesus! In James 5:16 it says, “ ...The effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much”. Believe it, and use it, all the time. It’s not a ritual or a position... just a heartfelt conversation with the One who has His finger prints on your soul.

--- “ Man is born broken. He lives by mending, and the Grace of God is the glue.”

Eugene O’neill

**See you down the road.**

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**Wanted; More Bikers In Heaven!!**