

"Never have I been so sensible of how vain a creature man is, what a leaf driven by the wind, what dry stubble, what poor dust, a bubble, a shadow, a nothing, and more vain than nothing! And never have I been so sensible of what a vain and vile and helpless creature I am--and how much I need God's help in everything." --Jonathan Edwards

There are no shortcuts in the Christian life--no simple remedies. --Martyn Lloyd-Jones

The Baptist Catechism

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813 *(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

72. Q. What is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill (Ex. 20:13).

73. Q. What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life (Eph. 5:28,29) and the life of others (1 Kings 18:4).

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Services:

Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

Volume 14, No. 29

July 18, 2021

THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8)

Thoughts are many and varied among those considering the mention of crowns in Scripture. They range from literal crowns such as those seen on the heads of earthly monarchs to that which is symbolic of the status of the bearer. The sources of those crowns are considered by some to be the reward for their good works; in others, all the credit is seen to belong to the Lord and the work of grace done in them. In examining the life of the Apostle who is here claiming his title to a crown of righteousness, we find that he attributed all to the mercy and grace of God. There is no reason to believe that he was thinking otherwise here.

It seems good to refer to beginnings and often we are pointed to the example of Abraham and our Lord's dealings with him. A connection to our subject may be seen in the following: *After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. (Genesis 15:1).* The word here to the “father of the faithful” was assurance in two ways. First, he would have no less than the Lord Himself as his protector. Second, his reward was not to be in material things; again, it would be the Lord Himself. Paul, wrote to the Philippians of his desire to “win Christ.” He went on to declare that “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Christ was, to Paul, both the mark and the prize.

As we consider the context of Paul's claim here it is well to see his expression of faith.

William Hendriksen observed these aspects of his faith. In v. 6 (...I am ready to be offered...) we see His faith appraisal of the present. In v. 7 (...I have finished my course, I have kept the faith...) we see his faith summary of the past. In v. 8, we have his faith-exultation of the future. Hendriksen went on to observe that “To those who fight the grand fight, run the race, and keep the faith (in other words to Paul and others like him, God has promised to give the wreath). Christ has earned it for them (BNTC).”

So, what of crowns and rewards, and what is the true objective of all who fight, pursue, and keep the faith. Are there degrees of reward in heaven? The declarations of our Lord would seem to indicate that to be so. To the persecuted He declares that “great is your reward in heaven.” In parables He indicated differing levels of inheritance. That begs the question of whether we are in competition for standing as it was perceived of by some of the Apostles as to being seated with Him in the Kingdom. His answer to them more than one occasion was that greatness would be in proportion to their servitude. The answer may have to wait the time of His appearing. None will be disappointed in His presence!

The reference to a “crown” here is not that of a royal diadem as often comes to the minds of men. It was a reference to the laurel wreath that was given to the winners of athletic events. It was the symbol of the victor. In looking to the preceding verse, we see the meaning of the

“henceforth” of our text. Paul’s life had been one of action and he clearly saw what was before him as the symbol of victory. It may well be that he simply saw that as the next thing to happen. He often made reference to the means of assurance as being in the race as an active participant. *And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. (2 Timothy 2:5).* A. R. Faussett puts it in this perspective: “The reward is in recognition of righteousness wrought in Paul by God’s Spirit; the crown is prepared for the righteous; it is a crown which consists in righteousness. Righteousness will be its own reward (Rev. 22:11).” In a similar fashion, John MacArthur wrote: “of righteousness” can mean either that righteousness is the source of the crown, or that righteousness is the nature of the crown.” MacArthur went on to reference many other mentions of the word crown. We read of the “crown of life” in James 1:12, the “crown of rejoicing” in 1 Thess. 2:19, and others in which life, rejoicing, imperishability, and glory describe the nature of the crown. MacArthur adds, “Believers receive the imputed righteousness of Christ (justification) at salvation. The Holy Spirit works practical righteousness (sanctification) in the believer throughout his lifetime struggle with sin. But only when the struggle is complete will the Christian receive Christ’s righteousness perfected in him (glorification) when he enters heaven.” A. T. Robertson called this wreath, “...the crown that consists in righteousness and

is also the reward for righteousness, the victor’s crown...”

How quickly men tend to grab on to anything that might seem to attribute merit to them in the matter of reward or a crown. To them Heaven would be filled with winners, losers, and “also rans.” It is impossible that any should be found in the presence of Christ unfulfilled. “O that will be glory for me!” In this, as in other aspects of the grace of God we are to fear presumption. Kenneth Wuest translated this verse in this way, *Henceforth, there is reserved for me the victor’s laurel wreath of righteousness, which the Lord will award me on that day, the just Umpire, and not only to me but also to all those who have loved His appearing and as a result have their love fixed on it.* We are safe in assuming that Paul’s earlier declaration that it is “not I, but Christ that liveth in me” was still very much his testimony. The experience was Paul’s to be sure. The fight was in him. His life was fully given to trust in what Christ had accomplished in his behalf. And he loved the prospect of the appearing of our Lord. Truly, our victory is in Jesus, and He is our prize.

O that by His mercy and grace, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we may be found fighting and believing as did Paul and that we look to Christ who is “our exceeding great reward.” Peter described the inheritance reserved in heaven for us and then assured us that we would be kept by the power of God through faith for the inheritance. *bhs*

MAKING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE MORE COMPLICATED THAN IT NEEDS TO BE

We sometimes make the Christian life more complicated than it needs to be and more complicated than it ought to be. For when it comes right down to it, God calls us to nothing more, and nothing less, than to obey. The only thing that really matters in any context or any circumstance is obedience to God’s will as it is revealed in God’s Word. Thus it is always necessary, and never superfluous, to search the Bible to know the mind of God. Thus it is always right, and never wrong, to pray, “Lord, teach me to obey you in this.”

If God calls us to possess great wealth, then he calls us to live with great generosity toward others and great care toward the state of our own souls, knowing that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. It falls to us to pray that we would be obediently and faithfully rich.

If God calls us to possess scant wealth, then he calls us to live obediently with reliance upon him and trust in his provision, knowing that the God who clothes the grasses of the fields will much more certainly clothe those whom he loves. It falls to us to pray that we would be obediently and faithfully poor.

If God calls us to experience times of great joy, he calls us to enjoy them, to rejoice in them, to acknowledge them as a blessing from his hand, to eat and drink and take pleasure in the good things of this world and the good times in life, knowing that each is a gift from God. It falls to us to pray that we would be obediently and faithfully joyful.

If God calls us to undergo times of sore loss, we are to acquiesce, to raise hands of worship rather than fists of rebellion, to lament our sorrows but to never charge God with the least wrong. We are to pray our longings and fears, our sorrows and griefs but ultimately, like Jesus, to say “not my will but thine be done.” It falls to us to pray that we would be obediently and faithfully sorrowful.

If God calls us to experience great physical strength, we are to use that strength to love and support others, to bear their burdens, to use our strength to support them in their frailty. It falls to us to pray that we would be obediently and faithfully strong.

If God calls us to suffer weakness, then we are to undertake the kinds of ministry that weakness permits and invites—prayer, encouragement, love, support. We are not to see our weakness as the end of our usefulness to God but as the gateway to a whole new kind of usefulness. It falls to us to pray that we would be obediently and faithfully weak.

There is no circumstance in which God has nothing for us to do, no situation in which we cannot be faithful to his calling on our lives. He calls none of us to uselessness and calls none of us to another man’s life or ministry. He calls each of us to be obedient in the context he has ordained for us. For the end of the matter, when all else has been heard, is that we are to simply fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the sacred duty of every man, the kind expectation of a loving God. –Tim Challies, Blog

The Lord’s own wonderful promise is in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” Later He added, “The one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out” (John 6:37). The erosion of the gospel in our day has given this truth an insidious twist. The language of the modern message sounds vaguely similar to “Just as I Am,” but the difference in meaning is profound. Sinners today hear not only that Christ will receive them as they are, but also that He will let them stay that way! Many erroneously believe they can come to Christ, receive absolution and immortality, then walk away to continue living life as they please according to the desires of their own flesh.

--John MacArthur, *Only Jesus*

It is one thing to shout it, it is one thing to sing it, it is one thing to talk about revival, but give me a people on their faces, seeking to be rightly related with God, and when that happens, we will soon know the impact of God-realization in our country.

--Duncan Campbell, *The Price and Power of Revival*