

# Crowns - Part 2

by Ken Baird

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*Ken Baird's sermon explores the significance of the crowns in scripture, particularly focusing on the roles and responsibilities of shepherds in the church.*

**Duration:** 56:22

**Scripture:** John 21:15-17, Romans 6:6-7, Hebrews 13:17, James 1:12

**Topics:** "Spiritual Gifts", "Church Leadership"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Ephesians chapter 4 and emphasizes that each person has been given a gift and the power to use it for the Lord. The preacher mentions the story of a shepherd who was struggling to feed the people of God due to quarreling among them. The preacher highlights the importance of shepherding and feeding the flock, stating that it is a threefold duty outlined by Peter. The preacher also mentions the need for multiple pastors and teachers to guide and direct God's people.

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## Transcript

Brother Nelson Cooke, would you quote a little word of prayer? We won't be able to take much time tonight to review. We've been studying about the crowns of scriptures, the crowns in the scriptures, and we have thus far considered the incorruptible crown, the crown of rejoicing, and the crown of righteousness. We'd like to have before us tonight the crown of glory and the crown of life.

We're going to try to budget our time a little better than we did last night, so we won't have that feeling of utter futility in touching so lightly upon the subject before us. We have much ground to cover, and in these crowns we have been seeking to show not only the crown, but how we may win them. These are crowns, these are distinguishing glories that the Lord is going to heap upon us, that the Lord is going to accord to us in His grace and in His mercy in the coming days.

The crowns are compensatory. They are a reward for the things which we have endured down here. The Lord is going to compensate us by means of these crowns.

We'd like to consider tonight, with the help of the Lord, the crown of glory. I want to refer you to the 5th chapter of 1 Peter, the only mention of this crown in the scriptures. Last night we considered the warrior's crown.

Tonight we will consider the shepherd's crown. This is a crown for shepherds only. Last night we saw that the Christian, every Christian, can be a warrior, and the reward for the warrior, the warrior's crown, is the crown of righteousness.

And we noticed that righteousness, practical righteousness in our lives, will result from loving the Lord, and in a special way, from loving His return, loving the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. And then to active resistance against our enemies, who would seek to destroy our personal righteousness, and thus discredit Christianity in general, and our Lord in particular. And for those who will twice as good fight as Satan, resist this enemy, and who out of love for the Lord Jesus, and adoration for Him, will live a life of piety, a life of righteousness, the Lord has for them the crown of righteousness.

But tonight this crown is a very specific crown, limited to a smaller group of God's people. However, I think it will do us all well to consider it. And then lastly, the crown of life, which I think is the martyr's crown.

But in a sense, we can all win that crown, because it's more than the martyr's crown. Now in 1 Peter 5, the elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Heed the flock of God which is among you, and taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.

Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Now we have seen already the Christian as a runner. We have seen him as a messenger, as an ambassador.

We have seen him as a warrior. And now we want to look at a certain group of Christians as shepherds. Now Peter himself is the one who is giving the counsel, and well qualified he was to be a shepherd.

He was given his commission by our Lord Jesus Christ himself. Now, let's notice that please, in John chapter 21. Because Peter is speaking out of the depths of his heart to those he wanted to see shepherd the people of God.

He's not alone in this. You will recall that Moses, when he was told that he had to die, he pled with the Lord. Lord, he said, set a man over the children of Israel, lest they be as sheep scattered, not having a shepherd.

And at the same time, the Lord told Moses to appoint Joshua to be a leader over his people. Moses wanted to see, his shepherd heart led him to see that there was a shepherd over the people of God. Here, in this epistle of Peter, Peter knows that his time is at hand.

And he wants God to indeed set shepherds over the flock. He knows that he has much longer to go, and he is concerned with the flock of God. The apostle Paul knew that he was going to die, and he wanted indeed Timothy and others to shepherd the flock of God.

And he called the elders of Ephesus to him and told them, warned them, of the dangers that would come upon the people of God. He had a concern for the sheep. And so Peter tells us, as a true shepherd he was, he tells of dangers ahead.

And he wants them, after his decease, to have these things always in remembrance. So there is much instruction in this portion of scripture, for you and for me, whether we are younger, or whether we are the ones being directly addressed as the shepherds. In John chapter 21, our Lord Jesus gives Peter his commission as a shepherd.

Verse 15 of that chapter, So when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon son of Jonas, Lovest thou me more than these? He said unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He said unto him, Feed my lambs. He said unto him again, the second time, Simon son of Jonas, Lovest thou me? He said unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.

He said unto him, Feed my sheep. He said unto him the third time, Simon son of Jonas, Lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? He was grieved because the Lord stooped to use the same word that Peter was using. And the Lord asked him the first two times if he loved him, if Peter loved the Lord.

He said, Do you deeply love me? The same kind of love that God has for this world. And Peter answered back, He couldn't boast of his love, not after denying his Lord. And he said something to the effect, Yes, Lord, I'm fond of you.

Now the Lord stoops down and uses Peter's word. Peter, are you fond of me? And Peter was grieved that the Lord would lower that standard in condescension to meet his standard. And he says, Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.

Jesus said unto him, Feed my sheep. Here is another shepherd that is going away. Our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the good shepherd, the great shepherd, and as we notice tonight, the chief shepherd. Yes, he's thinking of the sheep. Peter, do you really love me? Peter, do you love me now? Peter says, Yes, Lord.

Feed my sheep. Peter, if you love me, take care of my sheep. I love my sheep.

I want my sheep cared for. And he gives Peter this tender commission. Another shepherd is going away.

Now there is a sense, of course, in which the Lord Jesus is never separated from you and me. He is, in that sense, the great shepherd of the sheep. But you know there is a lot of shepherding to be done that the Lord Jesus leaves to us.

Now Peter fulfills, indeed, his commission. And if you want some precious reading, read the epistle of Peter to those scattered abroad. And you will find some of the best feeding in all the scriptures.

It lacks, perhaps, some of the analysis, the judicious structure of Paul's writings, and the sheer force of spiritual logic. But I'll tell you, if your soul wants to be fed, if you want your soul really fed, if your soul is languishing for food, read the epistles of Peter, and your soul will be fed. He was a true shepherd, and he fed the people of God.

And just as our blessed Lord provided for the sheep after his departure, and Moses and Paul as well, so Peter, after his decease, he says, I want you to have these things in remembrance. So it's Peter that counsels the shepherds. Peter himself a shepherd, and he is so interested in those who will be left behind

when he is with the Lord and beyond the need of shepherding.

Now, the word shepherd is an interesting word, and incidentally may I say that I believe that the Lord himself is still commissioning shepherds. I believe that the Lord himself is still giving the gifts of the shepherds. Let's notice that in Ephesians chapter 4. Ephesians chapter 4, well, let's begin in verse 7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Each of us has been given something to do for the Lord, and he gives us the power to do it. He imparts that power to us, the gift and the power to perform it. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heaven, that he might steal all things. And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers. Now, the word pastors here is the same word in the Greek that is translated shepherd elsewhere.

I don't know why it was translated pastor here and shepherd elsewhere. As a matter of fact, it's a part of the compound word that in our text in Peter 5 is translated the chief shepherd. It's one word in the Greek, but it means shepherd.

It's the archshepherd, it's the chief shepherd, but it's the same word in the Greek. And our Lord Jesus himself is the one who gives the shepherds for his people. Only the Lord can make a shepherd.

Only the Lord and the Spirit of God, who of course is sovereign. Let's notice in Acts chapter 20. Acts chapter 20, verse 28.

Now, who takes heed of the flock? Well, I think we will admit it is the shepherds over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which ye have purchased with his own blood. Now, he's still furthering the thought of the flock in the next verse. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not fearing the flock.

Only God can make a shepherd. The Holy Ghost makes overseers over the flock of God. Now, the Lord Jesus has given up the commission.

He has put that care for the people of God naturally in our hearts. Now, the amazing thing is that Peter should have to exhort shepherds at all. And this is the thought that we want to explore.

Why does Peter have to exhort certain men to indeed fulfill their commission as shepherds? Why does he have to do that? The Holy Ghost makes overseers for the flock of God, that they might feed the flock of God. Now, why does Peter have to exhort such men as this? To fulfill their duty. Well, I think the reason for it is, is because that calling of a shepherd is so difficult.

You know, we live in a day of fierce independence. We value our independence in this country. Our liberty is an obsession to us.

And it may be carried in Christian circles to the point of antinomianism. I mean absolute rebellion against any restriction whatsoever. This personal, this business of personal liberty.

And we live in an age when people insist on their own personal liberty. We have a kind of an unwritten law that goes something like this. Now, you stay out of my private life, and I'll stay out of your private life.

And that fierce independence of spirit, that craving for liberty, makes it very, very difficult for a shepherd to carry on his work. Many, many times, young Christians especially, who need shepherd care. Those that are away from the Lord.

A shepherd will come along, and he'll try to help. And he's probably told, mind your own business. Tend to your own business.

And it's quite unfortunate that sometimes that the devil sees to it that the shepherd may have enough in his own hunts to quiet him. I've seen that happen so many, many times. So many times.

David was a shepherd, and he had sons that didn't do so well either. Adonijah. As a matter of fact, there was Samuel, and Adonijah, and Eli.

All of them failed in the raising of their sons. Ah, how the devil is attacking the shepherd. I heard a dear old woman say once, in almost approaching 90, a spiritual school.

And she says, Pray for the elders. Pray for the shepherds among God's people. Pray for them.

They need our prayers. Why should a shepherd, a man of this caliber, have to be urged and exhorted indeed to feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, not having to be forced to do it, but willingly. Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

A readiness to obey. Strange, isn't it? But I tell you, you only have to be rebuffed about once or twice by the people of God until you do kind of retreat from your shepherd duties. But if there ever was a time in all the history of the Church of God where shepherding was needed and desperately needed, it's right now.

Right now, among the people of God, a need for shepherding. They need to be fed. They need to be taught.

They need to be warned of the pitfall that can come to the Christian. Now, the shepherd's duty seems to be threefold, as outlined here by Peter. First of all, he says, feed the flock.

In verse 2 of 1 Peter 5, feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly. The shepherd feeds. The pastor feeds.

Somebody has asked me the question, are you against the local pastor? A local pastor? I say, of course I'm not against a local pastor. What I'm against is this, limiting that local pastor to one person. This is a gift that God gives, and it's not limited to one man.

In many instances in prison and today, the pastor of a church, if I may refer to him that way, he takes that position, the pastor of a church may not have the gift of a shepherd at all. He goes into it with a thought of a profession to follow. Now, I know that even in the circles of the assemblies as we know them, there is a dearth of pastoring, and possibly even there is some benefit, some benefit by a man acting in that direction.

And acting in that capacity, even though he may not be gifted particularly to do it, yet some benefit will result from it. I think of those who really have the gift, and yet less business, and family responsibilities, and many other responsibilities that interfere from performing their duty, their God-given duty. Now, it's a matter of feeding the flock of God.

The shepherd must be able to feed. We need to be fed. Now, we don't all, all the food that we take is not from the shepherd.

There are teachers, there are shepherds, there are pastors for God's people. Some of the things that we get, we get directly from the Lord. They're very good.

But you know, we need to be guided and directed. Now, let's don't lean over backwards against this thought. Now, we say that there's no such thing as clergy and laity.

There isn't. But there is such a thing as shepherds and sheep. That's scriptural.

And sheep need to be fed. Now, Christ is the food for the soul, and Christ needs to be ministered. He is pictured in the mammon.

He is pictured in the old corn of the land. He is pictured in the milk. He is pictured in the meat of the scriptures.

He's the food for the soul. And what is needed is the ministering of Christ himself. He is food for the soul.

May God help us to have an exercise in regard to feeding the sheep of God, to be sure that the glories of our Lord Jesus, his power to keep, to satisfy us, is kept before the people of God. And you out there who, in this audience, who minister the word of God, oh, that our hearts might be fed upon Christ. Now, I'm not saying that there isn't that kind of ministry in scripture that is not practical.

There is ministry that's practical. And there is ministry in which the word don't is used. I say don't.

Do not, perhaps, is a better way of putting it. There is negative ministry. There is such a thing in the scriptures.

And there is positive ministry. And there is the ministry that feeds us upon our Lord Jesus Christ. The sheep of God need to be fed.

I heard of an old man say years ago, he says, what the people of God want, want, really want, really want, is, is, is, is cake. But when the Lord fed the multitude, he fed them with bread. He, indeed, is the bread of life.

He says, I am the bread of life. Let's notice that in John chapter 6, in this matter of feeding. Verse 31 of John chapter 6. Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, as it is written.

He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then said Jesus unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.

Then said they unto him, Lord evermore give us this bread. Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

But I say unto you that ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. He says in verse 48, I am that bread of life.

Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven.

If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. Feeding is a very, very important thing. I recall Mr. Ian O'Brien telling a story a number of years ago, and I think I heard him tell it right here in this chapter.

And he could tell stories so that you didn't forget them. A certain true shepherd, who was more or less isolated and seeking to feed the people of God where he was, was having difficulty, and there was a good deal of quarreling among the people of God in this place. And he sent a letter to another man of God.

I don't know whether that man of God was Mr. O'Brien or not. I don't believe it was. I believe he was telling a story about other people, other persons involved.

And he sent a letter. He says, These Christians are fighting among themselves. What shall I do? This man of God sent back the instruction, Hungry children will fight over a straw.

Feed them! And those were his instructions. Feed them! Oh, we need to be fed. And the assembly that is fed from the word of God will be a healthy assembly.

I think that this is a very, very important duty of the shepherd, to feed the flock of God. Oh, how we need to be fed. Now there, we talk about being spoon-fed.

Now this doesn't militate against that at all. God wants you and me, as sheep, to go into these green pastures and find food for ourselves. But then he gives us teachers as well.

We can't learn everything out of this book. I owe so much to the men that I have heard minister the word of God. I can't tell you how much I owe to them.

I can't even identify all my supposedly original thoughts. I wonder how much of them are original. I wonder sometimes.

We owe much to these men. God gives you and me a little. And just to keep us from getting conceited, you know, we have to take from others as well.

And shepherds can feed shepherds, believe me. They can feed shepherds. And you know, sometimes he'll give you things from a man whom you may not accept entirely.

Perhaps he will resolve a question that has risen in your heart about the scriptures over which you have prayed and which you have sought to search out and you could not derive any satisfaction from your searching at all. God may send along another shepherd and he may resolve that question for you out of the scriptures just told that you will thank God, acknowledge his omniscience, learn his ways, and be reconciled to a brother who can feed your soul. Now, there's another duty, too.

There's the exercise of oversight. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy looker, but of a readiness of mind. Taking the oversight.

You know, those who are along the pathway of faith a little longer than the youngest Christian, that is, the younger Christian, he knows a little bit more about the pitfalls of this life. He knows a little bit more about God's given antidotes for the evils and the ills of this world. And he can help, we can help each other.

Now, we're all helpers together, but there needs to be an oversight among God's people. And the Spirit of God, the Lord Jesus, gives the gifts. And the Spirit of God impresses those gifts upon the oversight among his people.

And they are responsible to God. Let's turn to Peter chapter 13, if you please. What did I say? Oh, I'm sorry.

Hebrews. You won't find Peter 13. Hebrews 13.

Thank you, Willie. Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 17.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is impossible for you. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account. To whom must they give account? To the one who commissioned them, to the one who gifted them.

They must give account. There is such a thing as godly rule in an assembly. I know most people think that that's archaic and outdated, but it isn't.

A man once came into an assembly of God's people, and he says, my, oh, he felt the liberty, and he says, my, I'm glad to be in a place where I can do anything I want to do. Just about that time, a brother tapped him on his shoulder, and he says, brother, he says, here, you don't do anything that you just want to do. He'd run up against a shepherd.

He'd run up against one who felt a responsibility for the people of God. There is such a thing as oversight in an assembly. And that's why at the end of this portion in 1 Peter 5, that he says, likewise ye younger, that's verse 5 of chapter 5, likewise ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder, yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility.

Now, the third duty of a shepherd that Peter mentions here is that of being an example, leading by example among the people of God. He says in verse 3 of 1 Peter 5, neither is being lord over God's heritage, but being in sample to the flock. The shepherd can be and should be an example.

He leads. He does not drive. You don't drive sheep.

Not in the eastern countries where our Lord is using these figures. We could turn to the 10th chapter of John. We won't do it.

But the shepherd goes before his sheep, and he calls them by name, and they follow him. Now, we need to be leaders by way of an example. And I'm including myself in this.

We need to be in sample to the flock. We could say a lot about the power of example. It's the greatest power in all the world, just to be an example.

I think I have learned more by following the example of men that perhaps I have the words of the men themselves. But he is to be an example. He is to make straight paths for his sheep, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way.

He is to be careful what he does. Oh, the shepherd has such an important position. He must not lord it over God's people.

Peter is very, very plain about that. He must not lord it over God's people. I have seen instances, and I'm thinking of a particular assembly hundreds of miles from here, where a very godly man could not accept

the fact that younger brethren in the assembly had grown up into a sphere of responsibility and had any right to say anything at all.

And he treated them as children all their spiritual lives. That condition didn't prevail too long until those younger brethren showed that they had a sense of responsibility, and they manifested it to the sorrow of this man. He had become a lord over God's heritage.

Peter forbids it. He warns against it. Neither of being lords over God's heritage, but being ensampled to the flock.

Now, I think sometimes that this is not altogether the fault of the man involved. Many, many times that man is lionized. Many, many times he is exalted in the opinions of people.

I have known instances in the ecclesiastical world where preachers, and it always happens to those men, it seems, who were godly men and who were able to help the people of God in a wonderful way. They were so exalted in the minds of their parishioners, those whom they served, that I actually think that those ministers received some of the worship that should have gone directly to the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lord will not permit that.

He is jealous of his glory, and he is careful to see that we don't take his glory away. Now, what has been exaggerated in some ecclesiastical circles can even obtain in our assembly to a modified degree, a greater or lesser degree. We must cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils.

I feel like telling anybody, I feel like, and I have told people. Now, if you get something from me, if I am able to help anybody, thank the Lord for it. But don't say too much to me.

Because I think that we can tell when the Lord has helped us and when he hasn't. I can, anyway. I can sure tell when he hasn't helped me.

And I can tell quite plainly. But I don't mean that we don't appreciate people. But there is a snare, and a good many men of God have been ruined.

And may I warn you, sisters, especially in this regard. I know we feel kindly toward those who can help us in Christ. But let's be careful, ever and always.

And after all, give the Lord all the glory that is his due. And if he gets all the glory that is his due, all the other problems will resolve themselves. Now, about the shepherd's crown.

We talked about the shepherd's counsel from Peter and the shepherd's care. Now let's talk about the shepherd's crown. In verse 4, it's called a crown of glory.

When the chief shepherds shall appear, the ones to whom the shepherds are responsible, ye shall receive a crown of glory, that feedeth not the weak. Why is it called a crown of glory? I think I know why it's called a crown of glory. Because many, many times the shepherd who is godly and seeks to carry out his god-given charge from the Lord, he's crowned all right.

But not with glory. He's crowned with infamy. And many, many times I have seen campaigns carried on against a godly man because he crossed the wrong brother or the wrong sister in the wrong way.

By their estimates of things. It's a crown of glory. It's a thankless task done here, much of the time.

And a task which is difficult to perform. But the Lord is going to see to it that a compensating crown comes to that shepherd in the coming day. It's going to be a crown of glory.

And the chief shepherd is the one who is going to give that crown. What a crown it will be. It will distinguish that shepherd.

It will make up to him for all that he has suffered by taking care of the people of God. In many instances the care absolutely unappreciated. But the Lord is going to see to it that things are straightened out.

And now perhaps just for a few minutes, let's consider the crown of life. I'm sorry if I even have to break your thoughts off from that, but I just don't know of any other way of doing it. I think maybe we might accomplish this as much to close now in prayer, but we'll see.

I'll give you this and you can think about it. I don't want to destroy or I don't want to obliterate from your mind that which has gone before. But I would like to notice the crown of life, just a little.

It's mentioned twice in the scriptures. Let's notice first of all Revelation chapter 2, and then we'll notice James chapter 1. Revelation chapter 2 and verse 8, And now that the angel of the church in Smyrna writes, These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive, I know thy works in tribulation and poverty, that thou art rich. And I know the blasphemy of them which say thee are Jews, and are not, but have the synagogue received.

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

This is the martyr's crown. Smyrna was the period, or detects or brings before us the period of the church's history from the end of the first century until about the time that the church was put in favor, supposedly by Constantine, seeing the sign of the cross, and installing the church in favor in the world. Satan was one of Satan's cleverest devices, I believe.

He couldn't stamp out the church through the fierce persecutions that had gone upon the church, so he wedded the world and the church together to the destruction of the church. Now, in Smyrna, they were being terribly persecuted, and in those perhaps two centuries of time, there were many, many martyrs among the people of God. Smyrna and Philadelphia are two of the seven churches of Asia against which the Lord has no word of rebuke.

They were going on for God. They were sealing their testimony with their blood, and the Lord tells these dear people, he says, you'll have tribulation ten days. Some have thought this to be the ten distinct periods of tribulation and persecution that came upon the church of God.

What he says to them is tender admonition. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Now, this is a compensating crown.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. You know, life is never so sweet as when we're facing death. It is never so sweet.

And those who are willing to die for the Lord are going to enjoy life with him, I believe, as those who have not had to seal their testimony with their blood. There is a special recognition given to martyrs. In the

scripture, those who loved the Lord, loved him unto death, loved him more than their own souls, their own lives, those people are going to be honored in a special way, and it's the crown of life.

I think all that they had to face is going to come back by way of recognition from the Lord, which is called the crown of life, which indeed will make them forget all about the death that they ever had to face. As a matter of fact, I think that's true of all the tribulations that we are facing. But this in a very, very particular sense.

They're going to receive the crown of life. But now there's a broader sense that I would like to apply this in James chapter 1. James chapter 1, verse 12. Blessed is the man that endures temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life.

Which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Here is the crown of life mentioned again, to be given to those that endure temptation. Now the crown of life in Revelation chapter 2 is given to those who are willing to die entirely.

And the crown of life here is given to those who are willing to die to the old man. It's death in both cases, and sometimes I think it's just about as hard to die to the flesh, to die to the old man, as it is to die entirely, the entire man. And thus he says, Blessed is the man that endures temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life.

You know it's hard to take the place of death, but we have actually died. We died with Christ on the cross. We talk more about the death of Christ for us on the cross.

That will save us from the penalty of sin. But foundation from the power of sin is gained through the knowledge of the fact that we died with Christ on the cross. Now there is a truth that we may not appreciate at all, which we may hold very lightly, of which we may think very, very little.

Our death with Christ. Let's turn briefly to Romans chapter 6, verse 5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man is, better still, was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin as a master. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him.

For in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now this death we have to recognize and accept by faith.

In the mind of God, you and I died with Christ on the cross. I know Christ was nailed to the cross, but we were so associated with Him that in the mind of God we died. Our old man was crucified with Christ.

Paul says, I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Now that old man doesn't die easily, believe me. And when he is tempted, he rises to the occasion.

And we, you and I, have only one report, and that is to tell him that he's dead and give him the place of death. That is hard to do. It must be done by faith, and it is very, very difficult to do.

Simply to turn your back, not argue with sin, not argue with temptation, simply turn your back upon it and say with God, as far as God is concerned, that old man is dead. And I say he is dead too. Now that's a struggle, and we die hard.

Now if we know the resurrection power of our Lord Jesus Christ in our lives, it's only in the same measure in which we can take the place of death. Now it doesn't seem that that should have to be stated, but it must be stated, only in the same measure that we can take the place and accept the place of death as regards the flesh, in that same measure, we know the resurrection power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now time forbids me to go into some scriptures to show that point, but if you want to check on them, you might check on Philippians 3 and 10, you might check on 2 Corinthians 4, 10 and 11, and you'll see what I mean.

That it's only as we reckon ourselves to be dead that the resurrection power of Christ is known in our lives. Now we die very, very slowly. We die a slow death.

This is a hard truth to preach, and it's a harder truth to practice. It's difficult to get across to us. We don't want to learn it.

The flesh is of enmity with God, but it's the truth. The 6th chapter of Romans. We could have well spent our entire evening on the 6th chapter of Romans and know what it means to be crucified with Christ.

But I think we've already considered enough that our minds are tired and filled up with things to consider in times to come. But James says, Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Do you notice here that it's to them that love him? All the love of the Lord Jesus Christ in your heart and mind is the seed and the spring of all our service to him, of all our piety, of all our devotion, of all our worship, of all our service.

Love to the Lord Jesus. And love to the Lord Jesus will help us to count that old man dead and to go on for him in days to come. May God give us that grace.

Brother Lyle, would you please close with a word of prayer?

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