

Crowns - Part 1

by Ken Baird

The crown of righteousness is a reward given to those who have fought the good fight and lived a life of practical righteousness, overcoming the enemy of righteousness through knowing their enemy and living for Christ.

Duration: 56:56

Scripture: Matthew 24:42, Romans 13:11-12, 1 Corinthians 9:25, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 2 Timothy 4:8, 1 Peter 5:4

Topics: "Personal Righteousness", "Imminent Return"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of the Five Crowns mentioned in the Bible. They have already covered the incorruptible crown and the soul winner's crown in previous sessions. Now, they focus on the crown of righteousness, comparing the Christian to a warrior. The speaker emphasizes the importance of personal righteousness in the life of a believer and encourages them to live in a way that aligns with their belief in the imminent return of Jesus Christ. They also highlight the contrast between the things of this world and the things provided by God, emphasizing that the things of God are superior.

Transcript

I'm sure I speak for the rest of you, I have been appreciating this special music. I so enjoyed the little girls last night. Not the little girls, I keep saying that, and it was a mixed girls group.

There were some smaller girls, and some quite young ladies. And then, of course, Adele's solo tonight. Shall we turn our Bibles, please, to the 2nd Epistle of Timothy, chapter 4. We want to continue in our study of the five crowns.

First, Monday night, we studied our occupation with Christ, and now we would like to study our occupation for Christ. The Scriptures mention five crowns we have considered thus far, the incorruptible crown, and under that crown we saw the figure, the Christian, compared with a runner. Then last night we saw the sole winner's crown, the Christian compared with a messenger, an ambassador.

Tonight we want to consider the crown of righteousness, and the Christian is compared with a warrior, or a warrior is brought before us. And both the experiences of the Apostle Paul and we who look for the Lord Jesus both the fighting character of the Christian faith and the longing and looking character of the Christian faith combine to produce the crown of righteousness. 2 Timothy, chapter 4, verse 5. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, more properly, I have fought THE good fight. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

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.

Now this, I believe, is the warrior's crown. The Apostle speaks of his fighting the good fight, finishing his course. It would almost seem that that would bring before us again the Christian seen under the figure of a runner.

I have kept the faith, and the word kept here is really guarded. I think the thought is military all the way through. He has fought the good fight, not a good fight.

It was not simply that the Apostle Paul had done well, although he had done well in his service for the Lord. I'm sure that no one would gainsay that. But he fought THE good fight, the very good fight that you and I may fight as well.

And he was a warrior. I have finished my course, I have guarded the faith. Even as a warrior, and how it needs guarding.

I have kept the faith in that sense. Now why, why is the reward for this kind of Christian life, why is it regarded a crown of righteousness? We have noticed already that all of these crowns that we have considered thus far are compensatory. And all the crowns that we are going to study are compensatory.

They are given in compensation of the Christian life down here. And this I believe is a compensatory crown. It's a special recognition.

Now all the crowns are not literal. I wouldn't say that any of them were literal. Even the Thessalonian Christians and the Philippian Christians were in themselves the crown of rejoicing.

And Paul considers himself distinguished by them when they get to glory in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now these crowns will certainly set aside certain Christians for certain recognition. A crown of course sets anybody aside who wears that crown.

That crown sets that person aside for special distinction. And the crowns that are given us, if not literal, and we have feeling, I have a conviction that they are not literal, set us aside for special distinction, special honor. And of course it will be our privilege if we are fortunate enough to win these crowns.

And certainly God sets them before us as a goal to cast those crowns at the feet of the Lord Jesus in that coming day and say of course that he alone is worthy. But back to our question. Why is it a crown of righteousness as the warrior's crown? And there are two, I believe, two as we've already mentioned, two elements that go to make up this crown.

A fight and then a longing for the Lord Jesus. Because he mentions here that this crown is not only his but it belongs to everyone who longs for the appearing of our Lord Jesus. We'll see the connection a little later.

Now I think that it's a crown of righteousness because if we have to fight, if the Christian experience is a fight, then it's a fight because we've got enemies. And we do have enemies. And I feel sometimes that we forget the fact that we do have enemies.

But Christianity is a fight because of our enemies. And those enemies are doing their best to destroy our righteousness. They're doing their best to bring ill repute, to bring reproach against the name of Christ through destroying any practical righteousness in our lives and any inwrought righteousness by the power of the Spirit of God.

Now I'm talking about practical righteousness. I'm not talking about the righteousness that is imputed to you and to me the moment that we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, which has been already expressed in prayer as the righteousness of our standing. I'm talking about the righteousness of our speech.

Now Paul wouldn't have to limit the crown of righteousness to anybody. He wouldn't have to speak as he does here in this 8th verse of the 4th chapter of 2 Timothy if indeed it's the righteousness that fits us for the presence of God. I believe this is the righteousness that is seen under the figure of a garment.

In another place in the scripture, in Revelation and in Psalm 45, it's the practical righteousness that you and I have, the practical righteousness that our threefold enemy wants to destroy, wants to obliterate, wants to besmirch. The righteousness that indeed the Lord would like to see in us, in you and me. Now we have an enemy.

Christianity is a fight. That enemy is a clever enemy. The enemy is mentioned in his threefold character.

I say threefold character. That would seem that he is an individual that is just one entity, but that's not true. We have our threefold enemy mentioned in Ephesians 2. All of them right there.

We may refer to him as him. All of them would be more proper. Ephesians 2, if you please.

And you happy quickens who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world. Now there's enemy number one. According to the prince of the power of the air, there's enemy number two.

The prince of the power of the air is none other than Satan himself. The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom, among those children of disobedience also, we all had our conversation, manner of life, and times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. The lusts of our flesh.

Enemy number three. We have the world and Satan and the flesh. Mentioned all three of them here in this one passage of Scripture.

Now they are mentioned in other parts of the Scripture, but not mentioned as they are here altogether. Now we were under the complete dominance of that enemy at one time in our life. That was our helpless condition.

First of all, we were dead. And then we walked according to the course of this world, which is ever downward, away from God, at enmity with him. According to the prince of the power of the air, we were blinded.

If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, let the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God. I forgot, but I thought I'd left out a word there and it threw me.

He is the one who seeks to blindfold us. And we were blindfolded, absolutely. We were oblivious of our danger.

We did not realize it. We didn't realize, many of us. He had us so blindfolded that we thought that we were perfectly all right.

And your speaker was one of those, because he was a very religious person. I regretted that I had to say that. I have to say that, but I think that perhaps God permitted me to have a religious experience, so that I would be better equipped to deal with people who are religious in character, who are religious by their activities and their affiliations, and yet don't know the Lord as their own personal Savior.

Because I was a very religious person, a very earnest person. And I was not saved, and I did not know Christ as my Savior. And I think that that's just as much a part of the work of Satan, to give people religion.

He is seen in the Scripture as an angel of light. And I think, indeed, he did have me deceived. And I have to say, with a very famous preacher of the gospel who won many souls for Christ, who is now in the glory, Oliver Smith, religion almost took me to hell.

Now, some people wouldn't understand that statement at all. But I'm telling you, I know what it means. Now, that is the activity of Satan.

He doesn't care how much religion we get, just so we do not know that we are saved, and just so that we will trust in that religion, and then, of course, be depending upon a faulty foundation, where there is none other foundation laid than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus. He is the only foundation for eternity. And then there is the flesh.

We were under the domination of the flesh. And the flesh can be religious on occasion. And if we were religious at all, it was the flesh that was religious, because we didn't have Christ.

Maybe we'd better distinguish between religion and salvation. There are lots of people that don't make any distinguishing, don't distinguish between them, and that's miscreant. Now, the scripture does talk about religion.

And you and I can have it. You and I can be religious. We can have religion.

And I think God wants us to have it. He wants us to have Christ. Now, let's distinguish between the two.

Religion is something that we do. Salvation is something that God has done. Now, that's just the difference.

True religion. Let's notice James, just to distinguish between the two for the moment. James, chapter 1. Pure religion it is.

James 1 and 27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Now, this is activity.

One is positive and one is negative. One is doing good, and one is keeping himself from evil. And that is pure religion.

And it's all right. But it's something that we do. Whereas salvation is something that God has done.

Now, the devil would like to have us be religious. And he doesn't care how many carrybacks we do. And we can indeed walk on the clean side of the footpath, the broad road.

We can take the footpath, the clean footpath. And he doesn't care. There are many, many people that are going to hell that are going to be the most miserable of all because they're going to have to associate with people that they wouldn't think of associating with in this world here below.

They're going to have to associate with people that they wouldn't wipe their feet on, if I may use that figure. And they're going to be bound up with them in hell for all eternity because they didn't know the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior. They walked in the clean footpath, but on the broad road.

And Satan doesn't care how much religion we have, just so we do not know Christ as our Savior. Oh, how wily he is. And then there is the flesh.

Oh, we were talking about the flesh. Well, Satan and the flesh work together. The flesh can be religious because we can have religion even before God saves us.

We can have dead works, not good works, and not wicked works, but dead works. There is a distinction to be made between dead works and wicked works. There are many works of good and kindness that can be done in this world that could not be classed as wicked works, but God just sent a class of them as dead works.

Good works have to be done, of course, by a child of God. And I have plenty of dead works, to my credit, I feel. Now, here we have this threefold enemy, and we commonly refer to them as the world, the flesh, and the devil.

I don't know why we refer to them in that way. They're not listed in that way in Ephesians. But we refer to them as the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Now, the world is an external enemy. He's all around us. The flesh is an internal enemy.

He is within us, or the flesh is within us. And the devil is an infernal enemy. So we have the external, the internal, and the infernal enemy.

And oh, how they combine, how they combine to destroy our righteousness. Let's take the world, first of all, and see what it is and see how it works. Now, let's not forget our objective in these meetings.

We're just not studying these crowns that we might learn about them in an academic way. We are trying to provide ourselves with a means of winning these crowns as we talk about them. Now, the way to practical righteousness is to know our enemy.

I don't very often give the devil a satisfaction of talking about him. And when I do talk about him, sometimes he makes himself manifest. I've had that happen.

And I wouldn't be a bit surprised when you do it here tonight, before the meeting is over. Although I know that greater is he that is within you than he that is in the world. I had a little experience out in a daily vacation Bible school in Paxton, Colorado, last spring.

I drew a picture for the boys and girls in that daily vacation Bible school. This picture was about the activities of the devil. I drew a picture of a roaring lion seeking whom he might devour.

And that was the lesson that day, and it was about the devil. And a woman had a little baby there that was one, oh, just about a year old. And the baby began to cry.

Just about the time that I really was showing those boys and girls how that Satan would seek to keep them from being saved, that baby began to cry. And I've seen temper tantrums before, but I never saw one to compare with it. And strangely enough, the lady, the mother, did not take the child out.

She was determined to conquer the child. Well, I'm telling you, it was most evident to me, I could almost smell a devil. So I thought, I didn't get much done.

I'm telling you that. I've had those things happen before. So the world is that fraternity of unbelievers.

It is a fraternity. That fraternity of unbelievers that are bound together in their common objective of putting God out of their thoughts, out of their lives, and out of their whole future. The world is a fraternity.

It acts together as a fraternity. Turn with me, please, to John chapter 15, if you please. We do not get a proper conception of the world by looking at an individual.

We get a proper conception of the world by being a group of unsafe individuals together and then watching the course of action. Then watching what happens. Then you begin to see a picture of the world.

Now, it is a closely-knit, well-organized fraternity with a real objective. Now, notice in John chapter 15 and verse 19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.

But because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Now, we're not talking about something that's abstract. The world hates.

And who does it hate? It hates you and me. We who belong to the Lord, we are hated. The world hates you.

It's a real powerful force. Now, I think a lot of Christians do not distinguish between the world and the things that are in the world. They are distinguished in 1 John.

Notice them if you will please. Notice that distinction, rather, in 1 John chapter 2, where the distinction is made. Verse 15 of 1 John chapter 2. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. Now, some people, some Christians, think of the world as being the things that are in the world that distract our eyes away from the Lord. Now, there are indeed things in the world that will do that.

But the world itself is a fraternity, a real powerful force. A force that's personal enough to hate. The world hates us, and they want to swallow us up.

Now, why does the world hate us so? Well, we read there in John 15, because the Lord chose us. The Lord chose us out of this world for himself, and the world hates us. And by the fact that the Lord has chosen us, he has put his image upon us, and he reminds us that the world hates us because it first hated

him.

That's in verse 18 of the 15th chapter of John's Gospel. If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. Now, the world hates us because we remind them of Christ.

They hated Christ because he brought their sin before them. Notice, if you please, John chapter 3. Verse 18, he that believeth on him is not condemned. But he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And this is condemnation, that light is come into the world. And men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. And every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. The world hates Christ because he reprov'd them. He showed them up for what they are.

And the world hates us especially if we live for Christ. Now, it's entirely possible that a Christian can be accepted by the world. That is, if he bears no testimony for Christ at all.

But if we live godly in Christ Jesus, we will suffer persecution. Now, I think sometimes that that's enough to exercise any of us. But I think that the world sometimes has more ways of showing their displeasure with us than with sticks and stones and with the things that can hurt.

They leave us out of their plan, they shun our company, and they smile sometimes when our back is turned and talk with others about it. There are many, many forms of persecution. But they don't like it.

Now, the world will take a Christian that is going on for the Lord, and they'll try to tone down that testimony. But the only comfort that they can get is to tone down that testimony. The world, David complained that men fighting against him daily would swallow him up.

And I think the world would like to swallow us up and get us out of sight. Swallow our testimony. They want to destroy our practical righteousness.

They want us to be one of them, or try to make us one of them. Now, the devil, we've already mentioned, would like to have us, would like to trick us into sinning. The devil appeals to the flesh that is within us.

We hardly need talk about the flesh, because the flesh is that internal soul that is inside of us. It's our nature, it's our tendency, our proneness to evil. We have an evil nature within us that is a selfish nature.

And that nature wants, indeed, its own way, and it will raise its head up against God. The flesh is at enmity with God at all times, and is not subject to the law of God, and neither indeed can be. Now, the flesh is inside of us.

Now, there is where the devil gets his stronghold in you and me, is through the flesh. Now, the flesh is the fifth column of our enemies. The fifth column works from within.

The term fifth column was, I understand, the term was born during the Spanish Civil War, when two Spanish generals were looking upon a city that was to be taken. They were viewing the city, viewing the attacks on the city with their binoculars. And one general said to the other, he said, I see four columns attacking the city.

And the other general says, ah, but he says there are five. And he says, he looked over the situation again, and he said, no, I only see four columns. But the other general said, yes, but there are five.

You're forgetting the column that is within the city itself. And thus, the term fifth column was born. Now, the flesh is the fifth column of our enemies.

He is the enemy that is inside of us, ready to betray the force. Now, Satan works on that enemy. And all the cruel purchase that he has upon our soul through that flesh.

He works on that flesh. Now, Satan has no power to command you and me. As Christians, we may be his children before God saves us, but after he saves us, we're God's children.

And Satan has no power to command you or me. But I'm going to tell you a power that he does have. He has the power of suggestion.

And that power is terrible. Because he knows the flesh, and he knows what appeals to the flesh, and he makes it appeal through the flesh. And it's tendency to selfishness.

Satan suggested to put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the daring to betray our Lord Jesus Christ. I suppose that Judas had a thought came into his mind, and he failed to identify it. He failed to realize where it came from.

Judas one time thought, now listen, he said, I've seen the Lord Jesus Christ nearly captured before, and I have seen him work his way out of the most, the tightest net of the most impossible situations, and he has worked his way right through the crowd, and they cannot, they cannot lay hold of him. And I suppose that Judas thought, Judas thought, now I know that the priests and the Pharisees, the scribes and the Pharisees want to lay their hands on the Lord Jesus. Tell you what I'll do.

I'll go to them. I'll sell him to them. I'll betray him.

They will come to apprehend him. He will slip out of their fingers. I will have fulfilled my contract.

I'll have the money, and they won't have their man. It was a clever design, only it didn't work out like Judas thought it would. They captured the Lord Jesus, and he was convicted.

And when Judas saw that he was condemned, he went out and hanged himself. Satan has the power of suggestion to you and to me, and the power of suggestion can be a terribly powerful force. Hypnotism is nothing more nor less than the power of suggestion.

And I think sometimes that the devil is the master hypnotist. The power of suggestion can be so strong that he cannot command us. I am thankful for that, that he can suggest.

You and I ought to examine our thoughts, our ideas, as to what we do, because those thoughts may well be suggested by Satan. He has access to our minds. We ought to check up on them.

I think that Satan is working today to destroy our practical righteousness, and may I suggest that his most effective weapon is yoking the saved and the lost together by the marriage yoke. I believe that if Satan can accomplish, I think that Satan can accomplish more by that one single act than any other single thing that he can do to spoil a Christian's testimony. Linking the saved with the unsaved in the marriage, in the bond of matrimony, in the marriage yoke.

And he does it. And he's still doing it. And he's responsible for it.

Oh, he can always have one of his children around to attract the eyes and the heart of a Christian. He can always have his children around, and sometimes God's children are not so alert and sometimes they are not so aware of his devices, and they fall into the unequal yoke of the sorrow of their hearts. Now, this threefold enemy that we've talked about would like to destroy our practical righteousness.

And fighting against the threefold enemy will leave us weary. It will leave us tired. But thank God for this threefold enemy, we have a divine antidote.

Because we have it opposed against the flesh, we have the Spirit of God as his opponent. Now, how can we gain practical, practical victory over our threefold enemy? Let's notice Galatians chapter 5, if you please. We've already noticed the world and the Father in opposition in John's gospel.

Perhaps we'd better notice it again. Let's hold your finger, please, in Galatians 5, and notice 1 John chapter 2, if you please. 1 John 2 and 15.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Now, the Father is opposed to the world.

The world spreads its delicacies before our feet. It would seek to distract us from our journey to the celestial city by the things that it spreads at our feet. You remember in Pilgrim's Progress that it was said of Vanity Fair, that Vanity Fair was established right on the pathway from the city of destruction to the celestial city.

It was established, first of all, by the Lord of that land, to distract travelers in their journey to the celestial city. That fair was placed right on the road. The device was so successful that the fair became a permanent thing, and it was called Vanity Fair.

That is the picture of the world, and you remember, perhaps if you have read Pilgrim's Progress, that Christian and faithful came to Vanity Fair, and they immediately attracted a lot of attention. Their clothes were different, their speech was different, and they would not buy any of their fairs. And they, first of all, derided them.

Then they threw them in jail, and faithful was martyred. Now, the world can be very cruel, it can be seductive, but the world can be very cruel. But there is in our Father the divine antidote to this enemy, the world.

Now, the world spreads its things before us. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. Now, our Father gives us many, many things to enjoy.

Let's notice Romans chapter 8, if you please. Romans 8 and 32. He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? The world provides this thing, and our Father provides his things.

And certainly the things of our Father are better than the things of this world. But it seems that there is a competition there. And our Father is the divine antidote to this world.

The things that are in Christ are better than the things that are in this world. And if we go on for the things of the world, it's because we do not realize the preciousness of the things of God. Now, back to Galatians

chapter 5. We have an opponent for the flesh in the form of the spirit.

Verse 16 of the fifth chapter of Galatians, This I say then, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. These are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Now, the spirit and the flesh are opponents. The flesh would rule us, but the spirit of God would rule us, too. And there is an opposition there, so that there's a continual warfare inside of us, going on within us.

And this warfare is certainly an enervating thing. It will certainly wear us out. The flesh opposed to the spirit.

But the rule is simple. Walk in the spirit, in the power of the spirit, in the fear of the spirit, in the light of the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. If we will follow the spirit of God, the flesh, indeed, will be minimized.

And we're to put that flesh, that old man, the old man is more comprehensive than the flesh, but we are to put that flesh in the place of death, the old man in the place of death, and the flesh right along with it. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ and Satan are opposed. Our Lord Jesus is the one who is our Lord and who has a right to command us.

But Satan, by his suggestions, would lead us. Now, we are to resist the devil. We're never told to flee from the devil.

We're told to flee from the lusts of the flesh, but surprisingly enough, we're never told to flee from the devil. We're told to resist the devil. And that's exactly what God wants.

You say, I'm no match for him. Resist him. Nevertheless, greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

And Christ is in us, as well as the spirit of God. And he is the opponent of the devil. They always were opposed to one another.

And we see that opposition in the desert when our Lord was tempted of the devil. The conflict of the ages, indeed, is the conflict of Christ and Satan. Satan is jealous of him, always and ever jealous of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He tries to limitate him, even to having two horns like a lamb in the book of Revelation. And believe me, he's trying to have his church in the ecumenical church. Satan wants to have his church as Christ had his church.

They're opposed all through to scriptural stories. Now, the world and the flesh and the devil have in the Trinity of God a perfect opponent. And you and I are not without recourse in the Christian battle.

We can indeed depend upon what we have in the Godhead. And the battle is not lost. Now, if indeed we will fight the Christian fight, and the fight is on, old Christian soldiers, I don't know whether we're conscious very, very much of fighting in our Christian experience or not.

But we should be conscious of it. And the fight is on. But oh, I'm so glad that the crown of righteousness is reserved for those who will fight the good fight of peace.

Now, that is one side of it. Now, the other side of it is love to the Lord Jesus. Shall we turn back to 2 Timothy, chapter 4, please.

And you'll notice there that the crown of righteousness is not only for those who fight the fight of peace, not only for the Apostle Paul. He says in verse 8 of chapter 4, 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. Now, loving the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ also will produce righteousness.

Now, one is the positive side of it, and one is the negative side of it. Love for the Lord will produce practical righteousness in you and me. And fighting against our enemies will keep those enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, from taking that righteousness away.

There are two sides of the same truth. Now, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ has a very, very practical effect in our lives. Some say that it is entirely a devotional study, but I think it's a practical study as well.

Now, notice, please, in 1 John, chapter 3, loving the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Just a moment, I have the wrong book. 1 John, chapter 3, verse 2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God.

And it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, or we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Looking for the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ will have a purifying effect in your life and in mine.

And as a matter of fact, I would make bold to say that we cannot be living a life of sin and at the same time be loving the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. The two just do not go together. If we are expecting the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, we will evidence it by living a life that is a righteous life.

There will be a difference. If we are really expecting the Lord to come, we will live as though we expected him to come. There is another verse in Romans, if you please.

Romans, chapter 13. Verse 11 of Romans 13, and that, knowing the time that it is now, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep. For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

The day of our Lord's appearing is at hand. Let us therefore, or let us because of this, cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. If we really believe and love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, it's going to have the effect of personal righteousness in our lives.

There are many things I'm sure that we would not want to be doing if our Lord Jesus Christ comes. As a matter of fact, I have seen a little motto that I think is so good. Do nothing that you would not wish to be doing when our Lord comes.

Say nothing that you would not wish to be saying when our Lord comes. Think nothing that you would not wish to be thinking when our Lord comes. He is coming, and we would be embarrassed to be in some place, to be doing some things, to be saying some things, if our Lord Jesus comes again.

I recall an incident that brought this most forcibly to me a number of years ago. Perhaps some of you have heard me talk about it. In Colorado Springs, I was listening to the news one day and also working in the basement.

I had my radio turned up quite high because I wanted to hear it downstairs. It was not the kind that I could carry downstairs, either. So I turned it up quite high, and I was listening to the news.

Well, the news was over, and an orchestra came on, and the radio began to jump. And it was very loud, and I began to start upstairs to turn the thing off. Because it wasn't the kind of music that, well, a Christian should be listening to.

And just as I got up to the top of the stairs with this radio blaring out, there was a knock at the door. And I couldn't make up my mind whether to go to the door first or to the radio. But I went to the radio and turned it down.

And I went to the door, and there stood one of the brethren in the meeting. I felt my face getting red. I wondered, does he think that I listen to that kind of music? And you know what I did? I explained the situation.

I don't know whether I sold him entirely, but I explained it. I could not let that pass. I was embarrassed in that experience.

You know, sometimes, it's not going to be a knock on the door, it's going to be a shout in the air. And it's going to be the Lord. And he's going to catch us up into his presence.

Will I be ashamed before him at his coming? I know I'm making a misapplication of that scripture by quoting it at this time. But will I be ashamed because of his coming? You know, this should have a practical effect in our lives. The Lord Jesus is coming.

Now, if he were really coming, and we really believed it, we would do something about it. The story is told, and with it our flow. A father left his children on a business trip.

And he had a number of children, and he said, Now, children, I'm coming back this week. And he says, I want you down to meet the train, the train that he would come in on, every evening until I come. Now, I may come on Monday, I don't know how long.

It will take me to complete my business. And so, Monday evening, the children were all down at the station to meet their father, all nice and clean and nicely dressed. The train came in, and their father was not on the train.

So, Tuesday evening, they were all cleaned up, all dressed up, and down at the station. And the train did not come in. Wednesday evening, the same thing, and no father.

Thursday evening, the same thing, and no father. Friday evening, the same thing, and no father. Well, they went down Friday evening, and their father was on the train.

And they said, Daddy, why didn't you come earlier in the week? We were cleaned up, and we came down to the station to meet you every night. Well, he says, I kept you clean, didn't I? They were expecting him every night, and he had kept them clean. Now, these two things combined will move toward producing for you and me a crown of righteousness.

That is, the keeping of ourselves in a state of personal righteousness, that is, being righteous in our faith as well as in our standing, and not letting Satan take that righteousness away. And then there is that personal righteousness which will be produced by love of the Lord Jesus Christ, through love of Him, and love of His appearing. And of course, it goes without saying, we will not love His appearing unless we are loving Him.

And I hardly can see, if you'll pardon me for saying this, and I don't think you'll need to, I hardly can understand how we could be loving His appearing if we didn't love Him, first of all. And love of the Lord Jesus will indeed produce righteousness in you and me, pleasing Him, but especially in His appearing, because He is coming to take us home, to be with Himself and to reward us there. And if we indeed are loving His appearing, you can be sure we're going to live the kind of life that will merit the crown of righteousness.

And God help us in this respect. Brother Nelson Cook, would you close with a 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, 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.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/8/SID8518.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ken-baird/crowns-part-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net