

## The King and His Crown

I Samuel 10:17-27, Trinity Sunday VIII

August 2, 2009

Beloved of the Lord.....It was our gentle, compassionate, and ever-merciful Jesus who once said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth..... But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.....For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." There are treasures on earth we should not desire, and there are treasures in heaven we should always desire. In the Bible these treasures are spoken of as two different crowns. God's holy Word says, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." There is a corruptible crown and an incorruptible crown. If our heart desires to be wealthy, to enjoy the pleasures of sin, to have the admiration and respect of others, to rule over others and be their boss, our heart is treasuring a corruptible crown which quickly fades away upon death.

If however our heart lays up for itself the treasures of heaven, we have an incorruptible crown that will never fade away. What are these treasures of heaven? This is Christ, His forgiveness of sins, His righteousness, even life everlasting. When we are sorry for our sins against God in our heart, we need only cling to Him in faith, trust in Him. Though this life is often filled with sorrows, Jesus wore a crown of thorns that we might wear the crown of life everlasting. Let us therefore look to and trust in this King of kings and Lord of lords ever rejoicing that our God will come and save us from our sins. Let us hold faithful to Him, hold fast, and hold true. "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."

I. The Israelites reject their own King. In our lesson today, the sin of the Israelite was that of worldliness. They wanted to be like the nations around them and have a king. We too commit this same sin of worldliness when we want to be strong and mighty like the world, to have power and force so that others will do what we say! We sin when we want to live the life of ease and comfort as this world lives, and we are not willing to suffer as Christ suffered and bear our cross. We commit the sin of worldliness when we want to live like our worldly friends live, and it always seems like they have so much fun because they can do whatever they want. But at the heart of this love for the world, the love for that corruptible crown, there is nothing more than the desire to be free from God's commandments. We don't want Him to make the rules, but we want to be free to do whatever our heart desires.

Jesus said. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." This means don't run with the crowd who lives only for the pleasures of the day. Stay on the straight and narrow path and keep out of trouble for one path leads to hell and the other path leads to heaven. When we look with covetous eyes at the world, we ought to remember the Old Testament lesson of Dinah. She was a God-fearing woman but she wanted to see how the other half lived. When she went out to visit the daughters of men, a certain man of the world forced her and defiled her body (Gen. 34). We who know the love of God ought to know the world does not love us as Christ loves us. She, the world, seeks only to lead us into sin and temptation and other great shame and vice. If we give in to her, she will use and abuse us leaving us lye half dead on the side of the road.

Yet even if we have fallen into such shameful behavior, let us ever remember that Jesus is the Good Samaritan. If we are sorry and we take our sins to Him, "he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It is His grace and mercy which continually heal us of our worldly sins. Be faithful then to this Heavenly King and do not forsake Him for that corruptible crown this world offers. The Bible 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."

In our lesson today we see that when the Israelites foolishly rejected their heavenly King, God gave them the earthly king they wanted. Saul was the kind of king the people wanted. By looks, by outward appearance he agreed with the eyes of the people. He was a head taller than everyone else, even handsome. And it was a great mark of mercy that in spite of the people's sins, the Lord gave them a believing and humble king. Earlier in the chapter Samuel anointed Saul with a vial of oil. Then God arranged things so that among the thousands of people of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin was elected by lot, then the family of Matri (May'try), then Saul the son of Kish. God works through means. He still elects our earthly kings today but He works through means to set them up and put them in place. Sometimes He allows or works through the means of a coup, sometime through the means of an election, but however it may be, "the powers that be are ordained of God" and "God save the king."

Though God gave the people an earthly king after their own heart, we should understand the people truly had rejected God their heavenly King. The Lord said, "Ye have this day rejected your God, who Himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations...." In like manner God has delivered us from all adversity and saved us from the power of the devil! Why then would we reject our Heavenly King? Thus when this

world tempts us with sin and that corruptible crown, let us not despise our Heavenly King, but simply trust in Him. Remember also the Spirit of that King lives within your heart by faith and He will be the strength you need to overcome temptation. Hold fast to Him, hold faithful, and hold true. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

II. Our King and His Crown of Righteousness. May we then never take our heavenly King for granted, but daily remember just how good and gracious our heavenly King is. He is a very benevolent, good and kind King. "The Lord is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His works." The Bible teaches He is a wall of fire round around those who trust in Him. "Fear not for I am with thee, be not dismayed for I am thy God!" Moreover though we often murmur and complain against this heavenly King, He is extremely patient with us, longsuffering. Psalm 103 says, "The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy....He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." In today's tough economic times, every time we come home from the grocery store and our bags are filled with food, let us inwardly rejoice and say, "Once again God has provided." "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them." If He feeds them, won't He also feed you?

Yet all this goodness of our heavenly King pales in comparison to the merciful and gracious nature of our King. For our sake, for our salvation the King of all Creation humbled Himself joining to His divine nature a human nature. This King did not come to be served, but to serve "and to give his life a ransom for many." This King made Himself of no reputation and "took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." The King of Heaven died on the cross for His subjects.

Beloved of the Lord, your King is not the kind of king that governs and directs the battle from afar. Your King doesn't send others to their death while He sits in the comforts of His castle. Instead your own beloved King triumphantly rode into battle for your soul, and with all His heart and with all His soul He fought on the cross your most dreadful enemies of sin, and death, and the power of the devil. At the absolute height of the battle which was the absolute depths of darkness, your King

willingly laid down His life as the Lamb of God who came only to take away the sins of the world. His life, His blood, is the ransom and payment for all. Your Heavenly King, acting as your Heavenly Priest did all this for you dear son of Adam.... that He might claim you as His own beloved child, making you a new son of God. On the third day with great triumph our King rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven, sitting on the right hand of God with all power and authority. Today your Heavenly King speaks to you as a Heavenly Prophet. He sincerely calls and invites all sinners to repentance and faith saying, "Come, for all things are now ready and there still is room!"

Indeed there is nothing left for us to do but believe and trust in our King with all our heart! When we hear the preaching of the Gospel, our King is speaking as our Heavenly Prophet comforting our hearts with words of forgiveness and mercy and love. The sins of His subjects are all forgiven! This is a King that we need not fear or doubt, but only believe. Though He has not anointed us with oil as He anointed Saul, He has indeed anointed us with the cleansing waters of baptism. By the blood of our King, He makes us kings and queens in His sight. "Ye are a chosen generation a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Indeed in the Gospel your King puts upon you a most glorious crown, an incorruptible crown, the crown of His 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." Let us therefore firmly believe, firmly trust, and never deny this King of kings and Lord of lords. Forsake that corruptible crown, the love of this world, and lay hold of that crown of everlasting life! For when we reach heaven we will indeed lay down our crowns before Him, for worthy is the Lamb that was slain. "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Amen.

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