

Message Five

Receiving the Kingdom Reward of Christ as the Crown of Righteousness

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 4:7-8, 18; 3:2-5; 1 Cor. 9:25; Phil. 3:9; Psa. 45:13-14

- 2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.
- 2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.
- 2 Tim 4:18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and will save me into His heavenly kingdom, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- 2 Tim 3:2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
- 2 Tim 3:3 Without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, not lovers of good,
- 2 Tim 3:4 Traitors, reckless, blinded with pride, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
- 2 Tim 3:5 Having an outward form of godliness, though denying its power; from these also turn away.
- 1 Cor 9:25 And everyone who contends exercises self-control in all things; they then, that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible.
- Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,
- Psa 45:13 The king's daughter is all glorious within the royal abode; / Her garment is a woven work inwrought with gold.
- Psa 45:14 She will be led to the King in embroidered clothing; / The virgins behind her, her companions, / Will be brought to You.

- I. In order for us to enjoy Christ as our kingdom reward, we must love the Lord's appearing, which is His appearing and manifestation to us today and His presence with His people at His second coming, by staying on the constricted way of being watchful in life and faithful in service to be constituted as the bride of Christ—2 Tim. 4:7-8; Acts 26:16; Rom. 8:19; 1 Thes. 5:23; 2 Thes. 1:10; John 14:21, 23; Matt. 7:13-14; 24:3, 45-51; 25:9, 13, 21:**
- A. Loving the Lord's appearing and loving the Lord Himself are inseparable—1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:8; John 14:21.
- B. In the prophetic picture presented in 2 Timothy 3:2-5 of Christianity in decline, four particular kinds of lovers are mentioned: lovers of self, lovers of money, lovers of pleasure, and lovers of God; whatever one loves, his whole heart, even his entire being, is set on and occupied and possessed by; this is crucial!
- C. Whether there would be a day of glory in the church's victory or grievous days of the church's decline depends altogether on what kind of lovers we are; history tells us that the root of the church's decline was the loss of her first love toward the Lord—Rev. 2:4.
- D. To maintain the victorious standard of the church, we must be lovers of God for the fulfillment of God's economy; the Lord has promised to give the crown of life and the inheritance of the kingdom to those who love Him—James 1:12; 2:5.
- E. The incorruptible crown is a symbol of glory and beauty given as a prize, in addition to the Lord's salvation, to the triumphant runner of the Christian race—1 Cor. 9:25; 1 Pet. 5:4; Isa. 28:5:
1. This prize is neither of grace nor by faith, as salvation is (Eph. 2:8), but of righteousness through works (Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).
 2. The crown of righteousness will be awarded not according to the grace of the Lord but according to His righteousness, and the One who awards it will be the Lord as the

righteous Judge—2 Tim. 4:8.

II. In order to be awarded with Christ as our crown of righteousness in the next age, we must experience and enjoy Him as our subjective, lived-out righteousness in this age—Phil. 3:9:

- A. There are two aspects of Christ being righteousness to the believers:
 - 1. Christ is our objective righteousness for us to be justified before God at the time of our repenting unto God and believing into Christ—Rom. 3:24-26; Acts 13:39; Gal. 3:24b, 27.
 - 2. Christ is also our subjective righteousness as the living out and genuine expression of Christ, which is the transcendent condition of expressing God by living Christ—Phil. 3:9; 1:21a.
- B. These two aspects of righteousness are typified by the two garments of the queen in Psalm 45:13-14:
 - 1. One garment corresponds to the objective righteousness, which is for our salvation—“her garment is a woven work inwrought with gold”—v. 13b:
 - a. This signifies that the Christ who has been dealt with through many sufferings and through death and resurrection becomes the righteousness of the church to meet the righteous requirement of God for her to be justified before God—1 Cor. 1:30; Luke 15:22; Jer. 23:6.
 - b. Her being covered with gold signifies the church’s appearing in the divine nature—Psa. 45:9b; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 - 2. The other garment corresponds with the subjective righteousnesses, which are for our victory—“she will be led to the King in embroidered clothing”—Psa. 45:14a; cf. Rev. 19:8; Matt. 22:11-12:
 - a. The overcoming believers are Christ’s corporate queen, taking Christ as their royal abode for them to be found in Christ and for Him to become their subjective righteousness—Psa. 45:13a; John 15:4a.
 - b. This embroidered clothing, another garment, the second layer of her covering, signifies that the church will be led to Christ at their marriage clothed with the righteousnesses of the saints to meet the requirement of Christ for their marriage—Rev. 19:8.
 - c. The raiment of embroidered work is the subjective Christ woven into our character, embroidered into our being, to be our lived-out righteousness.
 - d. This embroidery signifies the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, who is working day by day to embroider Christ into us stitch by stitch to be our wedding garment.
 - e. The degraded recovered church needs to pay the price to live Christ as her subjective righteousness that she may be clothed with Christ as her God-approved conduct—3:18.

III. “The Lord will...save me into His heavenly kingdom”—2 Tim. 4:18:

- A. The heavenly kingdom, which equals the crown of righteousness, is “the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:43), “the kingdom of My Father” (26:29), “the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph. 5:5), and “the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:11), which will be a reward to the overcoming saints (Rev. 20:4).
- B. The overcoming believers will participate in the heavenly kingdom, the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens—Matt. 7:21:
 - 1. As “the righteous,” the sons of the kingdom, the overcomers will shine forth like the

- sun in the kingdom of their Father—13:43.
2. In the heavenly kingdom the overcomers will drink the cup of the new covenant anew with their Lord—26:29.
 3. In the kingdom of their Father the overcoming believers will feast with the Old Testament overcomers—8:11.
 4. To the overcomers the heavenly kingdom will be a joyful inheritance—1 Cor. 6:9-10.
 5. In the heavenly kingdom the overcomers will inherit eternal life and thereby have a fuller enjoyment of the divine life—Luke 18:29-30.
 6. In the heavenly kingdom the overcomers will enter into the Lord's joy and thus gain their soul, save their soul, and enjoy the salvation of their soul—Matt. 10:39; 16:25-26; 25:21, 23; Luke 9:24; Heb. 10:39; 1 Pet. 1:5, 9.
 7. In the heavenly kingdom the overcoming believers will reign with Christ and rule over the nations—Rev. 20:4; 2:26-27.