

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Five : Receiving the Kingdom Reward of Christ as the Crown of Righteousness

I. Overview:

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. The root of the church's decline was the loss of her first love toward the Lord. To maintain the victorious standard of the church, we must be lovers of God; the Lord has promised to give the crown of life and the inheritance of the kingdom to those who love Him. These two aspects of righteousness are typified by the two garments of the queen in Psalm 45. One garment corresponds to the objective righteousness, which is for our salvation—"her garment is a woven work inwrought with gold". The other garment corresponds with the subjective righteousnesses, which are for our victory—"She will be led to the King in embroidered clothing." The heavenly kingdom, which equals the crown of righteousness, is "the kingdom of their Father". To the overcomers the heavenly kingdom will be a reward. They will inherit eternal life, enjoy the salvation of their soul, reign with Christ, and rule over the nations.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound Paul's life and work in 2 Timothy 4:1.

This word in 2 Timothy 4:1 proves that, in his life and work, Paul took the Lord's appearing and His kingdom as the incentive and goal. The Lord's appearing will be for judgment, to reward each one of us, and His kingdom will be for His reigning with His overcomers. The apostle not only took these two matters as the incentive and goal for himself but also by these two matters charged Timothy to faithfully fulfill his ministry of the word.

B. Explain the words in 2 Timothy 3:1 and what warnings revealed to us.

Paul says that in the last days "difficult times will come." The Greek for difficult times also means "hard times, grievous times, perilous times." In verse 12 Paul says, "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." For those who pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace and who call on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart, this time will indeed be difficult, grievous, perilous.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the words in 1 Corinthians 9:25.

In 1 Corinthians 9:25 Paul states, "Everyone who contends exercises self-control in all things; they then, that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible." All those who contend in the games, Paul says, exercise strict self-control. If athletes exercise self-control in order to receive a corruptible crown, we should exercise self-control even more to obtain an incorruptible crown.

B. Expound the difference between the Lord's salvation and a reward.

The crown, a symbol of glory, is given as a prize, in addition to the Lord's salvation, to the triumphant runner of the race. In contrast to salvation, which is of grace and by faith, this prize is not of grace nor by faith, but is of righteousness through works. The believers will be recompensed with such a reward, not according to the Lord's grace but according to His righteousness. Hence, it is the crown of righteousness.

Day 3 —

A. Expound the words in in Philippians 3:9 and how to apply.

In Philippians 3:9 Paul does not speak merely in a general way but in a very definite way. He wanted to live not in his own righteousness but in the righteousness of God, and to be found in such a transcendent condition, expressing God by living Christ, not by keeping the law. But now Paul's desire was to be observed as a person living in Christ and having Christ as his righteousness.

B. Explain the faith in Christ in Philippians 3:9.

In Philippians 3:9, the expression faith in Christ implies our believing in Christ. Such faith issues from our knowing and appreciating Christ. It is Christ Himself, infused into us through our appreciation of Him, who

becomes our faith—the faith in Him. Hence, it is the faith of Christ that brings us into an organic union with Him.

Day 4 —

A. Expound the words in Psalm 45:13 and its application.

The king's daughter is the queen signifying the church, and her being all glorious within the royal abode signifies the glorious church taking Christ as her royal abode. The word abode here refers to the church's taking Christ as her abode. First we, the believers of Christ, take Christ as our abode, and then we become His abode.

B. Explain the difference between the clothing inwrought with gold and embroidered.

The woven work inwrought with gold" refers to the first layer of her covering, that is, Christ as our righteousness through whom we are justified. 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.

Day 5 —

A. Expound the meaning of the kingdom of their Father in 2 Timothy 4:18.

In 2 Timothy 4:18 the heavenly kingdom is "the kingdom of their Father", "the kingdom of My Father", "the kingdom of Christ and of God", and "the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ", which will be a reward to the overcoming saints. It equals the crown of righteousness in 2 Timothy 4:8 and is an incentive to the believers to run the heavenly race. Paul had the assurance that he would be saved into this heavenly kingdom.

B. Explain what the two things to enter into the kingdom of the heavens in Matthew 7:21.

To enter into the kingdom of the heavens, we need to do two things: call on the Lord and do the will of the heavenly Father. To call on the Lord suffices for us to be saved, but to enter into the kingdom of the heavens, we also need to do the will of the heavenly Father. Hence, not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord," will enter into the kingdom of the heavens; but those who call on the Lord and do the will of the heavenly Father will enter in.

Day 6 —

A. Explain the words in Matthew 8:11 and its significance.

In the kingdom of their Father the overcoming believers will also feast with the Old Testament overcomers. The Lord Jesus speaks of this in Matthew 8:11: "I say to you that many will come from the east and the west and will recline at table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens." This refers to the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens. At that time, the overcoming Gentile believers will feast with the Old Testament overcomers.

B. Expound in 1 Corinthians 6:10 inheriting the kingdom of God.

In 1 Corinthians 6:10, Paul mentioned inheriting the kingdom of God. The word "inherit" implies enjoyment. The coming kingdom will be a joyful inheritance to the overcomers. According to Matthew, the manifestation of the kingdom will be a reward to the overcoming saints as their enjoyment with the Lord. This should be an incentive for us to live an overcoming life. By living an overcoming life today we shall be qualified to inherit the coming kingdom as a reward.

III. Conclusion:

Some dear saints do not like to be Christians who take this narrow path. They may not like it today, but the Lord will have a way to force them to like it sooner or later. We have been chosen by Him. It is not up to us. We must overcome; if we do not overcome today, we will still overcome tomorrow. All students in school must graduate. If they do not do well, they cannot graduate with their classmates. But they will eventually graduate. Therefore, they need to stay in school for a while, and they must be forced to study until they graduate. Paul is a model for us in our pursuit of the kingdom of heavens. He is always an inspiration for us to run the Lord's path. May we be able to bet on our lives and strive for the reward of the kingdom of heavens as he did! In the end, we can also declare, "... there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness..."