

Series: "The Crowns"

"Run The Race!"
I Corinthians 9:24-27
January 6, 2008
Pastor Corey Sateren

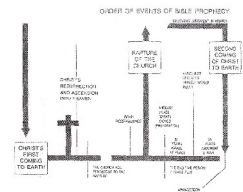
When we started our series last week on "The Crowns" we began by talking about this future event that every one of us who are Christians will be a part of called:

SLIDE –

- The Believers Judgment
- The Judgment Seat of Christ
- The 'Bema Seat' Judgment

And we mentioned that this future event will take place in heaven following the rapture (when Christians will be taken up into heaven and given our 'glorified body') as we see by this chart...

SLIDE – End Times Sequence



(I will talk about the chart a little bit...)

We are calling our series **The Crowns**...

...because we are going to find out when we are raptured and get to heaven and stand before Jesus Christ who is the one who will judge us and are participating in this "Believers Judgment" that it is actually like an "Awards Ceremony" where we who have 'run the race' on earth receive our awards/rewards from Jesus Christ for doing so and the Scriptures refer to our awards/rewards as '**CROWNS**'! Can you just imagine...(talk about it!!!!).

We also noted a few facts about the Judgment Seat of Christ...

SLIDE –Some FACTS

1. It is for **believers only**
The UN-believers will be at a different judgment ("The Great White Throne Judgment") that comes at a later date.

SLIDE –

2. It does **not** determine our **entrance** into heaven
What we decide to do - while on THIS side of heaven - with the knowledge we have about what Jesus Christ has done for us by sacrificing Himself on the cross...is what determines our entrance into heaven.

SLIDE –

3. It has **NOTHING** to do with **punishment** for our **sins**
Our sins have been dealt with by Christ's death on the cross and we will no longer have to pay any punishment for them.

SLIDE –

4. It is for the Lord to evaluate the **ministries** or **services** that we have done for Him and give us **awards/rewards!** CROWNS

Let me just bring this in so you will get the right picture...
There are two Greek words used in the New Testament Scriptures for the word "crown".

SLIDE –

1st - Diadem - A Royal Crown

The crown of a King or Queen. A very elegant crown with diamonds and rubies in it. Like what we would picture as a crown.

This is the word used of the crown Jesus Christ will be wearing when He returns at His second coming as King of kings and Lord of lords recorded for us in Revelation 19:12 where it says, "*His eyes were like a flame of fire and on His head were many crowns (diadems).*"

BUT...the second Greek word used in the New Testament for the word "crown" is...

SLIDE –

2nd - Stephanos - A Victor's Crown

This was really just a wreath often made of leaves or wild celery or a fir twig.

It was never meant to be of gold or any lasting metal. All these crowns of victory for winning the race or the games played by the athlete were fragile and quickly began to fade and wilt away and they were constructed of these materials and awarded for a reason. The reason was to honor their king! To honor the king for whom they ran. Oh, they received recognition! But honor went to the king.

Sound familiar!

I mentioned earlier that this Judgment for believers is actually like an “Awards Ceremony” where we who have ‘run the race’ on earth receive our crowns...and it is important to look at this Judgment with this “race” in mind because this is the picture or setting that Scripture paints for us when it refers to the Bema Seat Judgment.

So today let’s look at the rewards/awards/crowns that we will get one day at the ‘Bema Seat’ Judgment.

SLIDE – Pew Bible Pg. 1134

Take your Bibles, please and open them to the New Testament book of I Corinthians 9. If you didn’t bring your Bible with you today I would encourage you to reach forward and grab that burgundy colored Bible and turn to page 1134. (1st Service – Video Café – Raise hands for a Bible and someone will come by and hand you one! Keep it up!)

It is here that we see the Apostle Paul using this picture of a RACE so you and I can get a better picture of what will take place at OUR Judgment Seat of Christ.

SLIDE – I Corinthians 9:24-25

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but WE do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Now because you know the difference between the two crowns you see why it is he says this! THEIR crown will disintegrate one day (it is made of leaves and branches). But OURS will last forever. And it is this verse that gives us the name of the first crown that believers can receive AND what we do to receive it!

SLIDE – The Crowns

#1 - The Imperishable Crown -

And how do we as believers on earth earn this crown?

By...

SLIDE – Exercising Self Control

See what the verse says...

“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but WE do it to get a crown that will last forever.”

The Greek word used here for ‘strict training’ is “kratos” which means - self-control or disciplined; saying “no” to the flesh!

Okay, now it is up to us to apply this virtue! Do I exercise ‘self-control’? Am I disciplined?

If I had taken the time to go through I Corinthians 8 and 9 Paul gave us multiple examples of having self-control.

- Self-control in inconsequential areas by limiting what he CAN do for the sake of potentially hurting a weaker brother.
- Self-control in the ability to get married - but didn’t.
- Self-control in working a job while he preached so he wouldn’t be a financial burden on the people.
- Self-control in witnessing methods.

For you and me it may be we need self-control in our...

- Bible reading & study
- Prayer time
- Diet
- With our mouth
- With our eyes

...and many others. You apply it to where the Spirit of God convinces you to have self-control. Just know, come the Bema Seat Judgment we will be receive OR not receive the “Imperishable Crown” based on how well we exercised self control.

There is a second crown we may receive at the Judgment Seat...

SLIDE – The Crowns

#2 - The Crown of Joy/Rejoicing

And how do believers earn this crown while we are on earth?

By...

SLIDE – Sharing the Gospel (caring passionately for the lost)

Two verses for us...Philippians 4:1

“Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown...”

“For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when He comes? Is it not you?”

I Thessalonians 2:19

Commentator Joe L. Wall explains what this will be like for those who receive this crown:

SLIDE –

“When we stand in the presence of Jesus at His royal coming, our hearts will overflow with pride, joy, and exultation because of those who stand with us at that time - those we have had a share in bringing to the Savior.

What a thrill! For all eternity we will have “walking wreath-crowns” living and enjoying with us the glorious presence and unspeakable delights of life in the kingdom of the Prince of Peace.”

(Joe Wall, *Going for the Gold* pg.153)

Imagine standing in heaven surrounded by all the people you have influenced for the sake of the gospel!

- Your dear sister or uncle or son.
- Your coworker or neighbor.
- The teenager you sat beside on the bus.
- The many that have come to Christ because you supported financially a Missionary who shared the gospel.

The crown is for all of us who share the good news of salvation with the many people who ebb and flow through our lives. It is available to every believer!

There is a third crown we may receive at the Judgment Seat...

SLIDE – The Crowns

#3 - The Crown of Righteousness

And how do believers earn this crown while we are on earth?

By...

SLIDE – Staying at it/perseverance (even up to the return of Christ)

One verse -

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

II Timothy 4:7-8

What does it take to receive this crown of righteousness?

- Fighting the good fight (perseverance)
- Finishing well (stay at it and never give up)
- Maintaining the faith
- Loving Christ’s appearing

There is a fourth crown we may receive at the Judgment Seat...

SLIDE – The Crowns

#4 - The Crown of Life

And how do believers earn this crown while we are on earth?

By...

SLIDE – Enduring various trials

Two verses here...

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.” James 1:12

There is a fifth crown we may receive at the Judgment Seat...

SLIDE – The Crowns

#5 - The Crown of Glory

And this crown is a little different in that it is for a particular group of Christians. Not every Christian will receive this crown. How do these particular believers earn this crown while we are on earth?

By...

SLIDE – Shepherding the church

This crown is for Pastors/Shepherds/Elders of the church.

Here is the verse...

SLIDE –

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. I Peter 5:1-4

This crown is unique because it is reserved for the elders: Those Christians who were “officials who acted as pastoral leaders of the congregations.”

Today this group would involve pastors as well as lay leaders in the church and other Christian ministry leaders.

And there are the 5 Crowns we can receive one day at the Believers Judgment; the Bema Seat Judgment; the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Which ones will you have?

How many will you have?

I'd like to close a little different today if I may...
IN my own personal studies I ran across this wonderful explanation
of "running the race" of life for our crowns.

It is a video with Ray Vander Laan on location in the Holy Land of
Israel showing a group of people what it was like in the days of
Christ and the Apostles. He is at a location called "Aphrodisias"
which is a 1st Century Coliseum where Olympic Games and other
games took place. It applies so well to what we have been talking
about!

Listen...**VIDEO PRESENTATION**

Start at 7:00 minutes

Shut it OFF at 21:08

SLIDE – Runners

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