

Theme: The Crowns of Christ

Hebrews 2:9-10

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

As Americans we might not be too keen on the thought of having a king rule over us. We like our democracy. We want to vote for the people we put in government positions. And we certainly don't like the thought of someone having absolute authority ruling over us. The fact is, however, we do have a king ruling over us in this country—in fact, He rules over every country! That King is, of course, Jesus. But Jesus is unlike any other king. Not only is He the “King of kings,” but His ascent—or re-ascent—to His throne in heaven was very different than that of any other king in history. His path to glory was marked by humility, suffering, and sacrifice, not by force or military might. But make no mistake about it, along this path Christ did conquer every one of His enemies. This unique King also has some very unique crowns; crowns which reflect Jesus' unique kingship. On the last Sunday of the Church year we usually celebrate the kingship of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. This morning we will look at the Crowns of Christ the King.

What kind of crown do you think would be fitting for the “King of kings”? Maybe the Crown Jewels in England come to mind. Something so jeweled, golden and elaborate it takes your breath away just to look at it! A priceless crown for heaven's high King, right? You'd think so. But instead, the first crown Jesus chose to wear was **A Crown of thorns**. His first “coronation” was one of ridicule, humiliation, and pain at the hands of the Roman soldiers. We read in our Gospel reading for this morning, **“Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified” (Matthew 27:27-31).**

What kind of “king” is this? Why would Jesus do this? Do you think that Jesus' disciples and close followers may have thought this same thing when He was arrested, beaten, and taken to the cross to be crucified? “This is the Messiah? This is the ‘King’ that God has sent to save us? He won't even fight back? He looks so weak! Now He's allowed Himself to be put to death?! What is He doing?” Jesus knew exactly what He was doing! He willingly stepped down from heaven's glory and, as our text puts it, **“Jesus...was made a little lower than the angels” (Hebrews 2:9)**. He wrapped Himself in human flesh and became one of us. He willingly made His first “throne” a wooden manger. During every breath of His life He lived in perfect obedience to God's Law as our substitute. Finally, at the end of His life He willingly took on that **crown of thorns** and that horrible cross. Why? As our text says, Jesus went through **“the suffering of death...that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone” (Hebrews 2:9)**. It also says that God made Jesus, **“the captain of our salvation perfect [or “complete”] through suffering” (Hebrews 2:10)**. He wore that **crown of thorns** so that we would never have to! He bore the stains of our sin on His sinless body and soul so on the cross that we would be declared righteous! He tasted death and hell so that we would have life and heaven!

But Jesus did not wear this **crown of thorns** forever. Because of His obedience, because He willingly wore that crown and endured **“the suffering of death”** God has **“crowned [Jesus] with glory and honor” (Hebrews 2:9)**. We may not always realize it because it often does not seem to be this way, but right now Jesus is wearing that crown of **“glory and honor”** and is ruling over heaven and earth for the good of His believers. The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians, **“[God the Father] raised [Christ] from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way” (Ephesians 1:20-23 - NIV)**.

Again, we may not always be able to see Jesus’ ruling power at work. We may not always be able to understand the mysterious ways in which He is controlling all things for the good of His church. We may even look at this world that we live in and think that things are completely “out of control!” But make no mistake, there will come a day when it will be perfectly clear to every eye that Jesus is King when He comes again in glory to judge all people on the Last Day. Paul writes in Philippians, **“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11)**.

What does this all mean for us? Well, because Jesus has been crowned with **“glory and honor”** in heaven, it means, first of all, that in this life we have the assurance that Jesus, our King, is ruling over us with His perfect love and protecting us with His almighty power. He is guiding and directing all things in our lives—and in the entire universe itself—for our eternal good!

Secondly, because He wore that **crown of thorns** another “crown” has come into the picture. This, however, is a crown that our King Jesus has given to us! It is the **“crown of life.”** Jesus tells us in Revelation, **“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10)**. By this Jesus means *real* life; life eternal with Him in heaven! And this is not the only crown Jesus has won for us! Because Jesus now wears the **crown of glory** our text tells us that He has brought **“many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:10)**. Those words are speaking of you and me! We are called **“sons,”** and as the sons of the King we will rule with Him in heaven and will receive a **crown of glory** of our own!

Isn’t that an amazing thought? Because of Jesus we have been given the **crown of life** and the **crown of glory** when the “crown” we deserved because of our sins was the **crown of thorns**; the “crown” of eternal death. Jesus wore that crown for us willingly, and lovingly. Thank God for **The Crowns of Christ!** Amen.

Let’s conclude our sermon this morning by singing the last two verses of “Crown Him with Many Crowns” (printed here or in the bulletin—bottom of page 4):

*Crown him the Lord of life, Who triumphed o'er the grave
And rose victorious in the strife For those he came to save.
His glories now we sing Who died and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring And lives that death may die.*

*Crown him the Lord of heav'n, Enthroned in worlds above;
Crown him the King to whom is giv'n The wondrous name of Love.
Crown him with many crowns As thrones before him fall;
Crown him, ye kings, with many crowns For he is King of all.*

(Hymn 525 v. 4-5, *Lutheran Service Book*; 341 v. 4-5, *The Lutheran Hymnal*)