

01.31.2010 (Sun)

Anyone Who Comes to God (Heb 11:6)

Love brings change. The quality of your life can be changed depending on how much you love God. Those who've guided others into the right path will receive the reward of the star. However, if you work as hard as the sun, you will be honored like the sun. Just as we cannot live without the sun, if you help others come to an understanding of God, or help others live for the will of God, you will be honored like the sun (1 Cor 15:40-41).

1 Cor 3:8 tells us that each person will be rewarded according to his own labor. That is what Heb 11:6 also tells us. He who has true faith in God lives a life doing God's will. Just as Rev 22:12 tells us, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done," you will receive your rewards according to the work that you have done.

On that account, if one wonders, "Shouldn't being saved in the name of the Lord be enough? Why seek a reward?", it is challenging God. This is because faith is what pleases God. Anyone who receives Jesus Christ in faith receives salvation. However, *once you have received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you must live a renewed and transformed life.* He who comes before God reaches this transformation.

The reward according to what you have done is a crown. *Stephanos* and *diadem* are both crowns but *diadem* refers to a king's crown, whereas *stephanos* refers to a crown given to one who has won a race. The English word "*athlete*" comes from the Greek word *athleo* which means "*to strive for mastery*".

In 1 Cor 9:25, the "crown that will last forever" is *stephanos*. It is a crown earned through self-restraint and suffering. Beloved friends, the beginning of faith is when you have confidence that God exists. Just as a child's words and deeds can be altered through good parenting, a life can be altered and renewed through true faith in God and understanding of His word.

(1) There is a **crown of righteousness**. The crown of righteousness is given to he who has fought the good fight. It is not for those who have fought like cowards or immorally, but rather for those who ran the race with humility and have kept the faith (2 Tim 4:7).

(2) There is a **crown of life**. The crown of life is given to he who has been faithful, even to the point of death. It is being devoted to the end through love and sacrifice (Rev 2:10). When our Lord came to this earth, he was regarded with all sorts of contempt, jealousy, and even faced death. However, our Jesus loved even his enemies. He chose the path of life.

(3) There is a **resplendent crown**. It is a crown given to those who have been anointed by God. The resplendent crown in Ps 132:18 is earned by he who does good deeds

and praises our Father in heaven (Mat 5:16). He who has been anointed with the Holy Spirit knows how to live.

(4) There is a **crown of pure gold**. This crown of pure gold is given to he who has overcome trials (Ps 21:3). If you endure situations where having patience is difficult, your heart will become bold and your character will be strengthened. By enduring all trials and withstanding them with patience, you will come forth as gold (Job 23:10).

(5) There is a **crown of joy** (1Th 2:19). He who shares the word of God is His pride and joy. As you put in effort and time to share the Gospel with others, you may face losses in earthly things but have faith that God will bless us with his overflowing grace and provide us with things beyond what we even imagine.

(6) There is a **crown of glory**. This crown is earned by those who edify and set an example for others (1 Pet 5:4). It is given to those who fulfill their given duties. These 6 crowns are all *stephanos*; crowns given to those who have won the race. There is one last crown left. It is the crown of splendor.

(7) There is a **crown of splendor**. This crown is *diadem*, the king's crown. It is a crown meant only for our Jesus Christ but it is given also to those who have faith (Isa 62:3). This is because we are growing and will attain to the whole in measure of the fullness of Christ.

The Father wants us to become holy and perfect (1 Pet 1:15, Col 1:28). That is why we must attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Eph 4:13 tells us that to become holy, we must reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. The crown of splendor, which is a crown for a king, is for those who have faith like a king.

Dearest friends, there is surely *stephanos* and *diadem* when growing in our Lord. Your walk of faith is the good fight. Do not be disheartened because of the things of man, but stay devoted to the very end.

Though you may feel tired and alone, endure through the power of faith, Holy Spirit, and assurance that only our Father gives us. Let us be encouraged today by this verse: "*I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have so that no one will take your crown*" (Rev 3:11)!