



**"No Cross,
No Crown"**

The Cross and Crown

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I love the Bible! I wouldn't even try to count the number of times I've read it through, and yet, each time I do, I find something new. This past week, I noticed a detail that I can't believe had escaped me all these years: The jars that Gideon and his 300 men carried were empty – but with torches inside.

Can you imagine the moment when the army shouted, blew their trumpets and broke the jars? Not only did the battlefield reverberate with sound, but it was emblazoned in light! It was a strategy that, thousands of years later, would be known as "Shock and Awe."

In my mind, Gideon's battle has long been linked a passage written by Paul: "We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." (II Corinthians 4:7) God whittled an army of 10,000 men down to 300, who



carried jars of clay, so that no one would doubt that the victory came from his all-surpassing power and not from that of Gideon's army. Gideon's story takes Paul's metaphor a step further, showing us that, to unleash God's glory, we must break those clay jars.

Think of the times during your Christian walk when you have been broken.

In those times, the brilliance of God's glory was freed to shine through. You may not have noticed it at the time, but those around you most certainly did. As Christians, we already have God's glorious power indwelling us. We don't have to amplify it; we only need to break the clay jars that keep it from shining to the fullest.

Those moments of brokenness are never easy, but Paul goes on to say that, in the light of eternity, they're just for a moment – and they are "achieving for us an eternal glory that outweighs them all." (II Corinthians 4:17)

*Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness,
awesome in glory, working wonders?*

(Exodus 15:7)

Thanks for Praying!

We are so grateful for all that God is doing among us in response to your prayers! Thank you for committing to pray with us for

- summer ministries to kids and families, including VBS, Daily Bible Power Hour and Performing Arts Camp,
- the wisdom and ability to train the next generation of leaders, and
- financial provision to sustain our ministries.







Summer ministries are underway!

We're praying with you!

If you're on our mailing list*, you're on our prayer list! If there's anything specific that we can join you in praying about, please let us know.

And thank you to those who keep in touch! We do love hearing from you.

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* **Important:** If you'd rather not be on our mailing list, we understand! Just call or drop us a note, and we'll remove you. (We'll still keep you on our prayer list!)

If you'd rather receive this letter via e-mail, please let us know!

Did you know?

In the contest for the most definitions in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word “set,” with 430 definitions, has *set* the standard since at least 1989, when the second edition *OED* was published. This record is not *set* in stone, though. Get *set* for a change. When the third edition of the *OED*, *set* to be published in 2037, comes out, two words will *run* ahead and *put* “set” in third place: “run” and “put.” Stay *put*; we may *run* the updated numbers in about 15 years!

“He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others.

He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.”

(Daniel 2:21)



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