



**“No Cross,
No Crown”**

The Cross and Crown

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We rescued Coco three years ago, when she was about ten months old. Over the the last three years, we’ve come to know a lot about each other. Coco’s main motivations are eating, keeping us (and herself) safe, and resting. In addition to these, she also likes to please us. This can be a tricky pursuit for her, because she doesn’t really understand us. She does her best, taking cues from our body language (“Are they going upstairs or staying downstairs?”), our tone of voice (“Are they excited or angry?”), and the few English words she understands.

As Christians, we should be similarly motivated, wanting to please our Lord. When we’re new in Christ, we may struggle over how to do this, because we don’t always really understand where God is leading. You’ve heard the phrase, “God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform” – but are his ways really mysterious? To the Christian who has matured in discipleship, they shouldn’t be. Shortly before Jesus laid down his life for us, he explained to his disciples, “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”



How do we come to know God’s business? We do it the same way that the disciples did, by spending time with him, participating in what he does and paying attention to what he says. And, how do we come to understand what God is saying? The same way that we came to understand what our parents were saying: by listening. When we were babies, our parents’ words were just sounds, but we quickly learned. First, we learned to distinguish the sound of their voices. Then, over time, we learned to recognize our names, and we to recognize when they were talking to us. Bit by bit, we built up our vocabulary, until what they said made sense to us, and until, eventually, we were even able to respond.

God wants to have conversations with you. It’s the whole reason that he created people! Discipline yourself to listen to his voice – in prayer, in Bible study and in church. You will find delight in dialoguing with the Creator!

Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening. (1 Samuel 3:9)

Thanks for Praying!

As the year draws to a close, we are laser-focused on the opportunities that the season affords us to connect to our community. We need God's help! Please pray with us for







- our Thanksgiving and Christmas community outreaches,
- the new believers who have expressed interest in baptism and church membership, and
- the financial and human resources that we need to carry out our mission.

Volunteers prepare the building for a fresh coat of paint

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.

Thanks so much to those who keep in touch! It's so encouraging to hear from you!

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* **Important:** If you'd rather not be on our mailing list, we won't be offended! 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?

The average dog can learn 165 words and signals. "Super dogs," who are in the top 20 percent of dog intelligence, can learn up to 250 words. That's not bad for an animal whose brains are about the size of a tangerine!

Anyone who is among the living has hope—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion! (Ecclesiastes 9:4)



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