



**"No Cross,
No Crown"**

The Cross and Crown

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I was taught that John was the "Love" apostle; so aware of the love of God that the theme of love permeated his Gospel and letters. Indeed, he's the author of one of the most famous verses in the world, John 3:16, which is a powerful assertion of God's love.

John's emphasis on love is unquestionable, but, as I read through John this past week, it was another word stood out to me: truth.

What a powerful testimony of the nature of God! John's Gospel famously begins by establishing that Jesus is the Word of God – the eternal, infallible, immutable Word of God – in bodily form. Jesus, then is not just truthful and not just the author of the truth; he *is* the truth.

John said that his purpose in writing the Gospel was that people would believe and, as a result, have life in

Jesus' name. It makes sense, then, that he reinforces truth so often in making his case. John's argument, to paraphrase Peter, is not hinged on cleverly made up stories but on eyewitness accounts. (Please reference II Peter 1:16)



Certainly, God's love is a central aspect of the truth of the Gospel, but it is not the whole truth. As Christ's ambassadors, we have the obligation to go beyond the truth of God's love and tell the world of his holiness and power and of the sacrifice that he demands from those who would follow him.

Let us be people of the truth! In particular, when we share the Gospel, let us not sugarcoat or shy away from any aspect of it. John shows us that Gospel of love is not at odds with the truth of the Gospel, but that, in fact, the two go hand in hand.

Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. (Ephesians 4:15)

Thanks for Praying!

We're standing on the strength of your prayers! Please continue to pray with us for







Stocking distribution at last year's Christmas outreach

- our Thanksgiving and Christmas community outreaches,
- the wellness of our school and church families, several of whom are recently bereaved,
- 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.

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?

African lions are unsuccessful in catching their prey four out of five times. In baseball, that would equate to batting .200. On an exam, it would be a failing grade – 20%. That's good news for the lions' prey, who have an 80% chance of escaping when they're chased. The bad news is that there's not just one lion out there hunting – and all of them are hungry!

The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

(Psalm 34:10)



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