



**"No Cross,
No Crown"**

The Cross and Crown

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Rejoicing keeps us safe!

Paul told the Philippians to rejoice in the LORD, saying that doing so was a safeguard for them. (Philippians 3:1) He recognized that rejoicing takes our focus off of ourselves and our circumstances and places it where it belongs: On God. When we let our focus stray away from him, things tend to go wrong quickly. Here are two examples.

In Genesis 4, we read that Cain, feeling slighted and jealous, wallowed in anger, and, in so doing, ushered in the sin that was crouching at his door. Sin, when it was fully grown, gave birth to death, but God had offered an alternative path: "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?" Doing what was right, in this instance, meant offering the right kind of sacrifice. Both Cain and Abel had made the kind of offering that would later be included in the Law "the firstfruits" – a way to rejoice, by faith, in the full harvest that God had begun to provide. Had Cain focused on correcting his attitude and giving a sacrifice that reflected rejoicing, sin could not have made it past his doorstep.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, King Nebuchadnezzar, as recorded in Daniel 4, looked around at his circumstances and swelled with pride, even though God had warned him in a dream against rejoicing in himself. As a result of his self-focus, he ended up living like a brute beast for a season, until he acknowledged that Heaven rules. Again, the prescription was rejoicing in the LORD and acknowledging his sovereignty above any power or wisdom of our own.

Are things going well? Rejoice! Are you going through difficult times? Rejoice! Whatever our circumstances, we need that safeguard of rejoicing to keep us from going off the rails.

May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who long for your saving help always say, "The Lord is great!" (Psalm 70:4)

Thanks for Praying!

This Thanksgiving, we're thankful for you and your prayers! Please continue praying for



The Christmas season opens many doors for evangelism!





- our Thanksgiving and Christmas community outreaches,
- several in our church and Academy family who have lost loved ones in the past weeks,
- 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 received a call from Donna Bugieda this past week, asking prayer for her cousin, Dominic, who was recently hospitalized.

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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|  | PO Box 15191 Philadelphia, PA 19130 |
|  | 17 th & Tioga Streets (3501 N 17 th Street) Philadelphia, PA 19140 |
|  | Church/Academy Office: (215) 226-1000 |
|  | Welcome@ResLife.AG |

* **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?

As of 2016, Americans consumed 400 million pounds of cranberries per year, with one fifth of that total (80 million pounds) being consumed during Thanksgiving week.

The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

(Psalm I:12)



Highway Mission Tabernacle ♦ Resurrection Life Church ♦ PO Box 15191 Philadelphia, PA 19130

Welcome@ResLife.AG ♦ Church: (215) 226-1000 ♦ Otis: (215) 266-5976

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