



**“No Cross,
No Crown”**

The Cross and Crown

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The prophet Anna never left the temple, staying there night and day for 80 years, fasting and praying. Her persistence – “tarrying,” as it was called when I was growing up, was fueled by expectation. When Jesus was presented at the temple, “she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.”

I’ve come to use the word “expectation” rather than “hope” when I speak of matters of faith. Although it’s correct to say that Anna had hope for the redemption of her people, that word is so often misused that it has come to suggest uncertainty; *I hope I wake up on time tomorrow; I hope I don’t catch the flu.* Anna’s hope, by contrast, was an expectation based on a sure promise – the coming of Christ.



When God promises us something big, we can *expect* two things. First and most important, we can expect that the promise will come true. The second thing that we can expect is opposition, that what was promised will be contended. This is a pattern that we see all throughout Scripture. If there were no opposition, God wouldn’t really need to make the promise, would he? It is his promise and our expectation that give us the ability to persevere in the difficult circumstances that lie between us and the fulfillment.

God’s grace and our faith work together to secure our salvation. If either one is missing, we are lost. In exactly the same way, God’s promise and our hope work together to secure our victory. Hope alone, not founded in a promise, is futile, and we will, sadly, forfeit what God has promised if we let go of hope.

This past Sunday, for the first week of Advent, we closed a message on “Hope” by singing that grand old hymn, “The Solid Rock.” The first line says it all, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.” That Rock alone is our hope’s foundation.

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. (Hebrews 6:19)

Thanks for Praying!



Ministering at Philadelphia's
Christmas Village





We're in the homestretch for 2023! This final month is crucial – thanks so much for praying with us! Please remember:

- our Christmas outreaches in the community,
- many in our community struggling with housing and heat,
- discipling new believers, and
- planning and provision for the new year.

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 with 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?

When Philadelphia's Comcast Building was completed in 2007, a replica of the William Penn statue from City Hall was welded to its final beam, putting it at the highest point of any building in the city. This was done to break "the Curse of Billy Penn:" None of Philadelphia's major league teams had won a championship after 1987, when One Liberty Place was built and, for the first time since City Hall was built in 1901, the hat on top of William Penn's head was no longer the highest point.



Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. (Psalm 146:3)



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