



# THE CROSS *and* CROWN

*"No Cross, No Crown"*

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Lately, I've been obsessed with the parable of the good Samaritan. I think the vast profundity of this parable is somewhat lost on us, in part, because we're not familiar with the characters. Jesus chose characters who would be familiar with his audience, but they're a bit foreign to our American Christian frame of reference. So, let's update them. Instead of a priest, a Levite and a Samaritan, let's consider a pastor, a deacon and an atheist. A man is lying helpless in a ditch, having been set upon by robbers, and a pastor passes by careful to keep his distance. A deacon sees the man and also passes by at a distance. Finally, an atheist who comes on the scene stops and takes care of the man's wounds, pledging to pay the medical expenses out of his own pocket.

The amazing part of the parable is that Jesus deliberately made the atheist the hero, declaring that we should behave like the atheist and not like the church leaders!

Do you remember why Jesus told this parable? Luke wrote that a teacher of the Law asked who his neighbor was, wanting to justify himself in the face of the command, "Love your neighbor as yourself." In other words, he wanted Jesus to draw limits around the people he was required to love. The parable of the Good Samaritan was Jesus' rebuke of the kind of love that is only for a limited set of people and only given out of obligation to a commandment.



The priest and the Levite would have justified their decision to pass by the injured man on the other side: They couldn't afford to make themselves unclean, because they had to be about God's work. They may have claimed to love the injured man, and, perhaps, they really did – but remember Jesus' question: Which of them was a neighbor to him? To put it another way, which of them showed that man the kind of love that they had for themselves?

Other than loving God, there's no greater commandment than loving our neighbor as ourselves. If we're not following the Samaritan's example, does anything else that we do really matter?

*Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*

*(1 John 3:17)*

# Thanks for Praying!

To the faithful, God shows himself faithful! Thanks for your faithfulness in praying with us. Please continue to intercede for:

- a quick resolution to the housing need for which you've been praying with us,
- fruit from our recent mini-musical,
- laborers with a passion for Tioga-Nicetown, and
- rest and regeneration for our church and school's ministry teams.







The final dress rehearsal for "Sprouting Remnants"

## 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 for, please let us know. (We will only publish your requests in this newsletter with your permission.)

We really do love hearing from you! Every message and phone call makes a big difference!

	PO Box 15191 Philadelphia, PA 19130
	17 <sup>th</sup> & Tioga Streets (3501 N 17 <sup>th</sup> 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 write us, 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, or subscribe to it at [crossandcrown.online/subscribe](http://crossandcrown.online/subscribe) !

## Did you know?

Highway has gone by at least 5 names in its history: The Cross and Crown Association (Gospel Wagon), Union Highway Gospel Mission (the mission, at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Jefferson), Union Highway Mission Tabernacle (the old schoolhouse, at Harvard and Oxford), Highway Mission Tabernacle Union Un-denominational Church (as chartered in 1899), and Highway Mission Tabernacle (as renamed for the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, in 1984). Since 2008, Highway has also ministered as Resurrection Life Church.

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.  
(Exodus 40:34)



Highway Mission Tabernacle ♦ Resurrection Life Church ♦ PO Box 15191 Philadelphia, PA 19130  
Welcome@ResLife.AG ♦ Church: (215) 226-1000 ♦ Otis: (215) 266-5976  
HighwayTabernacle.org ♦ ResLife.AG ♦ Sunday services at Noon: ResLife.stream

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