



THE CROSS and CROWN

“No Cross, No Crown”

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One of my favorite passages in the Bible came out of one of the most difficult days in Aaron's life. You can read about it in Leviticus 10. Aaron had just lost his sons, Nadab and Abihu, who were stricken down after they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord. At the end of the day, when Moses confronted Aaron because he and his surviving sons had not eaten the sin offering, Aaron's defense was, “such things have this have happened to me. Would the Lord have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today?” Hearing this, Moses was satisfied.

Aaron had responsibilities as high priest, but he was human, and, as a human, he needed to grieve. God created us to grieve, and, as Aaron pointed out, God would not have been pleased if Aaron had discounted his grief and pressed on as though nothing was wrong.

Sometimes, we try to mask our emotions, put on a brave face and pretend that we're okay. It saddens me that this happens even in the church, our family, with whom we should feel free to express our true feelings. Unfortunately, the church is too quick to diagnose sadness, fear or anxiety as a lack of faith, and our brothers and sisters all too eagerly share verses out of context with us, such as, “The joy of the Lord is your strength,” or “Perfect love casts out all fear.”



I'm grateful for the Psalms, where songs of faith and praise are interspersed with expressions of sorrow, fear, loneliness and rage – teaching us that we can bare our true feelings before God. (And, when you think about it, why would we try to hide our feelings from God, who knows every thought and intent of the heart?) God doesn't reject us or chastise us in our weakness. On the contrary, “the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort . . . comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.”

I am always impressed when I read, in the story of Lazarus, that Jesus wept. He knew that he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, yet he took the time to share in the emotion that Lazarus' sisters felt in their time of grieving. Let's be that kind of comforter. Instead of being quick to tell people that everything will be all right, let's weep with them while we wait, together with them, for the moment when we things are all right, and we can rejoice again with them.

There should be no division in the body, but . . . its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

(1 Corinthians 12:25,26)

Thanks for Praying!

We are so grateful for your prayer support! Please join with us as we pray for:





- our summer ministries, including Alpha and our outreach programs to children and youth,
- God to send laborers and leaders with a love for our neighbors and our neighborhood,
- the upcoming school year at Spring Garden Academy, and
- multiplication!



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 helps us keep going!

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* **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 !

Did you know?

Crying has been shown to have benefits for our well-being. When we cry, our bodies release endorphins, chemicals which help ease physical and emotional pain. Also, our bodies take in cooler air when we cry, and a cooler brain results in better moods. Crying also spurs empathy in others, triggering a comforting response.

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. John II:33



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