



THE CROSS *and* CROWN

"No Cross, No Crown"

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This past week at my office, I walked past a row of plants that had been placed in front of the window. The intent was obviously to provide them with sunshine, but, somewhere along the way, they had been abandoned or forgotten, because they were all dried out, dead for lack of water.



In the parable of the sower, Jesus tells of seed that fell on shallow ground and sprang up quickly, but quickly died, because it couldn't put any roots down. With no roots to tap into the flow of water, the plants had no chance at longevity.

As "trees of righteousness, a planting of the Lord," (Isaiah 61:3) it is crucial that we remain watered by the Holy Spirit. It is not enough to expose ourselves to God's light, as those plants in my office were exposed to the sun, nor is it enough for us, like those plants, to live on the fringe of the refreshing flow of water while tragically separated from its life-sustaining power.

I have long been pained by the movement of today's church away from the Holy Spirit. To be clear, I'm not talking about a return to the days of dancing in the aisles and hooting and hollering (although, honestly, I wouldn't be opposed to that). I think that, somewhere along the line, the church came to believe that those over-the-top, physical expressions were synonymous with baptism in the Holy Spirit and forgot that Holy Spirit is the one who gives us life, who walks along beside us daily, moment by moment, and provides the still, small voice that teaches us the way to go and corrects us when we stray; that it is the Holy Spirit who, when we are exposed to the light of Scripture, enables us to absorb it into our spirit, so that we are nurtured and renewed, not withered and dead.

Our sons in their youth will be like well-nurtured plants (...) Blessed is the people of whom this is true; blessed is the people whose God is the Lord. (Psalm 144:12,15)

Thanks for Praying!

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

- God's provision in every area for the church and the academy,
- increased effectiveness in ministering to our neighbors,
- the upcoming school year at Spring Garden Academy, and
- more of God's Spirit.







God's Masterpieces with their masterpieces

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?



Certain trees exhibit behavior known as "crown shyness," which essentially means that they create space to separate the leaves at the top of their branches from the leaves on branches of nearby trees. Scientists have several theories about why this happens, but no one knows for sure.

I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below.

Acts 2:19



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