



THE CROSS *and* CROWN

"No Cross, No Crown"

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When my parents moved to Southern California, the house they bought had plenty of trees – avocado, fig, macadamia nut, to name a few. The previous owner had neglected them, though, and, by the time my parents got the house, the trees were producing poor fruit, if any at all. Over the course of a couple of years, my father was able to rehabilitate them, to the point where, by the time my parents moved, the trees were producing so much fruit that they struggled even to give it all away!



In my last newsletter, I wrote about some plants in my office that had been abandoned and had dried up. It seems a bit odd to me that they're still sitting in front of the window; that no one has taken the initiative to replace them or, at least, to throw them away. The plants are completely dead, and no amount of horticultural skill will bring them back.

As I passed them this week, though, it occurred to me that, to our Creator, the giver of life, even these plants are not a lost cause! I was reminded of God's question to Ezekiel, in the valley of dry bones: "Can these bones live?" Ezekiel's response was understandable, "Lord, you alone know!" God told him, first, to speak the Word of God to those dead bones, and, second, to speak to the breath and tell it to enter those bones as God's life-giving Spirit.

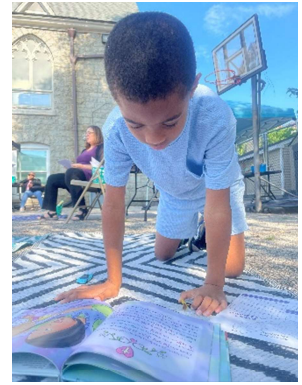
If you, like me, have been praying and believing for unsaved friends of family members for many years, I want to encourage you. God is able to bring life to them! We have given them the precious seed of the Word of God, and, now, we must faithfully continue to speak to the Spirit, urging him to awaken or reawaken that Word in their lives. In the valley of dry bones, dry bones became a great army. In my father's orchard, dried up trees produced much fruit. The Spirit gives life! Let us not become weary, because there is a harvest to be reaped if we don't give up (Galatians 6:9)!

Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them. (Psalm 126:5,6)

Thanks for Praying!

We're in it for the long haul! We're grateful to have you on our side! 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 and life!







Enjoying the remains of the summer

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?

It takes macadamia nut trees from three to seven years to reach maturity and begin producing nuts. Macadamia tree farmers have to play the long game, investing a lot of time and energy for many years without anything to show for it.

This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.

Mark 4:26,27



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