



THE CROSS and CROWN

“No Cross, No Crown”

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I love the parables that Jesus shared with real lives rather than words. Notice the juxtaposition that John gives us in chapters 8 and 9. In John 8:12, he records Jesus' declaration, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." It's in the very next chapter that John tells us about the time when Jesus healed a man born blind; – illustrating the truth that he had just declared by bringing light to a man who had walked in darkness all his life. This was a parable in the truest sense: a heavenly truth related in earthly terms.

Our experience of darkness is quite different than that of the people who heard Jesus' declaration. For them, the night brought an end to all activity. Our ability to travel long distances and to work productively at night would have been inconceivable to them, as it was throughout much of human history. It's not surprising that the Bible is full of references to God and his Word as light, given how much of an impediment the darkness was. God defied this impediment in Moses' day, when he provided a cloud of fire by night to guide the Israelites on their way. This was another living parable: "a lamp for their feet and a light for their path," foretelling what Jesus, the Word, brought when he came into the world.

Jesus, in turn, called us the light of the world. I like the saying, "It's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness," but Jesus took it one step further and told us to *be* the candle!

It's true in our day as it was in Jesus' day: We live in a dark world. That's all the more reason for us not to hide our light away or keep it to ourselves. We must be, as Jesus was, the light that overcomes the darkness.

*The path of the righteous is like the morning sun,
shining ever brighter till the full light of day. (Proverbs 4:18)*

Brothers and Sisters, Pray for Us!

Your prayers keep the lights on in Philadelphia! Please continue to agree with us for:

- more God's his Spirit, wisdom and direction,
- more grace and provision for the many challenges around us and ahead of us,
- the next generation of leaders and team members, and
- ministry planning and execution in the new year.



Serenity represents our next generation of leaders.

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.)

Whether it's to share a prayer need, a praise report or a word of greeting or encouragement, please keep in touch. Hearing from you encourages us more than you know.

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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?

Lumens are a measure of brightness, and a candle produces about 12 ½ lumens. The newest xenon headlights produce almost a thousand times as many lumens. The sun, though, is off the scale, producing an unfathomable 3,000 trillion trillion times as many lumens as a candle (36 octillion lumens, but who's counting?).

The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.

(Isaiah 60:19)



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