

REVELATION – SERMON 20

CROWN INSURANCE

Revelation 3:11

INTRODUCTION

- There are many examples of athletes who looked certain of victory, but through either lapse of concentration or over-confidence, stumbled before the finish line and lost the crown that could have been theirs.
- There is no word of *condemnation* to the Philadelphian church, but there is a word of *exhortation*.
- Christ is pleased with their past faithfulness and present condition, but impresses upon them the importance of maintaining their godliness.
- There may have been a danger of pride and complacency after hearing these words of praise from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Past success is no guarantee of future victory.
- A little success can be the worst thing for some people (2 Chronicles 26:16)
- “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” (1 Corinthians 10:12)
- The Lord gives this exhortation with a note of caution informing the church of the consequences of falling from their steadfastness.

If we are to secure the crown, there are three requirements to observe:

I. HOPE FOR HIS COMING

A. “Behold, I come quickly”

1. If we were to attempt to find one phrase that summarizes the whole book of Revelation, this must surely be it.
2. It has been called “The keynote of the book”

B. “Behold”

1. This Greek imperative, *idou*, is also translated as “Lo”, and “See”
 2. “Calling attention to something external to one's self.” (Bullinger)
- C. “I” (Christ)
1. Revelation contains a great deal of information about events, places, and beings – both human and angelic, but these are all secondary
 2. It is Christ and His dominion that is the primary theme of this book
 3. True Christianity gives Christ pre-eminence in all things (Colossians 1:18)
 4. True Christians ascribe glory to Christ alone for all they are and have (Colossians 3:3; Galatians 6:14)
- D. “come”
1. The ungodly scoff at the teaching of Christ's coming (2 Peter 3:3-4)
 2. But to the believer this is the “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13)
 3. This hope purifies the believer (1 John 3:1-3)
 4. Those who *look* for Him, *live* for Him
- E. “quickly”
1. Christ declares this four times in Revelation (3:11; 22:7,11,20)
 2. This shows the imminence of the rapture
 - a. The Lord Jesus can come at any moment; there is no event which must transpire before He comes (Philippians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 4:15; Titus 2:12-13; James 5:8-9)
 - b. We must remember that God's timing is not our timing (2 Peter 3:8)
 - c. His delayed coming is a test of the genuineness of the Christian's faith (Matthew 25:1-13; Luke 12:35-47)
 - d. His delayed coming allows opportunity for more sinners to repent (2 Peter 3:9)

II. HEED FOR THE CROWN

A. Rewards for faithful service

1. As in 2:10 this is not the crown of royalty, but the crown of victory
2. It is called the “crown of life” (James 1:12)
3. These rewards will be given to believers at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10)

B. There is the possibility of losing rewards

1. The believer cannot lose his salvation but he can lose his crown (1 Corinthians 3:15; 1 Peter 1:4)
2. There are some who will be ashamed before him at his coming (1 John 2:28)
3. Some are beguiled of their rewards (Colossians 2:18)
4. Some lose what they have wrought and do not receive a “full reward” (2 John 1:8)
5. If our crown is taken, we bear the blame

III. HOLD FAST TO CHRIST

A. That which thou hast

1. Every person, both saved and lost, has been endowed with spiritual benefits which we are obliged to embrace
2. The lost have the light of the gospel; the testimony of their conscience; the convictions of the Holy Ghost; the offer of salvation
3. The saved have justification; adoption; sanctification; assurance; peace; joy; grace; the indwelling Spirit; the word of God; fellowship with the saints; the privilege of prayer

B. Hold fast

1. The slack hand soon becomes the empty hand
2. We are to hold fast to the doctrines of the faith, never let them be compromised (Colossians 1:23)

3. We are to hold fast our hearts to fervent love for Christ and a deep hatred for even the smallest hint of iniquity
4. We are to hold fast in our daily growth in sanctification, becoming conformed to Christ's image
 - a. The cares and riches and pleasures of this life hinder spiritual growth (Luke 8:14; 2 Timothy 2:4)
 - b. Sins and weights must be laid aside (Hebrews 12:1)
 - c. Only by God's grace may we "hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14)

CONCLUSION

1. There are numerous examples in Scripture of those who marred an otherwise righteous life by failing to watch in their latter years (eg. Noah, Moses, Solomon, Hezekiah)
2. Our natural tendency is to drift away from God and neglect spiritual duties.
3. Without careful attention we lose our fervency and drop our guard against sin.
4. *"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."* (2 Peter 3:17-18)
5. Being continually mindful of Christ's imminent return is a great incentive to persevering faithfulness, even through great affliction and trials.
6. Paul so laboured and persevered that he "might finish my course with joy" (Acts 20:24)
7. Then at the end of his life he was able to say, *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* (2 Timothy 4:7-8)