

1Peter 11-07-08b

Let's pick up our study now. We're going to tackle the subject of crowns sort of in the context of Eternal inheritance and reward in general, but these things are pretty famous. How many of you remember? hearing about the casting crowns at Jesus feet. There's isn't there is there a Christian Group a singing group or something called casting crowns if I heard of that. Anyway, that's that's the idea. It comes from Revelation 4 which says John, you know John Revelation chapter 4 it's a famous thing.

Here's the voice come up here and we think that that's sort of a foreshadowing or the idea of the rapture of the church so that the perspective that has been in Revelation chapter 1 through 3 on the Isle of Patmos on the Lord's Day. Here's the Lord Jesus Feet like burning brass and the glory and so on and then two and three the letters to the seven churches. In time on the earth doing the church thing then in Revelation chapter 4. He says there's a door standing open in heaven. Did you ever think about that? Why is there a door in heaven? What's a door for? Why isn't heaven open? Why isn't it ubiquitous? Why isn't it? Infinitely accessible. Why does heaven have a door? Well, you can chew on that.

That's not my subject. And The first voice I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me saying come up here when the trumpet shall sound. Voice of the Archangel the Trump of God the dead in Christ rise, right? So we think trumpet voice come up here. This sounds a lot like the rapture. They say by the way that there's no verses on the rapture in the Bible. The ubiquitous they the unknown they the anonymous they. You can't show me any passages says there's a rapture. It's all one thing the second coming in the rapture.

Well I'll contraire mon frere and you'll find out when it happens and I won't have to argue with you. So come up here and I will show you things which must take place after this. Immediately I was in the spirit and behold a Throne set in heaven and one sat on the throne. He who sat there was like a Jasper and Sardis stone in appearance. There was a rainbow around the throne in appearance like an emerald around the throne were 24 thrones and on the thrones I saw 24 elders sitting clothed in white robes and they had crowns of gold on their heads. Crowns of gold on their heads well he goes on to say there's there's lightnings and thunderings and lamps of fire and living creatures and Then in verse 10 it says the 24 elders fell down before him who sat on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever and cast their crowns before the throne saying You are worthy. Oh Lord to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they exist and were created and This of course is the fundamental point that your secular materialist atheist Humanist godless pagan would want to dispute their their prybar gets stuck into the notch of God did not create I See no evidence that God created Well, we're going to we're going to address some of that in a little more detail in an upcoming study. But notice that the first Heavenly piece of information you think wouldn't be great to be somewhere up there in the throne of God realm and get some information Well, this is the first Piece of spoken information that John hears when he's caught up into heaven.

What do they say? The first one they say is holy. Holy. Holy Lord.

God Almighty who was and is and is to come the eternality of God the Absolute righteousness of God. What are the two attributes of God in verse 8? He is absolutely righteous and he is absolutely eternal. He is life in the past life in the present and life in the future Righteousness

and eternal life when these 24 elders Fall down before him and on a single occasion cast their crowns Before him these golden crowns.

They say you are worthy Oh Lord to receive glory and honor and power because You created all things and by your will they continue to exist so now we have two more pieces of information God is not only eternal life and Absolutely righteous But he created the universe and he Continues its existence. He sustains it by his will I can Create something perishable You know the sandcastle idea God creates the universe and he sustains it by his will he keeps it intact integral functioning So the question is what is the binding force of the atom and what is the electromagnetic force of the atom and what is the You know all of these different powers come from well, it's the will of God That's what it is and science can describe it and measure it all they want This God of the gaps thing. Oh, we've we've figured out where magnetism comes from.

So that's not God You've described it. You've measured it. You've analyzed it.

You haven't figured out where it came from Where did where did the where did the ferrous metal come from? Where did magnetic fields come from? Where what what designed that? Well, it's a product of the Big Bang. Where'd the Big Bang come from? I don't know well, I know and I didn't have to get a Six year study of physics to find it out. God created All things and it is by his will that they exist and were created This is what the elders acknowledge hear me closely This passage people read and say well, isn't that's isn't that humble of those elders to throw those crowns? And they miss what the elders say.

Why do they throw the crowns? Listen if I was a 24th elder and I had a gold crown from God and I was sitting on a throne that God gave me Climb down off the throne and take my crown off and throw it What would compel me to do that? Why would I do that? Why wouldn't I say? Well God gave it to me. I really think I ought to keep it He said, you know, it seems pretty Pretty ungrateful is you know, jump off the throne throw the crown away I mean what why would you do that? It tells us why and the why is is integral to our discussion of crowns in general The four living creatures declare the holiness and the eternity of God in verse 8 the elders Cast their crowns before the throne saying you are worthy. Oh Lord You are worthy There would be no thrones.

There would be no crowns. There would be no elders There would have been no opportunity to serve and earn or win those crowns or to exercise the authority that goes with them If it were not for you, it is all of grace. It is all of God and he is worthy to receive any Recognition that is due the elders don't want to sit there and say well See these other 23 guys Don't shine quite as bright as I do.

Do they? Notice, I'm in the center. I'm in the 12th chair 12 is a holy number of God that they don't do that There and this picture and it is a picture By the way, I already pointed out The the door in verse 1, you know, heaven has a floor if it didn't these crowns would just keep on dropping right There's a floor in the throne room and it's described in this on other passages, but there's a floor there's something to walk on and people walk people have feet angels have feet and They cast their crowns at his feet the representation of God in this passage. He's got feet I'm just saying it's in the passage and we just kind of ramble on looking for the dragons and the you know Earthquakes and the third of the stars falling and you miss these details There is a Dimensional representation of a place and I'm sure it's accommodated to our understanding But what what is the truth that transcends the accommodation that transcends the picture? There is

recognition the highest honor that God can bestow Appears to be for humanity appears to be these 24 elders out of all of the human race Certainly out of all the ones in the church age and I think these individuals represent the glorified church They say it's kind of like those servants that worked all day in the field and came in and made the masters food and They said we have done no more than what a servant should do You Oh Lord are worthy if these crowns and thrones represent any kind of worthiness Forget it.

We're not on the throne. We're not wearing the crown this stuff all belongs to you any credit any Glory belongs to God So first and foremost and when you come to a discussion of crowns in the Bible as rewards The first thing we want to establish is we would never Intimate we would never suggest we would never have the remotest idea that boy I sure want one of those crowns for myself Any reward any inheritance any blessing that we receive in the eternal future? We want it because We can sing this song the more we are able to reflect the glory of God the more fully and Loudly and beautifully we will be able to sing this song. There is no mercenary motivation Not a selfish iota of interest in reward or crowns This is the model.

These people have gotten the highest thing you can get and their attitude is expressed in this way It's God who is worthy. Don't forget it and don't let anybody say all you Christians You're just working you want to get some you want to get yourself treasure in heaven if we're doing what we're supposed to if we're achieving righteousness by faith and we truly want to please the Lord and be faithful servants any interest we have in treasure and reward is because it will Magnify and reflect the glory of God and no other reason No other reason. This is the model.

This is the passage anytime you start thinking.

Well, I sure hope my mansion's got a wing on it. And hope it's got a impressive Bunch of gardenias growing in front of it.

So pastors Bible look and say ooh, we just we wouldn't think that way. Well The the word crowns and this is almost universal in Scripture is In the New Testament, I should say is the word Stephanos Where you get the the name Stephen? Stephanos s t e p h a n o s and This really doesn't mean Crown so much as it means wreath.

Even the ones in Revelation 4 for its Stephanos the Stephanos is the victory wreath in the Greek and later the Roman athletic contests the reward for victory. You know, they've kind of polluted this a little bit. Polluted they've they've changed it in the Olympics because they get a great big old gold Medal and it's got some intrinsic value in the ancient Olympics in the ancient games.

The winner of the race or the wrestling match or the jump or whatever it might be got woven laurel branches. You know when they talk about well, he's received many laurels many many awards. The laurel is just at any old tree you could go by any roadside in the ancient world. And they had these laurels growing everywhere and you just split off a thing weave it into a little circle and stick it on your head and the the beauty of that is the Greeks understood that It isn't the intrinsic value of the award It is what the award represents and the concept of Stephanos is one that we also need to get clearly in our mind It's not the value of the award itself.

Not its intrinsic value It's what it represents You notice the rewards in Revelation chapter 2 and 3 the white stone God's gonna give you a rock if you're faithful and overcome you get a rock Well, it is going to be one of the most desirable Rewards there are Not because the rock itself

has any value but because of what it represents who it came from I told you before that that little chip of flint I got from my sister and I value it because of who gave it to me and the occasion from which it came and the memories that it evokes and the the Relationship I have with my sister and and every time I look at that little meaningless chip of flint anybody that Breaks into my house to steal stuff. They're not going to be taken the piece of flint It's just a white rock But to me, it's a valuable white rock and I'll always have it to be right there in my jewelry box right next to my other Trinkets because of what it represents That's the concept embodied in Stephanos It's just a wreath It's a woven wreath and the very best one you could get would be made of gold and that's what the 24 elders have They've got gold laurel wreaths But the idea is is that it does not bear a lot of intrinsic value. It's representational value So that's kind of the first point.

It's a Stephanos now if you turn to first Corinthians chapter 9 Paul more or less in the New Testament introduces this idea of crowns Verse 24 of 1st Corinthians 9. Do you not know that those who run in a race all run but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain And you notice it is in italics run in such a way that you may obtain For everyone who competes For the prize is Temperate in all things is self-controlled. You know how competitors are they're in training can't do that I'm in training can't eat that I'm in training I'm I'm looking ahead The essence of athletic training is looking ahead to a specific contest these if you've ever watched these Bud Greenspan specials they have about the the Olympics. He'll take a you know This is the 19-odd whatever Olympics and then he'll trace these different athletes and he's got a complete documentary of how they Trained and how they prepared and watch them march into the thing and then what happened during their competition and it's a very much a human interest story but One thing you learn from watching any of those is these people that go to the Olympics they train for years They look ahead to that specific Olympics for years.

They're running up and down hills You know Mugu Zambibi over there in Kenya someplace running in the middle of God forsaken nowhere barefoot He's thinking ahead two or three or four years to the Olympics He's thinking about the whole time these mountain bikers and he's Whatever it may be Winter Olympics at skiers and whatnot. They are looking ahead. That's our model Paul says do you not understand that here on earth? These people are just competing for a momentary award a perishable crown this laurel wreath and These people didn't put it up on their shelf and keep it forever that laurels fall apart in a very short time They just they're not like these roses.

You can hang upside down to keep in a petrified mummified fashion My mom's got some of those I was looking at him this past weekend Oh, these are from your grandmother's funeral and you know, these are from your other grandmother's You know, it's kind of a memorial but they're kind of ghastly, you know dead roses. I mean dried roses I mean there and again, it's not the intrinsic value. It's not even the beauty of it.

It's what it represents This is from a meaningful occasion and I'm not putting down the roses. My mom is listening I love those roses, but I'm just saying they look ghastly If I was gonna get something for my wife's anniversary or birthday I wouldn't be going saying who can you get me the driest most petrified? Roses I want something fresh Preferably something that's got roots and is in a pot that she can plant and keep and it'll live on I'm I'm not such a big fan of cut flowers because well, let's celebrate. Let's kill some plants, you know, and you Here's they're

chopped off heads and I just think you know decapitating plants isn't necessarily the best way to celebrate Yeah, I like I like giving seriously.

I like giving a living plant. It's got some it's got some longevity to it I mean, it's still perishable but not not as much That's just me. Don't don't read anything into that.

But here's the thing. He says these athletes compete for a perishable crown It's a momentary is 15 minutes of fame Does anybody know the name of the guy that won the hundred-yard dash in Athens back in you know 215 BC It was a big deal at the time and these people got some other perks They got tax-free and their families got you know first in line at stuff, but it's all gone. It ended You know centuries ago Paul says they do it to obtain a perishable crown But we for an imperishable crown now if you're one that doesn't mind marking their Bible I would circle that word imperishable that word imperishable is Off fart on a pH th ar ton off a pH far tar ton to n off far ton imperishable You see the alpha privet in the front.

That's like a negative it doesn't perish and And that that fart on you get the idea might be somehow related to to Thanatos or to something having to do with death and perishability. It's off fart on And that's only an association that's not an actual etymology, that's how I used to remember it in Greek class I try to do association and it reminds me of Thanatos, but this is far toss pH th a RT OS Imperishable now Paul says They are temperate. They are self-controlled in all things Somebody looking forward to a contest they watch what the they watch how they work out.

They don't work out too much They don't work out too little they vary their workouts. They combine strength with endurance They do all these different things all looking ahead. We should be living our lives Looking ahead.

We're looking ahead. We want to this is the picture Paul gives us We're looking ahead to that time when we can obtain Not in a mercenary fashion. We want to obtain If you go back to first Peter chapter 1 What did Peter say? in verses 3 and following he says blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to his Abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a living hope a Hope of life.

It's the hope of living a living. Hope It's an alive. Hope a hope of being alive.

It's all it's both meanings Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that does not fade away Incorruptible is off our time Imperishable Same word They compete for a perishable crown. We strive for an imperishable And he doesn't even repeat the word Stephanos back there in first Corinthians 9. He just says they compete for a perishable stuff and Stephanos Stephanos Tartos we for an off Tartos. That's the word Peter uses for our inheritance.

It is Imperishable it is eternal What do the four living creatures sing about God in Revelation chapter 4 he is eternal he is eternal life forever and ever past present and future ongoing existence in 2nd Timothy 2 5 Paul makes the same point talking to Timothy says I've pretty much run my race. I finished my course and I know That in 2nd Timothy 2 5 he says if anyone competes in athletics he is not crowned Unless he competes according to the rules He cannot win the crown unless he stays in bounds unless he starts after the gun goes off Unless he finishes without bumping anybody else off the track He's got to compete according to the the

rules Now in 1st Corinthians 9 25 and 2nd Timothy 2 5 how many crowns are there? In the Greek games, you don't see The bronze or the silver there is the laurel wreath and there's nothing they didn't have You know honorable mentions They didn't have consolation prizes the guy that comes in first gets the laurel wreath the rest of y'all Try again next time and that's it And in 1st Corinthians 9 5 they compete for a corruptible. It didn't say they compete for corruptible crowns.

Does it? There's one reward for finishing. Well We compete for an incorruptible singular crown is what Paul says he doesn't say we're competing for crowns a Crown Jesus speaking to the church at Philadelphia in Revelation chapter 3 verses 10 and 11 Says you all are going to be kept from the hour of trial that is coming to test the whole world So hold fast to what you have so that no one takes your crown Revelation 3 10 and 11 hold fast to what you have that no one takes your crown the implication being if you don't hold fast to what you have somebody may come along and Remove that crown singular singular in 2nd Timothy chapter 4 verse 8 Paul Talking about the return of the Lord. Jesus says the crown of righteousness Crown singular is laid up for all those who love Christ's appearing I know that there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness Not only for me, but for all those who love his appearing Now if you love Christ's appearing, what does that really mean? I mean, is there any Christian who seriously wouldn't love Christ's appearing? Why would you get a crown just for saying Wow? Rapture great What is what does it mean to love Christ's appearing? What does the athlete do when he's training? Why is he spending four years getting ready for the Olympics? What does he love? He loves competing in that Olympic game He loves finishing well in the Olympics or in whatever upcoming contest There is if you love a thing you have it in your mind If you love a person you have them in your mind.

It guides the way you act it conditions the way you think it Resorts your priorities and even your goals Right, if you love the appearing of the Lord, it changes the way we live, right? all those who love the Lord's appearing who are looking forward to it and living in its light and Adjusting their behavior in accordance with the fact of it are going to receive the crown of righteousness What's the other thing the four living creatures talk about? holy, holy, holy Is he who is and was and is to come right Eternality and righteousness the crowns that we have seen so far Crown of life crown of righteousness and In Peter's crown of glory All of these things are spoken of in the throne room of God all of them partake of the essence of God all of them Reflect the character and the glory of God It's all the same thing When we finish well when we hear that well done thou good and faithful servant they reward whatever tangible or Ethereal form that it may take in the eternal future It is the crown of righteousness. It is the crown of life. It is the crown of glory It is the imperishable crown that fadeth not away.

Our inheritance is off Tartan. It fadeth not away it is a Crown of life. It is a crown of glory.

It is a crown of righteousness. It is all of those things simultaneously How could you have a crown of righteousness that was not imperishable? How could you have a crown of life? It was not imperishable. How could you have a crown of glory? That was not a crown of life That was not a crown of righteousness.

They're all inextricably linked to the beauty of the glory of God the Lord Jesus himself Said and James records this in James 1 12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation For when he has been approved doki madzo He will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to

those who love him If you love him, you love his appearing, right? If you're looking forward to being with him and seeing him at his return Well, James says the Lord has promised the crown of life to those who love him Paul says it's the crown of righteousness Awarded by the righteous judge for those who love his appearing well You love him and you love his appearing you're gonna parse those two out and say well you love his appearing so you get this Crown of righteousness you love him. So you're gonna get the crown. It's the same crown.

Don't you think? Seems that way to me Jesus told the church at Smyrna another one of your letters in Revelation 2 and 3. This is chapter 2 verse 10 He told the ones at Smyrna if you are faithful unto death during this 10-day testing that is coming I will give you the crown of life Revelation 2 10 be faithful They told Philadelphia. I'm going to keep you from the hour of testing. Be sure nobody takes your crown They've already got a crown.

Maybe they had been tested earlier and they Have established an inheritance he says remain faithful don't fade don't fail don't Drop out in the homestretch that no one take your crown these this idea of inheritance is Reflected in a lot of different passages, but no more Clearly than here with these crowns You remember in first Peter 3 9? Peter said in this very letter We're studying not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling but on the contrary blessing knowing that you were called to this Called to be the stopping place for evil. You don't reflect it. You don't bounce it back You're not a lex talionis eye for an eye person You have heard it said Jesus Taught I say to you love your enemies do good those who hate you pray for those who despite Bad stuff hits us and it dies It stops.

It's absorbed. It's it's killed doesn't multiply doesn't spawn You were called to this so that you might inherit a blessing You were called to suffer and not offer suffering in return So that you could inherit a blessing Didn't he say you'll be tested and if you endure the testing you will receive Same idea acts 2032 now brethren I commend you to God and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up and The word of his grace is able to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified He doesn't say they've already got it He says I commend you I recommend to you. I suggest to you I exhort and encourage you stick with the word of his grace Because it is able to give you an inheritance among those who are sanctified its potential acts 2618 To open their eyes to turn them from darkness to light from the power of Satan to God So that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance This is God's purpose.

God wants all of us to inherit Forgiveness of sins and inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me Doesn't take much faith if you're not facing opposition Doesn't take much faith when life is easy and you're traveling in the green valleys There's a great old gospel song that talks about it's when you're on the mountain when you're having to climb through the rugged terrain You know Is the God who's God in the valley also God on the mountain? Do you have as much faith in the good times as you do in the bad By the way, you can look at that either way you can be in the valley of the shadow and the mountain is the glorified Transfiguration experience, but whichever way you look at it Are we consistent do we compete according to the rules? Do we train do we? Control ourselves Do we have that sobriety that dedication that manifests itself in consistency Romans chapter 8 verse 17? We are children of God and if children then heirs Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ if we are children no matter what we are heirs and joint heirs with Christ if Being a child of God is unconditional being an Inheriting child of God is conditional if indeed we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified together Suffering is an opportunity It's not one I would necessarily seek out But when it comes

it's an opportunity for faith faith is an opportunity for inheritance inheritance is an opportunity to reflect the glory of God the life of God the grace of God Galatians 3 18 If inheritance comes by law just by doing it is no longer of promise God gave to Abraham by promise. It is potential. It is a promise Ephesians 1 14 the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance Ephesians 1 18 Paul prays that the eyes of our understanding would be enlightened so that we might know what is the hope of his calling and what? Are the riches of the glory of his inheritance among the Saints? It's a reflection of God's glory.

That's God's purpose for us It's why he has scattered us precisely and exactly to where we are Colossians 1 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in the light God has qualified us Hebrews 9 15 Christ is the mediator of the new covenant by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant that those who are called Hear me now Christ died Mediated the new covenant through his death why? So that those who are called may receive the promise of the internal inheritance. It's not just rescue from the lake of fire it's not just Getting through the pearly gates as they would have us think Inheritance God wants us. He calls us to inheritance.

He wants to put this Stephanos on our heads Because it reflects his glory fulfills his purpose Luke 12 33 Sell what you have and give alms provide yourselves money bags, which do not grow old a Treasure in the heavens that does not fail off our toss Where no thief approaches and no moth destroys Look ahead first Corinthians 15 52 through 54 in a moment the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet the trumpet will sound the dead will be Raised incorruptible. We shall be changed for this corruptible must put on in corruption Tartos and off Tartos This mortal must put on immortality So when this corruptible has put on in corruption and this mortal has put on immortality Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written death is swallowed up in victory The Stephanos is a victory crown every one of us that wears a Stephanos manifests Christ's victory over sin and over death We are all it's it is as though instead of putting the Stephanos on his own head as the victor of the cross and over death and the grave and sin he Distributes that Stephanos to all of our heads. He took what we deserve and we end up receiving what he deserves Right up to and including that great victory crown 2nd Timothy 1 10 Now it has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel Immortality not just existence Eternal life life that partakes of the very essence and presence of God in Revelation 21 27 talking about the New Jerusalem There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles or causes an abomination or a lie Only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life incorruptible undefiled does not fade away We know from Isaiah that the grass withers and the flower fades.

It is the Word of our God. Which is why Paul commends the Word of God's grace. And I'll leave you with Ezekiel 47 12. Talking about the river of life flowing out from the throne in Jerusalem. Along the bank of that river on this side and that will grow all kinds of trees used for food their leaves will not wither and Their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month because their water flows from the sanctuary from the very presence of God. Their fruit will be for food and their leaves will be for medicine.

Remember in Revelation where John says the tree of life leaves will be taken out for the healing of the nations. Ezekiel says the very same thing. There is a tremendous opportunity for us with the gifts that God has given us his word his spirit the exhortations of these great passages to Compete to win the Stephanos that reflects his life his glory his righteousness and the

Imperishability the incorruptibility of life with God in the eternal future, but the path to that crown is arduous. Like anything worth having it requires Sacrifice it entails suffering. But who could suggest that it wouldn't be worth it That it wouldn't be the greatest thing that any human being could achieve to be in some way reflecting the glory and the grace of God Eternally never taken away never fades.

In our daily grind our little moment-by-moment tests and trials we are competing we're training we're running our race and We want to run We want to compete not as somebody who's beating the air. We want to run not as somebody who's stopping and starting and You know tortoise in the hare type of thing where the rabbit says he's ahead and he's going to stop for a while. Consistency. Loving the appearing of the Lord Jesus loving the Lord Jesus himself looking ahead and saying I want to be of service I want to be a reflection of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's all it takes to be an overcomer and to be an inheritor Reflected in the symbolism of these great Stefanoi, well, that's our study on the crowns. We'll pick up and we will go a long way toward concluding our study of the first epistle of Peter Next time as we work our way through this relatively short chapter 5. We'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the tremendous Almost incomprehensible grace that you have bestowed on us when we were So insignificant and so low and The psalmist says what is man that thou art mindful of him or the son of man that thou visit us him and yet you crown Us with glory and honor we're grateful for the Lord Jesus who through his Taking on our flesh and our life and bearing our burdens suffering our punishment Redeeming us from our sins has made it possible for us to enter into these Tremendously wonderful things. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will keep that knowledge alive in our souls that it will motivate us and encourage us to run our race with patience to Be qualified to reflect your glory both now and in the ages to come. We pray it in Jesus name.

Amen