



**"No Cross,
No Crown"**

The Cross and Crown

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I wonder what the father thought, night after night, perhaps planted at his window, in



hopes that his lost son, the Prodigal, would return. He must've worried about his son's health – whether he was eating regularly; whether he'd gotten injured or fallen ill – even whether he was still alive. He probably questioned himself, wondering whether he had done the right thing. Perhaps he should have denied his son's request and demanded that he stay at home rather than give him his inheritance prematurely. That way, at least, he would know that his son was safe.

As I reflected on Jesus' parable, I was struck by the father's wisdom. Imagine how the story might have ended had he not given in to his son's request. The son would have lived at home for the rest of his father's life, no doubt growing embittered and resentful with every passing day. When his father ultimately passed away and he received his inheritance, he might well have gone through that same prodigal experience and squandered all of his wealth – but, this time, without a safety net to catch him. When, desperate and destitute, he finally came to his senses, it would have been too late, with his father gone and his older brother not one to forgive and forget.

I sometimes wish that our heavenly Father would rein in our wandering spirits and coerce us to live under his wise, righteous laws. However, God, in his wisdom, recognizes that coerced obedience is not redemptive, so, like the father in the parable, he gives us the latitude to go our own way. Also like the father, in his boundless love and mercy, he stands waiting to welcome us back into his household if we only come to our senses.

Remember that Revelation 3:20, "behold, I stand at the door and knock," was written to the church. It is not only those outside the church who turn their backs from God's wisdom and choose their own way. Christians also make choices, in the short and long term, that either affirm or reject God's perfect path. In those times of rebellion, we must not misinterpret God's forbearance for his approval. Often, he is merely waiting for us to come to our senses and return to his arms of grace.

Do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

(Romans 2:4)

Thanks for Praying!

God is still on the throne! Please continue to intercede with us for

- our Sunday morning Connection Circles (small group discipleship classes for all ages),
- our fall ministries and upcoming leadership retreat,
- God to call laborers, including new interns, and
- financial provision for the ministries and missionaries we support.



Representing Resurrection Life Church and Spring Garden Academy at University of Valley Forge

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 you in praying about, please let us know.

Thanks so much to those who have kept in touch! To those whom I owe calls or letters, I apologize! I'm a poor correspondent, but please know that you're never out of my prayers!

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* **Important:** If you'd rather not be on our mailing list, we won't be offended! Just call or drop us a note, 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!

Did you know?

Most people know that the Bible is the best-selling book of all time, with approximately 80 million copies are printed per year, and about 5 – 8 billion total copies in circulation, but did you know that most Bibles are given away for free rather than sold?

“As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ (...)
Freely you have received; freely give.” (Matthew 10:7,8)



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