



# THE CROSS *and* CROWN

*"No Cross, No Crown"*

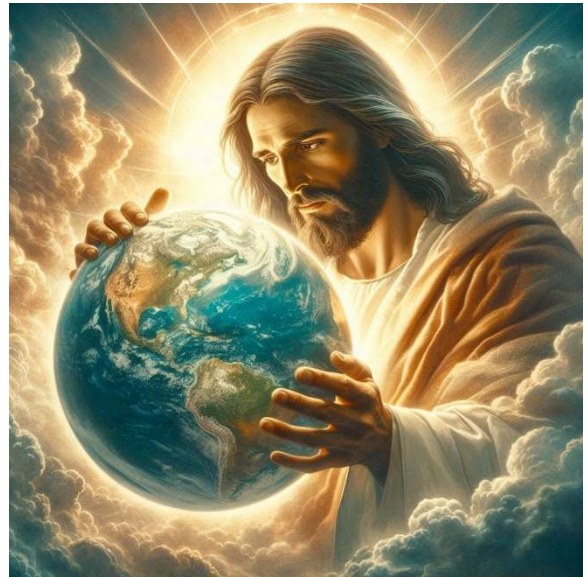
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What's your favorite parable? It's hard to choose just one, isn't it? One of my favorites is found in the last chapter of Jonah. You remember the story: Jonah was sitting out in the hot sun, angry that God accepted Nineveh's repentance rather than destroying the city. For a time, God provided a vine to shield Jonah from the heat, but when the vine was chewed by a worm and died, Jonah was so angry that he wished that he were dead. God then delivered the moral of the parable, contrasting Jonah's ridiculous mourning over the death of a plant with his lack of concern for the thousands of Ninevites.

When God was on earth in bodily form, he used words to relate parables. In Acts 10, he used a vision in the parable that he shared to change Peter's attitude towards Gentiles. To me, though, the most amazing parables by far are the ones that God, who created and controls everything, weaves together out of living beings and real events, as he did with Jonah – and as he does with us!

Through parables, Jesus taught about the kingdom of heaven and the folly of pursuing earthly things, illustrated the foolishness of people's attitudes and priorities, and nudged people forward in faith, love and true repentance. These are things he still wants to communicate.



Has God ever orchestrated events around you to deliver a message of encouragement, or one of correction? I believe that God speaks to us in parables more often than we realize. Remember that Jesus prefaced his explanation of the parable of the sower by telling his disciples that its meaning was hidden from most of the people who heard it, who were "ever hearing and never understanding." (Matthew 13:14)

Let us practice listening for God's voice; acknowledging his presence in all our ways. Instead of lamenting the reversals and setbacks that come to us, or the ruts that we seem to get stuck in, let's practice asking, "God, what lesson do you have for me in this?"

*Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance.*

*(Proverbs 1:5)*

# Thanks for Praying!

Because you kneel and pray, we are empowered to stand and fight! Please continue praying with us for:

- two in our church/school family who need housing,
- our upcoming mini-musical and fundraiser,
- people to be called to missions during April's missions convention, and
- laborers to be sent to our harvest field.







Two of the lilies placed annually in memory of Pastor W. Howard Roberson, who came to Christ on Resurrection Sunday.

## 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! Knowing that you're engaged in our struggle and praying alongside us encourages us so much!

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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 at [crossandcrown.online/subscribe](https://crossandcrown.online/subscribe) !

## Did you know?

Some churches in the Eastern tradition refer to the week after Resurrection Sunday as Bright Week. Various explanations put it down to the joy and optimism that followed the Resurrection, the light of the Gospel, the Kingdom of God which the Resurrection ushered in, or the white robes that those baptized on Resurrection Sunday traditionally wore throughout the following week.

**You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. (...) I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. (John 16:20,22)**



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