



THE CROSS and CROWN

"No Cross, No Crown"

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In one of the most famous chapters in the Bible, Paul writes that, no matter what he has, unless he has love, he is nothing. I've been sobered by this thought lately, particularly in this past political season. The Christian church has been very vocal, but, unfortunately, not much of what came out from the church came out of love. I have no delusions of being able to change that – but I can (and must!) change my own attitude.

Paul wrote that love is patient and kind. He also wrote (in Galatians 5) that the fruit of the Spirit is patience and kindness. Love does not envy; the fruit of the Spirit is peace – satisfaction with what one has. Love is not boastful or proud; the fruit of the Spirit gentleness. Love is not self-seeking; the fruit of the Spirit is self-control. Love is not easily angered; the fruit of the Spirit is joy. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth; the fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness. In short, love is the fruit of the Spirit. If I'm not overflowing with love, there's a problem with my relationship with the Spirit.



Jesus said that we will bear fruit if we remain in him. If we are not producing Godly fruit, it is because we are no longer abiding in him. If we are bearing the fruit of bitterness, resentment and, frankly, hatred, we should be very concerned about what sources we are actually abiding in and about what it is that's cultivating that carnal fruit in us.

I'm committing myself to examining myself: my heart, my attitudes and my relationships. Will you join me in this? If I find that I'm holding on to grudges, that I'm living in unforgiveness, that I wish the worst for any individuals or any group of people, the first thing that I need to do is repair my relationship with God.

We cannot love those who hate us and bless those who persecute us in our own human ability. That kind of love flows only from the True Vine.

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8)

Brothers and Sisters, Pray for Us!

We are so grateful for the hard work you're doing on your knees! 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
- our end-of-year outreach events.



We celebrated our 130th anniversary with the sacraments of baptism and Communion.

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?

The oldest known vine that is still producing grapes is in Slovenia and dates back to the 1600s. The modest harvest of grapes that it produces every year is fermented and fills about ten miniature bottles of wine.

This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (John 15:8)



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