

KING OF TWO CROWNS: JESUS' RESURRECTION

...Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. (Revelation 1:5, NIV)

THE EXPRESSION, THOUGH ALMOST NEVER LITERAL ANYMORE, is still universally used across athletics. When a player prevails, it is not unusual to hear an announcer say that the winner has been “crowned the champion.”

In golf, as in most sports, we’re more about trophies and medals and checks these days. Few champions wear crowns—though we might say that those who win in Tucson under the sponsoring watch of the charitable Conquistadores gain some regal headwear. This year, the gold-colored chrome helmet went to Steve Stricker, winner of the Cologuard Classic.

We have been considering the crowns of Christ this season, as we move through a weekend of remembering—and celebrating—his work on the cross and his return to life. Last week, we saw the crown of thorns, where Christ bore the curse of sin and shed his blood for our atonement.

But if the death of Christ is all we have to commemorate, we are no better than other adherents, whose faiths are built on the ideas of now-dead leaders. Many of these other leaders, including Moses, who gave the Jewish people their beloved Old Testament law, lived lives worth emulating. And yet none of those leaders remains. All have returned to the earth.

When we recognize Jesus’ resurrection, however, we base our faith on the life of one who lives. It is not only his former life that directs our paths; it is his current life. And that life is one in which he wears another crown. This is the crown of a king on the throne.

If Jesus’ kingship is amazing in itself, the wonder is multiplied when we realize that he has invited us into his kingdom. Where our sin would make us outsiders, his grace—when received with belief and repentance—welcomes us in. The exalted says to the undeserving, “You are my brother, my sister, a joint-heir with me to all of this.”

What do we celebrate at Easter? That we have a Savior, one who is living and leading. And that we are saved when we have relationship with him. There is no trophy as good as that. Not even close.

Opening questions Have you ever earned a significant award or trophy? How did you feel when you received it? • Have you ever seriously considered yourself a part of Christ’s kingdom?

READING Luke 24:1-8; 1 Timothy 1:15-17; 1 Corinthians 15:42-49

Jesus’ fulfilled words (Luke 24)

Can you capture a sense of awe from this passage? What causes this? How was the resurrection a fulfillment of Jesus’ own words?

Sinners saved by the King (1 Timothy 1)

How did Paul describe himself in this passage? Can you identify with him? Yet he ends with great praise—why? What would your own song of praise to God include?

Changed for good (1 Corinthians 15)

What specific differences will the resurrection make for us as described here? How well do you think we bear Christ’s likeness?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2018 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study can be found at <https://youtu.be/NHiUXtitiKQ>