

Your Heavenly Crown

(Transcript)

By Warren Zehrung – 8/9/2014

In today's sermon we will be looking at our tremendous reward that comes as a result of having been called at this time – by God – and placed in the Church of Jesus Christ. When will you receive your reward – and what is it?

Your Heavenly Crown is **salvation** from this deadly world, and being made a member of the eternal family of God – as Sons of God – as Children of God forever and ever. Our reward is not yet here. Your Heavenly Crown will be received at the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Paul knew it – and he said:

2 Timothy 4:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me [he did not yet have his reward already] a **crown** of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that **love His appearing**.

Do we **love His appearing** and all that entails – living Christian precepts forever more? Do we love God's way and His Truth – or do we seek to avoid it. Doing as we please – is not "loving His appearing." Paul urgently needed some help and assistance – so he appealed to Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:

9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

Paul had a lot to accomplish and needed help. Much of Paul's support group in the Church had fallen apart – like when most the people we depended on in the Worldwide Church of God proved to be unfaithful and undependable. We depended on them to do the right things – Feast, Sabbath services, anointings, communication and contact with brethren... We depended on them to say and write the true doctrines... We depended on them to counsel and baptize the brethren... Those leaders in Worldwide went out from us – because they were not of us.

1 John 2:

19 They went out from us, because they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

It became clearly manifest that the **leaders** of Worldwide were not of us.

Brethren, **Your Crown** is reserved in heaven for you.

1 Peter 1:

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in **heaven** for you.

God is keeping track of your reward – not any man or organization.

When you refine gold with fire – the dross or slag comes to the surface and the gold becomes purer. The impurities are being removed. The Scriptures equate our fiery trials with refinement. When Gold has been tried or refined in the fire seven times – you get Pure gold.

James 1:

12 Blessed is the man that endures temptation [trials]: for when he is tried, he shall receive the **crown of life**, [Your Heavenly Crown] which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

If you do not appreciate what you have – you might end up losing everything. Our calling to this way of life is of inestimable value. Do we know what is required of us to remain eligible for our reward?

Revelation 3:

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou have, that **no man take thy crown**.

It is possible to lose **Your Heavenly Crown** that you have been so diligently working toward.

It is **Your Heavenly Crown** – but it is not yet locked in – because if we go off course we will lose the right to it and someone else could qualify for it.

Brethren, this applies more to our time **Now** – than at any time in History!!!

Jesus sent this message – especially to us...the Church of God.

Jude :

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the **faith which was once delivered unto the saints**.

That faith is the type of Christianity that Jesus taught.

Make no mistake about it Brethren – there are many substitute “Christian faiths” which are not acceptable to God at all.

Our faith is not an easy or fun faith.

Revelation 2:

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a **crown of life**. [Your Heavenly Crown.]

We saw that we were to: Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Because – Right Now is the time that men are turning aside...

Thinking they still possess the faith – when in fact they are losing what they once had.

Our Crown – “**Your Heavenly Crown**” is speaking of what we are to become.

It is Our reward. It is ...Our Place with God.

You cannot do what you naturally feel like doing – and retain **Your Heavenly Crown**. Those in the world – do what they **feel** like doing. But this is Satan’s world isn’t it?

Our place is in the Kingdom of God – that is what we are in training for.

Revelation 5:

10 And hast made us unto our God **kings** and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. [Wearing our kingly crown with Jesus Christ]

Notice this: - the Scripture does not say – “Hold on to your crown.” It says to hold on to what you **“have.”**

We have not yet received **our Heavenly Crown** – that will be with Christ at His coming.

Matthew 16:

27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Revelation 22:

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

What is it that the people of God have??? Jesus is saying that there is a danger that we will be inclined to lose what He wants the Church of God to have.

Our last era of the church – is now predisposed – to letting go of the precious things we **once had**. Jesus said, “Hold that fast which thou have.” What is it that the people of God have been given? Wherein lies the whole Truth of God’s way of life?

What is it that has been restored to the saints? It is an understanding to live God’s way with a fervor – as Paul did – as James did – as Moses did.

We too must reject... turn our backs on society (Rome, Egypt) and the world – and live wholeheartedly towards God’s way of life.

“Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

Be a total Christian in believing and in living our Faith. Then, you will not lose **Your Heavenly Crown** which is stored up for you in heaven.

You do not have **Your Heavenly Crown** yet. Jesus said:

John 14:

2 In my Father's house are many mansions [offices, positions, jobs, duties]: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Jesus is telling us, “I’ve got just the spot for you.” Those spots will all be filled. They are reserved – and someone is going to fill that spot – will it be us or someone else?

Jesus is the **head** of the Church. We all know that – do we not? There was a time when the Church was being established for the first time. Jesus said,

Matthew 16:

18 ...I will build my Church.

God the Father individually calls each and every one of us and places us exactly in the body of Christ where it is best for us. We the Church are the **body** of Christ.

Ephesians 5:

23 ...Christ is the **head** of the Church: and He is the savior of the body.

1 Corinthians 12:

18 ...God set the members every one of them in the **body**, as it hath pleased Him.

Let's look at this analogy of the **head** and the **body** that Christ utilizes in the Scriptures. When the Church was in its toddler phase, it was like a child that had not yet learned to **walk**. A toddler knows that he wants to walk – but lacking the coordination – he is unable to do so.

Jesus Christ the head knew **what to do** – but the body was not yet able to walk the walk. It would take growth, development and maturity for the Church body to walk in Christ the head of the Church.

1 John 2:

6 He that saith he abides in Him ought himself also so to **walk**, even as He walked.

1 John 1:

7 But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

After that, the Church matured sufficiently after the toddler stage to be the body that Christ intended. The Church brethren followed in the steps of Jesus Christ—one head and one body. Christ the head directed His body the Church to walk in His way.

Colossians 1:

18 He [Jesus Christ] is the **head** of the **body**, the Church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.

That is the way that the true Church of God should operate—with Christ supreme—leading His Body. Continuing with the analogy, how can the Church be characterized today?

What we see are a lot of distinctive bodies of brethren who are not knit together in one body with Christ as their head. A bunch of differing bodies cannot have one and the same head. What we find today are many separate organizations which claim to have Christ as their head – but how could that be – for **Christ is not divided** (1 Corinthians 1:13).

Ephesians 2:

21 In [Jesus Christ] all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 In whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

And since Christ is not divided, He could not be detached and partitioned among other estranged bodies that do not recognize or fellowship with one another. The Scriptures are clear that Jesus has only **one** Church – so where or what is it?

One head would not direct its body to go in many different directions. And the One head – Jesus Christ – does not have many bodies – only one. Who are they?

But what we do find today are all these **head-less** church bodies which are not fitly framed together—Church groups that will have nothing to do with each other—and that is confusion. God is not the author of **confusion** (1 Corinthians 14:33).

So Brethren, we have a problem to think seriously about. We all claim to be of one Spirit—and indeed the true Church of God is of one Spirit.

Ephesians 4:

4 There is one **body**, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

From God's point of view then, His Church is of one Spirit – but that is not what we see when we look around – is it? We find lots of church bodies that will not associate with other Church brethren.

Since that is the case – and no corporate organization represents the one true Church of God, then God's true people must be **interspersed** throughout the scattered and diverse organizations. But in order to fulfill Christ's definition of the Church they must yet somehow be compactly knit and framed together. They must then be an **underground** Church of God - of brethren who recognize one another and genuinely care for each other across corporate dividing walls and barriers.

True Church brethren are not seeking political status or social prominence in the church. The true Church brethren are not found among those in the "in crowd" who seek the glory, loyalty and preeminence in their corporate associations.

*The true saints are reaching out and **laying their lives down** for one another – just as Jesus Christ gave us example:

1 John 3:

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

The church brethren in the larger groups do not know what it means "to lay down their lives" and they are not being taught this all important qualifying factor.

*The true Church brethren are speaking often to each other.

Malachi 3:

16 They that feared the Lord spoke often one to another.

The church brethren in the larger groups are persuaded not to have contact with those others who are led by God's Holy Spirit.

*True Church brethren fully recognize one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

One member who responded to this week's "Countdown to the Return of Jesus Christ" wrote:

"The problem is that everyone who needs to hear this is sitting in their weekly service being told by their minister that their organization is "the church." I just cannot imagine that God is okay with this arrangement. God's people are scattered and isolated because the men at the top of their respective organizations will not work with others in different organizations. They refuse to acknowledge each other as **brothers**, yet they all claim to believe the same thing. How can this be???"

Another member who responded to this week's Countdown:

"The words used by the "heads" – the leaders of the different COG organizations reveal rancor, division and utter contempt for one another. Such things are not of God. It's no wonder that the Laodicean Church is being caught unaware. They are all too busy fighting and striving for the pre-eminence. They have lost the pure and undefiled character that God is looking for in His people – the Gold tried in the fire. The truth is right in front of their faces and they don't see it."

Another member who responded to this week's Countdown:

"The most important attitude, besides faith, God is looking at in his people, is the greatest commandment, of loving God first and our neighbor. **That is the foundation of all knowledge. That is the core trunk of the tree.** No matter where they have ended up, we are to be gracious and love the tares, the Laodiceans and the foolish virgins, but we are not to emulate them." End Comments

The last person to make comments brings up a good point – and that is that there is so much discerning to do on our part. We often do not know what category people are in. Are they Children of God or, are they in the world?

We cannot dismiss people carte blanche and out of hand – and just claim to have a right relationship with God.

1 John 4:

20 If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

Loving all of our brothers and sisters in Christ - that is the foundation of all knowledge. That is the core trunk of the tree. Where are our brothers and sisters in Christ today? Sometimes they are hard to find – and sometimes they are hard to recognize. But there are so many Scriptures that tell us what our interaction with them must be like if you are to receive **Your Heavenly Crown.**

Maybe your brothers and sisters in Christ got kicked out of Worldwide because they refused to go along with the Tkachs' lies and excesses.

Your brothers and sisters in Christ refused to be a part of the apostasy.

You know that a lot of those who count themselves to be in the True Church today **never took a stand** against the apostasy.

When you stand for what is right - plan to be abandoned and forsaken – this tells us how fickle the hierarchical structure has always been.

Some moved out of Worldwide during the apostasy without ever being castigated, reprimanded or chastised.

Perhaps some moved out of Worldwide with the large exodus of the mid 1990's without ever leaving their seats in the church hall they had been attending all along.

Have they been tested in their love of the Truth? Perhaps they have not stopped yet to ask themselves what True Christianity is. Where are our brothers and sisters in Christ today?

Maybe they were run off by a harsh minister – it happened to way too many of our brethren.

Or, perhaps the congregation became so sinful that our brothers and sisters in Christ left – because they could not abide the sinful environment. They just could not stand it anymore.

Where are our brothers and sisters in Christ today? And it is not only our brothers and sisters in Christ to whom we must let our light shine.

John 17:

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that **the world may believe** that thou hast sent me.

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that **the world may know** that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

If the Churches of God and the brethren would endeavor to be **one** in fellowship and devotion, it would be a superb witness so that the world would **believe** and **know**.

Right now Jesus is preparing positions of rulership in His father's kingdom – for us. We can see what we must hold fast to – by looking at some of the things that are let loose of...

Lately, Have you noticed people becoming more zealous for God's precious Truth, as a general rule, **or**, has a general let-down begun to occur among the people of God? We are going down the tubes – just like the secular world all around us.

Hebrews 11:

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a **rewarder** of them that diligently seek him.

That is what **Your Heavenly Crown** is – the reward for living a life of diligently seeking God and His way. Here is another verse that promises **Your Heavenly Crown**.

Colossians 3:

24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the **reward** of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

But what about those who do not “Hold Fast?” The Church is letting down considerably! Could this be us??? Let’s examine ourselves.

Many in the Church of God have not quit their faith all together – that would be “cold” – they are just lackadaisically puttering along... half-hearted and easy going about their Christianity. God is Not pleased with that careless and relaxed approach to Christian living.

The approach that Jesus is looking for is described in Mark 12:33 - this is close to the Kingdom of God.

Mark 12:

33 To love God with all the heart,[wholeheartedly], and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, [and with all the life,] and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself!

Christianity would be a lot easier without all that “neighbor stuff” – wouldn’t it??? So we see that a relaxed Christian is not pleasing to God – notice:

Revelation 3:

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither **cold** nor **hot**, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Christians today will say (as if that counts for something), “I’ve been in the Church for 40 years – I’ve got all the booklets, I go to some exotic place for the Feast every year. I do it all – I have it all. Brethren, those members in the larger church groups think that they are rich and in need of nothing.

Revelation 3:

17 Because thou sayest, **I am rich**, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

What purity of Spiritual character and Godly life does God expect of His people? Gold tried in the fire is Godly righteous character.

Revelation 3:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou may be rich; and white raiment [Righteousness], that thou may be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou may see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

God holds out **Your Heavenly Crown** for you.

Revelation 22:

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my **reward** is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

God expects you to look forward to Your Heavenly Crown – but we have not received it yet.

2 John 1:

8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have worked, but that we receive a full reward. [A **full-sized Heavenly Crown**]

9 Who so ever transgresses, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

The “Doctrine of Christ” is the entire way of life that Jesus represented by His life. Serving, forgiveness, humility, laying down His life for the least of the brethren...

You might say – I’m a no body – how can I have a **Heavenly Crown** that will amount to anything? Jesus doesn’t think quite like church leaders who look forward to being fifth or third in the Kingdom of God. But Jesus was **servant** to all. He became the servant’s servant! [Like Abigail in 1 Samuel 25:41]

Matthew 10:

41 He that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

We are in this together – when you help someone to be in the Kingdom of God – their Heavenly Crown will also be **Your Heavenly Crown!**

Matthew 10:

42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. [**Heavenly Crown**]

Do we encourage people – or do our words pull people down? That is not to say we should do nothing – just the opposite as we saw with regard to Laodiceans.

Matthew 16:

27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall **reward** every man according to his works. [**Your Heavenly Crown**]

We are supposed to be busy forgiving, preaching, helping, teaching, loving, serving, praying, fasting, encouraging...

A verse that shows that God in heaven is keeping track of how we live our day-to-day lives is 1 Corinthians 3:8:

1 Corinthians 3:

8 Now he that plants and he that waters are one: and every man shall receive **his own reward** according to his own labor.

Planting and watering are referring to the building of Christian relationships among all brethren – reaching out and impacting their lives. This isn't about just attending Sabbath services, tithing, summer camp, church dances and pot lucks, but true **family** relationship building.

When you meet a Christian, do you say to yourself, "This is going to be my true friend not only for the rest of my life – but for all eternity?" And then begin to serve them in that way?

Brethren we live according to the rules and laws of God's Kingdom – **now**.

Philippians 3:

20 For our conversation [citizenship] is in **heaven**; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Here is the **Key** - to **Your Heavenly Crown** in the next few verses:

Philippians 3:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His **glorious** body [That is speaking of **Your Heavenly Crown** that never fades away].

We serve one another – Paul equated what he accomplished – building the Church – the brethren – the people - as His **Crown**.

There is no chapter break as we go to:

Philippians 4:

1 Therefore, **my brethren** dearly beloved and longed for, **my joy** and **my crown**, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

The mature and converted **brethren** are Paul's **Heavenly Crown**. Please understand that it is **not** corporate organizations and their ambitious leaders that we rely upon – but the brethren themselves who are **Your Heavenly Crown**. The Scriptures shift into **high-gear** now.

It should be clear by now that we should not be asking **What** is our Heavenly Crown – but **Who** is our Heavenly Crown. Do we think of our scattered brethren in that way? – **Paul did**.

1 Thessalonians 2:

19 For what is our hope?, or joy?, or what is our **crown** of rejoicing? Are not even you (plural) [the people – the converted brethren are our crown] in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

That is why one of the members commented about loving God first **and our neighbor**: "That is the foundation of all knowledge. That is the core trunk of the tree." It is the dispersed **Brethren** who are the guarantee of Your Heavenly Crown.

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:19 again! "For what is our hope?, or joy?, or what is our **crown** of rejoicing? Are not even you [Brethren] in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

Our responsibility is to help develop a people ready for the resurrection and the coming of Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 2:

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

There is no chapter break as we go to:

1 Thessalonians 3:

- 1** Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;
- 2** And sent Timothy, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to **establish** you, and to **comfort** you concerning your faith:
- 3** That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

It is tough being a Christian – no doubt about it. **Befriend** everyone who can be of like spirit with us.

Luke 6:

- 22** Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.
- 23** Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, **your reward is great in heaven**: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

But you have **Your Heavenly Crown** that never fades away awaiting us – Jesus Christ will bring it with Him.

End: Your Heavenly Crown