

A Crown Without Jewels

By - Max Lucado



Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. – Hebrews 4:16

Like most kids who grew up in the church, I was enrolled in Awana the moment I had the ability to memorize John 3:16. Not that I'm complaining, I enjoyed the evenings of games and Bible stories. However, like every Bible club for small children, Awana had its share of speed bumps. One such bump appeared during a lesson where a young woman was sharing her testimony. She had just finished telling everyone the story of how her grandfather accepted Christ on his deathbed when a hand shot up in the back of the audience.

"Does this mean we can do whatever we want as long as we say sorry before we die?" asked the child. I can vaguely remember the look of panic that came into the woman's eyes when she discovered her class was trying to cheat the system. Torn between theology and a group of minors, she opted for the easiest answer.

"Well, yes, God will forgive you if you ask him," then reaching down to her jacket, she pulled out the tiny crown pin reserved only for the best children in the club, "but it also means you will have fewer jewels in your crown when you get to heaven." I'm not bothered that our leader chose to use this explanation; it's hard to describe the grace of God to a room full of third graders hopped up on gummy bears. What does bother me is the number of adult Christians who still believe this idea to be true.

I grew up in a Christian household. "I accepted Christ when I was only seven."

Many Christians will take these statements and present them as proof of their superiority. Proof that the person who just gave their life to Christ is somehow "Second Class." It does not matter if you spend your entire life ignoring God or trying to build a stairway to heaven, we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of Christ. But when we accept him as our savior that all changes, regardless of how old we are or how we've spent our past. The whole, wonderful point of grace is that it cannot be earned. How else could it be called grace?



Responsive Reading: Philippians 4:7-8

LDR: *Think about these things:*
PC: whatever is true...
PC: whatever is honorable...
PC: whatever is just...
PC: whatever is pure...
PC: whatever is pleasing...
PC: whatever is commendable...
PC: that which has any excellence...
PC: anything worthy of praise...
ALL: **When we ponder these things, the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.**

Lesson: Isaiah 25:4-9

You, O Lord, have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying:

"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.' But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ..."

Gospel – cont'd

The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so, the wedding hall was filled with guests."

SALEM FAMILY EVENTS



Your church council will be meeting this Tuesday (13th) evening. Among the many topics to be discussed and determined is that of the impending indoor service that will likely go through the winter and into spring. These meetings are open to the membership that you may come and share your opinions.



- Watch for a list of resources for families with small children on our website and/or in future bulletins...coming soon!

SUNDAY SCHOOL
NEWS

- watch for a newsletter with updates about the fall Sunday services, gatherings, and activities



The job of church treasurer is again (sadly) open. Interested parties please see Pastor Rob.



Last Week

UPCOMING EVENTS

The October 18th Service will be.....

INDOORS!!!!!!

...for those who are comfortable and likely at 10:30 (TBD). Precautions will be taken (mostly, limited numbers, spread out, and masks). For those who are not comfortable w/ gathering indoors, the virtual service will still be offered through out web-site --
(<https://www.salemlc-oxford.org>)

Becky and Paul Fiske of our congregation are attending the LCMC Conference; you can speak to them about their experiences if you'd like. You may also 'attend' the convention yourself by watching the live stream at <https://www.lcmc.net/live>. A schedule of the day's events can be found at <https://www.lcmc.net/ag-books/summaries>.



Plans are being made to have the annual autumn leaf cleanup on October 17th... more details to come...

Confirmation Class/process for adults (confirmed or refresher), will be starting soon—more info ... see Pastor Rob!



GRINABLES



- **Girl:** Ick! Why does this sandwich have bacon on it? **Friend:** You ordered a BLT. **Girl:** Whaaaat? I thought the B stood for bread.
- Before google, there were librarians. Here are some queries posed to the poor, suffering staff of public libraries: • A woman wanted “*inspirational material on grass and lawns.*” • “*Who built the English Channel?*” • “*Is there a full moon every night in Acapulco?*” • “*Music suitable for a doll wedding to take place between a Shirley Temple doll and a teddy bear.*” • “*Can the New York Public Library recommend a good forger?*”