

“Claim Your Prize”

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and Various Scripture Passages

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- The Case of *“bait and switch”*
- No *“bait and switch”* when it comes to our salvation or rewards
 - Ephesians 2:8-9-- *“by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast!”*
 - 1 Peter 4:10-- *“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”*
- Purposes of the Judgment seat of Christ
 - 2 Corinthians 5:10-- *“will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, whether good or bad.”*
 - **Clarification**—full disclosure of all the facts
 - **Commendation**—rewards for fruitful, faithful service
 - **Conciliation**—repair of broken human relationships

“Claim Your Prize!”

A. PRAISES or COMMENDATION

1. Each of us will give an account of ourselves to the Lord
2. Church leaders will also give an account of those under their spiritual care.
 - Hebrews 13:17 -- *“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and now with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”*
3. Jesus Christ will have the final word

B. PRIZES or CROWNS

1. **Meaning of term “crown”**
 - a. Not the “diadema” or the “kingly crown” which is reserved only for Christ
 - b. But the “stephanos” or “victor’s crown” for those who render distinguished service to Christ
2. **Five Types of “Stephanos” or Crowns**
 - a. **Incorruptible Crown**
 - 1 Corinthians 9:24-27-- *“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such way that you obtain it. And everyone who compete for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”*
 - 1) Paul likens the Christian life to a sporting event
 - 2) To win this crown, one must...
 - a) Run a smart race
 - b) Strict training and discipline
 - 3) Crown given to those who gain the mastery over the old sinful nature with its corrupt habits.
 - 4) This prize is available to ALL believers

b. **The Crown of Rejoicing**

- 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20-- *“But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. For what is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.”*
- 1) The crown of “rejoicing” is identified as people who will be present in heaven because of your ministry.
 - 2) While some refer to this as the “soul winner’s crown”, it is not limited to those with the gift of evangelism, but is open to ALL who use their gifts to serve the Lord.

c. **The Crown of Life**

- James 1:12 -- *“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”*
 - Revelation 2:10-- *“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”*
- 1) The crown of “Life” is given to those who are willing to suffer for their faith.
 - 2) This prize is also available to ALL believers.

d. **The Crown of Righteousness**

- 2 Timothy 4:6-8 -- *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”*
- 1) The crown of “righteousness” is for those who endure, who go the distance, who refuse to quit.
 - 2) And the crown of “righteousness” is for those who “love His appearing”, that is, are looking forward to the coming of the Lord.
 - 3) This prize is available to ALL believers

e. **The Crown of Glory**

- 1 Peter 5:1-4-- *“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will also receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”*
- 1) The crown of “glory” is for those who faithfully lead and feed the flock of God.
 - 2) Those who feed God’s flock incur greater judgment.
 - James 3:1 -- *“let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”*
 - 3) With greater responsibility and accountability comes the greater reward—crown of glory

3. **Casting of our crowns at the feet of Jesus**

- Revelation 4:10-11-- *“the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying; ‘You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; For you created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.’”*

C. **PROMOTION or CAPACITY in Christ's Administration**

- Luke 19:11-19-- *"Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought that the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: ' A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, "Do business till I come." But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." And so it was when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to who he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, "Master, your mina has earned ten minas." And he said to him, "Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities." And the second came, saying, "Master, your mina has earned five minas." Likewise, he said to him, "You also be over five cities."'"*

1. **Explanation of the Parable**

- a. There is a gap between His entrance into Jerusalem and the establishment of His kingdom
- b. During this gap, Jesus will be going to a "far country"—heaven and His followers will be left here on earth to carry out His work.
- c. Those who are good stewards will be rewarded when He returns.
- d. The reward will be a PROMOTION or CAPACITY of service in His administration.

2. **Scriptural Support of our serving in Christ's administration**

- Revelation 5:10 -- *"And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."*
- Revelation 20:6-- *"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priest of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."*

D. **CLAIMING YOUR PRIZE?**

1. To claim your prize, you must begin NOW!
2. To claim your prize, you must be PRESENT!