

Missions

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Preacher: Rev. Dr. Russell Herbert

[0 : 0 0] I've got some quotes here, I'm just going to read them, they're very short, but they're all from the same person and they're rather famous. Here's the first one. For me, the teachings of Christ set my own personal accountability before God and provide a framework in which I try to lead my life.

Now have a think about who that might have been that said that. The same person said this next thing. Jesus Christ lived obscurely for most of his life and never travelled far.

He was maligned and rejected by many, though he had done no wrong. And yet billions of people now follow his teaching and find in him the guiding light for their lives.

I am one of them. Here's the third quote. Same person. For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, is an inspiration and anchor for my life.

A role model of reconciliation and forgiveness. He stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing. Christ's example has taught me to seek, to respect and value people of whatever faith.

[1 : 1 9] Or none. Anybody guess who said all of those things? It was our Queen. It was Queen. They all came from various, over the years, various Christmas Day speeches.

Now, something that comes through, I think, very powerfully in all of those things, those words, is that theme of service.

And if any of you saw the big concert last night outside Buckingham Palace, then that kind of came over as well in the words that were said.

The theme of service. Interestingly, the word crown comes up in the Bible at least 75 times.

I haven't counted them personally. I just got that from a source somewhere. But the word crown comes up 75 times in the Bible. There's lots of different meanings.

[2 : 1 5] But one in particular that comes up over and over again is the theme of crown as a reward. As a reward for our service. Now, it's really important to understand that being a Christian is not about just trying to earn your way into heaven.

That's a free gift from God. But nevertheless, the Bible does talk about how at the end, when we come home, or rather when God comes home to earth and heaven comes to earth and everything is perfect and there's no more death and no more dying.

Everything is perfect. We live with God forever and ever. There's this image there of us receiving a crown. And 1 Peter chapter 5 says this.

You will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. You will receive a crown of glory for the life that you have lived.

So what we're going to do, we're going to take a few minutes now just to think a little bit about what that means. Because it helps us to think about our lives right here and right now. What I want to do is just ask you to think about this question.

[3 : 2 1] It's going to come on the screen. When you look back at your life, when you get to the end of life, what would you like to think that you might be crowned for?

What service, what sort of things do you feel that you would like to be crowned for? Russ, what would you think you'd like to be crowned for? That's a really big question, yeah?

It is a big question. I think I would probably say that I would want to, rather than get too specific, I'd want to think that I've been faithful to whatever it is that God's asked me to do.

Oh man. Yeah. Yeah. I think. Cool. Whatever that looks like. Anybody else? Anybody else got any thoughts? Yes, yes, yes. Over here. Somebody over here.

Yes. But I said yes to God increasingly and with an increasing loving kindness to others. Amen. Wonderful. Come on here.

[4 : 20] Marilyn. Well, it might not sound very religious, but I hope I'm remembered for helping to make people laugh. Yes. Yeah.

People laughed. Anybody else? Yes, over the back here. Here we go. It always makes me run to the back.

There we go. What would you? I'd like to be crowned for my two beautiful daughters. Oh, two beautiful daughters. Wonderful. Great for parenting. Many parents feel crowned.

You know, the thing is, is that one of the things that we do as ministers is we go to rather a lot of funerals. And very often you'll hear at the end of somebody's life all sorts of amazing things that that person did.

Sometimes it can be the first time that those things are actually publicly said. And I often think, actually, how sad it is sometimes that it's not until the very end of somebody's life that we hear these things.

[5 : 23] But, you know, the thing is, is that it's not about whether we become well known for things or not. The question is, is that, you know, what do we do with the lives that we've given? We only get one life in this.

Life is not a rehearsal. This is it. And so, therefore, you know, how do we spend our lives? What do we do with the time that we have on earth? And I think moments of, like, you know, this weekend when people are giving tribute to the things that the Queen has done over those last 70 years of service.

It points that question back to each and every one of us. Whoever we are, however old or young we are, we each are given this gift of life. And at Pentecost, we're reminded that God actually has a plan for each and every one of us.

The Holy Spirit is not a gift just to a select few. It's not just to a privileged few. It's not just to those that are religious. It's not just to an elite.

It's to every single one of us. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. It's maybe we, when we were asked that question, when you look back at your life, what would you like to think you'd be crowned for?

[6 : 45] And maybe we were hesitant at speaking out. Yet on that day of Pentecost, these group of people were empowered to speak out into the lives of so many people.

And that's what we're called to do. So, Holy Spirit, would you come now into our lives as we respond to your prayer?

And when I say we pray, would you respond, come Holy Spirit. So, Father, we thank you for your call on each and every one of us to rise up and serve you in the everyday.

Wherever we are, whatever we do, we thank you for Elizabeth, our Queen. We thank you that she answered your call on her life and has faithfully carried out that calling for these past 70 years.

We pray, Lord, across this nation and commonwealth and the world today, Lord, that all your people would rise up to serve you. And for each and every one of us, Lord, we ask that you speak to us now in the power of your Holy Spirit.

[8 : 07] As you call on us to rise up and serve you. Maybe afresh and in a new way. Holy Spirit, may your outpouring come upon your people all over this congregation.

May we be ready to be changed by you.

And Father, we pray for hearts that would be softened. We pray, too, that we would receive you and all you have to give us without fear or holding back.

We pray, come Holy Spirit. So, Lord, we pray for all the peoples of the earth to know and honor your name.

We pray for the healing of the nations and a new thirst for righteousness, for purity at every level and every aspect of our society, of our government.

[9 : 16] We pray, Lord, for a dissatisfaction with the pursuit of pleasure that distracts us from your calling.

Lord, we pray for those whose lives we share.

That we, too, like those first disciples, would go out, Lord, and share the gospel with others. Not compromising your call on our lives.

Not being hesitant. Holy Spirit, would you come and give us a fresh courage in our lives to make you known. Not just by what we say, but the way we live our lives.

Lord, we pray. Come, Holy Spirit. Lord, today we pray for a new generation of Christians.

[10 : 16] We pray, Lord, as we look for the things that your Holy Spirit is doing in our towns, in our cities, in our churches. We pray, Lord, that we will be unbound by the past, but we would seek you at work where you are.

Lord, help us where you are asking us to do a new thing. Give us courage to do that, we pray. Lord, we pray. Come, Holy Spirit.

So, Lord, for all that you have given us, for all that you have to share with us, we invite your Holy Spirit to come amongst us. Let's just take a moment just to be open to all that the Holy Spirit has to give us.

Lord, we know that we need your Spirit. So, fall in this place, we pray for each of us, to be renewed and empowered for our mission today.

Ask for that filling. Give us courage to share the good news. Make us an inspiration to a new generation of Christians, to our young people.

[11 : 41] So, Lord, as we encounter you, encourage us, empower us, enable us, and enthuse us afresh. As the Gospel said, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.

Holy Spirit, do that now, we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.