

CROWNED

ADORNED WITH KINGDOM BLESSINGS

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CROWNED

WEARING YOUR CROWN

CHAPTER 1

CROWNED PRINCIPLE #1

THE CROWN OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD
THE CITIZENS ARE TO WEAR IS THE BEATITUDES



HE WORE LOVE LIKE A CROWN

The glory of the splendor of the King, resplendent for all to see, mirrors the heart of His heavenly Father. Jesus, the apex of majesty, wears the royal diadem of power in meekness. He wears sovereignty in humility. He wears authority in gentle empathy. And He brings great delight to God Most High.

Jesus wore righteousness to perfection. And He wants His people—citizens of the kingdom of heaven—to wear His same attitudes. So He taught us what they are and modeled them for us; so that we, too, may live a life so crowned.

And He went even further. To ensure this longing is realized, He gave His followers the Holy Spirit. He is the One who helps us to model these same attitudes by the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23) He produces in our life. They are like jewels in Jesus' crown of righteousness.

When we weave together the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount with the fruit of the Spirit and wear them as Jesus modeled, we wear the crown of our King. However, it still comes down to our choice to put it on, to wear it, and to let it shine. There are elements about us that aim to tarnish and destroy

such a display—forces that tempt to sway our choice. Daily we are exposed to influences that assault our demeanor—influences without and influences within. We must continually battle to keep these virtues reigning.

Thankfully, there is one to whom we can look to survey the choices she made. She shines like a beacon in the face of a harrowing dilemma. She exemplifies decorum under pressure. She is Abigail.

The attitudes Abigail chose to wear one fateful day are the very ones that please our Lord...that reflect the splendor of His kingdom, for they are the beatitudes of the crowned.

GLIMPING THE SCENE

It was the busiest of seasons. The festivities that began with the harvest ushered in the climax of the year. It was sheep-shearing time.

Many preparations needed to be made on all fronts. The pasture may have been empty, but the shearing stalls were jam-packed. As the activities sped to full throttle outside the home, the demands upon those inside the home also accelerated until every inch of the homestead in Carmel was abuzz.

As the landowner's wife, she had much with which to contend...and then the unforeseen took center stage. But she would not be undone—for grace rose with the challenge.

Who is this most remarkable of women? Abigail.

In the moments of our ordinary days, God gives opportunities for us to shine...to don His kingdom's crown and display the attitude of His King to the world. And in those moments, we are crowned. But long before His kingdom came to earth, Abigail wore the attitudes He would espouse of its citizens. The brilliance of her example shines down through the centuries for us to behold...and model.

UNCROWNED

When we fast-forward up the timeline approximately 500 years, we encounter another example...in the polar-opposite direction. When Queen Vashti was faced with a challenging situation instigated by her king, she responded quite differently.

Queen Vashti's husband, King Xerxes of Persia, held a royal banquet in his winter residence in Susa, in the

ASK

Busy seasons outside the home place an increase in demands upon those within the household.

What added tasks fall upon you as a result?

What activities in your ordinary days give occasion to display the attitudes of our King?

SEEK

How could disobedience
threaten the crown we wear
as citizens of the kingdom
of heaven?

Note your thoughts regarding
this statement made by
James M. Tolle:

*"The kingdom of heaven is
not only a spiritual locale, it is
also a spiritual condition."*¹

palace first built by his father, King Darius. As ruler of a vast and sprawling empire, he was not to be trifled with. He summoned all of his noble officials, from India to the Nile, to attend this grandiose affair, which spanned the course of five months in 483 B.C. It was a banquet to laud the great wealth and splendor of Xerxes' kingdom. And the Queen held a banquet of her own. Toward the end of this extravaganza, the drunken king summoned his queen to parade her beauty and flourish her royal crown. "But Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger" (Esther 1:12b, NIV).

Such disobedience warranted consequence. So King Xerxes sought the counsel of seven of his "wise men," who were informed in the matters of culture and law customary to the times. In retaliation, he accepted their advice and subsequently dethroned Vashti. She refused her king's call and disobeyed her king's command—attitudes that got her "uncrowned."

CONTRASTS THAT TEACH

I bring Queen Vashti into our story early on to set a contrasting reference that can teach us. As our story of Abigail progresses, we will see how her attitude won the king's heart and earned her way into the kingdom and the palace. Queen Vashti, on the other hand, rejected the king, lost her crown for her disobedience, and got tossed out of the kingdom. (Proving those proverbs regarding agreeable attitudes to be true, such as the blessing of our words in Proverbs 16:24 and even its contrast in Proverbs 26:21.)

Jesus often used contrasting attitudes in His parables as

a means to teach His followers—one such parable is found in Luke 18.

“To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable” (Luke 18:9) about two men with contrasting attitudes. One, a proud Pharisee who, when he prayed, boasted of his piety. The other, a tax collector. In humility and contrition, he pleaded God’s mercy—confessing himself a sinner. Jesus’ conclusion of the matter? “I tell you that this [tax collector], rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:14).

Here Jesus warns of the importance in remaining humble and repentant. He also conveys acceptable and pleasing kingdom attitudes to all those who will listen. You see, self-righteousness leads to pride. It’s an attitude that dethrones God in our heart and denies our need of Him. It is a fierce, and often fire-breathing, dragon that is stubborn to slay. But whatever the sacrifice is to do so is well worth it—because self-righteousness and humility cannot co-exist. The only type of righteous is Christ-righteous. And, in the vast and spacious kingdom of God, there is no room for the self-righteous.

So the contrast is helpful in seeking to understand what wearing your kingdom crown looks like.

PORTRAYING A REGAL PORTRAIT

Through His teachings and parables, Jesus painted a portrait of the attitudes His disciples were to portray. The Sermon on the Mount (recorded in Matthew 5-7) is one

KNOCK

With what are the redeemed
crowned according to
Psalm 103:4?

From Romans 1:17,
what does the gospel
have to say
about righteousness?

such teaching. It contains the beatitudes, the character and attitudes of the citizens of the kingdom of God. They are our crowning glory—because they reflect Jesus. And God bestows upon those who exhibit these values a certain blessedness. But they do not come naturally to us. Only as we abide in the Spirit are we able to discern the ways of God. In fact, practicing these attitudes is impossible to do separate and apart from the Spirit of God. For these attitudes are the spirit of God exemplified in Christ Jesus. But they can become habit—by training our behavior to behave until it becomes a part of us...like something we wear, but we must choose to put them on and to wear them daily, moment by moment.

You might easily assume that to wear a crown is to stand tall and wear it high upon your head for all to admire. No! That is not the kingdom-way. To wear the crown of Christ is to behave as Abigail. She bowed low before her king. And when we do, we place ourselves in the proper position before our Lord...to be crowned.

¹ Tolle, *The Beatitudes*, p22