

The Weight of the Crown

Imagine you are about to be handed something extraordinary. Not a trophy. Not a certificate. A crown. And with that crown comes real authority — the kind that shapes whole worlds. How would you prepare for something like that? What would it take to be ready?

Here is a truth that most of us walk past every single day without ever stopping to notice: God made you for royalty.

Not in the way greeting cards use the word. Not as flattery. God's design, from the very first pages of Scripture, was to place human beings as his vice-regents — his royal caretakers — over creation. Genesis 1 says he made us in his image and gave us dominion. That is a king's word. A ruler's word. The rabbis understood this. The early church understood it. Paul understood it when he wrote that we will one day judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:3). The whole arc of Scripture is bending toward a new creation where redeemed human beings co-reign with Christ forever.

So God is not just trying to get you to heaven. He is preparing you to reign.

Think about how any serious preparation for a great task works. Before Neil Armstrong stepped onto the moon in July 1969, he and his crew had spent years in simulators, facing every kind of failure their trainers could dream up — engine problems, navigation errors, communication blackouts. The purpose was not to discourage them. The purpose was to form them. Pressure reveals character. And character is what you need when everything is on the line.

God placed Adam and Eve in a garden that was beautiful, but it was not yet finished. The earth still needed to be filled, explored, cultivated. They were in training. And at the center of that training stood a simple test: trust me. One tree. One command. One question behind every moment of their lives — will you trust your Creator, or will you decide for yourselves what is good?

Enter the serpent.

Now, notice the serpent's strategy in Genesis 3. He does not attack with brute force. He does not threaten. He whispers. "Did God actually say?" He plants a tiny seed of doubt — not about God's power, but about God's goodness. He suggests that God is holding something back from them. That the Father cannot be fully trusted. That they would be better off making their own rules.

And they believed it.

With one act of disobedience — that is the word Paul uses in Romans 5:19, the Greek word *parakoe*, which literally means a failure to listen, a turning of the ear away — with that one turning away, everything unraveled. The crown slipped. The garden was lost. And death, like a flood through a broken dam, rushed into everything.

Paul writes in Romans 5:12, "sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." This is not ancient history behind glass in a museum. This is your story and mine. We are Adam's children. We carry his bent. When the whisper comes — God is holding out on you, take what you want, you deserve better — we recognize it, don't we? Because we have believed it ourselves, more times than we can count.

Here is where the tension becomes almost unbearable.

If the crown was lost by disobedience, if we are the ones who lost it, what hope do we have of ever getting it back? You cannot unring a bell. You cannot unpour the flood. We cannot fix what we broke, any more than a man can unstrike a match in a burning house.

And then Matthew 4 opens, and something remarkable happens.

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."

The Greek word there is *peirazō* — to test, to put to the proof. Jesus goes into the wilderness specifically to be tested. He goes hungry for forty days. He is exhausted, isolated, and at his most vulnerable. And the enemy comes.

Notice something stunning: the devil uses the exact same strategy he used in the garden. He does not come with an army. He comes with words. He whispers. "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread." In other words — don't trust your Father, take care of yourself. Then he tries again. "Throw yourself down — make God prove he loves you." In other words — doubt your Father's goodness. Then once more — "All these kingdoms I will give you." In other words — there is a shortcut. You don't need the cross. Take the crown without the suffering.

It is the same old serpent. The same ancient lie. The same battlefield where Adam fell.

But this time, the man standing in the wilderness does not turn his ear away. He listens. He holds. He answers every dark whisper with the living word of God, and when the devil has exhausted every weapon in his arsenal, he leaves. Defeated.

The early church father Irenaeus, writing around 180 AD, put it this way: Jesus recapitulated Adam's journey — he walked the same road, faced the same enemy, and where Adam stumbled, Jesus stood. What the first man lost, the Second Man won back.

And here is the miracle of the gospel: what Jesus won, he gives to you.

Paul writes in Romans 5:19, "as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous." His obedience is credited to your account. His righteousness is placed on your shoulders like a robe. His victory in the wilderness is the down payment on your crown.

This means that when you come to God with your failures — and you have them, we all do — you are not coming as a stranger begging at the door. You are coming as a son or daughter, still in training, sometimes bruised from your own

bad choices, still learning to listen instead of turning away. And the Father receives you in Christ.

The crown is not gone. It is being held for you by the One who won it back.

This is what God is doing in and through Jesus Christ. He is not merely forgiving the past. He is restoring your dignity, rebuilding your character, and fitting you — even now, even through your failures and your repentance and your returning — for the extraordinary future he has always intended. Christ's obedience covers your disobedience. His victory in the wilderness stands where your defeat would have left you. His righteousness clothes you completely. And by his Spirit living in you, the same word of God that defeated the enemy in Matthew 4 is placed in your hands, for the battles still ahead.

The weight of the crown is real. But you do not carry it alone.

The peace of God guard your hearts and minds as you believe and trust in Him.

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