TITLE: A Crown of Thorns!

TEXT: Jn. 19:1-3; Gen. 3:17-18; Is. 53:4-6; 1st Pet. 2:24; Rev. 19:11; Jn. 16:5-7,13:

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about the crown of thorns that Christ wore..

Crowns have always been the sign of authority and Kingship. Charlemagne, whom historians say should deserve to be called "great" above all others, wore an octagonal crown. Each of the eight sides was a plaque of pure gold, and each plaque was studded with emeralds, sapphires, and pearls. The cost was the price of a king's ransom.

Richard the Lion Heart had a crown so heavy that two men had to stand, one on either side, to hold his head up.

The crown that Queen Elizabeth wears is worth over $20 million.

Edward II once owned nine crowns, something of a record.

Put them all together, from all of Europe and from the archives of the East, all of them are but trinkets compared to the crown that Christ's wore at Calvary.

Let’s take a look at the crown that Jesus wore

**John 19:1 (NIV) Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.**

**2 The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe**

**3 and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck him in the face.**

This crown was not a crown of Gold studded with fine jewels, it was not a crown that was weighty from the worlds prospective, yet to the Son of God there could be no weightier….

This crowns value was not found in the material that it consisted of but in what this crown represented…

Just what did this crown of thorns that Jesus wore represent?

To see the significance of this crown of thorns and what it represents we need to go back to the beginning….

To when man first disobeyed God and fell to sin…

Part of sins curse was this…..

Gene 3:17 (NIV) To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, `You must not eat of it,'

**"Cursed is the ground because of you;**

**Through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.**

**18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you!**

When God created the earth and placed man in the Garden to tend and care for it, it was a perfect place, a perfect environment.

There were no weeds, thistles or thorns but only lush grass and fruit bearing trees.

After man sinned and fell from Gods grace all of that changed.

Not just man, but all of creation fell under a cruse because of mans sin…

God said:

**"Cursed is the ground because of you;**

**through painful toil you will eat of it**

**all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you!**

The instant that man sinned God placed something on planet earth to keep man mindful of his sin.

What better thing to remind man of sin and its consequence then thorns and thistles.

Example: rabbit hunting as a kid—we would walk outside of town to a timber that was full of multi-flower rose and was one big thorn thicket… if you shot a rabbit in the midst of the thicket of thorns and went in after it you would soon find yourself entwined and entangled in the thorns.

They would wrap around your legs and body and literally have you in their grasp! The harder you tried to get through them the more they would ensnare you.

I can still remember coming home with scratches and cuts all over my body. My hands, my arms, my legs would all be marred by the thorn pricks…..

What a description of what sin does in our life.

It ensnares us, entangles us and cuts us up.

The harder that we try to walk through it, the more it seems to wrap us up and pull us down.

Scripture says….

**1 (NIV) Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.**

**2 The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head.**

Why a crown of thorns?

Because they signified what Jesus was really doing and what the cross is all about.

The prophet Isaiah spoke of the crown of thorns that Jesus would one day wear…

**Isai 53:4 (NIV) Surely he took up our infirmities**

**and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.**

**5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,**

**he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.**

**6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

When the Roman soldiers pushed the crown of thorns down upon Jesus head they were not just being cruel, though that was their main intent, but they were fulfilling the prophetic Word of God.

Why did Jesus go to the cross?

**1Pet 2:24 (NIV) He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.**

**He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree!**

Thorns are a result of sin! Thorns typify sin! They represent sin and are a visual aid to remind us of sin and its consequence!

Jesus went to the cross to bear our sins. Take our sin upon himself.

The crown of thorns represent, they picture, what was really happening that day. Jesus was bearing our sin! Jesus was taking our sin upon himself.

You see, the crown of thorns was not His crown. It was our crown. It was not what He deserved-- it was what we deserved.

Scripture says that Jesus has many crowns…

**Reve 19:11 (NIV) I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war.**

12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns.

The crowns of Jesus are many.

He wears a crown of righteousness. He wears a crown of glory. He wears a crown of life. He wears a crown of peace and power.

Of all the crowns of Christ, one outshines all the rest. It was not formed by the skilled fingers of a silversmith, nor created by the genius of a craftsman. It was put together hurriedly by the rough hands of Roman soldiers. It was not placed upon its wearer's head in pomp and ceremony, but in the hollow mockery of ridicule and blasphemy. It was a crown of thorns.

Again, the amazing thing is that this crown was not His to bear.

It didn’t belong to Him. It belonged to you and me.

We deserved to wear that crown. We deserved to feel the thrust of the thorns in our flesh. We deserved to feel the warm trickle of blood upon our brow. We deserved the pain and the shame of that crown.

But He took our crown of thorns—And He offers to us instead His crown of Glory, His crown of life, His crown of righteousness and peace.

**Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.**

**5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,**

**he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.**

**6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

Why would Jesus, the incarnate God, the King of all Kings and Lord of all Lords, take a crown of thorns upon Himself that was meant for you and me?

**He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.**

He took our crown of thorns upon Himself, He bore our sin so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness.

For it is by His wounds that we are healed.

What is it that Scripture is referring to here that we might be healed of?

Sin! Sin and its ending consequence which is eternal death.

It is by His wounds and His wounds alone that we are healed.

It is by His wounds that we might die to sin and live for righteousness.

How is this healing realized in our life?

How can we die to our sinful nature so that we can live for Gods righteousness?

Jesus, in speaking to His disciples and trying to prepare them for His up-coming death on the cross says this…

**John 16:5 (NIV) "Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, `Where are you going?'**

**6 Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief.**

**7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.**

The going away that Jesus was talking about was the cross.

Jesus knew that He was about to bear a crown that was not His to bear.

Jesus knew that He was about to bare your and my sin upon Himself.

He knew that He was about to give His very life as a sacrifice for your and my iniquity.

And by so doing He was about to set us free from the most cruel taskmaster man has ever known.

He was about to set us free from the bondage and slavery of sin by giving us the hope of being healed from sins end consequence---eternal death and eternal separation from God.

**He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness…**

Jesus provided the way by which we can actually die to our sin and sinful nature and live manifesting His righteousness.

To die to sin means to be able to stop sinning and live righteously, live to please God.

It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

**John 16:13 (NIV) (And) when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.**

It is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives that enables us to live the lives that God has called us to live. It is the Holy Spirit within us that enables us to stop sinning and live for righteousness, live for God.

Jesus didn’t leave us comfortless. He bore our crown of thorns; He bore our sin upon Himself so that we wouldn’t have to.

He gave His life on the cross to pay the price of your and my sin but it didn’t end there.

After 3 days He rose from the dead! He rose victoriously over sin and death and ascended to heaven.

And when He got there He sent back His Holy Spirit to literally indwell our hearts and be our comfort. To guide us and lead us and direct us into righteous living.

He sent His Holy Spirit to give us the ability to do that which we had no hope of doing before—restoring a broken relationship with God and enabling us to go and sin no more. Go and live in righteousness instead of living in bondage to our sin.

The great truth of Easter is not just that Jesus rose from the dead and because He did all who have a saving faith in Him will one day also…that we are to live newly after death---that is not the great thing—

The greatest Easter truth is that we can be made new here and now by the power of the Resurrection because Jesus ascended to heaven and sent back His Holy Spirit to indwell our hearts and enable us to live righteous lives today.

All because of a crown of thorns that Jesus chose to bear.

A crown of thorns-- A crown of sin--- A crown that was not His own. A crown that belonged to you and me..

He not only took our crown of thorns upon Himself but then He offers us His crown of righteousness and His crown of Life and His crown of Power and Glory.

He offers us the crown of His splendor and majesty---the crown of His Holy Spirit.

This morning, are you thankful for the exchange of crowns that took place at Calvary?

Are you thankful that Jesus willingly bore your and my crown of thorns so that we might bear His crown of righteousness and glory?

Jesus willingly bore our crown of thorns, the question that I leave you with this Easter morning is, are we just as willing bear his crown of righteousness?

Are we living in the Victory that Jesus gave His life to secure for us? Are we living in the victory of the cross?

We live in that victory by living our lives in and for Him, allowing Him to live His life anew in us.

Prayer..

Communion Service….

The Apostle Paul gives us these instructions about communion...

**1Cor 11:23 (NIV) For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,**

**24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."**

**25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."**

**26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

**27 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.**

**28 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.**

**29 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.**

This is an open communion…The only requirement for partaking of communion is having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through having made Him the Lord and savior of your life.

Paul’s admonition to us then is …

**A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.**

**For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.**

David says it this way in....

**Psal 139:23 (NIV) Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.**

**24 See if there is any offensive way in me,**

**and lead me in the way everlasting.**

We will now share in Communion and in keeping with this admonition of Scripture, I am going to ask Pam to come to the piano and as she plays let us take of few moments to examine ourselves and prepare our hearts for that which we are about to do.

(chorus--Change my heart Oh God--

Sanctify This place)

Would Perry & Don come up and serve---

(Serve bread-hold your portion till all are served and we will partake together)

**1Cor 11:23 : The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."**

(pray)

**25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."**

**26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

(You may partake of the cup as you are served)

It says that when Jesus and the disciples had finished that they sang a hymn and departed...

Hymn-- #151 coming again? Christ the Lord has risen today #137