



Divine Crowns

Focus God has crowned us with authority to reign over sin and death and to represent lovingkindness and tender mercy to everyone around us.

Fun At the beginning of the meeting, give each person a gold crown.

Review Key Scripture: Psalm 103:1–4

We are in a series called *Divine Benefits*. Pastor Robert has identified three benefits believers receive from God: divine forgiveness, divine health, and divine redemption. As we continue exploring Psalm 103, the fourth benefit we receive is divine crowns. Verse 4 says, “Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies.” What does it mean that God crowns us with lovingkindness and tender mercies? There are three questions that will answer this for us.

What is a divine crown?

Matthew 7:28–29, 28:18; John 13:34

A crown represents authority, and all authority is given by God. Authority does not come from a position or title. Jesus came first as a lamb and then as a shepherd. Just as Jesus walked humbly on this earth with authority given to Him by God, God also wants us to walk humbly in authority.

Why are we crowned?

Romans 5:21,17; Revelation 5:10

We are crowned—given authority—to reign in this life over sin and death. Sin and death reigned over us until grace came. So, how do we reign in life? We reign by receiving an abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness—right standing with God—every day. Revelation 5:10 tells us that we were made kings and priests. Kings reign and priests connect people to God. God wants us to reign over sin and death in this life and then help other people reign over sin and death.

With what are we crowned?

Psalm 103:4, 25:6, 40:11, 51:1

God crowns us and surrounds us with lovingkindness and tender mercy. Our God is a merciful God. He's so merciful that even His throne is called the mercy seat. David used the phrase lovingkindness and tender mercies a lot because he understood that he had received an abundance of grace, the gift of righteousness, and authority given to him by God. If we will walk in humility, kindness and mercy as believers, then we will have the authority to overcome sin and death in our lives.

Group Dynamics Idea In John 13, Jesus washes the feet of the disciples. Jesus could wash the disciples' feet because He knew the authority given to Him was given by His Father and this act of humbleness could not diminish His authority. Take time at the end of the meeting to wash the feet of the members of the group who are comfortable with this act of humility.

Discuss

1. All authority is given to us by God, not by what we do, the position we hold, or the title we carry. God crowns us with authority to be ambassadors of kindness and mercy to those around us. Are you walking with God's authority?
2. All authority is given by God, not by position or title. Jesus walked humbly on this earth but had great authority given to Him by His Father. As believers, we have all been given a position of authority. Think about someone you know who has great authority. Do you respect this person? Does this person walk in authority with humility or with arrogance? Are you walking in the authority given to you by God or by man?
3. We've learned that grace is freely given to us by God. We knew we needed God's grace as sinners, but we still need to receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness in our life every day as believers. Do you recognize the need for grace in your life every day? Are you receiving the gift of righteousness (right standing with God)? Does understanding that grace is freely given to you give you hope to face the challenges in your life?
4. Pastor Robert told us a story of when he worked for his father's business as a representative of the company. Pastor Robert had to use the authority given to him by his father to fire an employee who was not representing the company in the manner which his father demanded. Our Father has invested authority in us to represent Him to the clients (the people who do not know Him yet). God made us kings and priests—kings reign and priests connect people to God—so that we could reign over sin and death in this life and then help other people reign over

sin and death in their lives. What are some things you can do daily to represent your Father in His company?

5. God crowned us with lovingkindness and tender mercies so that we could reign over sin and death in this life, not over people. Often, we focus on the crown and the authority itself instead of focusing on reigning the way Jesus reigned—with lovingkindness and tender mercy. Is there any area of your life where your focus is off? What are some things that you can do to redirect your focus from the crown to reigning as Jesus reigned?

Take Home

- God took the crown off His Son and put it on us.
- God took the crown that was meant for us and put it on His Son.
- Read Mark 15:16–20 as if it is the first time you've ever read it.

Pray

Father, thank You for Your lovingkindness and tender mercies. Thank You that through the authority You have given us, we can overcome sin and death in our lives. Lord, thank You for the abundance of grace in our lives every day, and thank You for the gift of righteousness. Help us to walk first as a lamb and then as a shepherd so that others will come to know You and reign over sin and death in their lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip Prayer is the best foundation you can lay for your group. Pray regularly for your group—for the meeting itself and for each person who comes. The Holy Spirit will help you as a leader, and He will do beyond what you can imagine in the lives of the people you serve!