

## Loving Jesus' Appearing

**Introduction:** In the final days of the apostle Paul as he was writing to Timothy, he testified to his hope in Christ. Anticipating death by execution, he looked beyond that painful experience to Christ's appearing (2 Tim 4:6-8).

Paul viewed his life from three perspectives:

- The PRESENT – he was imprisoned for the gospel and awaiting execution.
- The PAST – He had fought the good fight (defended the faith to the end)
  - He finished the course God had laid out for him.
  - He kept the faith (was true to the end).
- The FUTURE – He looked forward to seeing Christ and receiving His eternal reward (hope).

Paul says what remains for us following life on this earth is “THE crown of righteousness.” This reward is described three ways in verse 8.

### 1. Paul's reward is a settled condition of righteousness

For the Christian, righteousness has three aspects:

- 1) **Imputed righteousness** – the moment we are saved we receive a right standing before God because we are IN CHRIST and have received HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS (2 Cor 5:21; Rom 3:21-22).
- 2) **Practical righteousness** – as Christians, we pursue righteousness in our behavior and in our relationships with people (we do what is right according to God's standard Rom 6:13)

But it is NOT a present state of perfect righteousness because of the flesh that remains in us that resists our pursuit of righteousness (Gal 5:16-17).

So in this present world we strive to achieve righteousness because that is the goal of our salvation (Rom 8:29; Phil 3:14).

### 3) Perfect righteousness 1 John 3:2; Gal 5:5; Jude 1:24

When we die, we leave our sinful flesh and its desires behind and we become like Christ in perfect righteousness. THAT is the crown of righteousness that Paul looked forward to in 4:8.

### 2. Paul's reward was secure Heb 11:6; Mat 6:20; 1 Peter 1:3-5

Our crown of righteousness is assured and kept for us in heaven by the omnipotent God who not only keeps our reward but keeps us for our reward.

### 3. Paul's reward was specific 1 Cor 1:30; Phil 1:23

Those who are righteous in Christ “have loved his appearing.”

- When we were saved we fell in love with Christ (Rom 5:5; 1 Cor 16:22)
- That love for Christ abides and grows in our hearts and produces a longing to be with Christ.

NOTE: The Greek word EPIPHANEIA means to become visible. Titus 2:11-13

- We love His FIRST appearing because it brought salvation through His death & resurrection. We love His SECOND appearing because our salvation will then become complete – we will be perfectly righteous (1 John 3:1-3).

Those who love Jesus' appearing long to see Christ receive the glory that He deserves yet did not receive at His first coming (1 Peter 4:12-13).

So who are those who truly "love" His appearing?

**I. Those who are saved Eph 2:5-7; 1 Pet 1:3-8**

At salvation we received eternal life – we became alive to God and immediately experienced spiritual blessings in Christ. The result is that we will someday experience the immeasurable riches of His grace.

But because we have been saved, we have also been illumed by the Holy Spirit to grasp spiritual truth in God's Word and see the glory of Christ that the Word points to us (2 Cor 3:18; 4:3-6).

**II. Those who desire to see the glory of Christ manifest 2 Thess 1:10**

When Christ returns we will be awestruck by His glory. Our desire for His glory to be seen will be fulfilled.

1. The role of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ John 15:26; 16:13-14  
He illumines the Christian mind to see Christ in the Word and glorify Him.

2. The aim of a Spirit-filled Christian is to glorify Christ 1 Cor 10:31

3. The prayer of Jesus was for us to see His glory John 17:24; 1 Cor 13:12

Study Questions:

1. How does the hope of the Christian motivate us to persevere through the trials of this present life on earth (see also 2 Cor 4:17-18)?
2. What is the relationship between our faith and our hope (see Hebrews 11:1)? What causes Christians to become weak in their hope (see Colossians 3:1-3)?
3. Note again how Paul was secure in his faith and hope. What causes us to feel insecure (see Revelation 12:10)? Read John 10:28-29. What is the basis of our eternal security? How does that help us when we don't "feel" saved?
4. Read 1 John 2:15-17. What prevents us from loving Christ's appearing?
5. How does loving Jesus' appearing and longing to see His glory manifest impact our walk with God and our effort to live out our faith?