

**Read: John 17:1-11a**

## First the Cross, Then the Crown

### **John 17:3-5**

Now this is eternal life: that they know, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Jesus' suffering and death must have been so confusing for the disciples. For years they learned from his teaching and watched him perform miracles. They believed he was the Savior sent from God. Never once had he done anything wrong. Yet, he was beaten, whipped, hung on a cross, and put to death. They must have been terrified as they asked one another the simple question: Why did this happen? It just didn't make sense.

It all made sense to Jesus. "This is eternal life," he began. He understood that God's plan to save us meant he would experience horrible pain and suffering on the cross, but it would last only a short time. Soon he would rise from the dead victoriously and would ascend to heaven and rule over all things once again. First Jesus must suffer, then comes his glory. First the cross, then the crown.

This unselfish sacrifice by Jesus was not only for his own glory but for our glory as well. Jesus didn't die on the cross for his own benefit, but for our good—to win forgiveness of sins and eternal life for all people. Although he died for all people, only those who believe and trust in him as their Savior will receive these blessings and the glory of eternal life in heaven.

That's why Jesus prayed for his disciples. He knew he would soon be leaving them in the world. So he prayed to his Father in heaven to protect them and keep them firm in their faith.

Jesus continues to pray for his believers today. He understands our sinfulness, weaknesses, and the doubts we experience as we face the challenges of living in this sinful world. He reminds the Father again and again that he did the time even though we did the crime. Jesus' prayer assures us that we have pardon. Because Jesus suffered, our glory is coming in heaven.

First the cross, then the crown.

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- In today's devotion, which comes first: the cross or the crown?
- Jesus promised to someday place a crown on your head. How did he make sure that would happen?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- "First the cross, then the crown." What does that mean?
- Why is it important for every person to know God and his plan for salvation?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Jesus tells us in the Bible that only those who believe will be saved and live forever in heaven. How does that truth motivate you to tell others about Jesus?
- Look up John 3:16. How does that verse tell everything you need to know about God's plan of salvation?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending your one and only Son to win for us the forgiveness of sins. Protect and guide us as we navigate the challenges of living as sinners in a sinful world. May we find joy and comfort knowing that because Jesus suffered and died for us, we as your children will one day live with you forever in heaven. Amen.