

What would it look like if we arrived in heaven empty-handed? This powerful message challenges us to examine whether our Christian walk is truly selfless or merely self-serving. Drawing from Revelation 4, we're invited into a breathtaking scene where twenty-four elders cast their crowns before God's throne, declaring that everything they've achieved belongs to Him alone. The imagery is striking: these honored individuals don't cling to their rewards but immediately recognize that without Christ, they would have nothing. This sets the stage for exploring several crowns promised to believers—the victor's crown for those who discipline themselves like athletes in training, the crown of life for those who persevere under trial, and the crown of righteousness for those who overcome. Yet the most sobering crown mentioned is the one Jesus wore for us: the crown of thorns. When Roman soldiers mockingly pressed those thorns into His brow, Jesus was reversing the curse from Genesis where God told Adam that thorns and thistles would mark humanity's fallen condition. Every crown we might receive is ultimately a gift of grace, meant to be cast back at Jesus' feet in worship. The question becomes deeply personal: are we living with intentional surrender, or are we accidentally Christian, doing good things we enjoy rather than sacrificing what God actually calls us to? The challenge is clear—we must overcome our selfishness, conquer our fears, and endure hardship not for earthly recognition but for eternal reward that we'll gladly return to the One who deserves it all.