

**LUM MIDWEEK DEVOTIONAL**  
**OCTOBER 19, 2022**

**SCRIPTURE FOCUS: 1 JOHN 2:1 (NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION)**

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,

**BLESSED THOUGHTS: "I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU"**

As of today, September 25th, I am no longer on anybody's payroll. I am seventy-nine, and this morning was my last Sunday serving St. Paul's, Brunkild. After church we had a delicious catered roast beef dinner (my granddaughter said the gravy was good enough to put on ice cream), and one of the last things I did was to tell the people how I felt about them. I quoted an old time Baptist hymn that we loved in our Appalachian Mountain churches, called "Stars in My Crown." Eliza Hewitt wrote it in 1897. You may never have heard it, but the words go like this:

I am thinking today of that beautiful land I shall reach when the sun goeth down;  
When through wonderful grace by my Savior I stand, Will there be any stars in my crown?

***Refrain:***

Will there be any stars, any stars in my crown,  
When at evening the sun goeth down?  
When I wake with the blest in the mansions of rest,  
Will there be any stars in my crown?

In the strength of the Lord let me labor and pray, Let me watch as a winner of souls;  
That bright stars may be mine in the glorious day, When His praise like the sea-billow rolls.

***Refrain:***

Oh, what joy it will be when His face I behold, Living gems at His feet to lay down;  
It would sweeten my bliss in the city of gold, Should there be any stars in my crown.

***Refrain:***

Now, two things. My wife and I have lived very modest lives. I was never able to buy her a diamond ring until after my Dad's death, when my share of his estate came to \$2,000. I cashed that check and gave those bills to my wife with a thank you letter, telling how much "sparkle" she gave my Dad in his final years (she helped him come back to life after several heart episodes! What a nurse!) With those bills I told her to go to a jeweler and buy a ring that also sparkled! I didn't have to tell her twice!

The Royal Crown jewels, by contrast, may be worth well north of a billion dollars. Some valuations place them closer to over five billion. No wonder that half the British Army marched next to the Queen's coffin on which her crown, orb, and scepter were attached. But I—by God's grace—possess a far more valuable crown which the Scripture calls "The Crown of Life." In other words, God promises us life eternal, not just an endless day, but life without limitations, free

from pain, sorrow, and, most of all, free from sin. At a young Pentecostal pastor's farewell gathering, his final words to his congregation were, "Heaven is so wonderful. Be there!" There is no way any of us could ever fully enjoy our life in the Age to Come if even one of our loved ones wasn't there.

So, like Elder John in the New Testament, I'm taking a few moments at the end of a very busy and emotional day to encourage all of you, "Please, be there, too. All you mean to me, how can I put it into words? Each of you, my sisters and brothers, are like a star in my crown!

**BE THERE! AND LET'S SHINE AND SPARKLE TOGETHER, TO THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD!**