

Chapter 3

Crown Derby - Decrease (Pages 60-62)

“Those who run in a race all run, to receive a crown” 1 Co. 9:24-27

I didn't know if I should be excited or worried about what this town had in store. We turned and began to walk the boardwalk. There was a slight breeze, and the walk was pleasant. I began to notice some people who were walking together decided to sit on a lovely park bench along the River and talk. Others who had been sitting got up and began walking the boardwalk again. It was a hive of activity. Across the River, I could see a group sitting under some beautiful trees having a picnic.

As we walked, I saw a younger brown skinned man excuse himself and leave the group. He headed toward a door on one of the buildings. I caught a flicker of light out of the corner of my eye as I watched this man leave the group. We stopped as I watched him enter the building.

“Why did that man choose to go into that particular building, Jesus?”

“Did you catch the flicker of light on the sign above the door?” His reply sounded weighted.

“Yes, I did catch a flicker of light.”

Looking closer, I saw a neon sign. It was dark now, but in an instant, it might light up again. From this distance, I could barely make out the shape of a broken heart.

“There is always a sign for anyone desiring to see.” Jesus began to explain. “The sign is the illumination of a rhema word, a ‘now’ God word or symbol. When a person passes by a building that can help their choice to decrease, the illumination of the rhema word activates the sign. If the person is not paying attention, they will miss it. If the person does not want illumination right now, the light will not flash at all. But any person who desires to see, will not be disappointed. The sign on the appropriate building will momentarily illuminate.”

I turned my attention back to the group the man had left. His decision to enter the building set the group off into animated conversation and body language. It reminded me of gossiping teenagers I had observed at my school many times.

The incredulous voice of one of the women came drifting on the breeze to my ears. “I would have never guessed that John needed to go in there!”

Another person puffed out his chest and said, “It's about time he chose to go in! He's needed to go in there for a long time!”

Another person said timidly, "I probably need to go in there, but not today. Let's move on down the boardwalk and make another loop."

I watched as this group picked up their pace. Then shortly, one of the ladies of the group who had not said a word earlier, excused herself, and left. Waving, she spied a friend over in another group who waved back. This group was walking in the opposite direction. As she entered the new group and passed by us, I heard her say to two of the ladies, "You will never believe what John did! He entered today into..." I lost the rest of it as they moved on behind us.

I looked at Jesus to see if He had caught the gossiping interaction. His look communicated His sadness.

We continued to walk the boardwalk and I watched people chat and sit with others. It became clear, that it was rare for someone to break out of a group and to enter a building. Most of the people walked, talked and thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship of the stroll. I also noticed that some would occasionally break away making the illusion that they were entering a building. Later, they would double back, cross over to the other side of the River and join an entirely new group. The old group assumed the person had entered a building. The new group assumed that the person had just completed a building. It was all assumptions and deceptions. The thought came to me, *How long have some of these people been here doing this?*