

Minister's Message – September 2004

Crown of Righteousness

It was very exciting to see so many of our athletes winning medals at Athens. Not only did they get a medal but also received a wreath to put on their heads. It must have been a great honour to be crowned in this way. But, I wonder what has happened to all those crowns. Were they real or just plastic? Will they last for long?

The apostle Paul was in Athens almost 2000 years ago and maybe saw such crowns being given to athletes back then. He wrote to the young man Timothy telling him that *physical exercise is of some value but godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of life*. In another letter that he wrote shortly before he died, he said, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord will give me.*

The Olympics are over and the glory is fading, as I am sure any of the athletes will tell you. Paul saw life as a race. The start, the run and the finish are all important. He ran with perseverance, beating his body to conform to the way of the Lord. He was aiming for the crown that will never fade or perish, the crown of righteousness given by the Kings of Kings. It will be given to all who believe in Jesus – *all who have loved his appearing* in this world.

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