

Exposition of
1 Kings 3:1-28

Sermon Series:
Spiritual Lessons from OT Kings

Sermon Title:
Need for Godly Wisdom
Lesson from King Solomon

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the Old Testament we are presented with many valuable lessons and principals that are applicable to our modern lives. This is of course what we have been observing in this series of messages as we have looked back at various OT kings and learn from both their achievements and their mistakes.

After spending some time in 1 & 2 Samuel learning from the lives of King Saul and King David, we now come to 1 Kings and to King Solomon where we shall seek out what spiritual lessons we can learn from the record of this young King.

His father David has passed on, however prior to his death, David establishes Solomon upon his throne followed by Solomon taking care of a few things himself during the transitioning into his current reign as King (which is all outlined in Chps.1&2).

This then brings us to our text for today here in Chp. 3 where, I trust, **we will learn that like Solomon, we too have a great need and dependency upon the wisdom of God in living out the Christian life.**

King Solomon would build upon the godly wisdom he receives directly from God and we too ought to use the wisdom we gain from Scripture to serve as building blocks within all the different spheres of our lives. Our marriages, our careers, our parenting, our relationships with one another, etc. **HOWEVER, it is important to note that the narrative which unfolds in today's text is not a glorification of wisdom, but rather a recognition of God's wisdom for the purpose of service.**

BODY

vv.1 A Sign of Power and Might

•The marriage is significant, because according to ancient history, Pharaoh's daughter had never been given to a foreign king.

• The context of the Chapter does not necessitate this was displeasing to the LORD. We can safely assume perhaps that Solomon's court proposed this political alliance, however there is nothing in the text that prevents us from considering the possibility that this young woman had sincerely rejected her Egyptian gods and now has turned to the God of Israel and was sincere in her heart.

• We must not let our interpretation of this marriage be immediately discolored by what we know about king Solomon's conduct later on in his life with taking to himself 700 wives, who many were worshipers of pagan gods which is highly condemned in Scriptures. Of course we pause here to recall that how polygamy also was a problem that over and over again manifested itself in the life of his father David, and causes us to heed the warning from LOOK UP THE VERSE....

• However this marriage seems to be within a context regarding Solomon as one of acceptance and high commendation at the beginning of his reign as King and of his spiritual youth. Again the marriage teaches us something related to the power which Solomon has now been put in charge of as King.

~Despite the great extent of Solomon's power and the might of the kingdom signified by this marriage, the following text immediately addresses a problem.

v.2 Convenient Worship vs. Acceptable Worship

“Only the people sacrificed in the high places”

- The nation here was not completely obedient in worship. It worshiped the Lord but not at the Tabernacle located in Jerusalem. (Lev.17:3-5;Deut.12:57). They had not lawful or commanded worship.

- **This doesn't mean that their worship was to pagan idols**, in fact scholars are quite certain made their sacrifices through the priesthood no doubt and according to the other laws which dictated their sacrifices, however they did it not according to the lawful place which was to at the tabernacle erected in Jerusalem. They offered the right sacrifices, but did it in the wrong place.

- **The LORD forbears them on this account.** The people as well as Solomon were sincere, and by God holding back His hand of wrath against them is truly a display and example of the mercy, patience and longsuffering. **Always remember that God's forbearance of wrong doing is not a token of disinterest in the affairs of His creation, but rather a way in which He uses all things to work out His overall redemptive gospel plan.**

For example, even after the temple is completed, and the use of these pagan altars had been forbidden, eliminating these high places (originally erected by the pagan Canaanites) proved to be difficult, even for the best of kings (1 Kings 15:14).

- These “high places” were open-air, hill top worship centers that the Canaanites had left behind, it was the place where they offered up their pagan sacrifices and in this

• **An important observation for our use: What was the REASON for this?** The first reason is suggested by “*because their was no house built unto the name of the Lord*”. Rather than sacrifice and make the journey to the appointed place they did what was convenient. And it appears that Solomon, himself endorses this practice from the next verse.

But Church we are not to worship according to Convenience but according to God’s instruction and what God outlines as acceptable in His Word. The old puritans understood this precept well “The acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by Himself, and limited by His own revealed will, He may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures” LBC22:1

Due 12:32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

• Convenient worship in lieu of acceptable worship is still very much a problem for the people of God today. This could be illustrated in so many ways dear friends (Multiple church services, Traditional and Contemporary, Canceling service because of Christmas or other family plans) you get the picture.

• There is I believe, another reason we ought to consider and observe that is: perhaps there was a theatrical element behind all this? We have previously observed how the people wanted a king, in large part to resemble the surrounding nations and perhaps here again they want to present a certain level of display and religious pomp so as not to be outdone by the Cannanites, after all to only

have one location, and it being that of a tented tabernacle was not very conspicuous or grand for all to look upon.

This need for big presentation for show and external splendor has sadly plagued the people God throughout all ages, good people, bible believing people are swept away at times by external grandeur. Why just recently during a family worship in where we are studying the Reformation Period and in particular the role of Martin Luther we observed that it was the excess, the parading, the selfish use of God's resources by those in power that began his flame of indignation and protest against the Established Church of Rome. And so, we can learn from this - to guard ourselves from becoming covetous of the external grand appearances of others.

~ We now come to these tremendous vv.3 & 4 describing the worship of Solomon.

vv.3-4 Fuel for Worship – Love toward God

- As in v.2 – He did it in the right way, but in the wrong place.
- Solomon, as a young man (20yrs old) the text says “loved (208) the LORD!”

The Hebrew word for love captures the intimate and total depth of feeling and emotion capable by us as humans.

Gen 22:2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only [son] Isaac, whom thou **lovest**,

Gen 37:3 Now Israel **loved** Joseph more than all his children, because he [was] the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of [many] colors.

- This was in keeping with his name (Jedidiah) given to him by Nathan the prophet in connection with God's covenant promise to his father king David (2 Sam.12:25) – Jedidiah meaning “beloved

by God” and so Solomon also loved God more than he loved himself, which is always a sign of a true believer. He loved God more than power, more than wealth. He loved God more than the world and fame – He loved the Attributes of God! His Justice, Faithfulness, Love, Mercy, Might, Holiness. He loved God’s plans, God’s ways and he would study them and sought to be used and in service for them.

~ *In v.4 Solomon’s love for God intensifies the worship.*

- Gibeon is approx. 7 miles NW of Jerusalem where Solomon lived and in our attempt to discover some possible explanation as to why he would travel there instead of sacrificing at the altar located Jerusalem we observe in the text “for that was the great (chief) high place” this was where the original tabernacle of Moses and the original bronze altar were located. And so he goes there to worship God through a mass sacrifice.

- **1,000 burnt offerings! Was not likely all at once, nor for a mere display of extravagance, it had reverent and special meaning not for mere show.** Rather, it was done over a course of several days (as the old scholars believed, ie Gill) Solomon here is doing several things they taught, it was very likely that this was an offering of thanksgiving to God in honor of his father, also there were offerings consisting of the type by which Solomon was dedicating himself unto the service of God, and of course this tremendous and intense level of sacrifice was a call to the people to look unto God as they continually took place...it would be very possible that a large portion of the nation had come and witnessed this great act of worship of Solomon.

~ During this stay in Gibeon surrounded by the context of worship, we see the famous offer which God made unto Solomon as recorded in verse 5.

vv.5-6 God's Offer & Solomon's Reply

- It was after all this worship and honor offered by Solomon in Gibeon for the blessings and goodness of God upon his father David, himself and the nation that LORD especially appears to Solomon here in a dream.

- Observation#1: This special dealing with Solomon by God takes place in the midst of worship that was happening here in Gibeon which **teaches us something concerning the significance related to our own worship.** It seems that it's always during or after true worship the Lord deals with His people. We must friends, guard the worship of the Lord...keep it focused upon Him and not ourselves and then, expect, anticipate, be quite and open to God moving upon our hearts.

- Observation#2: This particular encounter with the LORD transforms Solomon's worship as we read in v.15 that he no longer worships in the high places but returns to Jerusalem before the ark of the LORD. This contains for us a lessons **that upon salvation, there is an organic submissive and teachable heart which desire's to worship the Lord as He has revealed to us.**

- THE DREAM – this is an unusual dream, because in this dream there was communication both ways. God does not reveal himself by dreams today because He has given us as His church the Scriptures, and all authoritative materials come to us by them. The reason there are no longer authoritative dreams today is because

one person would say this and another would say that and nobody would know what was true.

Now, God may use a dream which is a product of your own psyche in such a manner as to shake you up somehow or impress upon you a certain truth contained within His Holy Word, **but, the dream won't be an authoritative dream by which you can declare it to be divinely given you by God and from it dictate doctrine or authoritative teaching**, this is a big mistake made by the Charismatic movement.

~ But here of course God does do so with Solomon and says to Solomon "Ask what I shall give thee." What a tremendous economy of words. Not all that eloquent but yet considering the context and who is speaking it is profound.

• God's offer. Here friends, we see in a real and beautiful way the Covenant God of Scripture. The one who hears our prayers, the one who draws nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a **contrite** spirit. Psa 34:18

Contrite – humble, meaning literally dust.

Which we shall see is the attitude of Solomon in his response to God. God is now presenting Solomon with an open ended offer.

• How tragic it would've been if Solomon had not responded!

➤ *The unbeliever* - Mat 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,... ye would not!

➤ *The believer* – ask for a role, a gift, an avenue of service, a role to assist in the spread of the Gospel, the magnifying of the name of Christ. Jhn 16:23... Verily,

verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give [it] you.

Believers, as part of your blessings in Christ you are granted this wonderful privilege to ask!

- Solomon's reply. As we are seeking to learn lessons from the OT Kings, his here reply is so valuable to us.

How are we to reply to God / **What manner or style is our prayer to be when seeking to secure from God a certain answer for some gift or some ability to better serve Him?**

- Gratitude for God's covenant faithfulness (mercy & kindness). "*Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy...*" This is significant because it shows us that before a believer begins to focus on what they might receive from the abundant supply of the LORD, they must first recognize how good and gracious God already has been to them through Christ our surety, our covenant keeper. (2 Cro.1:9)
- Compare David's faithfulness to Christ's faithfulness and how it is through Christ we are treated kind.

- Conditional Covenant - Solomon notices the conditions of the blessings in v.6 "according as he walked..." a principal for us would be that if we are going to 'ask of the LORD' an equipping, a gift to serve Him, we had better be ready to fulfill the terms and love Him and obey Him and seek His help to walk in righteousness'.

• vv.7-8 Solomon admits his true needs before God, and in doing so demonstrates again faith in God. 'thou hast made' and 'thy people which thou hast chosen'.

- "I am but a little child" (20 yrs) "I know not how to go out or come in." an expression that reaches all the way back to the book

of Numbers referencing a shepherd leading a flock in and out of the sheep hold, in and out of pastors.

- We too, must have this sense of inadequacy if not we ought not expect a response for a blessing or a opportunity for a role in service. Of course we are inadequate.

v.8 They previously under the reign of David did take a count of some of the people, they counted all the men of fighting age which was 800k Israel and 500k men of Judah. The experts say based on this that the total population was approx. 4-6 million.

- ‘in the midst of thy people’ in Hebrew meaning Solomon fills oppressed by the burden, he feels overwhelmed, almost crushed.

- These are God’s chosen people!

This teaches that the recognition of the importance of a task to be done before God and the assessment of our needs in order to perform it, should include not only physical concerns but also the grace and sanctified discernment.

v.9 Choosing Wisdom

“understanding” Hebrew a hearing heart or a listening heart.

- He was not going to be the only Judge, there was a judicial system that had been around since the time of Moses. And local elders would conduct courts (although we don’t know the exact structure, we do know they would hear cases) EXPLAIN – Higher court down to Lower courts.

- He picks wisdom to administer Justice. 20yrs old.

- “that I may discern between good and bad” **He didn’t ask for wisdom for himself, he asked for wisdom for the service of the**

LORD. EXPLAIN his many areas of wisdom (Architect, Biologist, Master Writer of Proverbs, Engineer, Genius in many fields) We don't study the Bible for the mere sake of information (admonition of information forsaking service).

vv.10-12 Pleasing God and Receiving Wisdom

• “And the speech pleased the Lord”

• **Observation: There were several elements that made this prayer/request of Solomon good to the eyes of God’ –**

They were:

1. Responding to God's invitation to ask for a blessing.
2. Expressing gratitude to God and His indebtedness to Him.
3. Coming to God in humility, in faith and sincere belief.
4. He was ready to accept the conditions attached to any gift or opportunity that God may have given Solomon.
5. Solomon acknowledged the difficulty of the task and his own inadequacy
6. He wanted the blessing and the gift for the purpose of serving God and His people.

• Dear friends, if we come like this to God in our own prayers, then what is said of Solomon in v.10 will be true of us.

• It was immediate, no sooner than the request came out of Solomon's mouth, it was granted. (Same as conversion)

• A wise and understanding heart.

vv.13-14 God's Additional Blessing

There are three points here that the puritans would always draw out of this that I would like to share with:

1.Solomon received wisdom because he asked for it.

2. Solomon received wealth and honor, because he didn't ask for it.

3.Solomon was promised length of days, if he deserved it.

(Robert McCheyne/Scotland died at 29yrs)

v.15 Worship Transformed

The godly wisdom that Solomon had, led him to an acceptable worship.

vv.16-28 Wisdom is Applied

- It is very possible that Solomon knew the true mother, before he ever called for the sword.

CLOSING

The Lord granted Solomon's unselfish request for wisdom because he asked, as well as giving him things he didn't ask for and this testifies to God's amazing goodness and grace; in Paul's inspired words, he "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph 3:20)

We should learn from this that prayer is not just a list of wants in order to enrich ourselves but a means of seeking the Lord for His will to done.

We need to pray that God will grant us the wisdom or skill to be useful in whatever calling or task He has for us at any given point in life. What wisdom do you need from the Lord today? Seek it not from the counselors of the world, but look to Christ and His Word and remember - ask.