

Sunday Scriptures: 26th July 2020 Revd Janice Morgan

1 Kings 3:3-12 Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom

³Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David; only, he sacrificed and offered incense at the high places. ⁴The King went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the principle high place; Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶And Solomon said, 'You have shown great and steadfast love to Your servant my father David, because he walked before You in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward You; and You have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on the throne today. ⁷And now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And Your servant is in the midst of the people whom You have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹Give Your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern Your people, able to discern between good and evil'; for who can govern this Your great people? ¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. ¹³I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honour all your life; no other king shall compare with you. ¹⁴If you will walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life." ¹⁵Then Solomon awoke; it had been a dream. He came to Jerusalem where he stood before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord. He offered up burnt offerings and offerings of well-being, and provided a feast for all his servants.

Have you ever had a dream that felt so real you were surprised when you woke up? This was the experience of Solomon; a young boy suddenly crowned as king over a great nation of God's people. Being placed in this position at an age where he barely knew who he was let alone how to rule over others must have been overwhelming. What should he do...who could he turn to for advice...how was he to follow his father David's governance? These questions and many more must have been going round in his young mind so he went to the principle 'high place' to seek divine direction. However, these 'high places' were elevated places of worship to false gods. Although young Solomon loved the Lord and followed his father in keeping God's commandments, he was dividing his faith by worshipping other god's instead of trusting only in the One True God of his father. Just because we attended Sunday School does not make us faithful to God. Just because we attend worship on a Sunday does not make us faithful to God. Just because we have a theological degree or attend regular bible study or pray regularly, does not make us faithful to God. God is not interested in head knowledge or worldly understanding but the condition of a person's heart. David was considered faithful 'because he walked before God in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart' (vs 6). This is the demonstration and witness of a true child of God.

If I were to tell you that you had just one wish, but whatever you asked for in that one wish would be granted; what would it be? In his dream, God asked Solomon that very question. The Almighty Creator of all things gave Solomon the chance to ask for anything in the world. This young boy did not make his request in haste; he first recalled God's 'great and steadfast love' for his father David because of his 'faithfulness, righteousness, and uprightness of heart.' Then Solomon lays out his dilemma, he is but a child and totally out of his depth as to how to govern the people of God. Only then does he ask for understanding and discernment of good and evil. *Have you ever felt unqualified, ill equipped, and out of your depth for a task or situation in your life?* If you have then take heart, if you put your trust in the Lord God Almighty He will provide. Solomon asked for wisdom, defined as trust and reverence in the Lord (Proverbs 1:1-7), not for himself but in order to lead God's people in

accordance with God's will and purpose. For this reason his request pleased the Lord and God granted it by making him wiser than any other human being that has ever lived.

Solomon made a very wise request but notice that he did not ask God to do everything for him. Solomon asked for wisdom to carry out the task he found himself responsible for and the position God had appointed him to fulfil. We can also ask God for wisdom to fulfil the same purpose, "To trust and reverence the Lord" (James 1:5-8). Wisdom is both the discernment to know God's heart and the strength of character to act upon that knowledge. We should not ask God to do **for** us what He wants to do **through** us. Instead we should ask for the wisdom to recognise God's commission for our life, discernment to know what is of God and what is not and the courage to fulfil our given task according to God's will and purpose. King Solomon is remembered for his wisdom, but we must remember that it was gained through his steadfast relationship with God, Who is the source of all wisdom.

Not everyone is blessed with great wisdom, but everyone does have the potential to be faithful to God. Solomon may have received great wisdom from God, but it was then up to him to apply what God had given to all areas of his life. Solomon had the same freedom of choice as we do today, and sadly, he did not always choose wisely. *Do we recognise what gifts, talents, or tasks God has given us? How do we apply what God has given?* Those called to serve God in positions of authority and governance bear a greater responsibility to choose wisely and live according to God's Word. This is because they are called to lead by example, exercise discernment, and teach Truth with wisdom. How can people know Truth if they are not taught how to discern it and how can the family of God live in accord with God's will and purpose if they are not taught the Word of God. God does not promise riches to those who follow Him, but He will give us what we need if we put His Kingdom, His interests, and His principles first in our lives. Craving material riches will only leave us dissatisfied, because they are never enough, only God can satisfy our deepest needs.

King Solomon asked for wisdom, not wealth, but, because he enquired of the Lord out of a true heart in all humility, God blessed him with riches and long life as well. This is God's promise written in Scripture; those who remain faithful in heart and soul to the Word of God and teaching of His Son Jesus will receive 'every spiritual blessing' (Ephesian 1:3). God is omnipotent and omnipresent, that means He sees, hears and knows all things, particularly the desires of our heart. We have been given a conscience so that we know right from wrong. Our heart pricks our soul with guilt that we might repent and be saved. When we first put our relationship right with God, then we will live in righteousness and restore God's house to righteousness. *What does the Lord require of us?* "But to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). Let us give God our heart and soul; let us pray that we fulfil the call of Jesus, His Son; let us live to please the Lord our God. Amen!

Hymn/Song: Father, I Place Into Your Hands

By Jenny Hewer ©1975 Thank You music – (SoF 97; MP 133; JP 42)

Father, I place into Your hands
The things that I can't do.
Father, I place into Your hands
The times that I've been through.
Father, I place into Your hands
The way that I should go,
For I know I always can trust You.

Father, I place into Your hands
My friends and family.
Father, I place into Your hands
The things that trouble me.

Father, I place into Your hands
The person I would be,
For I know I always can trust You.

Father, we love to seek Your face,
We love to hear Your voice.
Father, we love to sing Your praise,
And in Your name rejoice.
Father, we love to walk with You
And in Your presence rest,
For we know we always can trust You.

Father, I want to be with You
And do the things You do.
Father, I want to speak the words
That You are speaking too.
Father, I want to love the ones
That You will draw to You,
For I know that I am one with You.

Poem: WISDOM ©Janice Morgan-1996

Wisdom is a gift most rare,
If you possess it have a care,
Don't waste it on a selfish deed,
The Master's teaching you must heed,
For wisdom comes from God alone,
So show to others, what to you, God has shown.

Wisdom's walk is life itself,
Life lived for others, not yourself,
To be a friend and understand,
When others need a helping hand,
Is how God's wisdom will be seen,
So be to others, what to you, God has been.

Wisdom has a patient way,
To wait upon what God will say,
A watchful eye will plainly see,
Discerning what God wants to be,
A danger seen avoids life's pains,
So teach to others, what to you, God explains.

Wisdom knows, for wisdom cares,
And sees the damage and the tares,
Upon the fabric of this life,
So full of struggle, full of strife,
She works and weaves and new cloth sends,
So mend for others, what for you, God mends.

Wisdom is a precious gift,
And may be used to mar or lift,
So don't be foolish and lay waste,
What God has given please use, make haste,
Not everyone is this way blessed,
So test for others, what for you, God will test.