

King Solomon's Mind I
The Wisdom of Solomon part 2
Proverbs 2:1-11, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, Matthew 12:39-42

Last week we overheard King Solomon's prayer at Gibeon. *The Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream and God said, "Ask for whatever you want Me to give you." (I Kings 3:5).* Solomon answered, *"Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of Yours?"*

My High School French teacher loved and lived the language. One time she said, "You must learn to think French, not translate it from English. It must be in your heart, in your subconscious. You haven't really learned the language until you dream in French." The desire for wisdom was so embedded in Solomon's heart, so seeped into his sub-conscious and his spirit, he prayed for it in a dream.

God answered Solomon's prayer, *I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover I will give you what you have not asked for – both riches and honor..* *I Kings 3:12, 13.* Solomon became the wisest and richest man who ever lived. He inherited from his father, King David a sizeable empire but Solomon extended its borders to Egypt on the South and as far North as the Euphrates River. During his forty year reign, Solomon amassed enormous wealth and surrounded himself with luxuries and magnificence of an Eastern monarch: He owned 12,000 horses with horsemen and 14,000 chariots. He divided the kingdom into twelve districts, established Israelite colonies and built cities to oversee military, administrative and commercial interests. His navel fleet sailed on the Mediterranean as far West as Tarshish (modern Spain) and to exotic ports of Ophir, South India, and the coasts of Africa. He led his nation to super power status.

With consummate diplomatic skill, Solomon formed peace alliances and trading agreements with neighboring nations: namely Tyre, Egypt, and Arabia. As was the custom these alliances were sealed by marriage: most notably, the daughter of Pharaoh, for whom he built her own palace. Solomon was husband to 700 wives and 300 concubines.

All of these attainments and accomplishments aside, Solomon was revered among his people for his crowning achievements: building the first Temple to house the Ark of the Covenant, the mercy seat of God. King David had done the ground work. But Solomon secured the materials and the

work force. It was an immense and elaborate project requiring the a work force of 30,000 men to cut and trim lumber, cedar from Lebanon, 70,000 laborers and 80,000 stone cutters; that's a labor force of 180,000 for just one building project. The interior of the Temple was appointed with fine fabrics, precious gems and overlaid with gold and silver. The Temple was the citadel of true life for the Hebrews, life in fellowship with God.

Peace along the empire's borders, unparalleled wealth and security, Solomon's reign was the Camelot of the United Kingdom of Israel and Judah. All of this came about because God answered Solomon's selfless prayer for discernment to distinguish between right and wrong. He composed 1005 songs including 2 Psalms. He compiled 3,000 proverbs in the Book of Proverbs, and wrote both the Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes.

Solomon became world renown for his wisdom Sages came to learn from him. Most notably, the queen of the South. The Queen of Sheba, overwhelmed by his wisdom and majesty, said to the King, *"The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard."* (1 Kings 10:6-7). He married her too, but that's next week's sermon.

Solomon valued wisdom as far more precious than any material commodity on earth. He gathered wisdom as one collects tea cups, or baseball cards, or Elvis memorabilia. We witness the power and work of Solomon's wisdom in the administration of his government, in the increase of his empire, and in the equity of his justice. Two women came to his court with a baby whom both women claimed as their own. Solomon threatened to spit the baby in half. One woman was prepared to accept the decision, but the other begged the king to give the live baby to the other woman. Solomon then knew the second woman, the one who cared desperately for the baby's life, was the true mother. Such insight is a gift of God: a gift God freely gives to those who search for it: wisdom.

"My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight, and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as silver and search for it as for hidden treasure," Pv. 2:1-4

The desire for wisdom finds fulfillment through willingness to accept God's honest truth, obedience to His commands, attentiveness, sensibility to wisdom, and practical application to what is learned. My French teacher piqued my imagination with her flamboyant method of teaching, but it

wasn't until I paid attention to the lesson, learned the vocabulary, practiced the pronunciation, did the homework, and passed the tests that I did in fact dream in French, and spoke the language while visiting Paris nearly 40 years later. Solomon teaches us to accept the text, do the assignments, practice what we learn, and *“then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.”*

Once again Jesus was being cross-examined by the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law. They were demanding a sign from Him to prove that He was at least a Prophet sent from God. Jesus never did a miracle on demand. Even when confronted by Herod with His life on the line, Jesus remained silent. His works were for the Father's glory, not some side show to satisfy the curious or the devious. This day he answers his inquisitors, *“None shall be given you except the sign of the prophet Jonah, for Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”* Jesus was pointing to the sign of His death, burial and resurrection as proof positive, he is the Messiah.

Then He adds a very interesting comment. He says, *“The queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.”*

The Pharisees just didn't get it. Some of the most religious people today, Christians, just don't get it. They come to church, they sing the hymns, sit through the sermon, give their envelopes but miss the wealth and the power of God's Presence - of Wisdom that is available for anyone who asks, seeks, searches and values God wisdom as more precious than silver, more costly than gold, and more beautiful than diamonds; Wisdom that is hidden from the rebellious and the foolish.

Paul gives a treasure map to the Christians in Corinth that they may find, know, experience and possess the Wisdom of God: *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”* (1 Cor. 1:18)

The cross was the most horrific means of execution: an accursed death to the Jews. A man dying such an excruciating death for crimes he did not commit makes is foolishness to the sensibilities of the world. Only by the Spirit of God, is it interpreted and understood by believers as the sacrifice made for sin for once and for all people; the very means of our salvation by God's mercy and power. *“We preach Christ crucified to those whom God*

has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God. vs 24

Beloved, don't miss this. If you don't remember anything I have said at all this morning, remember this, **Christ is the Power and the Wisdom of God.** Repeat this Scripture with me, **Christ is the Power and the Wisdom of God.**

Do you realize this? In your heart of hearts, in the depth of your soul, at the core of your being, realize that when you come to church, and you enter worship, you are in the presence of God: God who yearns to give you the Power and Wisdom to live fully, abundantly, to His glory, if we but ask, and seek, and search. We don't have Solomon's Temple. We don't have the Ark of the Covenant. We don't have the mercy seat of God. **But now ONE greater than Solomon is here!**

Christ is the Power and the Wisdom of God.

How much do you want Him? Are you yearning to seek Him out and search His wisdom? Are you willing to accept God's honest truth, obey to His commands, be attentive to Christ, and apply what you learn from Him? Do you treasure your relationship with Jesus? Is He more valuable to you than a bulging bank account or fortune 500 portfolio? He can be. Is He more precious to you than silver? More costly than gold? More beautiful than diamonds? Does anything you could ever want in this life compare to Him? Why not tell Him? Tell Him now.