

January 2, 2022

I Kings 3:4-15, Ephesians 1:3-14 (selected verses):

**“We Have What Solomon Had.
God Help Us to Safeguard It!”**

- I. Loved Before Creation.
- II. Gifted with Wisdom and Riches.
- III. Our Inheritance Is Sealed.

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I Kings 3:4-15, Ephesians 1:3-14 (selected verses)

Dear Friends in Christ,

Solomon was, of course, a son of David and Bathsheba. At the beginning of his life we're told, "And the Lord loved him..." (Sam. 12:24b) Toward the end of his reign as king of Israel we're told, "So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done." (I Ki. 11:6) Because Solomon's heart willingly accepted the idol worship of his 700 wives and 300 concubines, we're told, "And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord..." (I Ki. 11:9)

Our two texts for this sermon are worthy of serious Bible studies. However, in the light of the many thoughts about this world - where we're going and what's happening - I'm taking this direction:

WE HAVE WHAT SOLOMON HAD. GOD HELP US TO SAFEGUARD IT!

I. Loved Before Creation.

Let's first consider these words I placed before you at the beginning of the sermon: "And the Lord loved him..." (2 Sam. 12:24b) While these words are not part of our first text they direct us to these words from I Kings 3:3: "Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father, only he sacrificed and made offerings at the high places." The reason for the high places is in verse 2, "...no house had yet been built for the Lord." Following this, we're told, "At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, 'Ask what I shall give you.'" (I Ki. 3:3a,5)

God's love for Solomon was an incredible blessing, but here's the point: that love is ours. Our Epistle reading is very clear about this:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons (men, women and children) through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will (because He wanted to)...(Eph. 1:3-5).

God "chose us in him," in Christ. He chose us before creation to be His through faith in Christ. He knows us! Our text states the fact: "In love he predestined us for adoption...through Jesus Christ." And what is so remarkable about this, and so easy to take for granted, is this teaching from God's Word: "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved." (Eph. 2:4,5) We were spiritually dead, and left to our own thinking and devices we were doomed! The words Jesus promised to those trusting in themselves would be ours: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Mt. 25:41)

Of course, we know this! But what's heart breaking is how we often take the love of God in Christ for granted. While we were enemies of God, before birth, God loved us and wanted us to understand the blood of Jesus that lifted us from eternal rejection! Do you remember these words of David: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.?" (Ps. 51:5) And these words: "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.?" (Rm. 5:8) Of course we remember. Don't we wonder, with aching hearts, how on earth could the love of Jesus take a back seat to the multitude of distractions, the chase for pretty and petty? And, oh, the pitiful excuses we make! We are guilty! And look at this . . .

II. Gifted With Wisdom and Riches.

In His love for Solomon, our text from First Kings informs us, "At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, 'Ask what I shall give you?'" (v.5) Solomon requested,

"Give your servant...an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" (v.9) And God answered, "...I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you." (v.12)

No-one will ever have the wisdom of Solomon to govern a people, but listen to what our text from Ephesians reveals concerning what we have been given: "In him (Christ Jesus) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in **all wisdom** and insight making known the mystery of his will...(vv.7,8).

We have been redeemed, purchased from death and hell through the blood of Jesus; every sin forgiven. We have been given **the wisdom of God** to know and believe this. It is not something we brought about. It is the gift of God. As is stated in I Corinthians: "And because of him (God) you are in Christ Jesus, who **became to us wisdom from God**, righteousness and sanctification and redemption so that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boasts in the Lord.'" (I Cor 1:30,31) The magnitude of our knowing God's love in Christ is also spelled out in this Word of God:

"Yet among the mature (in faith) we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age (this world) or of the rulers of this age. But we impart **a secret and hidden wisdom of God** (the knowledge you and I have been given to know Christ), which God decreed for our glory." (1 Cor. 2:6,7)

Indeed, we have what Solomon had, the greatest wisdom any human could ever possess: faith that clings to God's love and forgiveness in Christ! And one thing more . . .

III. Our Inheritance is Sealed.

In our Old Testament text God also promised Solomon, "I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days." (v.13) Indeed, God gave him far more than we could imagine. Unfortunately, as stated at the beginning of this sermon, Solomon went too far through marriage alliances which, as scripture says, turned his heart to accept other gods (see I Ki. 11:1-8). Please recall again those chilling words, "And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice." (I Ki. 11:9)

Our second text, the Epistle reading, clearly states the promise of "riches" and "honor" that are ours in Christ; riches and honor that surpass any and all riches and honor of this world:

In him (Jesus) we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ (that is, Paul and the others who were with Christ when He walked this earth in the flesh) might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also (us), when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Eph. 1:11-14)

This world is rapidly moving to its final moment. What's going to take place in the future days is spelled out in Scripture. It's what we see unfolding. The first statement of the theme of this sermon is **We Have What Solomon Had**. Well, we do! I couldn't admonish you and me enough to lock these words the Holy Spirit gave to Peter in the forefront of whatever time we have to exist on this earth. The words really need little commentary:

According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (as opposed to the dead hope that takes us to eternal sorrow), to an inheritance that is imperishable (will never fade in its intense joy), undefiled (without sin and decay), kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (I Pt. 1:3b-5)

I know, we've heard that many times! But listen. That Scripture impresses upon us that while we rejoice in the eternal kingdom awaiting us - it impresses upon us: "if necessary, (we will be) grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of (our) faith...may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (I Pt. 1:6,7) And with that is the most important goal of your living and my living, which has nothing to do with the extent of happiness with this world: we are "obtaining the outcome of our faith the salvation of (our) souls." (I Pt. 1:9)

Make no mistake about it: ***We Have What Solomon Had***: The wisdom of God in Christ which assures us of an everlasting Kingdom of joy, peace and happiness. So, ***God Help Us To Safeguard*** what we have been given.

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott