

1 Kings 3:16-28

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[0:00] All right, let's put ourselves in context. Solomon is firmly seated upon his throne. He's reigning over the people of the Lord. He's reigning over Israel. He, by the time we get to this account, more than likely he's been reigning for some time.

But when he was about 20 years of age, he goes and he worships. There's this great worship season at Gebeah. He offers thousands of sacrifice, has all the leaders there.

We see that in 1 Kings 3. We also see it in 2 Chronicles, right? This recording of it. But during the course of this worship, he goes to bed and the Lord appears to him in a dream and says, ask of me whatever you wish.

What would you like for me to give you? And Solomon, very wisely, asked for wisdom. We know the account, right? He says, Lord, you've been so favorable to your people. You've multiplied your people.

You've been favorable. Your loving kindness has been displayed to my father. So you've allowed me to remain on the throne. But I'm but a child. I don't know how to go in or come out. It literally means I don't know how to govern the people.

[1:01] So he petitions God and he asks for wisdom. God gives him that wisdom. He says, I'm going to give you the wisdom, but I'm going to give you everything else that you haven't asked for. I'm going to give you riches. I'm going to give you prosperity.

I'm going to give you security. And then he puts that one condition on the end of it. It says that if you will follow me the way your father followed me, then I'll give you longevity of life, long life. We meet Solomon.

And I'm just going to be honest. As a pastor, we meet it in this conundrum. We talked about Sunday night if you were here. One Bible scholar defined him as the dumbest wise man you'll ever meet. Because he has wisdom and he is the wisest of the wise and he succeeds in prosperity. But in the end, his ruin is his multiple wives.

His ruin is really degrading to the people of Israel. Immediately after his death, the nation is divided, which if we're going to do an honest evaluation, the division occurs because of the things that Solomon had put in practice.

[2:06] And we just wonder why this departure from wisdom and faithfulness. He had all the wisdom in the world. He had all the wisdom.

He got off to a great start. But we know that wisdom alone is not that which is pleasing to the Lord. God defines David as a man after his own heart.

So it's a desire for the Lord God. But yet we also, and I say this because I want us to rightfully interpret it, it would be easy for me to sit up and go, oh, Solomon's all wrong. We open up the book of Proverbs and many of the Proverbs we read are from Solomon.

Many of them. And the book of Proverbs begins with this admonition to seek wisdom, right? Proverbs chapter 1 verse 7, the first half of verse 7 says, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

That the only reason we can ever attain knowledge or wisdom, two words that are used interchangeably there, it begins with the fear of the Lord. And then the first 8, 9 Proverbs just really encourage you to seek wisdom, to pursue wisdom, to search after wisdom, to purchase wisdom.

[3:20] So wisdom is a great thing, but it's not the only thing, right? So we understand that. We've come across this account now. We're fixing to read it, and I know this is a long introduction.

So what I'm confining myself to is just looking. We know we have the benefit of Scripture that when we read an account, we know how it all ends, right?

We can read ahead. We know what happens. But I don't want to read into Solomon's life what I know happens at the end because at that point he hasn't been influenced by the multiple wives.

He's there. But what we can see are some things he begins to put in practice that are good. If I was to be able to look at, if we had time to go all the way through the fourth chapter, I would show you the benefits but also the failings of wisdom.

There are some wonderful benefits. Then there are ways that wisdom, if that alone is what we're trusting in, fails us. But tonight we're just going to see the gift of wisdom and its exercise here.

[4 : 19] And this account that many of us have heard, even those of us that have heard it and read it and seen it, it's still strange, right? It's still a really strange story. And we find it in 1 Kings 3, verse 16.

Then two women who were harlots came to the king and stood before him. The one woman said, Oh my Lord, this woman and I live in the same house and I gave birth to a child while she was in the house. And it happened on the third day after I gave birth that this woman also gave birth to a child and we were together.

There was no stranger with us in the house, only the two of us in the house. This woman's son died in the night because she lay on him or lay on it. And so she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from beside me while your maidservant slept and laid him on her bosom and laid her dead son in my bosom.

When I arose in the morning to nurse my son, behold, he was dead. But when I looked at him carefully in the morning, behold, he was not my son whom I had mourned. Then the other woman said, No, for the living one is my son and the dead one is your son.

But the first woman said, No, for the dead one is your son and the living one is my son. Thus they spoke before the king. Then the king said, The one says, This is my son who is living and your son is the dead one.

[5 : 29] The other says, No, for your son is the dead one and my son is the living one. The king said, Get me a sword. So they brought a sword to the king and the king said, Divide the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other.

Then the woman whose child was the living one spoke to the king for she was deeply stirred over her son and said, Oh, my Lord, give her the living child and by no means kill him.

But the other said, He shall be neither mine nor yours. Divide him. Then the king said, Give the first woman the living child and by no means kill him. She is the mother. When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.

Now, I'm going to tell you, the reason I think that we go into the fourth chapter and gives us a good bookend is because the very last verse of the fourth chapter says, Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

So I say that little caveat to let you know that this is really an introduction to a longer message so we find its application as we move further along. Because in this context, we have from the starting of the 16th verse of the third chapter to the end of the fourth chapter speaking of Solomon's wisdom and really how it's played out.

[6 : 46] But here we just have this gift of wisdom. Solomon has been in a worship service and petitioned God for wisdom and God gave him that wisdom. But the gift of the Lord had to be put into practice among men.

Right? God gave him the gift of wisdom. God assured him, I'm going to give you the gift of wisdom. And when we read it, Solomon had this dream but it says he awoke and he worshiped. So this God appeared to him in the dream, not through a prophet or a seer or anything of that nature.

But when we read the wording that says, and I give you, it's an active tense. God says, at this very moment I'm giving you wisdom. And at this very moment I'm giving you riches. And at this very moment I'm giving you all these things. God didn't delay.

He gave him that at his request. Which is a great attribute of God. By the way, complete side note. When we read the Old Testament, we see the attributes of God.

And those are essential. Because while what is going on in that time, in that place, there is, in any portion of scripture, no matter where you open it, there is but one truth.

[7 : 49] Right? You're not going to go to a verse and there will be five or six truths. There's one great truth that's being taught in that passage. There are thousands of applications based upon that truth.

Okay? So, when you open up John 3, 16, For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. There's one truth. Right? Now that application of that truth over and over and over again. So we're not seeking for a new truth. But the truths are often confined to time and space and history. The applications transcend time. I say this because this is Wednesday night and we can get into that kind of Bible study habit. Right? So the truth of the matter is there are two women that are harlots, prostitutes that come and stand before a king and they both have sons. They're both living in a house. This is the truth of the setting. Right? But when we see this we also begin to see attributes of God. The attributes of God transcend truth. So when God says I'm giving you wisdom the moment you ask this shows us that God is a God who hears and God answers and God grants the petitions of his people.

[8 : 59] Right? And he does it instantaneously or he can't do it instantaneously. He doesn't always. Sometimes it's his weight. But we see this faithfulness of God. So God has given him wisdom and he gave it to him at that very moment in that active, present, active tense.

But a gift given. Remember we've looked at this. Spiritual giftedness or anything that God gives us he gives us to utilize and to use. It's one thing for Solomon to say oh I've got all the wisdom in the world and never use it.

But he had to take it from the altar to the courtroom so to say. Right? He was at the altar worshiping because God gave him wisdom and then God says now you've got to go to the courtroom and use that wisdom. When God entrusts us with a gift it's for utilization purposes.

Solomon has been given this gift and now God says okay now go use it. And he puts him in the courtroom and Bible scholars are astounded because David allowed access to his throne.

Solomon seems to follow in suit because not every king think Queen Esther remember Queen Esther right? Mordecai says go before the king tell the king we're in trouble and Esther says I can't do that because the king hasn't asked me into his presence and there's but one standard that if you go and you're not asked he's going to kill you unless he extends the golden center.

[10 : 14] Remember that account in the book of Esther? Right? You couldn't just go before the throne of the king. David allowed access to the throne. Solomon seems to follow the practice and Solomon even goes further.

He allows those in open debauchery to come stand before his throne which is really cool because we again begin to see the attributes of the king of kings and lord of lords.

The Bible tells us in the book of Hebrews that Jesus is the forerunner and he's opened up the way into the courtroom of heaven. We have access to the throne room. We don't think man if I go there he's going to slay me.

If not for Christ he would. The golden center has already been extended and it's in Jesus Christ. Right? So we have access to the throne. So they bring this decision.

The first thing that we see the gift of wisdom doing and I'll be as quick as I can. The first thing we see is it helps us to discern truth. Why is wisdom so important? It helps us to discern truth. This problem that is presented before Solomon God says okay I've given you a gift now let's utilize it.

[11 : 15] These two women come before him. Nobody else is in the house. Right? She gives birth three days later she gives birth nobody's there. It's literally he said or she said she said right?

Her word against her word that's all it is. Nobody can identify the kids nobody can do it. And Solomon is presented with this impossible reality.

Now we know from scripture that God can give discernment and God's done it and he does it in the book of Daniel he does it in other portions of scripture he gives interpretations of dreams to Joseph and Daniel as well and all these things but yet God has given Solomon the wisdom and the wisdom helps him to discern the truth of the matter though both seem to be presenting their case in a world of presuppositions and a world of opinions and in a world of well this is what I think is true and this one says this is what I think is true Solomon has given this grand ability to be able to discern and he does it you know what we see is that's kind of a harsh way he says give me a sword let's see if we can divide this child in two and you know he uses this matter never intending to kill the child but yet what we see is the ability that he has to discern truth wisdom is essential because wisdom helps us to know what is true and wisdom is a gift from the one who is true this is why in the book of Proverbs it says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge

Jesus says I am the way the life and the truth right in a world of opinions in a world of assumptions in a world of perceptions truth is a reality I know we live in a day and time where people tell us

there's no such thing as absolute truth but there absolutely is an absolute truth even the statement that there's no such thing as an absolute truth is given in such a manner that it's absolute so if what they're saying is true then what they're saying is not true I know that's confusing but that's that's the reality for you to say there is no truth is an absolute statement which makes no sense whatsoever you're contradicting yourself but wisdom is the thing that is needed to discern truth and God gave wisdom to Solomon but God also imparts that to us because we meet the one who is truth and we encouraged in scripture because there comes moments where the world presents this well that's my child that's my child this impossible situation and the wisdom of the world or the ways of the world wants to kind of be tossed to and fro back and forth but the Lord has called us to stand in truth and we need that ability and we get that from the gift of wisdom so it helps us to discern truth number two it diminishes strife it diminishes strife you know

I believe it is Solomon who writes later in the book of Proverbs it is better to live in the corner of the house than to live with a contentious woman and that's not to put anything down it's just it's the truth right he says I'd rather live over in the corner of the house than have someone you know quarreling fighting with me and now he's got two of them in front of him and they're both fighting and beckering over this and we notice that when they come into the room they're in strife with one another rightfully so the mother the rightful mother this is her child I mean sure we want her to be upset but the other one who won't admit the truth who won't acknowledge the truth is just fighting so we have one who is standing in truth and we have one that is standing in a false lie and anytime truth and lies get together there's strife and so these two individuals come and they're in the midst of strife and argument and disagreement in front of Solomon and nobody can stop and nobody has the ability to speak into because nobody else was there but them we find elsewhere in scripture that the first to present their case seems right until the other stands up and we have this ability here to know that just because we hear something the first time it may seem right but it might not be right

[15 : 22] I have found this that some people are really good at lying and a lot of times the whole purpose in lying is just to create strife and Solomon in his wisdom that God gave him delivers the truth and the one thing we don't know much right we hope that the lady who is lying is persecuted to the fullest of the law we don't know we hope that the one who knows truth kind of is awakened from the lifestyle she's living and decides not to we're not told that but one thing we do know is that the moment Solomon delivers the verdict everything stops why because truth stops strife the only reason arguments and things take place is because someone is holding on to either half truth or a full lie but when the truth is clearly seen and acknowledged strife ceases and we see this here not only amongst these two people because we read later at the end of this chapter that there was fear over the land it says when all

Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down they feared the king why because if we have a king who can figure out the truth like that then maybe I need to think twice about what I'm about to do right we don't much grief was spared simply because of the reality that people knew they had a king who was wise we think about all the turmoil and the strife and the bickering and the fighting that takes place during the reign of David Solomon has none of that if we could continue reading on we will see in the fourth chapter I mean Solomon reigns over the largest portion of land that any king in he gets close to everything God promised to Abraham he's right on the borders of it right the nation of Israel is yet to possess all of the land that

God promised him I say yet because it will be a day when I believe they will possess it but they are yet to possess it because they've yet to have the king sitting on the throne but Solomon gets close he has the he dies his son rings in his place he's not a wise man he accepts the counsel of his friends not his father's counselors right he takes his buddies advice nobody's afraid of his wisdom strife shows back up then there's civil war there's all these slayings all these battles that's when we get into the history of the good king the bad king and all this other stuff why because the gift of god's wisdom helps to diminish strife it does it in our homes it does it in our workplaces and it does it in our lives if we think about it for just a moment every argument every disagreement

I speak to myself and I really when I was typing this up speak to myself every disagreement I've ever gotten into has been because I wanted to try to convince someone of what I thought when I know the truth and I'm living in the truth I don't have to fight over it I can declare it and walk away from it we work twice as hard to convince others of our opinions than we do when it's true because truth liberates right and in wisdom we don't fight over it we don't quarrel we don't argue because we know it's true we don't have to defend it ask any of our police officers right people work really hard

at defending lies just really hard and they do a really good job at it sometimes but anyway diminished strike number three finally we see here this gift of wisdom should be sadly does not end up being but this is still we're on the front end of his kingdom should be an avenue to righteousness wisdom rightly used declares righteousness we see that in this very last phrase here right all the people heard the wisdom and the judgment and they feared the king and it says for they saw the wisdom of

God was in him to administer justice when they looked at Solomon they didn't just say man Solomon's got it together they saw that Solomon had the wisdom of God which gives a great platform right it gives an astounding platform to declare righteous decrees and declare righteousness the thing that saddens me in the account of Solomon people are drawn to him by this wisdom this great gift he's given people want to come see his splendor people want to come see all of these things the thing that saddens me is that platform for declaration is never used because when they leave they all leave going oh wow did you see Solomon did you see how many people were eating at his table did you see the golden lions on each side of his throne did you see how big his throne was did you see his house did you see the the shields did you see all those things they're always declaring what Solomon they're not leaving declaring look what

[21 : 12] Solomon's God has done it's a big difference right he had a platform he had a gift he doesn't acknowledge it he doesn't use it but yet it's there and people are noticing it right there they're saying he's got the wisdom of God this isn't just the normal man like he's read books I mean he writes many people believe he's the author of the book Ecclesiastes I love the book of Ecclesiastes it's not a really good encouraging book but I love the book of Ecclesiastes and you read it in Vanity of Vanities all is vanity right you know everything is useless and it doesn't matter he said I went to the greatest schools didn't do any good I did all the fun stuff I didn't do any good in the end he gets to seek the Lord God and follow him that's the best thing you can do and he's like yeah I get that but while he was doing all this pleasurable stuff he forgot God but the platform was there because God gave him wisdom and he said well maybe God hasn't given me wisdom but he helps us to know truth right we've been introduced to the truth and those gifts that he gives us he wants us to utilize them but the utilization of the gifts are always for the declaration of the giver it is always a platform to declare the righteousness of the giver and when we begin to make the recipient of the gift greater than the giver of the gift we have a problem when we begin to say wow did you see what they have or did you see them or did you see all that and we begin to exalt the one who has been given the gift more than we exalt the one who has given it there's danger there we see it in our pulpit pastors begin to

I mean listen I understand every time I stand up I really but for the grace of God I mean I'm a very poor preacher in my own mentality in my own mind and people have told me you've got a photographic memory no I don't because there are things I forget all the time God is just so good and gracious and kind and I just really have to surrender that to him and I don't say that in false humility it's just me being honest with you but the danger is in the pulpit when you begin to think God has really given you this gift and you begin to think you're the most important thing in that gift and then you realize that God can speak to a donkey he spoke to a donkey one time and then he spoke to a rooster one time and he spoke to a bush one time and you're like well I'm not anything but a bush a donkey or a rooster so what am I right I mean so you go okay you do however you want to and I'm thankful for that but it's not like that way in any field right God's given us wisdom or he's given us faith or he's given us anything that you administrative skills when those gifts and the recipient of the gift becomes more important than the one who gave it to us we're missing the opportunity we're missing the opportunity to declare righteousness think of what Solomon could have done and then we look back and see what he didn't do everybody knew how great Solomon was nobody walked away seeing how great the Lord God was in contrast you have some fishermen and tax collectors and some uneducated individuals in the New Testament that were given God given wisdom and they saw Peter speak with the wisdom of God not with the wisdom of man and they knew he wouldn't educate it they knew he didn't have the schooling but when people left Peter's presence they knew how big his God was not how big Peter was it's how we use the platform to declare righteousness and the worthiness of a holy God is what's important in the end of the matter and we see this here with the gift of wisdom that's being laid out in Solomon's life we'll stop right there my brother because we gotta get to business meeting okay I really wanted to get to the fourth chapter but we'll stop right there anybody need a copy so

I Thank you.
Thank you.
[26 : 53] Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.