

17.10.21 am: THE WISDOM AND FOOLISHNESS OF SOLOMON

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Date: 17 October 2021

Preacher: George Barnie

[0 : 00] everybody and a warm welcome to everybody in the church building here today and also to those of you who are online. It's nice to see a few visitors with us and we give you a warm welcome.

Our preacher today is Mr. George Barney who is an elder in Smithton Free Church in Inverness so we look forward to George speaking to us and if you're at the prayer meeting on Wednesday night you'll have heard a very good message from him so we're looking forward to another good one today.

After the service there'll be tea and coffee served in the room next door so I encourage as many folk as possible who are able to stay behind for a cup of tea and coffee. You can have a chat with George and also his wife Elizabeth and the evening service is at six o'clock to which all are welcome once again that's both in the building here and online. There's no formal ladies fellowship or little fishes this week but I think there'll be an informal fellowship that Marion McLean is arranging. Is it on Marion yet? So if you want to know anything more about that just speak to Marion that will be tomorrow night. Prayer meeting on Wednesday. Sorry missing out road to recovery. That meets on Tuesday at seven. So anyone who's got issues with addictions you're very welcome to come and attend that meeting. And then on Wednesday the prayer meeting as usual and it will be both in the building and on Zoom this week once again. The Friday clubs for young people I understand are on this Friday as the kids go back to school on Friday itself. And then the services next Sunday 11 and 6 will both be taken God willing by the minister as far as I understand. So he's due back on Tuesday morning. So if there are any pastoral issues between now and Tuesday morning please just get in touch with one of the elders. And we also have support from Reverend Ian McRitchie up in Lox.

Okay. I think these are all intimations so I'll ask George to come forward and lead the service now. Good morning. Our call to worship this morning is from 1 John. It's from 1 John chapter 3.

[2 : 36] See what great love the Father has lavished on us. That we should be called children of God.

And that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God. And what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears we shall be like him. For we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves just as he is pure. Amen.

Let's sing to God's praise from Psalm 113. Psalm 113 which is on the screen.

113 and we're going to sing the first nine verses. Six stanzas. Praise God you servants of the Lord. O praise the Lord's name. O praise.

[3 : 49] The Lord's name praise. Yea, blessed be the name of God. From this time forth always. From rising sun to where it sets. God's name is to be praised.

Above all nations God is high. Above heavens his glory raised. Let's stand if we can and sing to God's praise. Praise God ye servants of the Lord.

O praise the Lord's name praise. God's name is to be praised.

Above all nations God is high. Above heavens his glory raised.

Unto the Lord the Lord that dwells. On high who can compare.

[5 : 31] Himself that humbler things to see. In heaven and earth that I.

He from the dust doth raise the fur. That very low doth lie.

And from the dung hill lives the man. Oppressed with poverty.

That he may highly name advance.

And with the princes set. With those that all his people are.

[6 : 40] The chief in graces stay. The barren woman has to keep.

The man that hath to be. Of sons and mother full of joy.

Praise to the Lord give ye. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Let's join together in prayer. Let's pray. Let's pray. Our heavenly Father. With your people all over the world. Today we want to magnify your holy name.

For we remember all your gracious benefits. Lord we think of your love. Your faithfulness. Your care. Your compassion. Lord we could go on and on.

[7 : 49] But Lord especially that gift. of your own son and lord we realize it was the only way that we could be forgiven with him jesus taking the blame the sinless one taking the sin of the world on himself so that by trusting in you we sinners can go scot-free lord we identify with the words of the psalmist when he says that we were lifted from the pit and our feet were put on a rock and a new song was put in our mouth lord so many of us today can think of times when singing psalms and hymns would have been anathema it would not have been part of our normal culture and here we are loving praising your name and lord we thank you lord jesus that you have secured a place for us in heaven that could never otherwise have been achieved our father there's a good congregation gathered here today but given the population of this island we're a very small number and yet as we've already said we gather with our brothers and sisters all over the world and lord we realize that some of these brothers and sisters would love to join with us and have the freedom to come together to see one another to have the encouragement of brothers and sisters in christ but lord they don't have it lord we if we're christians today we are part of a worldwide family from different nationalities different backgrounds different denominations different personalities different in almost every way and yet when we're in christ all one in jesus lord you are a most gracious god a most forgiving god and caring god and loving god and lord we are just so delighted that you're willing to adopt us even us into your family lord we come asking for forgiveness today forgiveness for all sorts of things but forgiveness in the way that although we claim to be yours we're sometimes lukewarm in our faith there are days can go by where we don't even think about you lord we have known your way but we've chosen to do something different and we as we look at the book of judges we see that we are like the people of judges doing what is right in our eyes lord we do just ask you to forgive us and to forgive us for our many sins and lord we realize that we are christians and lord for people who have slipped away and lord we realize that it's so easy to to be yours and yet to slip lord we love these words that say come back or people who have never come to you lord would you draw them lord way beyond the voice of a man today would they hear your voice and your invitation lord we do just pray for our brothers and sisters in in so many difficult situations and particularly this morning with afghanistan being in the news we pray for our brothers and sisters in afghanistan and lord we pray that you would give them everything they need and lord today they that would know that the joy of the lord is their strength

lord we just want to pray for this community lord we thank you for all the people here today who live in this community and lord you have given each one of us a responsibility to be salt and light wherever we live wherever we live wherever we go and wherever we are and lord we pray that that that influence would draw others to come to you lord we just want to remember missionaries today in other countries we think of the country of portugal which has such a small percentage of christians and we do just thank you for those who are working there and do just ask that you would bring more and more people to know you lord we think of france too and glad to hear of different denominations different groups who are working there that you are building your church in that beautiful country lord we do just remember the mcgillvary's and we pray for them as they've moved to turkey and lord we do just pray that you would help them to cope with the language to get to know people and lord to share the good news of jesus lord we thank you for the ministry here we thank you for david mcleod lord we thank you for the way that you've brought him and you've brought this whole church into being and lord we thank you for each person who belongs here and we thank you for every single visitor that's here today and that you would bless us bless us as we pray bless us as we read bless us as we sing bless the children as they go to their groups lord we do just ask for that blessing that comes from you lord as well as remembering david we do just remember mary and we remember anna and grace and lois and do just pray that you would refresh them and just bring them back to this congregation for all the work that's involved lord there are many things in our hearts today individually collectively as families lord you know them and lord we

just want to spend a moment just coming before you in prayer and lord these prayers that we've prayed to you in silence we know that you hear them and that you will answer them according to your will lord we ask all of this in jesus name and for his sake amen boys and girls if you would like i think this is your time for coming to join me so if you would like to join me here that would be lovely if you come sit on the floor make yourselves comfortable that's really nice to see you and if you're visiting today feel free to come and join us here or feel free just to stay in your seats yeah absolutely really nice to see everybody now where would i get the best view of you all i think i can see you all now and i can still see the ones that are sitting sitting in their seats well it's lovely to see you and to see so many of you how are the holidays going so far oh good yeah holidays are great and you'll be dying to go back to school oh you're not okay yes well i was a teacher for 42 years so and i sometimes must admit as a teacher sometimes i wasn't particularly keen to get back to school but i love the holidays and most of the time i love school as well now what i want i want to ask you a few questions today and i hope that you're going to answer my question i love to go places i absolutely love it going places going anywhere it can it's great and when i heard i was coming over to harris i've been in harris before but i heard if i was coming back to harris i was so pleased to be coming back here i want to ask you where are the places you've been that you love that can probably only take about five so on the first five there's number one where's number two number two right who's going to be three four five right there's three good help me with the order would you just help with the order yes three i get confused three okay we'll take three where do you like to go yeah yes are you i'm cross-eyed yeah you like to go to infer next that's where i look oh i'm glad you like him for next good you like to go to who do you like to go oh well you can say it as well oh yeah you like to go to infer next oh where do you like to go sorry it's you so you have your hand back you have your hand back you have your hand back no no did you have your hand back oh never mind well i'm not going to ask you my next question i'm going to ask when i was your age right about your age we went on a journey and it took us 13 hours to get there now we conclude we lived in glasgow and took us 13 hours to get there any ideas now you boys at the back you feel free and tell your mama that it's um you want cancer so she'll let me know yeah where do you think we were going i'm going to give you three guesses with this one three guesses because there's quite a few things to talk about london is a very good guess 13 hours from glasgow you thought it was london well oh right more guesses coming up get very good guess but not the right answer yes what are you edinburgh oh an edinburgh well we must have had it was it was in the 1960s and we did have slow cars no boy we're in slow cars yeah good one edinburgh yes now anybody that's not well wait a minute we'll get a few today else guess oh come back to your two of those guesses anybody else want to guess where did we go on holiday we went every year when i was young age and young age and your young age and it took us 13 hours where was it anything getting at you well we'll have to come back to you in the north in the north in the north in the north in the north in the north in the north in the north i thought it was somewhere down in england so that's where we went and because my dad had a rickety old car and because in many places you couldn't do more than 30 miles an hour or 40 miles an hour that's where we went here's the next question my daughter worked for a family during one of her she was a student and during the holidays she worked for a family and how did they they lived in a house in the middle of nowhere middle of nowhere and they lived there and how did they get to their house now three guesses how did they get to their house i'll give you a clue it wasn't a traditional way they didn't go by car they didn't go on a train oh i've given you too many clues here so how did they get to how did they get to their house how did they get how did they get how did they walk no no they didn't walk but that's a very good yes oh cycled no they didn't cycled they went by sea plane oh yes the sea plane you know the one that lands on water there was oh yes they went there and they landed on the lake beside the house you know i thought this is a nice way to travel isn't i'm coming to have us next time on the sea plane and see what that's like now here's the next thing now they didn't they went maybe for two three weeks to this house where my daughter worked but they didn't take any luggage why not why did they not i mean could you imagine going you should have seen what we brought over to the house we brought a tub we brought have a different essay here and you know they didn't take luggage and if you get any ideas girls any now girls could you imagine going somewhere and not having all your smart outfits with you not suggesting boys got smart outfits as well um yeah well yes yes okay right okay but why didn't they take luggage with them went for two or three weeks and they didn't get any luggage why not did the the thing have luggage in there or did that or did the luggage oh they have like a little fridge in there oh wait a

fridge with the luggage in there oh right yeah yeah now yes they didn't they very very good get these are great assets the brand new world called you mr luggage always oh i think he's read my notes yes i think he's read my notes their luggage was already there they had all their clothes in each of their houses they had about seven or eight houses around the world and they just kept clothes in each house so they could travel light oh brilliant now i want to tell you that something else now where where is this group of people going now i'm just going to give you i'm going to give you one number five clues five clues and you tell me where were this group of people going now you only get one guess per clue now you folks have been guessing all the time you two boys now if anybody else wants to guess they can but it's one guess now here's what here's the place where they're staying this is what it's like fabulous first class you couldn't get any better hotel hotel that's that's guess and it wasn't a hotel here's the next clue when will they leave we don't know the exact date but they've got to be ready oh say that again we have to tell you when they're leaving well you have to tell me when when will they leave no i'll give you a couple of clues we don't know the exact date but they have to be ready anybody want to guess yes is that really one of those places where they're like on top some people would build like these uh tall houses and people like uh on water wow you guys have great imaginations and i wish i had your imagination no it's not a real one see where you get it how are they going to get there they're going by air also yes oh wow they have to be prepared because they're going to heaven and they have to be prepared they don't know when you got after three guesses i was going to say they don't need any jags because there's no diseases and they didn't need any luggage because they came with nothing we all came with nothing and we are going with nothing just one or two other things this is what this is what jesus himself said about heaven about what it's like where we're going to be in john chapter 14 verse 2 he said my father's house has many rooms so there's plenty room for any of us who trust jesus and are going to heaven here's the second thing he said about diseases and revelation the last book of the bible

he will wipe every tear from their eyes there'll be no more death or mourning or crying or pain here's what he says about luggage first timothy chapter 6 we brought nothing into this world do you remember the day you arrived do you remember no no of course you wouldn't remember you were doing me you didn't remember you didn't remember you didn't remember you arrived you arrived with nothing and it we can take nothing out of it now here's a bit that i didn't talk about a passport here's the kind of passport they say you need this is revelation chapter 21 jesus that's it in one word we need to be friends and followers of jesus this is what it says exactly in revelation 21 only those names that are written in the lamb's book of life these are the only people who will get in and it's a question of trusting jesus can i say you can you learn about jesus you learn about jesus from your clubs from church maybe from your mom and dad but there comes a time when we trust jesus as our savior and our lord and we don't have to wait to our old we can do that when we're quite young can i just pray with you and then thank you very much for coming and after the next hymn's over i think some of you are going out to sunday school i will just pray with you our father we thank you for each of these boys and girls that are here today lord we thank you that you love them with an everlasting love and lord we pray that one day if it hasn't happened already you would bring them to know you as savior and lord lord we ask that you would be with them as they go to their sunday school or to their groups and we do thank you for those who look after them and those who teach them we ask these things in jesus name amen thank you very much we are going to sing from mission praise we are going to sing we're going to sing from mission praise and if you've got the book it's number 988 how deep the father's love how deep the father's love for us how vast beyond all measure that he should give his only son to make a wretch his treasure how great the pain of searing loss the father turns his face away as wounds which mar the chosen one bring many sons to glory let's stand and sing this together if we can how deep the father's love for us how deep the father's love for us how deep the father's love for us how vast beyond all measure he should give his only son to make a wretch his treasure how great the pain of searing loss the father turns his face away as wounds which mar the chosen one chosen one, bring many sons to glory.

[27 : 59] Behold the man upon our cross, my sin upon his shoulders.

Ash in, I hear my walking voice, call out among the scoffers.

It was my sin that held him there, until it was accomplished.

His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished. It is finished.

I know that it is finished.

[29 : 19] 1 Kings 3.

1 Kings 3.

Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the city of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the Lord and the wall around Jerusalem.

The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places because a temple had not yet been built for the name of the Lord. Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

[31 : 28] 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.

Solomon answered, You have shown great kindness to your servant my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties.

Your servant here is here among the people you have chosen, a great people too numerous to count or number. So 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?

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this, so God said to him, Since you have asked for this, and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have you asked for the death of your enemies, but for discernment and administering justice, I will do what you have asked.

[32 : 47] 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, with wealth and honour, so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings.

And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my degrees and commands, as David your father did, I will give you a long life. Then Solomon awoke, and he realised it had been a dream.

He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant, and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court.

Now, two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. One of them said, Pardon me, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house. I had a baby while she was there with me.

The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone. There was no one else in the house but the two of us. During the night, this woman's son died because she lay on him.

[33 : 57] So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side, while I, your servant, was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by my breast.

The next morning I got up to nurse my son, and he was dead. And when I looked at him closely in the morning light, I saw it wasn't the son I had born.

The other woman said, No, the living one is my son. The dead one is yours. But the first one insisted, No, the dead one is yours. The living one is mine.

And so they argued before the king. The king said, This one says my son is alive and your son is dead. Well, that one says, No, your son is dead and mine is alive.

Then the king said, Bring me a sword. So they brought a sword for the king. He then gave an order, Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other.

[34 : 57] The woman whose son was alive was deeply moved out of love for her son and said to the king, Please, my lord, give her the living baby.

Don't kill him. But the other said, Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two. Then the king gave this ruling. Give the living baby to the first woman.

Do not kill him. She is his mother. When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice.

Amen. And may God bless the reading of his word. Let's sing again as we sing. As we sing from Psalm 106.

106. The first two verses. And we're going to sing in Gaelic. I'll just read the two verses in English. Give praise and thanks unto the Lord for bountiful is he.

[36 : 06] His tender mercy doth endure unto eternity. God's mighty works who can express or show forth all his praise. Blessed are they that judgment keep and justly do always.

Let's stand. No, I think we remain seated for this and let's sing in Gaelic or try to join in in Gaelic if we can. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh.

Et Yuuti Noabilah Hubert That's how I miss you Thank you.

hearts and and them ihr war ein train gehe ah The brought the

Tsuk so I Am Thank you.

[39 : 29] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Solomon could have asked for so much more, couldn't he? Long life, wealth, death of his enemies. But instead of that, he asked for wisdom.

And his choice of wisdom shows a discerning heart. Solomon at this point, as he comes to the throne, is 18 years of age.

I see there are some people 18 years of age or thereabouts in the congregation, and therefore I will not make any statements that I might regret.

[41 : 06] But 18 is very young to be king. But he's not, he's not like the average 18 year old, and yet he feels his youth.

Verse 7. Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, but I am only a little child. I do not know how to carry out my duties.

Which one of us, even if we're 18 or not, which one of us would? He's ruling at this point over approximately 4 million people.

Now, every time we come to God's word, whether it's privately or collectively like this today, three things to think about. What do we learn about God? God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

What do we learn about the people in this story? About Solomon? About the two ladies with their babies? And what do we learn about ourselves? Because in many ways, the Bible is like a mirror.

[42 : 17] His origin, first of all, by rights, he should never have been on the throne. He is fifth in line to the throne.

Now, to give us an idea of what that's like today, it would be like once the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II happens, the person who would come to the throne would be Louis. Louis, the son born to William and Kate, who is coming up for.

That just gives us an idea. And in 1 Kings, we start to read that Solomon took his responsibilities very seriously.

And with him not expected to be king, Adonijah, who thought he was next in line to the throne, started to plan his coronation.

And it was well underway when Nathan the prophet went to Solomon's mother Bathsheba and reminded her of the promise that we read of in 1 Kings 1 and at verse 30.

[43 : 26] It's an odd choice in many ways, Solomon.

Solomon was never meant to be. He and his mother and David, his father, they came together out of an adulterous relationship.

They both had a husband or a wife. But they came together, they had a child, the first child died, but the second, the second child lived.

Solomon. It was an odd choice. And it's equally, when we think about in God's economy, that it's often odd choices that he has of followers.

When we think of the disciples, they were quite a random bunch. And in many respects, an odd choice. And then those of us who are his followers today, it's quite an odd choice.

[44 : 44] We've all got different personalities. All got different gifts. In some ways, a odd choice. You think, why would the Lord have picked them? And yet, in God's economy, he became king.

And he wasn't like any other king. He was called, by God, Jedediah. Jedediah. Jedediah meaning the loved of the Lord, the beloved, the darling of the Lord.

In a way, his situation of coming to the throne unexpectedly, being fifth in line to the throne, is a wee bit like his father David, who was similar with him when he was the eighth of the sons of Jesse.

And as Samuel was instructed by God to go and make a king of one of the sons of Jesse, he went through seven of them before the Lord revealed it was to be David.

So he and his father were in the same situation. And isn't it a constant, we get a constant reminder from God's word, that in Isaiah 55, where God says, for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

[46 : 08] And yet, here is what God thought of him. In 1 Chronicles chapter 29, at verse 25, we read this.

The Lord highly exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel and bestowed on him royal splendour such as no king over Israel ever had before.

That was what God thought of him, the richest and wisest king in the history of Israel. So that was his origin.

Now, what about his meteoric rise to fame? What attention this man gave to detail. The temple of Solomon was built, it took seven and a half years to be built.

And every detail was supplied by the Lord for him. And he gave special attention to being built exactly to the Lord's specification.

[47 : 11] And this temple was to be the centre of worship in Jerusalem. And for Jews, it was like Mecca is to the Muslims.

A symbol of God's presence with his people. A reminder of the seriousness of sin, but yet the availability of mercy.

Again, in 1 Chronicles 29 and at verse 2, in the Message Bible, we read this. Of the temple.

This is not just a place for people to meet each other, but a house for God to meet us. This is not just a place for people to meet each other, but a house for God to meet us.

Isn't it a timely reminder, especially when this congregation has just moved into a new building? A new building, a beautiful building.

[48 : 13] Amazingly, the way it came together and the finance needed came in. Just a stunning building, and yet a reminder that the church, the church is not a building.

The church is the people of God. So to what do we attribute Solomon's success? In 2 Chronicles 1 and at verse 1, it says this.

Solomon, son of David, established himself firmly over his kingdom. For the Lord his God was with him, and made him exceedingly great.

God gave him the promise that he gave to so many of his saints in the Old Testament. I will be with you. And God gives that same promise to each one of us who is committed to him today.

Sometimes we would wish that our circumstances might be different. Sometimes we wish our health might be different, and all sorts of things. But the Lord's promise to us is, I will be with you.

[49 : 28] And he gives us real encouragement to enter fully into what he calls us to do. Here is Solomon with his greatest gift being wisdom, and he's willing to use it for God's glory.

Now what about our gifts? The gifts of each one of us sitting here today. Some people we say in our modesty or in our false humility, oh, I don't have any gifts.

But we do. Each one of us does. We have natural gifts of music, art, languages, sewing, knitting, all sorts, hospitality, and spiritual gifts that the Lord bestows on us.

And Jesus' parable about the gifts is just a reminder that so often we just want to hide our gift, bury it, rather than use it for his glory.

I think Solomon's wisdom is particularly seen in the story of the two prostitutes. We wonder, how would we have solved that situation? These two women with two babies, one baby's dead, whose baby is it?

[50 : 47] And Solomon, of course he had no intention of killing that baby, but he knew that if he attempted to kill that baby, the true mother would reveal herself, as she certainly did.

And don't we need wisdom to deal with all the situations we face in life? And the young people who are gathered with us today, that you too need great wisdom if you're still at school.

And you also need great wisdom if you're at college or university, or if you've just started in a job.

Whatever your situation, you too need great wisdom in to know how to handle these situations, and especially if you're a Christian today.

I love the visit of the Queen of Sheba. If I had dared, I would have a little bit of that track played, but I didn't dare.

And I love the way it says again in the Message Bible, as she came and she saw everything, and it was way beyond her wildest imaginings. And she just says, it says this in the Message Bible, it took her breath away.

[52 : 04] A terrific start. Meteoric rise to fame for any 18-year-old. And finally, the cause of his downfall.

He had risen to such heights at such a young age. In 2 Chronicles 7, starting at verse 17, God had encouraged him, and he had also warned him.

And isn't it good that that's exactly what God does for us? He encourages us, but he also warns us. There are pitfalls.

Don't we know it? Many people here have fallen down them, and we know all about these pitfalls. But isn't it good that God warns us in Scripture?

There are warnings there. And it's like any good parent. A good parent is going to warn his or her children all about the dangers.

[53 : 08] And yet, in spite of the warnings, and yet we often rebel, or we ignore these warnings.

The first time I ever went to France, I think I was about 15, 16, and we went to, it was a very cheap holiday, and we went to the cheapest of hotels.

There was a notice on the wall that said in French, «Défense de carrer sur le tapis ». Please, translated, please refrain from spitting on the carpet.

Now, although I'm a Glaswegian, I would not have been in the habit of spitting on people's carpets or anywhere else. But suddenly, I had, because it was, it was, I was told not to, I suddenly had this great urge, I just wanted to spit on the carpet.

You'll be glad to hear, I didn't. I controlled myself. Now, with Solomon, there are three things, three things that draw him away from God.

There is warfare, there is wealth, and there is women. First of all, the warfare. He chose military strength rather than strength in God.

[54 : 34] And isn't it so easy for us, we choose, maybe I'm not involved in warfare and we don't choose military strength, but we will choose ways to deal with situations rather than turn to God or even turn to God's word.

We think we can rely on our intelligence, our power, our contacts, our ability. And secondly, his wealth.

Oh, and boy, did he have great wealth, unbelievable wealth. But Solomon forgot that the riches of gold and the most precious stones are nothing compared to what God offers.

That peace, that purpose, forgiveness, love, a future, and so much more. And Jesus warns us about wealth in Matthew chapter 6 verse 24 when he says this, no one can serve two masters.

Either he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

[55 : 55] Our society in 2021 is obsessed with money. Aren't we obsessed with money as a society? Now, of course, money is necessary.

Of course, money is not evil in itself. It's the love of money which is the problem. But it can be, it can so easily become an idol.

And often, it's interesting to read of lottery winners, maybe a couple of years after they've won the lottery. And they don't tend to be any happier than you and me. Here's one example, a chap called Greg Lake who was a millionaire at 24.

And I'm looking around and I think I see people who are 24 or thereabouts in the congregation. And you think, oh, a millionaire at 24.

24. And he was the bass guitarist with Emerson, Lake and Palmer for those of you who remember that group. And this is what he says. These are his exact words.

[57 : 04] Being a wealthy millionaire is a very fleeting pleasure. When you can do anything you want, buy anything you want, you soon realize that you don't want any of it.

So, and it's, we've got to watch out that we too can always be ripe for a downfall.

And we must never let our guard down. Our guard against sin and temptation. 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 12 reminds us, so if you think you're standing firm, be careful that you don't fall.

In another version it says this, then maybe you're more familiar with this. Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. It's so easy, isn't it?

God's plan is clearly stated in Genesis chapter 2 and at verse 24.

[58 : 20] One man, one woman for life. As it says, for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh.

And yet, in 1 Kings 11 we realise that Solomon had 700 wives. And as if that weren't enough, he had 300 concubines.

But even worse than these amount of women is that these women drew him away from the Lord and led him to worship their gods, their false gods, and led the nation into spiritual decline.

So the three W's that affected Solomon's life. The three W's warfare, wealth, and women. And in some ways we've got to watch for exactly the same three W's, don't we?

Warfare, in the sense that we have to remember and we can so easily forget that if you're a Christian today you are involved in warfare.

[59 : 43] And therefore, on a daily basis we need the full armour of God that we read about in Ephesians 6. And wealth, as we said that, it can so easily lead us away because we think we have everything.

We don't need a thing. In Deuteronomy chapter 8, God is reminding his people as they approach the promised land, be careful because as you enter the promised land and you have all all that you would want, it's so easily forget me.

and women. Now it might not be women but it could be a relationship that's dragging us away from the Lord and it's so easy to enter into a relationship that's not suitable.

Ephesians, I would recommend two things for you to read this afternoon if you've got a long afternoon and you're not doing lunch or having tea is one would be to read the whole story of Solomon.

I'm only joking about reading it in the afternoon, it would take more than that to read it properly. But to read just the story I just dipped into the story of Solomon to read it from start to finish and also to read Ephesians 6 because it talks about three similar things it talks about warfare, wealth and walk and it's nice and easy because all of these things are the three W's.

[61 : 28] Warfare, reminding us just of what I said that we are, if we're Christians we are in a war. Wealth, the wealth that it reminds us of in Ephesians is that we have wealth that we could never have dreamt of because we have every blessing in Christ Jesus and our walk to remind us of our walk is important as we walk before the Lord and also as our witness in the way that we're living because it's so easy for any one of us to say the things that are Christian and from the Bible but what about walking the walk not just talking the talk.

God had decreed that they would not intermarry outside the family of God and Paul speaks about that in 2 Corinthians 6 and this warning stands to this day.

How many have been drawn away from Christ by a relationship? Often a fabulous relationship or we've been drawn away by other things career family hobby etc.

etc. And what about us? What about us sitting here today listening to God's word? What about us? Are we in the same situation as Solomon?

And if we're not we just give thanks to God that we aren't but realise we have to be so careful how we live our Christian lives because it's easy isn't it easy to go through the motions?

[63 : 16] Very easy I think I did it for two years I went through the motions of being a Christian but that I was so far away from God it was untrue but it is indesit wonderful that the Lord will have us back and I love the words that we know so well in 2 Chronicles 7 verse 14 If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked way then I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land What forgiveness what grace what love that the Lord Jesus offers Can I just say today if you have never made a Christian commitment it is I'm sure the congregation here is delighted that you're here but I wonder what's holding you back and sometimes there are wrong things that are holding us back and sometimes it's because we feel we're not worthy none of us are worthy it's all undeserved it's unmerited it's unbelievable and then later on way after

Solomon the real Solomon arrives the darling of the Lord the darling of the Lord the Lord Jesus the one who brings real and everlasting peace between God and his people in Matthew 3 at verse 17 we see God's reaction to Jesus and a voice from heaven said this is my son whom I love with him I am well pleased and when we come to him our guilt is transferred onto the sinless son of God so as I conclude there are four things just to think about as we go away no human king is perfect read through first kings second kings and you'll know exactly what I'm talking about there is no king that's

perfect even the one who was the apple of God's eye

David adultery arranging basically to have a man murdered no king is perfect secondly God had never wanted them to have a king he realised that he was their king he was the king and thirdly it's the Lord Jesus who is the king of kings and the lord of lords and there is no one else we would rather have running our life life and showing us the way forward amen let's just have a short prayer together our father we are gathered here as a congregation but we are gathered here as maybe a hundred different individuals and we thank you that you don't see us as an amorphous mass but you see us as individuals and you speak to us as if we were the only one in this room

Lord how we thank you for that and that you would both encourage us and challenge us today for we ask it in Jesus name amen we're going to close by singing great is thy faithfulness great is thy faithful mission praise two hundred great is thy faithfulness oh God my father there is no shadow of turning with thee thou changes not thy compassions they fail not as thou has been thou forever will be let's stand if we can and sing to God's praise great is thy faithfulness oh God my father there is no shadow of turning with thee thou changes not thy compassions they fail not as thou hast been thou forever will be great is thy faithfulness great is thy faithfulness morning by morning new mercies

I see I see all I have needed thy hand has provided great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me summer summer and winter and springtime and harvest sun moon and stars in their courses above join with all nature in manifold witness to thy great faithfulness mercy and love great is thy faithfulness great is thy faithfulness morning by morning new mercies thy praise

[69 : 44] I see all I have needed thy hand hath provided great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me pardon for sin and the peace that endureth thy thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow blessings all mine with ten thousand beside great is thy faithfulness great is great is thy faithfulness morning by morning new mercies

I see all I have needed thy hand hath provided great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me great is thy faithfulness now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and forever more amen amen amen