

Bible Readings

1 Kings 4:29-34

Solomon's Wisdom

²⁹ God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. ³⁰ Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹ He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. ³² He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. ³³ He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. ³⁴ From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

Philippians 2:12-18

Do Everything Without Grumbling

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

¹⁴ Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky ¹⁶ as you hold firmly

to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. ¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸ So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

Sermon: The Excellence of Wisdom

19-Sep-21

G'Day Church Family

We're **continuing** our **series** on the OT book of **1 Kings**.

It would be great to have your **bible turned to 1 Kings 4** - starting at verse 29.

You may have a sermon **outline** - if you'd like to **take notes**.

Let me **ask God** to grant us **understanding** this morning

Let's pray...

Context

- Last week we saw how Solomon's used the wisdom he gained from God to organise his kingdom
- This week we see *the excellence of the wisdom of Solomon* in his personal life
- In our Bible passage from 1 Kings 4:29-34
- The word "wisdom" is used 6 times (7 times if we count the heading)
- As well as that - the word wiser is used in v31 - and v29 also has synonymous words like "insight" and "understanding"

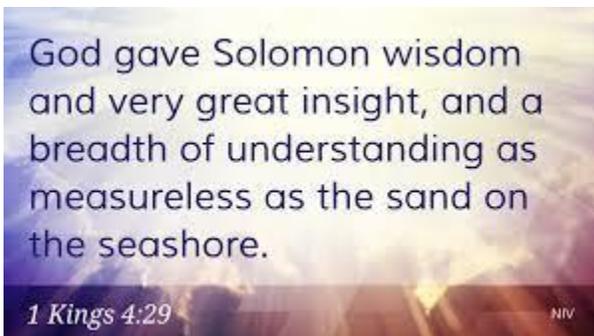
- God wants to emphasise the importance of wisdom - which is why it's mentioned so much in this passage
- So, let's break down the excellence of Solomon's wisdom into 3 sections
 - The **source** of Solomon's wisdom
 - The **superiority** of Solomon's wisdom
 - And the **scope** of Solomon's wisdom

The Excellence of Solomon's Wisdom (1 Kings 4:29-34)

The source of Solomon's wisdom (v29)

- 1st then - the source of Solomon's wisdom - look at v29

[PowerPoint 1-v29]



- It's **God** who gave Solomon's his wisdom - and insight - and an immeasurable breadth of understanding
- Remember back in chapter 3 verse 9 - Solomon asked God for a discerning (God-listening) heart so he could govern God's people and distinguish between right and wrong

- God was so pleased with Solomon - that in v12 - God gave Solomon a wise and discerning heart - and on top of that in v13 - he also gave Solomon wealth and honour
- We will see how much God blesses Solomon in the following verses
- But the 1st point is -the source of Solomon's wisdom is God

[PowerPoint 2-source]

- Application - for us then - if God blesses us with His wisdom- this should eliminate any pride we might have in ourselves - and prompt us to humbly acknowledge that God has blessed us with this wisdom - and give Him the glory and not ourselves
- And it should also prompt us to give thanks to God for His wisdom.
- How do we gain God's wisdom?
- Thankfully God's Word tells how to get God's wisdom - Proverbs 2:1-6 says:

¹ My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,
² turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding—
³ indeed, if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,
⁴ and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,
⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.

6 For the LORD gives wisdom;

from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

- So, it seems we gain God's wisdom by taking God's Word and God's commands and storing them into our hearts - and by taking God's words of wisdom and applying them to our lives
- So, the **source of true wisdom is God**
- It does beg the question though - how do we know the difference between God's wisdom and the world's wisdom? And how do we live our lives in God's wisdom
- Godly wisdom, obviously, is from God and honours God. Godly wisdom starts with the fear of God and results in a holy life. Worldly wisdom, on the other hand, is not concerned with honouring God but with pleasing oneself. With worldly wisdom, we may become educated, street-smart, and have "common sense" that enables us to play the world's game successfully. Godly wisdom enables us to prepare ourselves for eternity. With godly wisdom, we trade earthly values for biblical values (1 John 2:15-16). We recognize we are citizens of another kingdom, and we make choices that reflect that allegiance (Philippians 1:27; 3:20). Having godly wisdom means we strive to see life from God's perspective and act accordingly.

The superiority of Solomon's wisdom (vv30-31)

- 2nd in 1 Kings 4 we see the **superiority** of Solomon's wisdom - that's in verses 30 to 31

[PowerPoint 3-superior]

- Solomon's wisdom was **superior** to the wisdom of the East (Eastern Countries like Mesopotamia, Persia and Babylon); remember the wise men (magi) came from the East (according to Matthew 2:1)
- Solomon's wisdom is **superior** to the wisdom of Egypt; remember that Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and powerful in speech and action (according to Acts 7:22)
- Solomon's wisdom was **superior** to people like **Ethan** (Psalm 89), the Ezrahite; **Heman** (cf. 1 Chronicles 6:33 and Psalm 88), **Kalkol** and **Darda**, the sons of Mahol. We don't know anything about these guys but we can only assume they were the **wise-heads of the time** (they are mentioned in 1 Chronicles 2:6)
- And Solomon's wisdom became famous in all the surrounding nations.
- I wonder whose wisdom people listen to - today?
- The Pope? The Queen? The Dalai Lama? The latest US president? The latest Prime Minister?
- Or so-called influential people like? Bill Gates? Richard Branson? Jeff Bezos (Amazon)? Elon Musk? Mark Zuckerberg? Oprah Winfrey? Beyonce? Taylor Swift? Naomi Osaka? Greta Thunberg?
- All of these people might be very smart and successful?

- But does what they say line up with *God's Word* - that's the question? Is it really superior wisdom?
- Who are we listening to?

(pause)

The scope of Solomon's wisdom (vv32-34)

- 3rd we see the scope of Solomon's wisdom - that's in verses 32-34

[PowerPoint 4-scope]

- Incredibly - Solomon wrote 3000 proverbs (see Proverbs 1:1; 10:1; 25:1 as examples - and assuming Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes - see Ecclesiastes 12:9)
- And Solomon wrote 1005 songs (see Songs 1:1) - even the Beatles only wrote 200 songs!
- He spoke wisdom about botany (scientific study of plant life) and flora
- He spoke wisdom about zoology (study of animal life) and fauna
- So, the **scope** of Solomon's wisdom is breathtaking - he covers all aspects of life!
- It's like having the wisdom and knowledge of Shakespeare, Dickens, Einstein, Attenborough all rolled into one!
- Application:
- God has left the fingerprints of His wisdom everywhere, since there is no place where God does not lay down the raw materials for godly thinking. As Christians, we should be seized with curiosity to ponder and explore His works; those which are majestic and those more mundane.

- What wisdom can we learn from God's creation? For example?
 - From birds we've learnt how to build and fly an aircraft!
 - From ants we've learnt about planning, hard work and organisation
 - From bees we've learnt teamwork
 - From the sun we've learnt about solar power and harnessed it for energy
 - From the waves of the sea, we've learnt how about to harness the power of water - for things like hydro-electricity
 - From plants and trees, we've learnt about food, shelter, medicine, oxygen and fuel
 - And so on ...
- God's given us - His whole creation to tap into
- The task of wisdom is to joyfully explore all God's works. We might not have Solomon's insight, but we have the same data.
- We also see in v34 - Solomon's **reputation** for wisdom was so great, that kings and queens [Queen of Sheba in 1 Kings 10] from other nations sent people to listen to Solomon's wisdom.
- 2 Chronicles 9:23 says: **All the kings of the earth sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.**
- Application - Solomon **shared** his wisdom with others - We must surely **share** our God-given wisdom with others and not keep it to ourselves!

The Excellence of God's wisdom in Jesus (2 Tim 3:15-17 & 1 Cor 1:18-25)

- Now as much as Solomon's God-given wisdom was superior to everyone around him - and as much as his God-given wisdom covered a breathtaking scope of subjects - it was temporary - in that he went off the rails by chapter 11 - and it was temporary - in that he didn't live forever on this Earth
- So, as we said last week - we must ultimately come to one greater than King Solomon (Matt 12:42; Luke 11:31) - and that is of course the King of Kings - Jesus Himself
- Now Jesus is described in John 1:14 as *God's Word in flesh form*
- So, Jesus is the personification of God's Word - and we've just said that God's Word is the **source of true wisdom**
- So, in Jesus we have God's Word and God's wisdom
- So, let's briefly explore what God's Word and Wisdom gives us
- By looking at 2 Tim 3:15-17 which says:

[PowerPoint 5-2 Tim 3:15-17]

the Holy Scriptures [That's God's Word], which are able to **make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.** ¹⁶ All Scripture is **God-breathed** and is **useful** for **teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,** ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be **thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

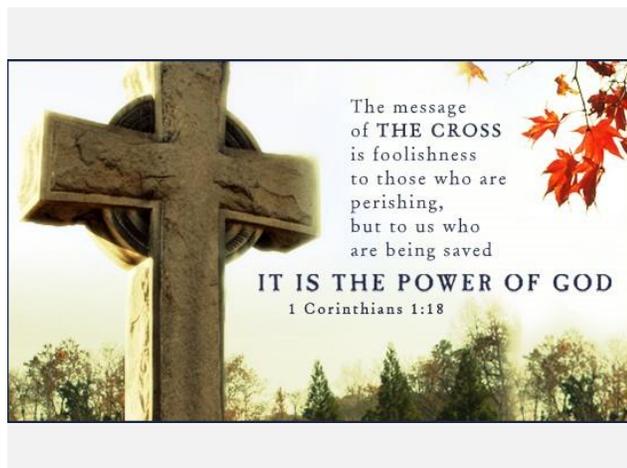
- So, God's Word
 - *Makes us wise for salvation* - in other words it tells us how we are saved for Heaven - by having faith in Jesus' death on the cross for the

forgiveness of our sins - and having faith in His resurrection to gain eternal life in Heaven

- And God's Word **teaches us** - so we learn things about God and to learn His commandment - we learn about His Son Jesus - and we learn about God's people and about ourselves - as we read and study God's Word
- And God's word **rebukes us** - as we read it - we see where our behaviour does not match God's standards - and we feel convicted by the Holy Spirit? Maybe we've broken one of God's commands and God's word has punched us on the nose and reminded us of this - and we need to repent!
- And God's word **corrects us** - as we read it - we see that we have the wrong thinking about something. For example, maybe we have been too hard on someone and need to show grace? Maybe we've had a grudge with someone and we need to forgive them?
- And God's Word **trains us in righteousness** - it shows us how to be right with God - by repenting - and approved by God - by loving and serving Him. God's Word may show us we need to show love to someone? Or that we need to help someone? Or that there's someone we need to share the Gospel with?
- God's Word **thoroughly equips us - to do God's work**
- Can we see how wise and superior God's Word is? Can we see what it achieves? It achieves eternal things - lasting things?

- Application - If God's Word is the source of true wisdom - doesn't it stand to reason - that we need to read it - and study it - and meditate on it - and apply it to our lives? Rather than investing our time in the so-called wise heads of our day?
- Application - Just as people came to King Solomon - more importantly everyone on this planet needs to come to King Jesus - that's the wisest smartest thing we can do - Jesus has the key to Heaven and everlasting life.
- That's only possible because in God's wisdom - God the Father allowed His precious Son to leave the glory of Heaven and come to this Earth
- And humble himself to a death on a cross - so that people can go free of the punishment of their sin and receive forgiveness (Phil 2:1-11)
- As the Apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Cor 1:18

[PowerPoint 6-Foolishness of the Cross]



- The idea of Jesus dying on a cruel cross - seems foolish to those who don't believe - it seems crazy?
- But to believers - it's actually the power and glory and grace of God

- God's wisdom in sending Jesus to save people from sin and death - is not wisdom that the world can understand
- Paul puts it this way in 1 Cor 1:19-25

¹⁹ For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."

²⁰ Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ²² Jews demand signs [Jesus gives sign of Jonah only – Matthew 12:39-40] and Greeks look for wisdom [Greeks intoxicated by wisdom], ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews [anyone hung on a pole is cursed Deut 21:23] and foolishness to Gentiles [idea of a god becoming incarnate and involved in human affairs was revolting and foolish], ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

- You see the most excellent wisdom found in Jesus - is God's true wisdom which achieves His eternal purposes - and saves people for Heaven. No Earthly wisdom can do that!

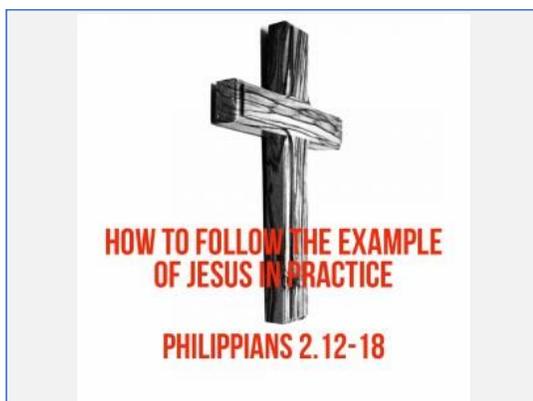
Our response to God's wisdom in Jesus (Philippians 2:12-18)

- So, what's our response to God's wisdom in Jesus then?
- Well - that's where our NT passage from Philippians 2:12-18 comes in

[Please turn there now]

- The Apostle Paul tells us what our response to God's wisdom in Jesus is
- It boils down to following the example of Jesus in a practical way

[PowerPoint 7-Phil 2:12-18]



- V12 - Work out our salvation in Christ in fear and trembling - in other words in thankfulness to God's salvation in Jesus, we should be in awe of God and want to please Him, in obedience
- Knowing that God is at work in us - to will us to obedience and to will us to act in a way that gives Him pleasure and will accomplish His purposes for our life (v13)
- Just like God was working in Solomon to give him wisdom - God is working in us in order to fulfil the plans He has for us to achieve His purposes. This happens by His Holy Spirit giving us the words to say and the actions to take!
- Doing everything without grumbling and arguing (v14). I know it's easy for us to be grumbling right now; but when we realize what we have in Jesus - and that

what we have goes into eternity - then our present situations - although troubling - won't last forever - but God's love and the glory of Heaven will!

- Our behaviour should be a shining light (stars) to the world we live in to encourage them to come into the light of Jesus (v15) by holding firm to God's Word, the Gospel (v16)
- We are to have the same attitude as the Apostle Paul who is more than glad to be persecuted and live a sacrificial life for the sake of the Philippians (or anyone for that matter) becoming followers of Jesus (v17)
- Paul wants the Philippians [and us] to rejoice in the sacrifice that comes in sharing the Good News of Jesus (v18)

Application

So, let's be praying that we have the same mindset as Jesus - a sacrificial loving mindset - and humble ourselves before God - and live out the Gospel and share the Good News of Jesus with all we come across.

Conclusion - Promise (Philippians 1:3-6)

If we think that is too hard -

Let me remind us all of God's promise in Philippians 1:3-6

Philippians 1:3-6

[PowerPoint 8-Phil 1:3-6]

Listen for a reason for joy.

Philippians 1:3-6 (NIV) I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that **he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.**

Let's pray

Father God, we thank you that you are the source of true wisdom

We thank you for the wisdom you have granted each one of us

Please remove any pride we may have in ourselves and help us to give you the glory.

Help us to explore your wisdom from your creation

Help us to share our wisdom, from you, with others.

We thank you that in Jesus we have the most excellent wisdom from you.

Help us to have the same sacrificial and loving mindset as Jesus - and share the

Good News of forgiveness and eternal life in Jesus, with others

And thank you that you have begun a good work in each one of us and you promise to carry it on to completion.

In Jesus name, we pray, Amen!