

Bible Readings

1 Kings 4:1-28

Solomon's Officials and Governors

4 So King Solomon ruled over all Israel. ² And these were his chief officials:

Azariah son of Zadok—the priest;

³ Elihoreph and Ahijah, sons of Shisha—secretaries;

Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud—recorder;

⁴ Benaiah son of Jehoiada—commander in chief;

Zadok and Abiathar—priests;

⁵ Azariah son of Nathan—in charge of the district governors;

Zabud son of Nathan—a priest and adviser to the king;

⁶ Ahishar—palace administrator;

Adoniram son of Abda—in charge of forced labor.

⁷ Solomon had twelve district governors over all Israel, who supplied provisions for the king and the royal household. Each one had to provide supplies for one month in the year. ⁸ These are their names:

Ben-Hur—in the hill country of Ephraim;

⁹ Ben-Deker—in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh and Elon Bethhanan;

¹⁰ Ben-Hesed—in Arubboth (Sokoh and all the land of Hopher were his);

¹¹ Ben-Abinadab—in Naphoth Dor (he was married to Taphath daughter of Solomon);

¹² Baana son of Ahilud—in Taanach and Megiddo, and in all of Beth Shan next to Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth Shan to Abel Meholah across to Jokmeam;

¹³ Ben-Geber—in Ramoth Gilead (the settlements of Jair son of Manasseh in Gilead were his, as well as the region of Argob in Bashan and its sixty large walled cities with bronze gate bars);

¹⁴ Ahinadab son of Iddo—in Mahanaim;

¹⁵ Ahimaaz—in Naphtali (he had married Basemath daughter of Solomon);

¹⁶ Baana son of Hushai—in Asher and in Aloth;

¹⁷ Jehoshaphat son of Paruah—in Issachar;

¹⁸ Shimei son of Ela—in Benjamin;

¹⁹ Geber son of Uri—in Gilead (the country of Sihon king of the Amorites and the country of Og king of Bashan). He was the only governor over the district.

Solomon's Daily Provisions

²⁰ The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy. ²¹ And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life.

²² Solomon's daily provisions were thirty cors^[a] of the finest flour and sixty cors^[b] of meal, ²³ ten head of stall-fed cattle, twenty of pasture-fed cattle and a hundred sheep and goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks and choice fowl. ²⁴ For he ruled over all the kingdoms west of the Euphrates River, from Tiphseh to Gaza, and had peace on all sides. ²⁵ During Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree.

²⁶ Solomon had four^[c] thousand stalls for chariot horses, and twelve thousand horses.^[d]

²⁷ The district governors, each in his month, supplied provisions for King Solomon and all who came to the king's table. They saw to it that nothing was lacking. ²⁸ They also

brought to the proper place their quotas of barley and straw for the chariot horses and the other horses.

John 15:9-17

⁹“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷This is my command: Love each other.

Sermon: Wisdom for Kingdom Living

12-Sep-21

G'Day Church Family

We're **continuing** our look at the OT book of **1 Kings**.

It would be great to have your **bible turned to 1 Kings 4** - and 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 King **Solomon** use the **wisdom he gained from God** to make a **wise judgment** regarding the **two prostitutes** and judging the real mother of the **baby boy**
- Now, we don't only need **wisdom for making good choices** and **making decisions** between **right and wrong**
- We also need **wisdom for wise living**
- In **1 Kings 4** - we see how King **Solomon** used the wisdom he gained from God for **wise Kingdom living**
- [So please turn to 1 Kings 4]

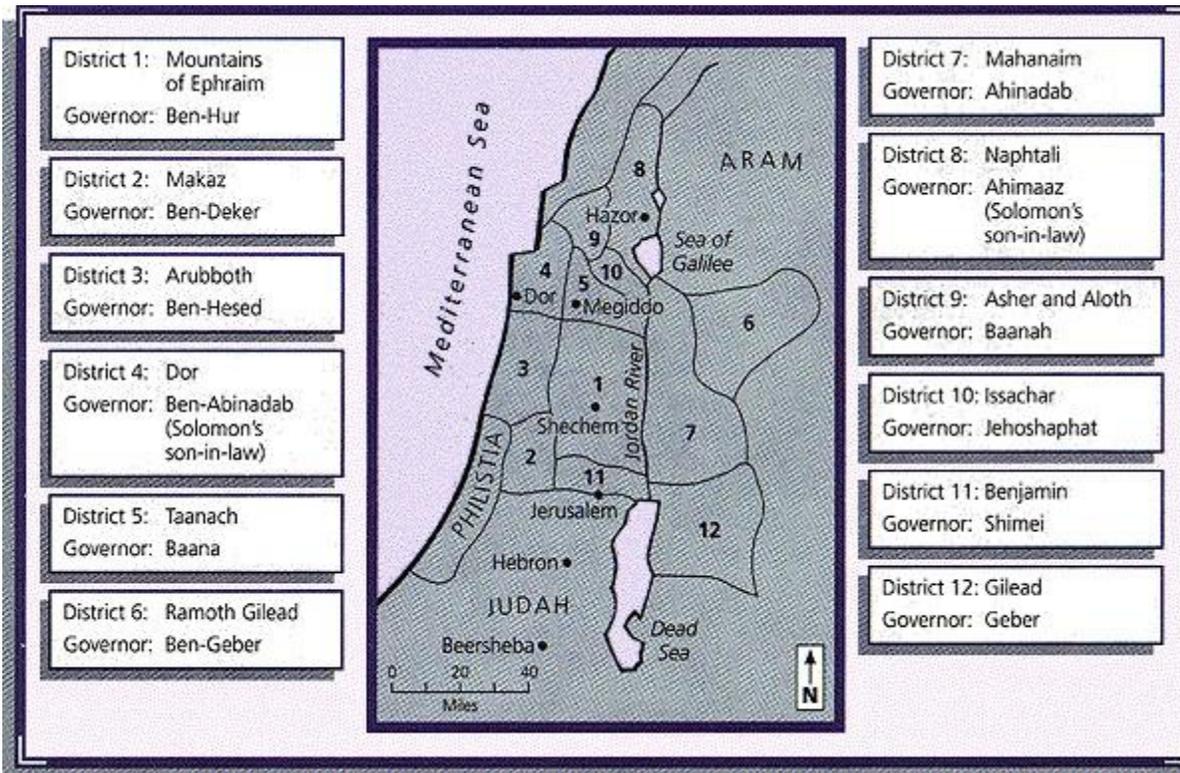
God's wisdom brings order (1 Kings 4:1-19)

- And first we see - **God's wisdom brings order**
[PowerPoint 1-Order]
- In verses 1 to 6 - we have a **list of chief officials** appointed by King Solomon
- The point of the list is to **show the wise way that King Solomon**, having been blessed with great wisdom from God, **surrounded himself with priests, secretaries, recorders, commanders, governors, advisers and administrators.**
- A **successful kingdom needs wise leaders** to ensure the kingdom functions as it should. There is also **wisdom in delegation** - to share the load and to have people with the right qualifications doing the right tasks. For example,

if someone doesn't know how to relate to kids - we're not going to make them a youth leader!

- Application: Applying this idea of **wise delegation** then. What about us - do we try to do everything on our own? Or do we look to people who are wise in certain areas to help us? I know as an only child - I can sometimes have the wrong attitude of - 'I can do it myself' - rather than wisely asking for help? Teamwork makes the dream work!
- The **order in the Kingdom** continues in verses 7 to 19
- Where we have **another list of 12 district governors** over all of Israel
- These **12 districts were responsible for supplying provisions** for the King and his household/entourage
- And note these districts were **not** allocated the same way as the land of Israel was allocated to the **12 tribes of Israel**.
- See map

[PowerPoint 2-districts]



- And controversially these districts didn't include the tribe of Judah
- The 12 districts took turns one month at a time to supply the provisions for the royal household - it was kind of a royal tax
- We're not told how the other tribes felt about Judah not contributing to this royal tax - but it could well be the sowing of the seed of division between the 10 tribes of Israel and the 2 tribes of Judah and Benjamin - which later would cause the Kingdom to be divided into Israel and Judah
- Nevertheless, in God's wisdom, Solomon organised things differently and it does seem like a wise and fair system - where each district - contributes to the upkeep of the Royal family

[PowerPoint 3-Order]

- Application: - The order in Solomon's kingdom shows God is a God of order. God is not only concerned with moral and accurate judgments like the 2

prostitutes from last week; but He is also concerned with efficient and orderly structure in leadership of a nation.

God's order prevents chaos and disorder and prevents waste in the kingdom. It also shows God doesn't leave anything to chance.

For us it's important our nation's leaders call upon God's wisdom and not their own wisdom. For example, in our current COVID situation - we see the different states working autonomously rather than collectively - I wonder if this is God's wisdom or their own? I think perhaps the latter? We need to pray for God's wisdom for our state premiers and federal leaders to work together in unity.

- Similarly in our church - we need to be praying for God's wisdom for our church leaders - as they face the challenges that will come when we return to face to face services - things like QR codes, social distancing, masks, singing- or not, food prep and vaccine passports - and the continued pastoral care of our church family - all these things require great wisdom to make the most loving decisions. These are not easy decisions - and need great wisdom from our great God - to maintain unity in our church.
- We also need God's wise order in our families too - as we manage our finances, care for our children and grandchildren
- All in all - **God's wisdom brings order!** That's my first point this morning!

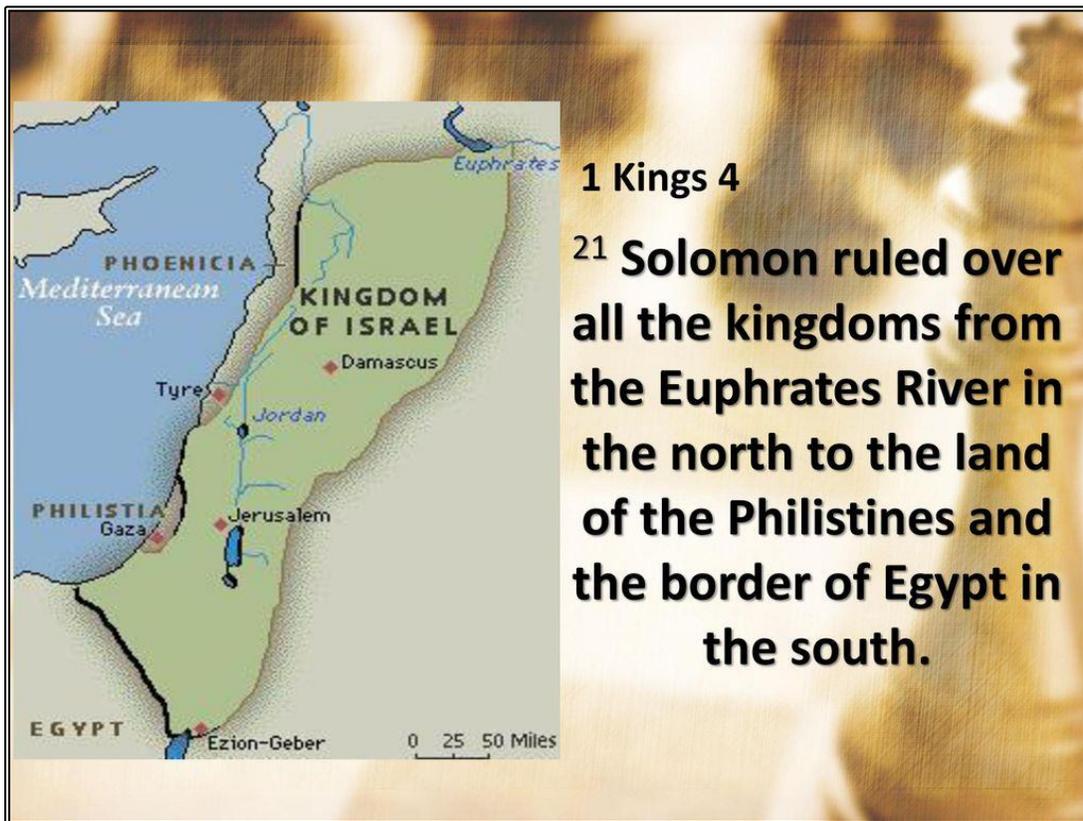
God's wisdom brings blessings (1 Kings 4:20-28)

- 2nd God's wisdom brings blessings - see verses 20 to 28

[PowerPoint 4-Blessings]

- Look at verse 20 - what blessings there are!
- The **people** of Israel and Judah are **more numerous than the sand on the seashore** - this is a **fulfilment of a promise God made to the patriarch Abraham** - a long time before Solomon
- Back in **Genesis 12:2** - **God promised Abraham** that his **people** would become a **great nation** - and in **Genesis 22:17** - **God promised Abraham's descendants** would be as **numerous** as the **stars** in the sky and as **numerous** as the **sand** on the seashore
- And the **blessings** continue in v20 - the people **ate, drank and were happy**. The land of **Israel was truly a land flowing with milk and honey** - as *God* had promised Moses in Exodus 3:8
- Not only were there **many people** - not only did they **have all they need**
- But in v21 - the extent of their **land** was amazing
- See the map

[PowerPoint 5-Map]



- The land of **Israel** **extended** as far south as Egypt and as far as the river Euphrates in the North - which is on the **border of Assyria**.
- And notice Israel has *gobbled up* Syria (Damascus) and **Syro-Phoenicia**
- Again, this was a **fulfilment of a promise by God in Exodus 23:31** - when God promised Moses - *"I will establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the desert to the Euphrates River. I will give into your hands the people who live in the land, and you will drive them out before you"*

[PowerPoint 6-Blessings]

- The blessings continue in verse 22 and 23 - when **we're told of what Solomon's daily provisions** are - **5,000 Kg of flour, 10,000 Kg of meal (maize, rye or oats), 30 cattle, 100 sheep and goats** - as well as deer,

gazelles, roebucks and choice fowl. This is just for one day! That's almost as much as our morning tea at church!

- This daily provision gives us some idea of the blessings of abundance that has come from **Solomon organising the country using God's wisdom!**
- **The blessings continue** in verse **24** - because Solomon ruled wisely - even the countries - surrounding Israel - were subdued - and there was **peace on all sides!**
- With wisdom comes peace! Again, this fulfils a promise God made to King David in 2 Samuel 7:10-11 - that there would be a time in Israel when they would have rest from their enemies.
- Not only were there corporate blessings as a nation - but there were individual blessings - see v25 - because of the safety and security everyone had under Solomon's leadership - v25 - says "everyone lived in safety under their own vine and under their own fig tree" - **everyone's living the Israeli dream - their own patch** - it's a picture of peace, security and prosperity - complete contentment!
- Even the army is well catered for - see v26 - 4000 stalls for chariot horses - and 12,000 horses - which are well fed - with proper quotas of barley and straw - v28.
- Having a well-equipped army - **allows Solomon to wisely protect his kingdom!**

- However, there is also a **hint of a danger here** - in **having so many chariots and horses** - which most likely came from Egypt (see 1 Kings 10:28-29) - it means the nation might **rely on their army prowess** instead of God - as **Isaiah 31:1** warns Israel not to go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses; they are to rely on the Lord. And **Deuteronomy 17:16** warns not to go back to Egypt (where the Israelites were slaves) for horses. God brought them out of Egypt for a reason!

Application:

- What can we learn from all of this?
- We see **God always keeps His promises** in His own perfect timing
- **Trusting in God's wisdom** - leads to godly leadership -which leads to **peace and security and blessings** - as we see for Solomon and the people
- We can also heed the warning not to trust in worldly things (whatever our chariots and horses might be) instead of trusting fully in the Lord
- Where is our peace?
- Where is our security?
- Is it in **ourselves**? Is it in **our stuff**? Or is it in **the Lord**?
- Where is our promised Land? On **Earth**? Or in **Heaven**?
- We can also heed the warning that - when life is peaceful and everything is going along really well; there is a danger of thinking we don't need God and

we can get by all by ourselves. We see this particularly in prosperous Western nations - who've turned their back on God!

- The Covid19 pandemic might have us rethinking whether we need God right now! **We certainly need God more than ever!**
- I wonder - will we forget about God - once COVID lockdown finishes and things open up? **I pray we don't!**
- Now the **reign of King Solomon and His glorious Kingdom** was a golden period for the nation of Israel - and it's fair to say the people of Israel experienced great joy
- But **Solomon's kingdom** and the joy they had - didn't last forever - the kings that followed Solomon were **good and bad** - mostly bad - and by the time we get to **Jesus' birth - 1000 years after Solomon** - Israel doesn't even have their own king - and they are under Roman rule
- As wise as Solomon was - as ordered as Solomon was - as blessed as Solomon was - it **didn't last** - like **everything on this Earth** - it is temporary
- So, we must come to a greater one than Solomon - to an everlasting King - with an everlasting Kingdom
- That's King Jesus - [[please turn to John 15:9-17](#)]

God's wisdom in Jesus brings real joy (John 15:9-17)

- The context is that **Jesus is talking to His disciples** before He goes to the cross

[PowerPoint 7-Joy]

- Earlier in the chapter He's described Himself as a vine - and **His followers as branches on the vine**
- And He says that His followers (the branches) must stay connected to Him (the vine)
- See v5 - "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing"
- The key phrase is: "**apart from me you can do nothing**" - in other words - if we don't stay connected to Jesus - we can't achieve anything that lasts.
- And as v6 says - if we don't stay connected to Jesus - we are like dead branches - like sticks that get thrown into the fire
- Whereas - as Jesus goes on to say in vv7-8 - if we do stay connected - we can achieve many things that last and bring glory to God
- So how do we stay connected to King Jesus?
- In V9 Jesus tell us - **As the Father loved me, so I have loved you - now remain in my love**
- Notice Jesus uses the illustration of - the **love a father has for a son** - as the way we are to love
- I mentioned last week on Father's Day - the **love my Father had for me was a special unexplainable unfathomable love** - that's How God the Father loved Jesus the Son
- *Here's an example from my own life - growing up my parents didn't have much money - and they knew I wanted a racing bike - they couldn't afford a brand*

new one - Dad found a second-hand racing bike in the paper - He walked about 10 miles to buy it and wheeled it home - he didn't want to ride it before I did?

You can't explain that love, can you? It's just there!

My Father could barely read and write - but he knew how to love!

- How did Jesus show the love the Father showed to Him?
- He showed that love sacrificially - a love that came down from heaven to lay down His life for us on a cruel cross to have our sins forgiven -
- Jesus describes that love in v13 - as the greatest love - He says there's no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends. And Jesus went on to demonstrate that - even dying for His enemies - who could still repent and believe in Him and be forgiven
- What does remaining in Jesus' love look like?
- **See v10 - we remain in His love if we keep His commandments**
- Elsewhere (Matthew 22:37-39) - Jesus summarized the commandments into loving God and loving each other - which can be summarized down to one word - love
- So, if we truly love Jesus - we will keep His commandments and love one another as He has loved us (John 13:34-35) - that is - love each other with a "other person" centred love - a sacrificial love - a "to die for" love
- When we do this Jesus says in v11 - His joy is complete - AND our joy is complete

- I think it's fair to say - with the current lockdown - and not being able to see our loved ones - most of us are not experiencing - much joy - right now?
- But Jesus is saying it is possible to experience this joy now - if we stay connected to Him - and if we love one another as He loved us
- So, it's essential - for us to stay connected to Jesus - in prayer - and through His Word - and it's imperative we obey His commands
- And we also have to be inventive in staying connected to each other - through computer technology - or through the phone or even through good old-fashioned mail
- As I speak to our church family during the week - it's wonderful to hear that they've had phone calls (connections) from other church family members!
- Jesus is saying - if we love each other as He loved - we will experience joy - I think it's just that we don't always love like Jesus does
- But - if we show love for someone - forever - sacrificially - without limits - consistently - without any strings attached - we're getting close to the love Jesus had - and I reckon we will receive joy in doing that
- The joy in seeing someone come to know Jesus
- The joy in seeing a person's face when we've relieved a burden they had
- The joy in seeing a person feel accepted or remembered
- The joy when someone is so grateful for our phone call or visit

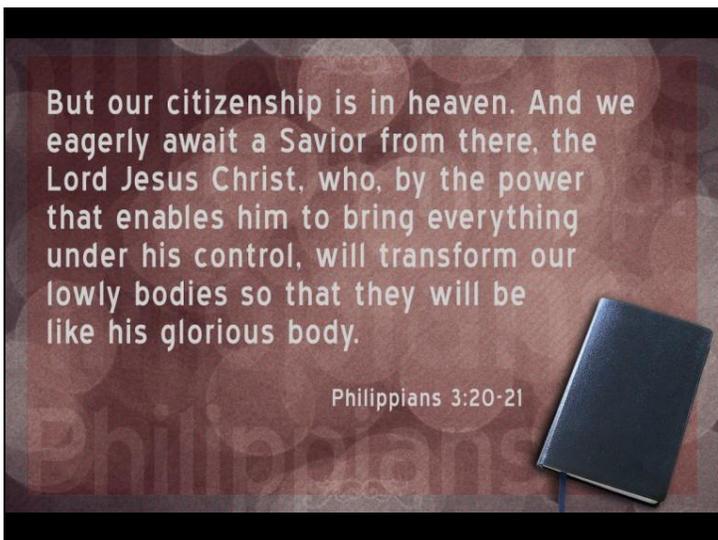
- The joy in knowing Jesus as our Good Shepherd - and knowing we lack nothing we really need (Psalm 23:1)
- You see the bottom line is - no matter what is going on in our lives right now - or whatever happens on this Earth
- As Christian's - we still have the love of Jesus
- And we have the joy of knowing we are loved by Jesus and forgiven of our sins - and saved for Heaven
- As good as Solomon's Kingdom was - Heaven is infinitely better
 - It's an everlasting Kingdom
 - It's everlasting Peace with God - peace from Satan, sin and death!
 - It's living in the joyful presence of our Lord Jesus and God the Father
 - Where there are no more tears, no more anxiety, no more sickness, no more suffering, no COVID, no more lockdowns, no death, no grieving - just everlasting happiness and joy
- So, my 3rd point this morning is that **God's wisdom in Jesus brings real joy - joy - joy that lasts**
- But it not a passive thing - where we sit around going - "wow I'm saved by Jesus - oh what great joy that is!"
- Jesus wants us to be active as we remain in His love
- Look at v16 - Jesus says - we didn't choose Him - He chose us - for a purpose
- What purpose? - that we might go and bear fruit

- **What does that mean?** - it means doing spiritual kingdom work - bringing the love of Jesus into other people's lives - so their joy can be complete too - and so they are forgiven and saved for Heaven
- And the key thing is as we do that spiritual kingdom work - and bear fruit - **it's fruit that lasts** - it's **permanent** - because it's to do with the everlasting kingdom of Heaven
- And Jesus is saying our joy is complete - when we bear fruit that lasts
- So, **my challenge** for us this morning is to be inventive in how we can show the love of Jesus to others...

Conclusion

Let me finish with a **reminder** and a **promise** from Phil 3:20-21

[PowerPoint 8-Phil 3:20-21]



Our real citizenship is beyond this Earth - **in Heaven**

And we have the **promise of the return of Jesus** - when He will transform our frail **earthly bodies** into heavenly ones - like Him!

Then our joy will be complete!

Let's pray

Heavenly Father - we give thanks for your infinite wisdom

We give thanks that you always keep your promises

And that ultimately all your promises find their fulfilment in our Lord Jesus

Thank you that your wisdom brings order

Thank you that your wisdom brings blessings

And thank you that in Jesus your wisdom brings real joy - joy that lasts

Help us to bear fruit - fruit that lasts - and show the love of Jesus to others - so that they can experience that joy too.

In Jesus name, we pray, Amen.