

1 Kings 9:10-28

Solomon's Other Activities

¹⁰ At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon built these two buildings—the temple of the LORD and the royal palace— ¹¹ King Solomon gave twenty towns in Galilee to Hiram king of Tyre, because Hiram had supplied him with all the cedar and juniper and gold he wanted. ¹² But when Hiram went from Tyre to see the towns that Solomon had given him, he was not pleased with them. ¹³ “What kind of towns are these you have given me, my brother?” he asked. And he called them the Land of Kabul, a name they have to this day. ¹⁴ Now Hiram had sent to the king 120 talents of gold.

¹⁵ Here is the account of the forced labor King Solomon conscripted to build the LORD's temple, his own palace, the terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer. ¹⁶ (Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He had set it on fire. He killed its Canaanite inhabitants and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife. ¹⁷ And Solomon rebuilt Gezer.) He built up Lower Beth Horon, ¹⁸ Baalath, and Tadmor in the desert, within his land, ¹⁹ as well as all his store cities and the towns for his chariots and for his horses—whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled.

²⁰ There were still people left from the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (these peoples were not Israelites). ²¹ Solomon conscripted the descendants of all these peoples remaining in the land—whom the Israelites could not exterminate—to serve as slave labor, as it is to this day. ²² But Solomon did not make slaves of any of the Israelites; they were his fighting men, his government officials, his officers, his captains, and the commanders of his chariots and charioteers. ²³ They were also the chief officials in charge of Solomon's projects—550 officials supervising those who did the work.

²⁴ After Pharaoh's daughter had come up from the City of David to the palace Solomon had built for her, he constructed the terraces.

²⁵ Three times a year Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar he had built for the LORD, burning incense before the LORD along with them, and so fulfilled the temple obligations.

²⁶ King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea. ²⁷ And Hiram sent his men—sailors who knew the sea—to serve

in the fleet with Solomon's men. ²⁸ They sailed to Ophir and brought back 420 talents of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

Matthew 20:20-28

A Mother's Request

²⁰ Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

²¹ "What is it you want?" he asked.

She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."

²² "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?"

"We can," they answered.

²³ Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

²⁴ When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵ Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Sermon “Serving of Self-Serving”

14-Nov-21

Please have your bibles turned to 1 Kings chapter 9

There’s an outline if you wish to take notes

Let me pray for God’s help and understanding before we look at His Word together

Let’s pray

Intro (Warning signs)

- Have you noticed we live with **warning signs** all around us?
- Like - **road warning signs** – a narrow bridge – a railway crossing – a sharp bend – speed limits
- Or warning signs like - there’s **wet paint** – yet we still touch the sign
- Or a warning - “**Do not touch – hot surface**” – yet we still put our hand on it and burn ourselves
- Some warning signs are not so easy to spot – I came across a story of a **Zoo in Yorkshire** (Kirby) in England – where **monkeys steal all sorts of things** from the visitors – the thing they **steal most** is **spectacles**
- The owners of the Zoo were puzzled why the monkeys kept stealing people’s spectacles until they discovered that the **monkeys grabbed people’s spectacles** when they leaned over to read a small sign on the monkey cage that says “***Beware! These monkeys steal spectacles***”

[PowerPoint 1-Danger]

- God’s warning signs are not so hidden

Context

- Last week – **God gave a huge warning to Solomon** and the **people** of Israel - in 1 Kings 9:6-9
- ⁶ “*But if you or your descendants turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees, I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, ⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of*

*ridicule among all peoples. ⁸ **This temple will become a heap of rubble.** All who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, ‘Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’ ⁹ People will answer, ‘Because they have forsaken the LORD their God, who brought their ancestors out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why the LORD brought all this disaster on them.’”*

- There are **always consequences** in walking our own way and forgetting about the Lord our God
- Sometimes we can **unwittingly walk into the danger** without realizing it
- That’s what **Solomon** does here in chapter 9 – he’s just **received this huge warning** – but is **has he really listened?**
- **Solomon’s activities** in this chapter - can be **summarised** into **4 categories** here in chapter 9:
 - Politics – vv10-14
 - Defense of the land– vv15-24
 - Religion v25
 - And Commerce – vv26-28

A Self-Serving King (1 Kings 9:10-28)

[PowerPoint 2-Heading]

- First then from vv10-14 we see how Solomon operates **politically**
- We see **Solomon** has **finished building** the temple and his palace **after 20 years**
- And the guy who has helped him so much – King **Hiram** of Tyre -the one who supplied Solomon with all the timber and gold for his building projects.

[PowerPoint 2a-Land & Hiram]

- Look how **Solomon repays him with twenty towns** in the north of Israel in Galilee
- But these towns are not that great
- King **Hiram describes them** as the “**Land of Kabul**” – Kabul means “**good for nothing**”

- Nevertheless, Hiram goes along with the deal and even gives Solomon 120 talents of gold [4 ½ tons or 4 metric tons] – worth \$161 million at 2015 prices!
- What are we to make of Solomon's behaviour here?
- Well, remember the Land of Israel is the **Promised Land** that **God gave** to the Israelites – Solomon had **no right - nor permission** - to **give these towns away** – He's totally disrespecting God here
- Also, Solomon thinks he's being a shrewd dealer – but he has **treated Hiram pretty shoddily and deceitfully** – especially after all the help Hiram has given him – what must Hiram think of Solomon - and what does this say about how serious Solomon is in bringing glory to God?
- If anything, Hiram behaves way better than Solomon

Application

- For us – a lesson that we should **be good stewards of all God has blessed us with**
- Also, a lesson for us here to always operate with **honesty and integrity** in our dealings with others; we are ambassadors of Jesus! **Remember Jesus' Golden rule – do to others what you would have them do to you** (Matt 7:12).
- Next, we see how Solomon operates in **defending the land** – vv15-24

[PowerPoint 2b – people as commodity]

- He **used forced conscripted labour** for his **building projects** and to fortify the cities of Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer (v15)
- These **forced conscripted workers** turn out to be **non-Israelite people** from the tribes of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites
- Also, **Solomon received a gift** of one of the cities, **Gezer**, from Pharaoh of Egypt – who captured the city – and gave it to Solomon as a **wedding gift** when Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter

- Solomon also **fortified other cities** – Beth Horon, Baalath and Tadmor – and had **towns to store his chariots and horses**
- And **Solomon** - gave all the leadership jobs to Israelites - and all the working jobs to non-Israelites
- And he even gave his wife, Pharaoh's daughter, her own **Palace**
- They are all things that any king would do
- But **Solomon** is not any King – **He's God's anointed King!**
- So, what's the problem with Solomon's behaviour?
- Well
 - These **non-Israelite tribes shouldn't even be in the Promised Land** – unless they have converted to Judaism and now follow Israel's God. **God had given strict orders** [see Deuteronomy 7:1-2] that these **non-Israelite tribes should be driven out of the land**. But as they are still here in the land, Solomon uses them as slave labour.
 - Solomon uses people as a commodity – to do what he pleased with them!
 - These non-Israelites worship false gods and could be an influence on the Israelites around them.
 - Also, we see that Solomon has taken a foreign wife, Pharaoh's daughter and she has her own palace and she's free to worship her Egyptian gods as she pleases and influence others around her. This will prove to be a major downfall for Solomon (see 1 Kings 11:4)
 - It's also a **double standard** – it's **okay for Solomon** - to have a **pretty foreign wife** in a palace but the **foreign men are slaves!**
 - Another problem for Solomon is his accumulation of chariots and horses
 - The OT had warnings about trusting in chariots and horses:
 - **Psalm 20:27** - *Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.*

- **Deuteronomy 17:16** - *The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again."*

Application

- We must - **treat people equally and fairly**
- We must - **walk in obedience to God – love God and love others – before loving ourselves**
- We must - **trust in the Lord** and not **in our wealth or in our "stuff"**
- Next, we see how Solomon operates **religiously**– vv25
- He makes sacrifices at the Temple three times a year

[PowerPoint 2c – not much worship]

- According to Exodus 23:14-17 there were 3 annual festivals which were pilgrim festivals
[Jews travelled to Jerusalem]:
- The festival of Unleavened Bread
- The festival of the Harvest of the Firstfruits
- The festival of Ingathering at the end of the year
- We are perhaps told this:
 - To show **Solomon fulfilled his obligations** – but no more?
 - Perhaps he even made the sacrifices himself – and not the priest
 - It's the only verse in this section that **mentions anything about Solomon's worship of God**
 - We're are **meant to see** – how **Solomon is subtly drifting away from God** – and his priority is now the **pursuit of wealth** and **possessions** and the pursuit of many **foreign wives**

Application

- For us it's a warning of how **subtly we can get influenced by people and things around us** – and get **sucked into the attractions of this world** – and even **fall for the lies of this world** – that **fame, wealth and success are what's important** – rather than living in obedience to God – **with love for God** - and **love for others**
- Are we **in danger of being over influenced by family/friends** who don't follow the Lord!
- Before we know it – we've forsaken the worship of God - and His Son, Jesus
- Finally, we see how Solomon operates in **commerce** – vv26-28
- Solomon builds himself a **fleet of ships** and has some of **Hiram's men as sailors** – and they **sail to Ophir** (unknown location) and bring back **420 talents** (16 tons or 14 metric tons) of **gold** - **\$564 million** at 2015 prices

[PowerPoint 2d – pursuit of wealth]

- Solomon's **pursuit of wealth** knows no bounds – it's **relentless**
- He's taken his eyes completely off God

Application

- What about us?
- Are we pursuing some **hobby, interest** – **persons** or **possessions** – that is **becoming all time consuming** – even an **obsession** – and **God and the worship of Him** - is **off our radar?**
- There will always be **consequences for** forsaking our relationship with God and **for disobedience**
- Remember what the warning to Israel was – they would be **kicked out of the land** and the **temple** would be a **pile of rubble**
- What might happen in our lives – if we are to **continue down this track of forsaking God**
- **Solomon was not content** with what he had – he **always wanted more?** What about us?

- **Solomon** was self-serving – He never for a moment thought to share his wealth or looked outside himself. What about us?
- We must not forget the warnings of vv6-9 – **calling us to be obedient**
- We might be enjoying a thoroughly successful financial or professional or ministerial career - or enjoying retirement - and **yet we must still be fully obedient to the first commandment** – *“You shall have no other gods before me.”* – that should be our **highest calling!**

A Servant King (Matthew 20:20-28)

- In God’s grace and mercy, we do have a greater King - than the self-serving King **Solomon** - as our example – that’s of course – **King Jesus – the Servant King!**

[PowerPoint 3 Heading]

- That’s where our **NT passage** comes in – [please turn to [Matt 28:20-28](#)]
- The **mother of** the sons of Zebedee (**James and John**) asked Jesus for her sons to be **seated at Jesus’ right and left in His Kingdom**. Basically, asking to also **share in Jesus’ prestige and power**. [Bear in mind Jesus had promised this in Matthew 19:28 – [Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.]

[PowerPoint 3a]

- But their **mother doesn’t know what she’s asking**. If they want to share in Jesus’ power and prestige they have to **also share in His cup of suffering and be baptized** [that is swallowed up or immersed in it] with the **same suffering Jesus would face**. And besides who sits at Jesus’ right or left is up to God the Father and not the Son!
- **Jesus promises that James and John will drink His cup** [of suffering]
- The other **disciples** were a bit **annoyed thinking the two brothers**, James and John, had been given **special privilege** but in fact **Jesus is saying they will suffer for following Him**
- Pretty much **all the apostles suffered greatly** for following Jesus.

- Jesus makes the point that **His leadership and Kingship** is different to the surrounding **nations'** (Gentiles) idea of Kingship. The **rulers of Gentiles** lord it over their subjects. But no so in Jesus' Kingdom.
- This is a **stinging rebuke** to the disciples and to the Church (and to us) not to operate the way the world does.
- **In Jesus' Kingdom** - status, money, popularity should never be the prerequisites for leadership. **Humble service is the great prerequisite**, as shown by Jesus' own ministry.
- As Christians - real **ministry** [serving] is **done for the benefit of those being ministered to** [served], not for the **benefit of the one ministering** [serving]
- As Christians – we **serve people** NOT for what we receive (either materially or emotionally) from people – **BUT INSTEAD** – we **serve people for what we can give them** in terms of love, emotional support and practical help – without expecting anything in return.
- As Jesus finishes talking to the disciples here – in v28 – He concludes: *that He did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many*. Note: a **ransom** was most **commonly used** as the **purchase price for freeing slaves**.
- When Jesus died on that cruel cross – He **freed us from slavery and bondage to our sin** – by taking our place and punishment - and **granting us forgiveness!**
- Kings of the world might die for their subjects – some have – but they wouldn't die for a person's sin - or to take a person's punishment off them. Jesus even died for His **enemies** – who later could still come to believe in Him and be saved (e.g., the Apostle Paul).

Our Response (as Servants of Jesus)

- How should we **respond** this morning?

[PowerPoint 4 Heading]

- Obviously **being self-serving**, like Solomon, is not the **answer** -as we see that **just leads us away from God - and into disobedience**
- Instead, we must **imitate Jesus** – the Servant King (1 Cor 11:1)
- And we must be a “Servant of Jesus”

[That’s how the Apostle Paul describes himself (Romans 1:1; Colossians 4:12; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 4:6) - The Greek word used for servant (doulos) means someone who sets aside all rights of their own to submit to the will of another person and serve them. Because the word slave has such negative connotations in our society today – we use the word servant – but servant doesn’t quite capture what the Greek (doulos) means – it’s more like being a slave for Jesus]

A servant of Jesus knows Jesus is King and voluntarily sets aside their rights in order to love, serve and obey the will of God in all things

Our primary desire every day as servants of Jesus is to honour and glorify the one who bought our freedom from sin (1 Cor 10:31)

[PowerPoint 4a-Humble Service]

- So, what would being a **servant of Jesus** look like for us this morning?
 - It looks like – **humble service** - Jesus humbled Himself – even to death on a cross – for the sake of others (Phil 2:3-8) – He made Himself a slave and washed His Disciples feet (John 13) to show what humble service looks like – nothing should be too much trouble for us - or beneath us. Our desire should be to help others – *go the extra mile* (Matt 5:14) – *give them our shirt and our coat* (Matt 5:40)
- There are many ways we can serve in our church family:** Sunday rosters [welcoming, prayer, bible reading, sound, music, morning tea]; Pastoral care; PWA; COM; P.A.T; Visiting; Phone calls; letters/cards; and financial and practical help too; Children’s ministries and Scripture in schools] – As we approach the end of the year and look to the new year ahead – is God calling YOU to serve?

[PowerPoint 4b-Obedience to Jesus]

- It looks like - **obedience** to Jesus and His Word: As Jesus says: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled* (Matt 5:6) and *seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well* (Matt 6:33) and *hearing Jesus' words and put them into practice* (Matt 7:24) and *if you love me, keep my commands* (John 14:15) – to do all this we need to read – study – and apply God's Word to our lives

[PowerPoint 4c-Gospel]

- It looks like - **making sharing the Gospel a priority**: As Jesus says: *my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.*" (John 6:40) – And Jesus tells us to – *be a light to bring people to Him* (Matt 5:14) – and He tells us - *store up treasures in Heaven* (Matt 6:20) – when was the last time we shared our faith with someone?

[PowerPoint 4d-Loving sacrificially]

- It looks like - **loving others sacrificially** with a "to die for" love (John 15:13) – a love that is other-person centred – and not self-centred

(pause)

To finish up then, Servants of Jesus consider their lives on earth as a brief time of preparation for eternity. The hardships and struggles we must face while in the flesh will be far outmatched by the glory and reward awaiting us (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Just as a servant who loves his master lives for the master's approval, so servants of Jesus live for the moment He will say:

[PowerPoint 5-Matthew 25:23]

"Well done, good and faithful servant...Come and share your master's happiness" (Matthew 25:23)

Let's pray...

Father God – help us to heed your warnings in Your Word

Help us to walk in obedience to You

Lead us away from the temptations of wealth and possessions

Lead us away from people who might be a bad influence on us and take our attention off You

Help us not to be self-serving

Instead help us to follow Jesus – our servant King

Thank You for Jesus' example and for His life laid down for us to be forgiven

Leads us into humble service – always obedient to Jesus and His Word

Please give us opportunities to share our faith with others

And equip us to love others sacrificially – as Jesus did.

In His Name, we pray. Amen