

**Sunday 03-July-22**

**Solomon forget his first love**

**1 Kings 11:1-13**

### **Solomon's Wives**

**11** King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. **2** They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. **3** He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. **4** As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. **5** He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. **6** So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

**7** On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. **8** He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

**9** The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. **10** Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. **11** So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. **12** Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. **13** Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the

sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.”

## **Revelation 2:1-7**

### **To the Church in Ephesus**

**2** “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. <sup>2</sup> I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. <sup>3</sup> You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

<sup>4</sup> Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. <sup>5</sup> Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. <sup>6</sup> But you have this in your favour: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

<sup>7</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

### **Sermon: Solomon forgets his first love**

It would be good to have your **Bibles opened** up at **1 Kings Chapter 11**

Let me **pray** and ask God to give us His understanding of this passage and speak to our hearts this morning.

Let's pray...

## Intro

In 1954 Australian **Dr David Warren** came up with the idea of a **device** for aircraft that would **record aircraft flight data** and also **record voices and other sounds** in aircraft cockpits **immediately prior to an aeroplane crash**.

This invention led to the “**black box**” **flight recorder** – which are now used by **air crash investigators**.

In our look at **King Solomon’s** life this morning – he’s just **about to have a massive crash from a very great height** – I wonder what **Solomon’s “black box” recorder would tell us**.

Well thankfully **his crash is recorded** in our Bible reading this morning from **1 Kings 11**

[Slide 1-Flight Recorder]



But before we look at the crash

Let’s **remind ourselves** of how high **Solomon’s** been **flying**.

- Solomon was the **third king** of the United Kingdom of Israel
- He was the **son of King David** and his wife **Bathsheba**
- He **ruled** as King from **970 to 931 BC**
- He is believed to have written **3 books in the Bible** – **Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes** and much of the book of **Proverbs**

- When Solomon became king, God gave him the opportunity to **ask for whatever he wanted**. Solomon asked for wisdom to rule God's people and God **blesed him with both** incredible wisdom and wealth
- God gave Solomon's reign - **peace on every side** (1 Kings 4:20-25)
- Solomon was also given the **privilege of building a House for God** (1 Kings 5) – the Temple
- And **Solomon** is described as being **greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth** (1 Kings 10:23)

### [Slide 2-Income]



- Solomon's **annual income** was **666 talents of gold** – 25 tons (800,000 oz.) = almost **\$2 billion dollars at today's prices** – but remember gold is a lot more expensive now than it was in Solomon's day
- On top of that annual income – Solomon also **received revenue from merchants and traders** - and **royal taxes from Arabian kings** and governors of the territories
- **Solomon's treasure** also included 200 large shields of hammered gold and **300 small shields of hammered gold** – the large shields were worth \$602,000 each and the small shields were worth \$148,000 each
- As well as all of that - every three years - Solomon's fleet of trading ships returned with more **gold and silver, ivory, apes and baboons**

- It's **mind-blowing**
- So, as we end chapter 10 of 1 Kings – we're meant to see this is a **golden-era of Israel** – and **King Solomon is flying high!**

(pause)

**BUT...**

As we hit chapter 11 – we have a problem – **Solomon is about to crash land!**

[Slide 3-Flight Recorder]



What will his **black box flight recorder** reveal?

### Solomon's Sin (1 Kings 11:1-8)

As we look at **verses 1 to 2**

Solomon's **flight recorder reveals**

[Slide 4-Problems]

He **loved many foreign women** – all from nations that God had expressly told the Israelites they should not intermarry with – because - **these women would surely turn their hearts away from the one true God and towards these foreign gods and idols**  
(this was told to them in Exodus 34:11-16)

And we read in **v3** – Solomon had **700 wives and 300 concubines** [explain concubines – slaves/no rights/no dowry/no inheritance for children born]– and just as God predicted – **these women led Solomon astray.**

It's also worth pointing out that **having multiple wives** (polygamy) was not God's original plan for marriage (Genesis 2:23-24 and Matthew 19:1-6; 1 Tim 3:2)

When God ordained marriage with the first human beings – Adam and Eve – God describe marriage as ***“a man leaving his father and mother and being united to his wife (singular) and they become one flesh (singular - not fleshes)”*** (Genesis 2:23-24)

In other words – **marriage is an exclusive relationship.**

So, the **problem** is not as some might think – that **Solomon was very rich** – and was led astray by his wealth – but that he had many foreign wives – which led his heart away from the Lord God.

How this plays out is **described in more detail** in **verses 4 to 8**

This **problem** seems to have **happened** as **Solomon got older**

**Solomon's heart didn't remain fully committed to the Lord** like Solomon's father, King **David** – who always had a heart for God alone.

Yes, **David**, did **sin many times** and he **repented many times** – but he never worshipped other gods or dabbled in foreign gods.

Whereas Solomon worshipped the **goddess** called **Ashtoreth** of the **Sidonians** -- who was worshipped **for sexual fertility and crop fertility** – and Solomon worshipped the **detestable god Molek of the Ammonites** – and **most terribly** the worship of this god, Molek, required the live sacrifice of children!

No wonder **v6** says – **Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord!**

**V7 - Solomon also built worship places** for the detestable god **Chemosh** of **Moab** which required human sacrifice and he built worship places for the detestable god **Molek of the Ammonites** – as well as - building worship places for his wives - to offer sacrifices to their gods.

You can imagine – one of his wife's saying – *'you built a worship place for wife #10 what about building a worship place for me?'*

So, **Solomon has broken the first two commandments** – by **having other gods** as well as the Lord – **and by making and worshipping idols!**

### Application for us

What can we learn from this?

- We learn - **God gives rules, laws and commandments for a reason** - to **keep us safe and pure**
- We learn - **Marriage is meant to be an exclusive, faithful life-long commitment between one man and one woman.**

In the Old Testament – the relationship between God and His people – is often pictured as a marriage – which is meant to be an exclusive, faithful, life-long commitment between God and His people.

And in the NT – marriage is a picture of the relationship between Jesus (the bridegroom) and His Church (The Bride) – and again it's meant to be an exclusive, faithful life-long commitment.

- I think it's **pretty fair to say** that wherever men in the Old Testament did have multiple wives – there were **major problems** – we see it with the marriages of Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon!
- We also learn – **sin is subtle and gradual**; it creeps up on us sometimes without us noticing. You can imagine – Solomon with his breadth of knowledge on all subjects – **being curious about his wives' worship practices** – then his curiosity becomes more intense – and before long – **he's joining in!** Then the next wife – shows him her worship practices – and so it continues. Then it's a **slippery slope** – **as he leaves the worship of the one true God** – on the shelf.

- **This can happen to us too – we can have such intense interests in some things – that take our interest and our heart away from God?**
- **We also learn – pride comes before a fall (Proverbs 16:18). Solomon's harem of wives and concubines became a massive status symbol for him. He can impress all the nations around him – that he is able to support 1000 wives and all their children – because he's so wealthy!**

### **Judgment on Solomon's Sin (1 Kings 11:9-13)**

But - **God is not going to stand for this blatant disobedience** of His rules

Look at v9 – **God is angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from His Lord** – and yet the Lord has **given Solomon the privilege of appearing to him twice!**

[Slide 5-Judgment]

So, **God passed judgment** – see v11 – **God says He will tear Solomon's Kingdom away from him and give it to one of his subordinates**

But even in this judgement – we see **God's grace** in v12

**God says He won't tear the kingdom away from Solomon during Solomon's lifetime but will tear away the Kingdom from Solomon's son**

Why?

Because – of **God's promise to - Solomon's father – David** –

**God had promised David (2 Samuel 7) that David's kingdom would be an everlasting Kingdom** – and that **David's son would rule after him** - and **God always keeps His promises**

How will God keep His promise to David of an everlasting Kingdom?

**V13** – tells us how – **God will not tear all the kingdom from Solomon, one tribe out of the 12 tribes of Israel will remain** – and it's **David's tribe** – the tribe of **Judah** – which just happens to be the tribe that one of David's descendants 1000 years after David -

will come from – that descendant is of course **Jesus** – and He is the **King of an everlasting Kingdom** – the Kingdom of **Heaven and Earth**

### Application for us

What can we learn from this?

- We can learn – there will **always** be **consequences** for disobeying God’s laws and commandments
- We can learn – just because God seems to allow sin – like multiple wives – **does not mean He approves** – and **does not mean there will not be consequences**. Even today – **marriage breakups** – **affairs** – **sex out of marriage** - may all occur – and even though we repent of them – **the consequences continue** – with things like - **access to children** – **child support** - and **estranged relationships** in the family – and so on!
- We can learn – that **God always keeps His promises** – He **cannot and will not break one promise!**
- We can also learn – that even though **God must exert justice and punishment on sin** – He **also offers grace and mercy**. We see how that grace and mercy to Solomon – **keeps God’s promise intact** – that grace and mercy resulted in Jesus coming from the one remaining tribe of Judah – and resulted in Jesus laying down His life on the cross for sins to be forgiven – **for all who care to believe in Him**. And that grace means - **Heaven is available to us** – if we believe in Jesus
- We can also learn – that because Solomon was the King and seen as the wisest man on Earth, **people looked to his example**. He was supposed to point people to God and set a godly example. He **failed to do that** – and no doubt led many others astray. **People would say to themselves ‘if Solomon (our King and the wisest man alive) is worshipping false gods, it must be okay for us’**

- What about us? Are we setting a godly example to our family and friends – are we - leading them towards God/Jesus – or away from God/Jesus?

### The Solution to Sin (Revelation 2:1-7)

King Solomon began supremely well – in 1 Kings 3:3 – He loved God and followed in obedience to God's commands and laws as his father David told him. But by the time we get to 1 Kings 11:1 – Solomon has replaced loving God by loving all those wives.

What an **epic failure!**

King Solomon – like all the characters in the Bible - is in the Bible - so that we don't make the same mistake as them.

Ultimately there's a solution to sin and rebellion against God

We find the solution in our NT reading from Revelation 2:1-7 [[Please turn there now](#)]

[Slide 6a-Heading]

It's over 1000 years after King Solomon – Revelation was written after Jesus has lived, died, rose again and ascended to Heaven

The Apostle John has a **vision of Heaven** and a **vision of our Lord Jesus**

And in this vision - **Jesus spoke to 7 Churches** that existed in John's Day.

And the part we read this morning is what Jesus said to the Church in Ephesus (which is in modern day Turkey today)

**Jesus commends** the Church of Ephesus for its **hard work and perseverance through persecution that was going on from the Romans at that time** (v2 & 3)

But then we discover the **Church of Ephesus has the same problem** as King Solomon

See **v4** – Jesus says to the Church of Ephesus - **Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first**

Just like Solomon, the **Church has forgotten their first love** – that is the **love of God!**  
Remember Jesus summarised the commandments as **loving God and loving others** –  
 the Church had forgotten that!

[Slide 6b-Solutions]

Thankfully this **passage** also has the **solution** – and its three-fold

- a. **1<sup>st</sup> - Remember our first love is God** – God wants our whole heart towards Him – He doesn't want half-hearted worship – He doesn't want lip-service – He wants **complete devotion** to Him – nothing and no one should be a **higher priority than Him**. We are **not to get complacent** – especially if we've been a **Christian a long time**. Solomon fell when He was older not when he was younger. We **need to be diligent that we are not taking our eyes off God** – or watering down His commands – and saying '*near enough is good enough*'.
- b. **2<sup>nd</sup> – We are to repent of our neglect of God** – James Innell Packer [Christian author and theologian) puts it this way: *"What other gods could we have besides the Lord? Plenty. For Israel there were the Canaanite, Ammonite, Sidonian, Moabite, Edomite and Hittites gods, those jolly nature gods whose worship was a rampage of gluttony, drunkenness, and ritual prostitution. For us there are still the great gods Sex, Shekels, and Stomach (an unholy trinity constituting one god: our self), and the other enslaving trinity of: Pleasure, Possessions, and Position, whose worship is described as "The lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Then there's the trinity of: Football, the Firm, and Family – these are also gods for some. Indeed, the list of other gods is endless, for anything that anyone allows to run his or her life becomes their god and the claimants for this prerogative are many. In the matter of life's basic loyalty, temptation is a many-headed monster"* – **We need to repent of all of that - AND**

- c. **3<sup>rd</sup> – We are to return to our first love – God – as verse 7 says – we are to **switch our ears on** – listen to **God’s laws and commandments** – listen to what the **Holy Spirit is saying** to this Church in Ephesus – and if we listen and return to God – John says we will be victorious – and we will eat from the tree of life – **which gives eternal life** – which means living with God in Paradise (Heaven) for ever!**

Now – you could be some one here this morning

That grew up in a Christian home as a child and went to **Sunday School** – but then as you **grew up** – **life got messy** – and you **drifted away from God** – away from Church – away from your Christian upbringing – and you **forgot your first love** – but this passage is saying – **it’s not too late** – **it’s never too late** - to return to God - your **first love** – today is the day!

Or - you could be someone here this morning

That **grew up without any Christian input whatsoever** – and again **life** has been **messy** for you – but this passage is saying it’s **still not too late** – **you can make God your first love** - **today** – and He will accept you with open arms.

Or - you could be someone here this morning

Who has **been a Christian for a long time** – and **you think you’re doing okay** – just like Solomon – but you’ve gotten complacent – and some of those idols that James Innell Packer mentioned - have got into your life – and **God’s not your first love anymore** – **it’s not too late to remember your first love**, and **repent** – and **return**.

This **passage speaks to us all**.

I’m not pointing the finger at you – without me also looking in the mirror.

This **passage convicted me** – this week

For me: maybe I get too busy with **Church ministry** and the **Church Family** – and neglect God! And I justify it all as doing **God's Work**, but my relationship with God my first love - is not as it should be?

**Maybe I'm so busy pleasing others** – at the expense of my dear wife, Heather – and more importantly - at the expense of pleasing God? **And that's not right either!**

You see this sin of putting people and things before God – is gradual and subtle – and **creeps up on us.**

### Conclusion (Proverbs 3:5-8)

To finish up then – perhaps **we can all benefit** from some **IRONIC** words that King **Solomon wrote** from **Proverbs 3:5-8** – words Solomon wrote - when his heart was on his first love – **God.**

[Slide 7-Proverbs 3:5-8]

Here's what Solomon says:

<sup>5</sup> *Trust in the LORD with all your heart*

*and lean not on your own understanding;*

<sup>6</sup> *in all your ways submit to him,*

*and he will make your paths straight.*

<sup>7</sup> *Do not be wise in your own eyes;*

*fear the LORD and shun evil.*

<sup>8</sup> *This will bring health to your body*

*and nourishment to your bones.*

Let's pray...

*Father God, we thank you for your commandments which are designed to keep us safe and pure.*

*Thank you that you balance your requirement of judgement on sin with your grace and mercy in sending Jesus – who took the punishment of our sins upon Himself – and offers all who believe in Him – forgiveness and eternal life.*

*Father, help us to learn from Solomon and the church in Ephesus, this morning and remember you are our first love!*

*Help us through your Spirit, to repent and return to you.*

*In Jesus name, we pray, Amen.*