

## ***“Ask What I Shall Give You”***

Well, it's that time of year. Time for a new start. Turning over a new leaf. Reorienting your life. Rather than you making resolutions (which rarely last), the Lord Himself comes to you today – giving you what you need – a truth and wisdom to be lived out each day of your life.

Solomon is the King of Israel. He goes to Gibeon to worship God, and while offering up his sacrifices in faith – “the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night.” That sounds familiar. Reminds us of the Angel Gabriel who appears to Mary and Joseph. But to Solomon, the Lord says – “Ask what I shall give you.”

How do you suppose Mary would have answered that question, if asked? How about Joseph? What would you say if you were in their shoes? “Make it all go away, Lord. Tell me that Mary is not really pregnant. Leave us alone so we can go about the plans we've made for our lives.”

Notice HOW Solomon answers. It's such a simple thing, but so important. “YOU” he says. Rather than beginning with himself, and his plans, his wants and desires, his resolutions – Solomon looks to the Lord. “YOU have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David, my father ...”

That's how faith talks. It starts with God and who He is. Solomon, the king, believes that God is the LORD of his life – and not just any Lord – but One who shows great and steadfast love.

“YOU have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day.” Lord, YOU have kept your Word. YOU promised David that his son would sit upon his throne – and here I am, the King of Israel.

And yet, with the Lord there is always more to His promises than we sometimes realize.

Our Christmas celebration is centered in the truth that the Lord has kept His promise and sent His Son Jesus – the Son of David, to sit upon His throne – to rule over us and all creation, with His “great and steadfast love.”

That’s what faith does – it trusts in Lord for His great and steadfast love – it trusts the Lord to keep His Word.

“YOU have made your servant king,” Solomon confesses. YOU are responsible for this. YOU have made me king. YOU have called me to be YOUR servant – to serve these people on your behalf – but they are “a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude.” How in the world am I supposed to govern all these people? I don’t know what to do – or how to do it. “I am but a little child.”

That’s the way faith talks. As Jesus says – “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” It realizes its inability and disability. It confesses its weakness. And so it looks to the Lord to provide.

“Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people.”

That’s the way faith talks. It looks to the Lord and His will to know what is good and evil. It sets aside personal wants and desires, personal plans and resolutions – and trusts that the loving Lord will provide what is good.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find” – that’s the Lord’s promise to you. “Ask what I shall give you” is His invitation. And to those who pray in faith, who pray according to the Lord’s will and words – the Lord is faithful, giving you His “great and steadfast love.”

And so you pray, “Lord, give me an understanding mind.” And He hears and answers your prayer – giving you the Ten Commandments so that you may discern what is good and evil.

He hears and answers by giving you the Holy Spirit – so that you may know that you are the Lord’s servant – that He has made you to be a husband, a mother, a sister or brother – and given you to serve His people.

Those He has given you to serve may not be “great” in numbers (like Solomon) – but each one is precious in His eyes. Your wife and children – your boss, your classmate, that stranger – they are all HIS people. And He has given you an understanding mind – not just so that you know what is good and evil – but so that you may use such wisdom for their benefit.

Having received from the Lord even more than he desired or deserved – Solomon comes to Jerusalem and stands before the Lord. He lives his life in communion with the Lord whose love is great and steadfast. He lives as if he has no life apart from this Lord.

That’s how faith lives. It hears God’s Word and believes what He promises. Solomon “offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for his servants.” Solomon trusts that the Lord will give His grace and peace through these offerings, just as He promised – and he lives for his neighbors, gathering them to feast with him and his Lord.

Dearly beloved, like Solomon, look first of all to the Lord – who loves you, keeps all of His promises to you, and pours out His grace, mercy, and peace on you.

And like Solomon, you are God’s servant. You know your weaknesses. You know that in and of yourself you are not able to love your husband, teach your children, care for your neighbor – and so you look to the Lord to provide all that is needed. That’s what faith does. And the Lord provides.

Even now, in faithfulness to His promise, He gives you His Son. Jesus, in His great and steadfast love, gathers you for His feast – giving you His very own Body and Blood, born of the Virgin Mary – forgiving all your sin, and giving you His peace. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.