

SERMON FOR JANUARY 2, 2022

TEXT: 1 KINGS 3: 11-15

THEME: MORE THAN WHAT WE EVEN ASK FOR

**11** And God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, **12** behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. **13** I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. **14** And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.” **15** And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

In the name of Jesus:

The “Twelve Days of Christmas” is a popular Christmas song. The twelve days of Christmas is the time from the day of Christmas to the day of the Epiphany of our Lord. While in our culture, Christmas is celebrated once, or even twice, on December 24 and 25, within the Church Christmas is celebrated as a season. The importance of the birth of Jesus is celebrated for twelve days! And the song “the Twelve Days of Christmas” expresses the celebration of the birth of Jesus for the season of Christmas. You remember the lyrics, that on the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me a partridge in a pear tree.

And then the song goes on to say what gifts are given on the succeeding days of Christmas, so that at the end of the season, on the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me not only twelve drummers drumming, and eleven pipers piping, my true love gave so many gifts that they number by my count 78 gifts in total from one person! Talk about gift giving, to the extreme!

But this song really reflects the gifts that God bestows upon His children, and this is made evident in our text for today, 1 Kings 3. For God gives us more than what we even ask for. That was the case with Solomon. Here God appears to King Solomon in a dream, and tells him to ask whatever he desires from the Lord. Solomon didn't ask for riches, or fame or a long life. Solomon instead asked for wisdom, wisdom to lead such a great people. Solomon prayed: "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?"

It is interesting to note the response of the Lord. The Bible says: "**10** It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. **11** And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, **12** behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I

give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. **13** I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. **14** And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”

The Lord God loves you with an everlasting love, and He is the supreme Gift Giver. He has given to you first of all all that you have and need. You may not have gotten what you have asked for for Christmas, but God nonetheless has showered you with His gifts. Consider what Luther writes in the explanation to the First Article of the Creed, that God has given to me house and home, food and drink, spouse and children, clothing, shoes, indeed everything I need to support my body and life.

And as if this is not enough, God has bestowed upon you the wisdom that makes you wise unto salvation. For on Christmas Day God gave to you a wonderful present, the gift of His only Son, Jesus. To you was born in the city of David a Savior, Christ the Lord. In Christ the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell. And this Jesus is the wisdom of God!

God showered upon Solomon His gifts, and gave Him a wise and understanding heart. God promised to Solomon that He would give to Him a

Savior, the Wisdom of the Lord, Jesus. And this is the Gift that God gives to you today, His Son, Jesus!

Jesus comes to you this day, to make His home with you. He has filled you with His Holy Spirit the moment you were baptized. Your body is now a place where the Holy Spirit dwells. Jesus speaks His Word of love, forgiveness and eternal life to you this day. He lives in and through you for Jesus has said: “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

Solomon was known and is known today as the wisest person in the world. The Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes contain much of the wisdom that he shared with the world and with us today. Solomon had it all. But sadly, there was a point in his life that he lost it all. He began to fall in love with the world and worldly things. He worshipped false gods and built temples to idols. He was destroyed as a man. He had forsaken his first love and rejected the Wisdom of the Lord.

But he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes at the end of his life. This book is kind of like the last will and testament of Solomon. It is known for the phrase: Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, meaning that Solomon had tried and had partaken of all that the world had to offer. And in all that he possessed, in all

where he sought pleasure and wisdom, it was found wanting. The only thing that mattered, in the end, was the Wisdom that God gave to Him.

And so Solomon wrote at the end of the book of Ecclesiastes this: “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” Solomon said he tried it all but only one thing mattered, Wisdom, the Wisdom of God revealed in Jesus.

No matter what you possess, no matter what you got for Christmas, the greatest Gift of all that has been given to you is the Gift of Jesus, born for you, crucified for you, raised again from the dead for you! Nothing else matters but Jesus! God showers you with His love all on account of Jesus. It is more than what you can even imagine or ask for. So hold on to Him. Believe in Him. Receive His Gifts in Word and Sacrament. And share the Good News with others, that for you is born in the city of David a Savior, He is Christ the Lord.

Amen