

## "And More Bread"

1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14; Ephesians 5:15-20  
19 August, 2018 -- 20th Ord.

1 Kings 2:10-12

Then David slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of David. {11} The time that David reigned over Israel was forty years; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. {12} So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.

1 Kings 3:3-14

Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David; only, he sacrificed and offered incense at the high places. {4} The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the principal high place; Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. {5} At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." {6} And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. {7} And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. {8} And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. {9} Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?" {10} It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. {11} God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, {12} I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. {13} I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life; no other king shall compare with you. {14} If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life."

## Ephesians 5:15-20

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, {16} making the most of the time, because the days are evil. {17} So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. {18} Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, {19} as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, {20} giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## John 6:35, 51-58

**6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.** 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." {52} The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" {53} So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. {54} Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; {55} for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. {56} Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. {57} Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. {58} This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever

This summer we've been witness to the rise and fall and rise of the great hero of Israel, King David who goes from brave shepherd boy to diminutive soldier with a sling, to commander of armies who bring God giddily dancing into Jerusalem and becomes king to a man who grovels before his most base instinct until he's given a second chance by God and becomes a poetic man after God's own heart. We learned that from the ill gotten relationship of King David and Bathsheba's union comes a child, a second child, the first born being sacrificed to the evil David had done. This second child is Solomon. It's quite a saga, among many great stories in the Bible. Do you know where to find it?

In our story for today, we hear that king David, after ruling Israel for 40 years, slept with his ancestors. That doesn't mean he went back to Bethlehem for a visit. He died. But, before he dies, David who has learned his lesson about God's abundant ability to pardon and forgive, says to his son, Solomon, "Be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go."

Long before all of those royal weddings, when he was a young man, Solomon did everything, was trying to do what his father had instructed him to do. He was vigilant in his service to God. One day after offering not one, but a thousand burnt offerings, God says to him in a dream, "Ask what I should give you."

Solomon's response, which was surely sincere, is, "You have shown great and

steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?" -- You can almost hear the fireworks go off in the background -- this was a great answer.

This pleases God so much that he will not only grant Solomon's wish he will also give him all else he might want. So along with wisdom, God says, "I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life; no other king shall compare with you."

By the end of Solomon's reign he was revered as a man of unparalleled wisdom -- but his kingdom was in debt, and the reason no other king was like Solomon was because Solomon and his 700 wives and 300 concubines ran through the treasury and after him there wasn't a lot to work with. In fact, revolution divided the country in the very next rule.

Solomon is a classic example of one who wants desperately to do what God wants him to do. And in his wisdom he leaves a legacy of thought and action that

God will use in teaching others. Part of his legacy were the books of Proverbs, the Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes. Who knows where you can find these?

Solomon stands out as a man of great wisdom, But we, too, are called upon to live lives that exhibit our calling -- in wisdom. Paul in his letter to the church at Ephesus charges us with these words: "Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

So, wise people, what's the will of the Lord? What does that mean for us?

Remember the little talk David has with the boy Solomon. Basically it's 'do what God says to do and you'll prosper. You'll be o.k. You'll be happy. We want our kids to be wise. We may not expect Solomon wisdom, but an ability to discern right and wrong, a heart for God that's expressed in love and service for others, a desire to be good and decent are all pretty good things to work toward.

Sounds kind of daunting doesn't it. I know on Back to Sunday School Sunday, I'm like the guy on t.v. in a slick commercial who is trying to sell you a Volvo because "it's the safest car in the world." But it's only safe if someone taught you to drive, and you are wise enough not to drive it while impaired or drive it too fast or think to yourself let's see just how safe it is and run it into a concrete wall like in the commercial. But I'm going to say it anyway like I've said it for 37 years when you truly develop a living faithful relationship to Jesus Christ, you will have a source of wisdom, a way, a truth, and a life that rises above all the trite and the true, the petty

and the profound proverbs, programs, promises, and people of our living. Jesus is the embodiment of the very spirit of God's wisdom.

Why do you think that today, for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in a row it seems that we are talking about bread, that Jesus so unambiguously as to be a little unsettling or even a bit too explicit about the fact that he is, his flesh is, **for us** the bread of life. His disciples and maybe we must have been saying, 'Bread, Jesus, really, Bread again?' We get it. But Jesus isn't sure we do. That we do get it. Then or now. He isn't so sure that we understand his level of commitment to us. So yes, he tells us again. He is the bread. His body. His blood. Broken. Given. For us. To save us. Jesus is trying to penetrate our sophistication, he is trying to teach us just how serious he is. When Jesus says, no one comes to the father except by me, he's telling us that by giving up himself, his physical being, to save us, he makes a way for us in his flesh and blood.

In this difficult passage in John he's saying, " Here **I** am -- chew on this..... this isn't some concept, this isn't some life affirming activity, this isn't a sport, this isn't a self help guide, this isn't medicine -- this is me....my body, my blood. " If you want to be happy and whole and at peace, if you want your children to be well and to live in a world of acceptance and tolerance and creative love, if you want abundant life -- you have to take me into yourself. You have to do more than listen to what I say... you have to live...be nourished by... ingest... who I am.... you have to love God that much.... when I say, let the little children come to me it is more than just a sweet little

story.... when I say it's easy to love your friends you must also love your enemies it's more than just a noble kind of unattainable ideal.... when I say, feed the poor, clothe the naked, free the oppressed, heal the broken hearted, bind up the wounded, sell what you have far too much of, so that others who have far too little can live... I mean that. How much do I mean that? How serious am I. I am hang on a cross serious. This is my body. This is my blood. Serious. Bread again....yes... it is the only true source of wisdom... it is the word, the LOGOS, living word, living LOGOS of God.

And here's the thing. As clever or as wise as we think we are. As smart as we are. There is only one place you get it. You don't get it at school, You don't get it at the rec center, you don't get it at the golf course or on a hike communing with God in nature. You do not get it in a bottle. It doesn't come in pill form and as good as driving that Volvo is and as safe as it feels you don't get it unless you drive it to church and seek it out in study and worship.

Fortunately Jesus, the Word, is here. Right here. In the family life center. IN Harris Hall. In this sanctuary in a abundance in a supply that allows us to never be hungry, and to never be thirsty.