

**“If You Could Ask for Anything” - 1 Kings 3:3-13 - Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs**

It sounds like a deal that is too good to be true. If God promised to give you anything you asked for, what would you ask for? Compare your request to Solomon’s request for wisdom and God’s pleasure with Solomon’s request. Today we begin a Stewardship Sermon Series “*Earn. Save. Give.*” with this quote from the author the Rev. James Harnish, **“We Don’t Need More Money; We Need Wisdom!”** When it comes to managing our money, we all need wisdom, and we will all ask for God’s wisdom in the management or stewardship of our lives, our time and yes, even our money.

Are you all planning on joining a Bible study this fall? (You may want to join Sharla for the study of Psalms and finding Jesus there. Or you may wish to join me on Zoom on Wednesday nights at 7 as we look at Paul’s letter to the Romans -except not for the next two weeks as I will be on vacation.) This week I am inviting people to join me for a daily 5-minute Bible study of the Gospel of Luke at: [PastorJeffChilds - YouTube](#).

Let’s take a moment to get in touch with Biblical 101 – in the Bible there are several types of literature. The Bible is not a book, but a collection of 66 books in fact. Today we will look at the 39 of them in the Old Testament. The first 5 books are the Law and are foundational for the Jews, both ancient and modern, next in importance came the Prophets both major and minor (or bigger and smaller books) as the prophets spoke the word of God. And then came three forms of literature that were different. The Psalms, History and Wisdom were books written about God and God’s people. The Psalms were not so much the word of God as they were the words of people to praise or worship God. The history books like 1 Kings we read today was written by historians to recall the stories of the kings and their reigns. We hear the history today of Solomon receiving wisdom from God and so the wisdom writings of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are attributed to King Solomon. And for a time reference, Solomon ruled about a thousand years before Jesus so we are talking almost 3000 years ago.

Think for a moment. Who are the wise people in your life? We each have them, maybe a family member or neighbor. These would be people we would go to for advice or a second opinion. Please know that we each have some wisdom, even if it is like Solomon that we are wise enough to know we need more wisdom (or a second opinion.) Some wise ones maybe shared words of wisdom, if we were wise enough to listen. The book of Proverbs is full of them, but so too was Ben Franklin and others. What wisdom have you learned?

***Happy are those who find wisdom and those who gain understanding.***

***Her profit is better than silver, and her gain better than gold.*** (Proverbs 3.13-14)

***Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*** (Matthew 6.21)

***Early to bed, early to rise; makes a man, healthy, wealthy and wise.***

***A fool and his money are soon parted.***

Jesus also drew on the Old Testament wisdom tradition in his parables, like the one about the wise and foolish builders - one built his house on the rock and the other on sand. Parables were stories that told about one thing which was to be translated into another

thing. It was not about building a house on a solid foundation of rock, it was about building a faith on the solid foundation of Christ. And today we can talk about the wisdom of building our faith on a solid foundation. It is my hope that through this sermon series we will learn how to faithfully handle money for the glory of God, and make a true difference in this world for Jesus.

Here in the midst of our 21<sup>st</sup> century problems and debts we will look for 18<sup>th</sup> century wisdom from John Wesley's sermon "The Use of Money," where he wisely described three rules on the use of money. **Earn all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can.** These will become the basis for the next three sermons in this series. The purpose of Wesley's sermon was not to raise money for the church, but to enable faithful disciples to manage their money in ways that are consistent with their commitment to Christ. Because of these rules Methodist lives were changed through faithful living out these rules. In England a middle class was established as people were raised out of poverty. The message today is to help us gain wisdom in our lives and particularly in our use of money. And the Bible offers us a promise that we can be just like Solomon. *But anyone who needs wisdom should ask God, whose very nature is to give to everyone without a second thought, without keeping score. Wisdom will certainly be given to those who ask.* (James 1:5) Today let us pray for wisdom. Alleluia and Amen.

### **Sing Praise to God**

Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs 8/29/23

Sing praise to God the Lord above,  
From whom we know all blessings come.  
And with the blessing of God's love,  
We give thanks for divine wisdom.

We think that many things we need,  
To be fully satisfied.  
God's love is what we need indeed!  
By God our needs will be supplied.

Do not focus on what's not there,  
Focus on what with God you've got.  
We fully know that God does care,  
God cares for each of us a lot.

It's the toughest times when we learned,  
That we are never all alone.  
With God's help things around turned,  
And in wisdom we have grown.