

Solomons Dream

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[0 : 00] I want us to turn back together to the passage that Christine read for us from 1 Kings, where we were reading all about Solomon and what he asked for when God came to him in a dream.

Let me read verses 9 and 10 together, where Solomon had been said, you know, what God had said to Solomon, what would you like to ask for? And he said, Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil.

But who is able to govern this, your great people? It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked for this. Now over the last few weeks in our Sunday morning services, we've been thinking about dreams, lots of different dreams that people can have, because everybody has dreams.

We've got things that we aim for, whether that's the dream of where we want to live, or our dream job, or our dream with sport, or whatever it might be.

We all have dreams about the things that we want to achieve, the places where we want to live, the possessions that we want to own. And in many, many ways, these dreams are good. And that's one of the things we've been talking about.

[1 : 05] And we've been discovering that these dreams that we have in life have a lot to teach us about the gospel. We're learning a lot about the good news of Jesus by thinking about our dreams.

I want to think about that a little bit more today, and especially I want us to think about Solomon's dream. Because this is a very interesting thing to think about, because in the passage that we read, we discovered that Solomon had a dream, and in the dream, he was asked, what would your dream be?

In other words, God came to Solomon in a dream and said to him, what would you like? You could have anything. What would be your dream? And Solomon, who had just become king after his father David had passed away, was faced with this great question from God, ask what I shall give to you.

Solomon could have had whatever he dreamt of, so he could have had lots and lots of money, could have been very, very famous, very, very successful. But he didn't choose any of those things. Solomon chose something else. He chose something very, very interesting. He asked God to make him wise. Solomon's dream was that God would give him wisdom.

[2 : 35] And so I want us just to think about that a wee bit together today, and we're going to just ask three very, very simple questions. What is wisdom? And why is it important? And where do we find it?

So we're going to ask these questions one by one. So first of all, we are asking the question, what is wisdom? So what is wisdom? And this is an easy question to get wrong, because it's easy to think that wisdom is just knowing stuff.

So it's like, oh, well, I know lots and lots of things, therefore I'm wise. But that's not quite right.

Wisdom isn't just about knowing stuff. Okay? And so to kind of help us see and understand this, we are going to have a quiz.

Okay? So on the quiz is going to be children against grown-ups. Okay? So children, if you want, you can all pile in down to the sofas down there so that you can confer. So you can run down there if you want. Go down to the sofas at the back.

That's team kids at the back there. And you're up against everybody here, team grown-ups. Okay? And so we're going to see who's going to win this quiz. Right? And it's not an easy quiz.

[3 : 40] It's quite a tough quiz. And so you guys can confer together. I'm going to do, it's going to be ten questions, five questions each. So it's one for the kids, one for the grown-ups. We'll follow that pattern. Okay, so kids, here's your first question.

Right? What is the capital of Canada? Right? Confer together. Make sure you agree on your answer. Right? You've got five seconds to confer. Five, four, three, two, one.

Okay, what's your answer? Ottawa. Very good. Okay, right? One to the kids. Grown-ups, what's the capital of Cambodia? Who said that?

There you go. Phnom Penh is the answer. One all. I told you, it wasn't an easy quiz. Okay? So kids, they're right up with you there. So Phnom Penh. How many adults actually knew that?

No, I won't ask that question. Okay, so next question. Right? Kids. Okay? It's a harder question. Who was Prime Minister in 2020?

[4 : 37] Okay? 2020. Okay? Right? Christopher. Boris Johnson. Two, one to the kids. Okay. Right then. So they got who was Prime Minister in 1920.

Grown-ups. Who was Prime Minister in 1960? Who are you saying earlier? Close. First game's right. Harold is right.

Half a point so far. Any notes? Not Wilson. Macmillan. Macmillan. Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. Ulster was there. So. Harold Macmillan.

Very good. Two all. This is a tight quiz. Okay? Right then, children. Highest mountain in Africa. Highest mountain in Africa.

Tricky. Bit of conferring. Let's see if they know. Five more seconds. Five. Four. Three. Two.

[5 : 36] One. Okay. Do we know the highest mountain in Africa? Mary? Close. Complete, complete.

Okay. Danny? DJ, you are not a child. You're a grown-up. I'm afraid I'm going to have to be strict. No points for that one.

So the answer is Kilimanjaro, which you nearly got, but not quite. Okay. So grown-ups. Highest mountain in North America. Lots of...

I'm seeing here. I told you it wasn't an easy quiz. Well done. Mount McKinley. Alistair. Dan. He's saving his team today. Fantastic.

So it's three, two. Two. Ooh. Grown-ups are winning. Right. And children, who sang the song Wonderwall? What's that?

[6 : 36] Oasis. They pulled it back to three all. Right. Grown-ups. Who sang the song Ring of Fire? Pardon? Johnny Cash. Well done. Oh, that was good.

Great. Okay. So four, three. Last question. Right. Children. In which game do you find community chest?

In which game do you find the community chest? Danny. Monopoly. Very good. Okay. Right.

Grown-ups. This to win it.

But this is just round one. Okay. This to win round one. In which game do you find the Endor Dragon? Minecraft.

Who's giving away the fact that they play Minecraft? No. I'm joking. Well done. Five, four to the grown-ups. Okay. Right. That was round one. Okay. Don't worry. There's round one, kids.

[7 : 33] You can come back. So that was round one. Round one was knowledge. Highest mountain in Africa. Who was prime minister in 1960? That was knowledge. Round two is wisdom.

Okay. Round two is wisdom. And I'm going to be very strict with the points in this round as well. So, kids, I'm going to give you a wisdom question.

Right. You're running late. And you need to get somewhere on time. And you're driving along. And you hit a 30 mile an hour sign.

And you think, I'm late. I think I'll speed. Is that wise? No. Correct answer.

Grown-ups, here's your question. Have you ever been late? And passed a 30 mile an hour sign. And ignored it.

[8 : 34] Honest answer? I think maybe there's a bit of guilt hidden behind the lies. So, okay.

Next question. Children. You're watching a football match. Referee makes a terrible decision. And you want to shout at them. Is that wise? Yes.

Let's try that again. Is that wise? No. Grown-ups. Have you ever witnessed a decision you weren't happy with?

And shouted at it? Well, exactly. Well, Neil can report. Have you ever been shouted at, Neil, by the residents of this room? Careful.

Exactly. Exactly. Okay, right. Let's race through the round. Okay. So, children. Imagine you're a grown-up. You're at work.

[9 : 33] And you're busy, busy, busy all day. And you're thinking, oh, I think I'll just stay and work a little bit later so I can work, earn a little bit more money, even if it means not spending time with my family.

Is that wise? No, it's not wise. Grown-ups. Have you ever thought, oh, I'm going to do a little bit more work? I think we all have done that. Okay, two more questions.

You make a mistake and you think, I'm going to just hide the fact that I've made that mistake. I'm going to lie about it and I'm going to hope it's going to go away. Is that wise?

No, it is not wise. Grown-ups, have we done that? We have all done that. We make mistakes and we try to hide it. And then last one. This is maybe a cruel question to ask.

You wake up on a Sunday morning and you feel tired and you think, oh, I think I'll just skip church today. Is that wise? No?

[10 : 37] Grown-ups? Well, let me ask the question, have I ever done that? And the answer is yes. So, in that round, if the kids said yes, they got a point.

If the grown-ups said yes, they lose a point. So, I think that means the score is now 9-0. So, the kids have won. Well done, well done. Well done, boys and girls.

Okay. Now, that game is just, that's a fun game to help see the difference between knowledge and wisdom. So, knowledge is just knowing stuff. And we've been made with our mind to learn things. And that's good. But wisdom is not really about what you know. Wisdom is about what you choose. And it's all about the fact that we've been made not just with a mind that learns stuff, but we've been made with a will that makes decisions.

And sometimes those decisions are wise, but sometimes they aren't. And it's such an important thing to think about. And that takes us to our second question.

[11 : 42] Why is this important? Well, knowledge, as we said, is important. Every day you're learning stuff, we hope, whether that's at school or in some of the other things you do.

Even in your hobbies, you have to learn stuff. I know a lot of you like playing football. You've got to learn stuff about how to play football better. Some of you like music. You like singing. You've got to learn songs, learn words.

We're always growing in knowledge for school, for hobbies, for all the different things that we do. But some days you might not learn something new. And some days when you come home from school, if someone asks you, oh, did you learn anything new today?

You might be, well, actually, no, I didn't. I was maybe practicing stuff I already knew. But we don't learn new things every single day. But every day, every single day, we have to make choices.

And for those choices, we need wisdom. And choices can be for very little things. So, supposing it's your breakfast, boys and girls, you've got the choice between cereal and a bacon roll.

[12 : 46] Who would pick cereal? Okay, who would pick a bacon roll? Interesting. Fairly evenly split. It's Saturday night.

On one channel, you've got Strictly. And on the other, you've got Britain's Got Talent. Who chooses Strictly? And who chooses Britain's Got Talent? Okay, interesting, interesting.

I should ask everyone these questions. It's quite interesting to see opinions. You're going to go somewhere on a Saturday night. You could go to a football match or you could go to a concert.

What would you choose? Who would go to the football match?

Concert. Okay, interesting, interesting, interesting. Okay, a couple more. Would you pick to play Minecraft or Mario Kart?

Minecraft? Mario Kart? Correct answer. Definitely, definitely. Mario Kart's fantastic. Last of all, you're going to listen to something.

[13 : 45] You're going to listen to a song. Are you going to pick Oasis or are you going to pick the Spice Girls? Oasis? Spice Girls? Look at that. Look at that.

Very good, very good. Okay, lots of little choices. That's fine. But we also have to make big choices in our lives. And that especially applies to our dreams.

You think about the things you dream of in life. You think about the job you dream of having, the place you dream of living, the person you dream of marrying. We all need to make choices that affect these big things.

And this is why wisdom is so important, because it affects the most important things in life. In fact, wisdom is important because it's all about knowing what really is important.

Wisdom is important because it's all about knowing what really is important. And so I want you to make a wee list in your head just now of three of the most important things in your life, or five of the most important things in your life.

[14 : 48] It doesn't matter. But just run through in your head very, very quickly. Like if you were to do a top five, one, two, three, four, five. What would be the most important things? I want everyone to do that in your heads just now. Think what would be the most important things in your life.

And then, what I then have to ask you all is, is God on that list? Is eternity on that list? Is knowing Jesus on that list? And this is where we see that it doesn't really matter what you know, as long as you know what really matters.

And so we need wisdom to shape our priorities, because it's very easy to get our priorities muddled up. And we need wisdom to help us avoid bad choices.

And I actually read a beautiful little prayer this morning that I think would help us with this. And I'm going to read it. It starts with a quote from Psalm 139, where it says, Where can I go from your spirit?

[15 : 58] Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you're there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise in the wings of dawn. If I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will lead me. And then there's a wonderful prayer for today that says, O Lord, may your hand be upon me to lead me away from where I should not go.

Keep me in your perfect will that I may know your presence. Amen. That was a beautiful prayer. And I'm very grateful to Duncan, who shared that prayer on social media this morning. We need wisdom to guide us.

We need wisdom to show us what's important. But all that raises the crucial question, where do we find it? And you might be thinking, well, Solomon, because he was so wise.

And that's true a little bit. Solomon was very wise, and we learn a lot from him, both in some of the actions that we see in his life, and also he wrote a big part of the book of Proverbs in the Bible, which is full of wisdom.

But if you read the whole of Solomon's life, you discover that he actually made quite a few big mistakes. In fact, you see that, you see the seeds of it in this chapter that we read, because at the very start of the chapter, it said that Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

[17 : 15] And he took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her into the city of David until he'd finished building his own house in the house of the Lord on the wall around Jerusalem. So Solomon married the daughter of a foreign king.

And he would actually go on to marry many, many more women. And these women were from other lands, and they worshipped other gods. And so you had Solomon, who was king in Israel, and who was supposed to follow and love and serve the Lord, had married all of these women who were following other gods.

And eventually, Solomon copied them. Let me read about what happened at the end of Solomon's life. It says, King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh.

So daughter of Pharaoh, that's the woman he married, which we read about in chapter 3. But along with her, there was Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonite, and Hittite women from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, Don't marry them.

You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they be with you, for surely they will turn your heart after other gods. But that's what happened. Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives who were princesses, 300 concubines, which is a bit like girlfriends.

[18 : 27] And his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods. And his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

Now, the big lesson that we're learning there is that Solomon, even though he was very, very wise in lots of ways, he actually made big mistakes and made bad choices himself.

And it's interesting that actually when you go back to chapter 3, you see that Solomon had actually made this mistake before he had asked God for wisdom. So even when he asked God for wisdom, he'd already made the bad choice that was going to bring serious consequences later in his life.

Now, two important things I want us to think about as we finish. One is that the story of Solomon is reminding us that we always have to be careful about who's influencing us. And that's going to be a really important thing for you guys as you grow up in school.

When you go through primary school, into high school, and even into the rest of your lives, you're going to be surrounded by people. And many of these people are going to be great, great friends. And you'll have lots of fun with them, which is fantastic.

[19 : 37] But you always need to think about how you're being influenced. And it's very easy for you to be influenced in a way that's not wise and in a way that might take you down paths. And, you know, when you're young, I'm sure you know this, that when you're young and in school, none of you get up in the morning and you think, oh, I'm going to get up today and I'm going to do something really stupid.

Nobody thinks that. But you might get up one day and you go off with your friends and you're in a group of them and one of them suggests doing something stupid and you think, I don't want them to not like me.

And so I think I'll just go along with them. That's when we're being influenced in a way that is unhelpful. So we've got to be wise and careful. And so that's a big lesson that we learn from Solomon.

But the other big lesson, and this is maybe the most important lesson of all, is that Solomon is not actually where we find true wisdom.

Solomon is in the Old Testament in the Bible and everything in the Old Testament is a shadow and it's pointing us towards something more important, pointing us towards the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation.

[20 : 58] And that plan is always fulfilled in Jesus. And so Solomon was wise, but actually we discover that later in his life he wasn't that wise after all.

And that's pointing us to the fact that we need somebody who is better than Solomon and wiser than Solomon. And of course, that's Jesus.

And the Old Testament, the New Testament makes that very clear. Jesus himself says something greater than Solomon is here. That's speaking about himself. And many times the Bible will speak about Jesus and his wisdom.

The fact that Jesus is wisdom from God. And so if we want true wisdom, we look to Jesus. And in many ways, when we think about wisdom, the big lesson I want you to remember is that wisdom is not about knowing everything.

Wisdom is about knowing who to trust. So wisdom is not about knowing everything. It's about knowing who to trust. So I want you to imagine, right, you grow up and you're a weaver, right?

[22 : 07] And your loom is broken. Who would you ask in here to help you fix a loom? Boys and girls, who would you ask, Mary? Sorry? Well, that's a very good answer.

But I think Jesus has actually helped some other people know about looms as well. Is there anybody in here that who could help you fix a loom? Danny. Him, that's right. Tixie could help you fix a loom.

So could Callan. I'm sure there's a few other loom fixers in here. So what about if you bought a guitar and somebody wanted to learn the guitar? Who could help you learn about a guitar? Danny. Grant. Could you? Yes, he could. Of course he could. Grant and David. Maybe one or two other guitar players as well. Okay. If you were stuck in maths in school, a very difficult sum, who could you ask?

Who could you ask, Mary? The teacher, yes? Anybody in here who you could maybe ask, Annie? Kirsten, yes? Mrs. Bell to you, Nicholson Institute students. She could help you with a maths sum.

[23 : 10] Supposing you needed to know about a lamb. Anybody here that could help you with a lamb? Lewis, who could help you? Your dad. He definitely could. Exactly, exactly.

And if you wanted to learn how to score a goal for Carlaway, who could you ask? Who could you ask? Lewis. Me? Well, I was actually thinking of Gordon Craigie, but I'll take that.

I'll take that. Between us, me and Gordon have scored 150-something goals. Between us. He scored 155 of them, and I've scored one.

So, yes, you can ask somebody. Now, how can you ask all these people? How come you can ask Tixie or Callan about looms, or Grant about guitars, or Kirsten about maths, or Gus about sheep, or Gordon about scoring goals?

How come you can trust them? You can trust them because of what they've done. So, they know how to fix looms, because they've spent their lives working on them.

[24 : 10] They know how to play guitars, because they've been doing it for years. They know how to score goals, because they've scored dozens of them. They know how to look after sheep, because they've been doing it for years, and years, and years. You can trust them because of what they've done.

Now, for the most important things in life, who do we go to? We go to Jesus. And how do you know you can trust him? Because of what he has done.

And Jesus came, and he died on the cross, and he rose again, so that everyone who trusts him can be saved.

And what he has done proves that he is trustworthy. And this is what's so important. When we talk about wisdom and the gospel, the message of the gospel is not Jesus saying, be wise like me.

The message of the gospel is actually Jesus saying, trust me. Trust me, and I will keep you safe.

[25 : 11] I will look after you. I will be your guide, and your strength, your saviour, and your king, forever. And so, as you think of wisdom, yes, you need to think about the choices that you will make going through life.

That's so important. But most important of all, when we think of wisdom, we need to think of Jesus. We think of everything that he's done for us, and the fact that we can trust him forever, and he'll never let us stay.

So I want you to always, always remember that. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together.

Let's pray together.