

Solomon

Sermon #0902
1959

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—July 10,

In our last vesper service we studied about Samson, the strongest man in the world. But was he really strong? No, he was really very weak because he couldn't control himself.

Samson was the strongest man. Solomon was the wisest man. Do you suppose Solomon knew as much as a man with a master's degree? How do you suppose he would compare with someone who has a PHD degree?

"And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom" 1 Kings 4:29-34.

The queen of Sheba had heard of this man who was so wise. She came one day with all her retinue to prove Solomon with hard questions. But after she had asked him many questions she said, The half hasn't been told to me. I heard it was wonderful, but it is twice as much as I thought it was.

Yes, Solomon was a very wise man. How do you suppose he got this wisdom? He was the youngest of the sons of David. It would ordinarily be expected that the oldest boy would have been the king. But one after the other of the older sons of David proved unfaithful and unfit. So the divine choice came to Solomon, the youngest.

We find this young king going up to Gideon to pray and sacrifice. He offered burnt offerings and sought the Lord earnestly. As he sought the Lord for wisdom, God came to him in a dream. It is interesting the response of Solomon. He didn't

pray for a great deal of riches. He didn't pray for long life. He didn't pray for power. He didn't pray for victory over his enemies. But there was one thing that weighed upon his heart. He said:

"Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people" 1 Kings 3:9.

He expressed his own feeling of helplessness:

"And now, O LORD my God, Thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude" 1 Kings 3:7, 8

Here was a man who was destined to be famous throughout the world as the wisest of men. But kneeling before God he said, I am but a little child. I know not how to go out or come in. Give me an understanding heart to judge Thy people that I may discern between good and bad.

He wanted wisdom. Did he get it? Oh, yes.

"And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days" 1 Kings 3:10-14

For years Solomon did the very thing God had asked him to do. He obeyed God, and God gave him the wisdom he asked for. He became famous among all the kings. His fame and renown went out through all the earth.

It was through his great leadership that the temple David had longed to build was erected on Mount Moriah. Several chapters are devoted to telling the story. Solomon built the temple David had gathered the materials for. It took several years to build it. He got cedar from Mount Lebanon. He gathered gold and precious stones, and linen, and other materials from near and far. It was an immense

undertaking. It was the most beautiful and most wonderful building that was ever erected in the world. It was a splendid edifice.

When the time came for the dedication of this building, people gathered from near and far. There were thousands upon thousands of attendants. The king himself took part in the service and knelt upon a brazen platform that had been erected in the court and prayed. The power of God was manifest. A cloud of glory filled the temple so the priests could not enter into it. God acknowledged the dedication of this building, and accepted it as His dwelling place.

You would think that with such wonderful blessing that Israel would have gone on from strength to strength, from glory to glory. They did have for quite a season a period of prosperity such as Israel had never experienced before.

"Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry. And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon" 1 Kings 4:20, 21-25.

You would think that with so much wisdom, and with the power and glory that God gave, that Israel would have been the light of the nations for ages. But in the very days when the wisdom of Solomon was at its height, the seeds of decay had already been planted. We need to study the life of this man who under his leadership Israel dropped from the pinnacle of glory down, down, down.

What was the matter? Solomon became proud because of the wisdom and glory God had given him. Having had a taste of glory and luxury and power, he wanted more and more of it. And he turned to the pleasures of sense. He turned to enjoy all that could tempt the appetite and enchant the ear and please the eye. He turned to enjoy all that human nature could enjoy. Doing that, he caused to be brought from the ends of the earth all manner of things to entertain and enchant and please every one of the senses.

God had told Israel not to multiply horses for warfare and display, yet Solomon caused beautiful horses to be brought from Egypt. God had told the kings of Israel not to multiply wives, but Solomon had a thousand of them. God had told the kings of Israel not to multiply gold and silver, but Solomon made gold as plentiful as silver, and silver was so much it wasn't even counted. I will read a description concerning king Solomon on his throne:

"Solomon sat upon a throne of ivory, the steps of which were of solid gold, flanked by six golden lions. His eyes rested upon highly cultivated and beautiful gardens just before him. These grounds were visions of loveliness, arranged to resemble, as far as possible, the garden of

Eden. Choice trees and shrubs, and flowers of every variety, had been brought from foreign lands to beautify them. Birds of every variety of brilliant plumage flitted from tree to tree, making the air vocal with sweet songs. Youthful attendants, gorgeously dressed and decorated, waited to obey his slightest wish. Scenes of revelry, music, sports, and games were arranged for his diversion at an extravagant expenditure of money" *Bible Commentary*, Vol. 3, page 1165.

Solomon tells us about this himself in the book he wrote at the end of his life.

"I have seen all the works that are done under the sun;
and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit"
Ecclesiastes 1:14.

He had drained the cup of wisdom and power and glory. Some of you who may be dazzled by the glory of this world, if you could find all that this world has to offer you would never get to where Solomon got. You can't get there. He had seen it all.

"I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" Ecclesiastes 2:4-11.

Solomon got everything he wanted. Think of the disappointment of it all. He had all the gold that didn't satisfy him. He had all the music that didn't sound good anymore. He had everything to eat and drink, but nothing could fill the vacancy in his heart. What is the matter with this wise man? If he had only been a little wiser he could have found the answer.

God allowed the wisest man who ever lived in this world to go the limit in everything he wanted. What for? To help you and me to be wiser than Solomon.

You say, But Brother Frazee, you said Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived.

Yes, but my subject is how you can be wiser than the wisest man who ever lived.

"The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here" Matthew 12:42.

Who was greater than Solomon? Jesus.

I found a little statement tucked away that I have been pondering over:

"While the knowledge of science is power, the knowledge that Jesus came in person to impart is still greater power. The science of salvation is the most important science to be learned in the preparatory school of earth. The wisdom of Solomon is desirable, but the wisdom of Christ is far more desirable and more essential" *Counsels to Teachers*, page 19.

So while Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, there is someone wiser. It is anyone who will listen to Jesus and follow what He says. He will escape the sorrows and disappointments and frustrations that marred the life of Solomon and made him old before his time.

Will we listen to Jesus?

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" Matthew 11:25-30.

Oh, how different that sounds from what Solomon says in Ecclesiastes. The more he got the heavier the load. The more he tried to find something to tickle his appetite and please his fancy, the more unsatisfied he was. But here is someone

Jesus says is going to find rest, peace, joy, and satisfaction. It is those who come to Christ and learn of Him.

Which wisdom would you like the most, the wisdom of Solomon or the wisdom of Jesus Christ? The wisdom of Solomon is desirable, but the wisdom of Christ is far more desirable and far more essential.

Oh, how many today are making a god of education, a god of knowledge, a god of science, a god of human learning. But it doesn't satisfy. Many, like Solomon, are making a god of riches, power, position, and fame, but it doesn't satisfy.

Jesus says to all who are weary with those things, Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.

Jesus didn't come with talents. He wasn't born in a mansion. He didn't sit on a throne of ivory with steps of gold. No, He was born in a stable and cradled in the manger. He grew up as a poor boy and worked as a carpenter to help make the family living. He never knew what it was to experience the luxuries of this life. He didn't have servants to wait upon Him. No, His whole life was devoted to serving others, living for others. His life was the most simple, His fare meager, but He was happy. A greater than Solomon is here.

You say, Yes, but He was the Son of God.

True. But the Son of God came to this world to show us how to live; to show us how we could be happy.

"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" Matthew 6:28.

There are literally millions of dollars being spent today, yes billions, because people are trying to make themselves more beautiful, attractive, alluring, enchanting, or something.

Jesus says, Why? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. One of these humble flowers is more beautiful than Solomon was able to create with all his wonderful inventions. In his earnest search after the artificial beauty he lost the natural beauty (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, page 628).

But Jesus turns our attention away from Solomon. He tells us here is something far more beautiful. What is it? The simple flowers of the field. And He says:

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" verse 29.

Jesus will make you beautiful, if you will let Him. He will make you rich, if you will let Him. He will make you happy, if you will let Him. But it will never come through the mad race Solomon went into.

I was reading the other day that some dog caught one of those electric rabbits in a race. He chewed it all up. It was very satisfying I am sure. That was what Solomon thought. He said he had seen it all.

"And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" Ecclesiastes 12:1213.

Solomon had read many books, but he says there is no end to it. And much study is weariness. Did you ever get weary with it?

"Solomon had great learning; but his wisdom was foolishness; for he did not know how to stand in moral independence, free from sin, in the strength of a character molded after the divine similitude. Solomon has told us the result of his research, his painstaking efforts, his persevering inquiry. He pronounces his wisdom altogether vanity" *Selected Messages*, Book 1, page 249.

I purpose we take Solomon's word for it. Why go down that road? Why end up frustrated as he did? I thank God we can come to Jesus and learn of Him.

"And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children" Isaiah 54:13.

The result of learning from Jesus is peace, joy, happiness. Not because of riches. Not because of fame. Not because of ease. Jesus was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, even though He walked this earth enduring all the temptations and pains and troubles that human flesh is heir to. He knew how to be peaceful in the storm. He knew how to be happy in the midst of temptations and trials and problems. And He is offering that to us tonight. Come, He says, And I will give you rest. Come, "learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Has Jesus taught you something? Have you entered into this learning process. Can you testify tonight that learning of Him brings peace and rest? Have you something to say to the praise and glory of God, and to the encouragement of others, that Jesus is a good teacher? What is the word that God puts into your heart?

Friends, I propose that we be simple minded enough to do what Jesus has invited us to do.

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