

Sunday Morning Message

March 24, 2019

Need Wisdom? – It's Yours for the Asking

Topic – Wisdom

Text – James 1:1 – 8; 1 Kings 3

Congregational Reading – James 1:5 - 8

Introduction

Read James 1:1 – 8: text verse 5

The word, "wisdom" (σοφία – *Sophia*) in the Bible is used in a variety of ways and can mean different things. The context of the passage is the deciding factor as to precise meaning of the word. In James 1, wisdom could be defined as "the knowledge and practice of the requisites for godly and upright living."¹ Wisdom in this sense involves knowing what God would want you to do or say in any given situation. Read James 3:13 – 18.

The wisdom I am talking about comes from God.

"For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:1-3)

Read vs. 1 – 4 of the 1 Kings 3 and explain the context.

Transition – In v 5 God gives Solomon the opportunity to ask for anything that he wants.

If God gave you the opportunity to ask him for anything, what would you ask for?

a million dollars; a new house; a fancy car; good health; Wade – a wife

In our text today, we will see that Solomon asks God for the one thing that would help him be successful as the leader of God's people; but would also guarantee that he would get all of those other things.

Solomon asks God for wisdom:

"Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" - (2 Chronicles 1:10)

The dictionary defines wisdom as having experience, knowledge, and good judgment. But the wisdom we are talking about means more than that. It's knowing what God wants you to know. But, it is more than just knowing:

Spurgeon said:

¹ Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 581.

“Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom.”

Vance Havner said, “If you lack knowledge, go to school. If you lack wisdom, get on your knees! Knowledge is not wisdom. Wisdom is the proper use of knowledge.”

It’s knowing what to do and when to do it.

It’s knowing the right thing to do say, and when to say it.

It’s knowing when to keep your mouth shut.

In our text today, we examine Solomon’s acquisition of wisdom:

I Solomon Acknowledges His Need For Wisdom (vs. 6 – 15)

A Notice Solomon’s Attitude (vs. 6 – 8) – Solomon is humble enough to recognize that the job God had given him was bigger than his natural ability. If he was going to succeed he knew he needed divine help from God.

You and I are in a similar quandary:

God has given you some things to do that are beyond your natural ability. Even though He has gifted you in certain areas, those gifts will not be sufficient on their own - without the help of God – to do all that God expects you to do.

Are you a parent – you need God’s help

Are you in a profession – you need God’s help

Are you a preacher or a teacher – you need God’s help

B Notice Solomon’s Asking (v. 9)

The New Testament epistle of James tells us that we can ask for wisdom from God too; and notice what the answer will be when we ask.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.” - (James 1:5-6)

This is a promise from God.

It is evident from some of the choices and decisions that we make that we often do not have God’s wisdom. Perhaps the reason that we lack the wisdom that God offers us is because we don’t ask:

“...ye have not, because ye ask not.” (James 4:2)

C Notice God’s Answer (vs. 10 – 15)

God is pleased when we depend upon Him. He wants us to acknowledge Him:

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." - (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Notice that God give Solomon beyond what he asks for:

"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." - (Psalm 37:4)

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," - (Ephesians 3:20)

II Solomon's Application of the Wisdom That God Gave Him (vs. 16 – 28)

This story illustrates the wisdom that God had given Solomon. He was able to discern in a dispute between two mothers who were both claiming to tell the truth.

III Solomon's Acquisition of the Benefits That Wisdom Provides

See – 1 Kings 4:29 – 34

See – 1 Kings 10: 1 - 24

Conclusion

You and I need God's wisdom.

"Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee." - (Proverbs 4:5-9)

How can you get wisdom:

1. You can get wisdom by asking God.
2. You can get wisdom from the Word of God.

The Book of Proverbs is the Book of Wisdom.

3. You can get wisdom from wise counselors.

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." - (Proverbs 12:15)

"Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end." - (Proverbs 19:20)

4. You can get wisdom from being a soul winner.

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." - (Proverbs 11:30)

5. You get wisdom from experience – learning from your own and others' mistakes.

Illustration

One morning the young new president of a bank made an appointment with his predecessor to seek some advice. He began, "Sir, as you well know, I lack a great deal of the qualifications you already have for this job. You have been very successful as president of this bank, and I wondered if you would be kind enough to share with me some of the insights you have gained from your years here that have been the keys to your success."

The older man looked at him with a stare and replied: "Young man, two words: *good decisions*."

The young man responded, "Thank you very much, sir, but how does one come to know which is the good decision?"

"One word, young man: *experience*."

"But how does one get experience?"

"Two words, young man: *bad decisions*."²

6. You can lose the wisdom that God gives you.

When you get to the point where you no longer feel that you need God, or you no longer want what God wants, you will lose wisdom.

Like being filled with the Spirit, having wisdom is a daily decision. You must daily depend upon God for wisdom.

See 1 Kings 11:1 – 11

All of the benefits that Solomon had received because of the wisdom that God had given him were lost because Solomon no longer was following God.

² Michael P. Green, ed., *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching: Over 1500 Sermon Illustrations Arranged by Topic and Indexed Exhaustively*, Revised edition of: The expositor's illustration file. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989).