

WATCH OUT FOR YOUR HEART!
(Lessons from the Life of King Solomon)

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Scripture: 1 Kings 10:23-27, 1 Kings 11:1-11, Deut 17:16-19, 2 Peter 1:3-4

Last few weeks, Pastor has been preaching on Authentic Discipleship; so we'll follow more or less on the same theme, but with some kind of practical application.

1 Kings 10:23-25

²³ King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. ²⁴ The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. ²⁵ Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift—articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules.

These verses talk about Solomon's wisdom which was given by God.

Then vv. 26-27 talk about Solomon's riches.

²⁶ Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. ²⁷ The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills.

Now in some other chapters, even in Chronicles, it is mentioned that during Solomon's time, gold was in plenty. All his goblets were of gold. In India, our newspapers daily carry the price of gold. So just imagine the riches that God had given him.

1 Kings 11:1-4, 6

¹ King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. ² They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. ⁴ As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

⁶ So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

Now you see here the sad part of it. Let's also read what happened because of all this.

vv. 9-11 ⁹ The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰ Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. ¹¹ So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.

So we see the glorious wisdom that he had, the riches he had. Then you know the way of the world in those days – having many wives, foreign wives, and the Lord had very clearly forbidden this. Then we see the consequences of what happened.

Deuteronomy 17:16-19 where explicit instructions were given by the Lord through Moses regarding what kings should do.

¹⁶ The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again." ¹⁷ He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold."

Exactly what the Lord said you should not do, Solomon did. The next two verses are very interesting.

¹⁸ When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. ¹⁹ It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees.

So, you see how Solomon directly violated what was written. And interestingly, the Lord had said through Moses, that all the kings should have their own personal copy of the law so that they could refer to it every day. In those days they didn't have bibles like us. It was all in scrolls. But the king had this special status to have a personal copy of the law with him so that he would read it. I'm sure Solomon read it and for some reason, he decided to disobey and do exactly the opposite of what the Lord had asked him to do.

One phrase that kept on repeating especially from chapter 11 is about heart, and it said that Solomon's heart was not devoted. Again and again that word heart keeps coming. So I thought we would see how we could prevent some of the mistakes which Solomon did, in our own lives.

Because Solomon did not devote his heart fully to the Lord, that led to disobedience in his life. And that finally led to such a point that he did not even repent. We don't see anywhere when the Lord told him that "you disobeyed, and I'm going to tear the land away from you." We don't see one word where it is mentioned that he repented, and he said "Lord, I'm sorry." That is a sad state of affairs. When we think of Solomon, we always think about the great wisdom he had, and also the great riches he had.

But watch out for the heart. It's not very clear when all this started. Definitely he started well, and you would have noticed in the portion we read, that he had the privilege of the Lord appearing to him twice. His father David did not have that privilege, but he did. And that is unique. Unfortunately somewhere down the line he fell, and one reason is mentioned here is his wives. His disobedience also led him. Maybe his success, maybe his riches, all these are kind of warnings for us to watch out for.

Three Lessons for us from the Life of King Solomon.

1. True Riches

We read about the riches of Solomon that silver was like stone. We can't even imagine that. In the Book of Chronicles, it says, "Silver was of no value in those days." Silver was available in plenty. But the Bible talks about true riches.

Psalm 62:10b "Though your riches increase do not set your heart on them."

There's nothing wrong to have a good salary; it's nothing wrong to have good savings. But we should not keep our heart there. That is what is dangerous – to set our hearts, our ambitions and our longings there.

Jesus also warned in Matthew 6 in the Sermon on the Mount, when He said: “Do not store up for yourself treasures on earth.” And then He said: Because thieves steal and moths will destroy it. but more importantly at the end of that particular verse, Jesus said something very, very important for all of us to remember. “Where your treasure is, there will your heart will be also.” That is the key. That’s something we should remember. We also should think where our treasure is. What do we value in our life? Do we value our possessions? Do we value our degrees or position or salary or house or whatever? If that’s the case, that’s where your heart is also going to be. That’s the warning for us, and maybe that gives some clue where Solomon’s fall started. So that’s a warning from the Lord: Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Now some of you might say, “No, we are not as rich as Solomon. We don’t have half or even one-thousandth of the gold he had.” But that’s not the point. If you remember, one man came running to Jesus and he had a very strange request in Luke 12. That’s what prompted Jesus to talk about that parable of the Rich Fool. This man ran to Jesus and told Him, “Teacher, please ask my brother to divide the inheritance with me,” which is a very right request. Now those days, the elder brother always had an upper hand. So here’s the problem. Two brothers and the elder brother probably takes the lion’s share of the inheritance. Here is a very valid request.

Jesus’ reply was very interesting. This is found in [Luke 12:15](#)

¹⁵ “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

There is nothing wrong with riches. Sometimes you may not get the rightful share which you are supposed to get. But Jesus’ reply was “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” I think that’s very important to remind us especially we who live in the city of Mumbai, the commercial capital of India. I’m told that the Income Tax department gets the maximum revenue from this city. Definitely all of us are affected in some way or the other by the kind of riches which are floating around. It’s important to note down what Jesus said, “Be on your guard.” Slowly, without our knowledge, even when we don’t have enough money, this aspect of greed can come. Watch out!

2. Run Consistently and Finish Well

One thing we learn from Solomon’s life is that starting well is not as important as running our Christian race consistently and also finishing it well. Unfortunately you hear so many stories even of Christian leaders who started well, who had wonderful ministries, but they couldn’t finish well. So, it’s a warning and a lesson for all of us. Solomon started extremely well. God appeared to him twice and if you read his intercessory prayer – it was wonderful. But somewhere down the line, he lost track and that is a warning for us.

What is important for all of us is to run consistently and to finish well, not just start well. maybe we sometimes take our Christian life a bit casual, we take it for granted. We think it can happen automatically – coming regularly to church, reading the bible, maybe a few verses, singing some songs. No! Not at all! Sometimes we can get to a place of complacency, taking it casually. Watch out! Solomon’s life should be a rude warning for us.

We need to take our discipleship very carefully. In the last few weeks, Pastor was sharing about the importance of submission, obedience, fruitfulness, and also longevity or perseverance. Running your race well needs perseverance, and that’s not automatic. Always remember, just like a plant, it needs nurturing. It doesn’t just grow. Our Christian life also needs nurturing and care. As parents I believe it’s our duty to also nurture our children in their faith. It’s very important. It doesn’t happen automatically.

I'm always reminded what Jesus told His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane in the context of prayer. Jesus asked if the 3 of His close disciples would pray with Him. And when He came back, they were sleeping. To this Jesus said, "Watch and pray that you do not fall into temptation; the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." That's something that we should always take as a warning. Our good intentions may not always lead to good actions. We need to watch and pray.

This one verse comes to me again and again many times during the day: Watch and pray. Both. Ask for God's strength. It's not there in us. Never thing that you can live the Christian life in your strength. Temptations will come on the way, but with God's strength, we can win. One thing we must remember is that we are in the enemy's territory.

1 John 5:19 says "We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one."

Always remember that. There is no place for complacency in the life of a disciple. But no need to get scared. All that the Lord is asking is to watch and pray. Ask for God's strength. God's Spirit would give us the grace. God's Spirit would remind us.

3. Watch out for your heart.

The question for all of us is: Where is our heart? What do you mean by heart? The greatest commandment says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength." So what do you mean by heart?

It is the heart that gives us that focus, life's ambition, that driving force. And where is your heart? The heart determines the direction for your life. That's why He says to love the Lord with all your heart. So the question we need to ask ourselves is: Where is our heart? We need to give the Lord our whole-hearted love or full attention, devotion and reverence. In Deuteronomy that's what the kings were asked to do, to really devote and revere the Lord. it's so important for all of us to do this check every day.

Solomon himself wrote this particular verse:

Proverbs 4:23 "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it, for is the wellspring of life."

It's so important for us to watch out what gets into our heart, what takes away our focus? Where are we? What are we thinking? What are we aiming at? Watch out. Guard it. Out of it comes the wellspring of life. That is everything. Our heart has everything so that's why we need to watch out.

How do we do that?

One of the most practical and simplest way of doing that is to invest heavily on God's Word. Give your best time to the Lord, whatever is best for you. For me, it's early morning. Invest that time, spend time with the Lord, and He will talk to you. I've seen it in my life. God has very special words for you as you spend time with Him. Whatever time you invest will not be wasted, and at the right time, God's Spirit will bring those words when you need it. Maybe sometimes words of encouragement, or maybe words of rebuke. God will bring it if you invest in God's Word. So let's make a special effort to give quality time to the Lord, in time, in prayer.

I want to give this example from the life of Abraham. God told him, "Abraham, I am your very great reward." God Himself should be our reward, our riches. That can happen only when we spend that quality time with the Lord, so that whatever we go through, throughout the day God's presence will be with us. God's strength will be there with us.

Finally, I want to leave with you one or two more verses that are wonderful.

2 Peter 1:3-4 ³ His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.

As we spend quality time with the Lord, God will give me everything I need for my life, both for my challenges today and for godliness.

v. 4 says: Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

This verse is so practical, so down-to-earth. God has given us in His word, very great and precious... Nothing can be more clear than this. That's the kind of richness of God's word. Why? so that through these, you may participate in His divine nature. God has given us divine nature. We need to nurture it so that we would escape the corruption which is there in the world caused by our evil desires. We need to be more and more rich in God's word, and God will do that. all that we need to do is to allow God to do that in our life.

In summary, let's take care about our heart, what we feed into our heart, our thoughts, our focus, what is our aim. And be sure that we really are serious in our walk with the Lord and ask God to help us walk so that we will be able to not only run but complete our race well.

Amen.