

1 Kings 10:14-11:8

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[0:00] This scripture reading today is taken from the book of 1 Kings chapter 10, verse 14, through to chapter 11, verse 8. This can be found in the Bibles in your pews on page 275.

Again, the scripture text is 1 Kings 10, 14 to 11, 8 on page 275 of the Pew Bible. Please stand out of reverence for God's word.

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold, besides that which came from the explorers and from the business of the merchants, and from all the kings of the West, and from the governors of the land.

King Solomon made 200 large shields of beaten gold. 600 shekels of gold went into each shield. And he made 300 shields of beaten gold.

Three minas of gold went into each shield. And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon. The king also made a great ivory throne and overlaid it with the finest gold.

[1:15] The throne had six steps, and at the back of the throne was a calf's head, and on each side of the seat were armrests and two lions standing beside the armrests.

While twelve lions stood there, one on each end of a step on the six steps. The like of it was never made in any kingdom. All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold.

None were of silver. Silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon. For the king had a fleet of ships of Tarshish at sea with the fleet of Hiram.

Once every three years, the fleet of ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. Every one of them brought his present, articles of silver and gold, garments, myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year.

[2:30] And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.

And the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone, and he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of Shephelah. And Solomon's import of horses from Egypt and Qa, and the king's traders received them from Qa at a price.

A chariot could be imported from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver, and a horse for 150. And so through the king's traders, they were exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria. Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh. Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.

Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart.

[3:46] 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.

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done.

Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab. And for Molech, the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem.

And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please be seated.

Well, today we commence on a brief four-week series on Christian stewardship.

[4:58] And we've titled these four weeks *Generous Joy, Straight Talks on Giving*.

So Happy New Year. I suppose that the backside of celebrating four weeks of Advent is as good a time as any to begin a four-week series on giving.

For Christmas at its core, of course, it is marked by the exchange and giving of gifts to one another, our own emblematic outworkings of God's great gift in his son as he gave him to us.

And I notice that in the auditorium, which we meet and rent, even the visual vestiges of Advent are yet hanging.

And so that four weeks of God's gift spilling over into this new year in a consideration of straight talks on giving.

[6:15] I don't know about you, but after hearing the Bible reading today, I'm not sure I would have liked to have drawn King Solomon's name come Christmas time.

I don't know about you, but our family, we often draw names so that you buy a gift for an individual rather than for all the individuals. Imagine having to get something for Solomon come Christmas.

The man who had everything. The opening of our text places this wealthy ruler in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

And you can envision his own Christmas party. The text says he had a throne that in some measure was unlike any other throne that had ever been made.

Ivory it was. And overlaid with gold. And the armrests. The heads of lions. And six steps descending down into the room before him.

[7:40] And on each step, another lion. Twelve in number. That's quite a living room. Quite a white elephant exchange.

You better bring something worthy of the king. And it looks, according to the text, that the queen of Sheba did her best.

Take a look at verse 10 prior to our reading. Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold and a very great quantity of spices and precious stones.

Never again came such an abundance of spices as these that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. Not a bad gift.

What would you bring to the king? It appears that the whole earth did its best.

[8:46] Take a look at verse 25. Every one of them. Of course, in reference to the whole earth. All the kings of the earth.

Every one of them brought his present. Articles of silver and gold. Garments. Myrrh. Spices. Horses and mules.

So much year by year. The individual queen bringing her great gifts. The whole earth bringing its gifts.

And think. This doesn't even include the gifts that God brought to Solomon.

Imagine God. The everlasting creator and ruler from on high. Bestowing gifts to a son of man.

[9:49] To a earthly ruler. The gifts of God are obvious in the text. They are summarized for you in verse 23.

Which I think 23 to 25 is indeed almost the summation of the whole. Verse 23. Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth.

In what? In riches. In riches. And in wisdom. Those two gifts. Stand as the pillars of the entire chapter.

If you take a quick look at 1 Kings 10. The first 13 verses are enumerating the gift of wisdom.

That God had given to Solomon. So that it says in verse 3. When she came to Solomon. She told him all that was on her mind.

[10:54] And verse 3. Excuse me. And Solomon answered all her questions. There was nothing that he did not explain to her. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon.

There was no more breath in her. Verse 6. She says the report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom.

But I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. Behold. Half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpassed the report I heard.

Happy are your men. Happy are your servants. Who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom.

Verses 1 to 13. This great gift that God gave to Solomon. The gift of wisdom. The latter half of chapter 10.

[12:01] The portion that was read for us today. Well it's abundantly clear what the second gift was. It was the gift of wealth. It opens with the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year.

Being 666 talents. And then it goes on from there to say on no fewer than two instances. Silver. What was as nothing in the days of Solomon. I mean you can get chariots imported for silver. That we'll export to others and a great profit unto ourselves.

Wisdom and wealth. The great gifts that God gave to Solomon. Now.

How do we know. That God. Is behind these gifts. Well you'll need to turn back. Of course we're coming into a topical series.

[13:05] And so there's no. Sequential preaching that's led up to this point. And so you'll need to turn back to 1 Kings 3. Had we been working our way through the text. We would have known.

From the very outset. That wisdom and wealth. Were the gifts of God. In chapter 3. You'll remember that Solomon was yet young. And just beginning his rule.

And could ask God. For any gift. And then. We see verse 9. Solomon.

Give your servant therefore an understanding mind. To govern your people. That I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to govern this. Your great people.

His request. Was for wisdom. And look what the narrator tells us. Verse 10 and following. It pleased the Lord.

[14:02] That Solomon had asked this. And God said to him. Because you have asked this. And have not asked for yourself. Long life. Or riches. Or the life of your enemies.

You have asked for yourself. Understanding to discern what is right. Behold. I now do according to your word. Behold. I give you a wise. And discerning mind.

So that none like you has been before you. Nor none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked. Both riches.

And honor. So at the outset of his reign. He had been promised by God. The gifts. Of wisdom.

And wealth. And by our chapter. Those gifts have been. Spilling over into his presence.

[15:02] He no longer has enough rooms. To hold wealth. Ivory itself. In all its beauty. Well. Overlay it in gold.

Now let me make a word here. By way of an aside. It's important as we begin a four week series on stewardship.

For you to know. That there is nothing inherently. Wrong. Or evil. With wealth. It's the love of money.

Which is the root of all sorts of evil. But the scriptures are never condemnatory. In regard to wealth itself. What they condemn. Is a covetous heart.

Which is. Equally. The partner to one who has. Or the one who. Has not. In fact. When you begin to look through the scriptures.

[16:02] The partner's wealth. Is often. A sign of blessing. It is often. A sign. Straightforwardly. That. An individual. Has been blessed. It was that way for Abraham.

God caused all that he did to prosper. It was the same for Jacob. Who. His growing wealth. Was an indication. Of the presence. Of God with him.

And so. As we begin this series. Recognize. There's nothing inherently wrong. With wealth. That said. Wealth.

Is not. Always. A sign. In the scriptures. Of God's presence. In fact. When you read Paul. I think of 2nd Corinthians.

In particular. There are times in life. Where his impoverished condition. According to the argument. Of his own mind. Is validating.

[16:59] His call. As an apostle. And the fact. That he walks. In the shadow. Of his Lord. Who was. Without. So no simplistic.

Positions. Over the next. Four weeks. Wealth. Is not inherently wrong. Wealth. Is often a sign. Of God's blessing. But the presence.

Of blessing. Cannot necessarily. Be equated. With the presence. Of God. Indeed. There are times. Where a lack. Of wealth. And being absolutely. Impoverished.

Validates. The presence. Of the living God. In your. Life. But with that in place. Recognize this. According to our text. It was God. Who stood behind. The complete. Mental. Capacity. For learning. And wisdom. That Solomon.

[17:56] Was able to express. In the company of people. He was indeed. Is indeed. The God of the mind. The God of the world. The God of the world. And he gave Solomon.

A measure. A capacity. That exceeded. Those around him. But it was. God. Who gave him. This mind. And it was God. Who gave him. This wealth. And for you. And for me. In some measure. God stands behind. Our mental capacity. God stands behind. Our material capital. God is the giver.

Of intellect. And learning. And stature. God is the giver. Of any increase. To investment. And livelihood. God. Stands behind it all.

[18:53] That's so important. For us to remember. For what. Our congregation has. Is a wealth.

Of both wisdom. And money. In the west. We certainly do. And. We are. Well equipped. And it is. All. Grace. Now. So far. I have only made.

Some introductory comments. From this chapter. Concerning the things. That God was doing. For an individual. Namely Solomon. But I don't want you to think. That that is.

The fullness. Of this chapter. What's striking to me. In 1st Kings 10. Even more so. Than Solomon's wisdom. And wealth. Is that God is also. In this chapter.

[19:47] Accomplishing something. Great. From promises. That had gone. All the way back. Into Israel's history.

In other words. What you see. In 1st Kings 10. Is the full. Working. Of God. In the life. Of an individual. That is fulfilling.

The larger promises. Of God. For the world. Let me see. If I can explain. This to you. If I was to ask you.

Tell me. Open your Bible. To the absolute. High water mark. In the Old Testament. The capstone. The highest moment. In Israel's history. History. Where would you turn. Well you ought to turn. To 1st Kings 10. For.

[20:48] We have walked. Into our reading. Today. The high water mark. Of all the Old Testament. In regard to what God. Has been doing. For. Israel. God's promises.

To Abraham. Are here. In this chapter. In full bloom. Let me explain. Genesis 12. 1 to 3. God made a promise. To one man. That through him.

All peoples. Would be blessed. That of course. Is a promise. That came on the heels. Of the sin. Of one man. Through whom.

All the families. Of the earth. Were under God's wrath. But after the flood. Wherein one man. Representing all men. Indicate the judgment of God.

Upon all families. One man is given a promise. That through him. All the families of the earth. Will then again. Be blessed. And so he says to Abraham.

[21:44] I will make your name great. I will give you. Your own place. And all the families of the earth. Will be blessed through you. Genesis 12. 1 through 3.

That promise. Finds its flower. In our text. For God.

Has fulfilled. His promises. Not merely to Solomon. In 1 Kings 3. But to Abraham. For God now. Has a great people. In their own place. Under his anointed ruler. And there are signs. That all the families of the earth.

Are now being blessed. Through his righteous reign. That's the significance. Of the queen of Sheba. She represents.

[22:40] The peoples of the earth. Who are now coming under the hearing. Of God's king. And knowing. And knowing how to live. In light of his reign.

And the response of her heart. Is to give. In the summary verse. Of our text. That indeed was the response. Of all the kings.

Of the earth. Every one of them. So when we look at. 1 Kings 10. God is doing. Something great. Not merely for one person. But he is accomplishing. His promises. For the whole. Earth. Now. What did Solomon make.

Of those gifts. Well. I want you to take a look. At. The obvious.

[23:39] Indicator. In the text. That he is messing up. With the gifts. Is chapter 11. Verse 2. The narrator is now. Bringing forward.

For the first time. An indicting text. That says. Solomon has gone off the rails. 11. 2. From the nations. Concerning which the Lord. Had said to the people of Israel.

You shall not. Enter into marriage. With them. That's the not so subtle hint. That he's not making good. On his gifts. But in actual fact.

The narrator. Has subtly been. Building to this indictment. I believe. The first sentence. That shows you. Solomon has gone off the rails. Is actually in chapter 10.

Verse 26. Wherein we read. And Solomon gathered together. Chariots. And horsemen. He had 1400 chariots. And 1200 horsemen.

[24:35] 12,000 horsemen. Now when we read that. We read that. As the further. Amplification. Of the great things. God did to bless. Solomon.

But in actual fact. That summary. Has already been made. 23 through 25. Is the summary. That is what God has done. 26. Is now what Solomon.

Is doing. He is gathering. Not only. Wives for himself. That he wasn't. To do. He is gathering. For himself. Chariots. And horsemen. In other words.

It is wild horses. That drove Solomon away. Not just women. Horses. Were the downfall.

Of the king. Now to substantiate that. You have got to turn back. Of course. Lest you walk out of here today. Thinking the pastor. Has really gone crazy.

[25:30] I have gone to church. And they have told us. That horses. Brought down the Old Testament people. But Deuteronomy 17. Will indicate. That this indeed. Is the case.

Take a look. Deuteronomy 17. At this point. Of course. In the Torah. In Moses's books. Given years. Before Solomon. Of course. We have the words of God.

Concerning the time. In which they come. Into the new land. And verse 14. Reads. When you come to the land. That the Lord your God. Is giving you. And you possess it. And dwell in it. And then say. I will set a king over me. Like all the nations. That are around me. You may indeed. Set a king over you. Whom the Lord your God. Will choose. One from among your brothers.

You shall set. As king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you. Who is not your brother. Only. Verse 16. He must not acquire.

[26:27] Many horses. For himself. Or cause the people. To return to Egypt. In order to acquire many horses. Since the Lord has said. You shall not return. That way again. And he shall not acquire.

Many wives. For himself. Lest his heart turn away. Nor. Shall he acquire. For himself. Excessive. Silver. And gold. The stipulation.

In the law. Was that the ruler. Of God's people. Was to be a man. Who would not acquire. Many horses. Yet the text. Has told us. That Solomon. Is now gathering them. By the thousands. What is it about horses? Well. It seems to me.

That horses. In that day. In particular. Would have been. The. Primary. Vestige.

[27:25] Of power. In other words. They would have been. What protected you. What. You banked. Your security on. I mean. Before we flew.

Planes in the air. Where. The air. Became. The place. Of strategic. Strength. There was. The. Cavalry. And. The one. With the most. Horses. Wins. And. In Solomon's. Mind.

The accumulation. Of horses. Is an. Indication. That his. Heart. Is now. Beginning. To. Rest. In his.

Strength. For his. Security. Security. He's forgotten. Miriam's song. In Exodus. 15. I will sing unto the Lord.

[28:20] For he is triumphed. Gloriously. The. Horse. And rider. Thrown into the sea. Remembering. Remembering. God's. Place. When his. People. Were. Completely.

At the end. But. God. Delivered. Them. He's forgotten. Psalm. 147. 10. His delight. Is not in the strength. Of horses.

Nor his pleasure. In the legs. Of man. But the Lord. Takes pleasure. In those who fear him. In those who hope. In his steadfast love. He's forgotten.

The words. Of his own father. David. Who. According to the. Ascription. Of Psalm. 20. Wrote. Now I know. That the Lord. Saves his anointed. He will answer him. From holy heaven.

With the saving might. Of his right hand. Some. Trust. In chariots. And some. In horses. But we trust. In the name.

[29:14] Of the Lord. Our God. They collapse. And fall. But we rise. And stand. Upright. O Lord. Save the king. May he answer us.

When we call. That's the dilemma. Of horses. It's an indication. In the life. Of an individual. When they begin to. Of their own initiative.

Supply their own security. Now that's coupled. With. The love. Of foreign women. Or to put it differently.

The idols. In Solomon's day. Are very much like. The ones in our own day. We are always tempted. To succumb. To power. To secure. Our own ends. And pleasure.

To secure. Our own. Our own. Desires. God. And this. God. And this. Indeed. Is the much more. Obvious one. And it is the one. That the narrator. Chooses. To bring forth.

[30:15] The quote. From the Old Testament. Concerning something. That he. Should not. Do. Now. Where do we go.

With this today. Stewardship. It's evidently. A matter of the heart. His heart.

Was turned away. It says so. Explicitly. In. Chapter 11. For when Solomon. Was old. His wives. Turned away. His heart. You know.

That reads rather negatively. On women. Doesn't it? His heart. They turned his heart away. Well. Believe me. This was a man. Who. Who was really. Ready. For his heart. To run.

Let's put it. Squarely. Where it belongs. The problem. Is with his heart. And we know that. Because even in the following. Verse 9.

[31:14] That wasn't read today. And the Lord. Was angry with Solomon. Because. His heart. Had turned away from the Lord. The God. Of Israel. Stewardship is a matter.

Of the heart. Does God. Have. Your. Heart. Does he have mine? Secondly.

I want you to think. In terms. Of this text. And. Our Lord. Jesus. Christ. The Lord.

Jesus. Christ. Presently. Is enthroned. In heaven. On a throne. Far greater than Solomon's. Ever was. And imagine ascending.

Those steps. With the 24 thrones. And laying your gift. Before him. You see.

[32:10] Jesus was. Wisdom. Personified. He was. He was. He was. Eternal. Wisdom. From. On high.

He. Grew. In stature. And in learning. Among men. And. Before. God. He.

Is. So. He. Is. The fulfillment. Of what we see. In Solomon. Here. God. And not only that. He is. Everlasting.

Wealth. He's. Part of. The Godhead. In the sense. That he. Is the eternal. Word of God. Made manifest. In the flesh.

Through his. Incarnation. And he. Laid aside. All. The riches. Of heaven.

[33:03] To be. Made. A man. A baby. Born in humble estate. Under law. That through his righteous service.

To us. And to the. Crowning achievement. On the cross. Wherein. He. Sacrifices. Everything. So that we.

Might be. Restored. To God. Jesus. Everlasting. Wisdom. Jesus. Everlasting. Wealth. Jesus. Never. Living.

In a sense. Of excess. Never. Building. A house. The way. Solomon. Built the house. For himself. Jesus. Building. The house.

Of God. By. By giving. Himself. Away. To. Others. Others. Well.

[34:03] Finally. Finally. It would be a tragedy. If today. You sat in this auditorium. And in some measure.

Were at the height. Of your powers. In regard to your. Capacity to earn. Or learn. And to not acknowledge.

That God is the giver of all. And to become. Living. And turning your heart. To where you are trying to accomplish things. For yourself. Often it says of Solomon.

He did this for. Himself. For. What are you doing. With the gift of your mind. What are you doing.

With the gift of your money. Are you coming to Jesus. And saying. You. O ruler.

[35:04] Of rulers. King of kings. I bring it all to you. You. Our response. Ought to be really.

A response. In principle. The way. The queen's response was. In chapter 10. Verse 10. Then she gave the king.

What will you give? Give him your heart. Give him your mind. Give him your. Money.

That he might. Build his house. May our response. Be. The summary. In principle.

To what we saw. In 23 to 25. Read it this way. Thus. King Jesus. Excels. All kings. In riches.

[36:03] And in wisdom. And the whole earth. Sought the presence. Of Jesus. To hear his wisdom. Which God had put into his mind. And every one of them.

Brought his present. So much. Year by year. Month by month. Day by day. Hour by hour. Moment by moment.

A life. Given to him. The song we sang. The. The splendor of the king.

Clothed in majesty. Let all the earth rejoice. Let all the earth rejoice. In age to age he stands.

And time is in his hands. Beginning in the end. Beginning in the end. The Godhead three in one.

Father. Spirit. Son. The lion and the lamb. The lion and the lamb.

[37:06] Name above all names. Worthy of all praise. My heart. Will sing. How great.

Our God. Our heavenly father. As we. Consider. The stewardship of a life. We turn from this.

Beautiful but. Tragic. Hero. Solomon. And. His course. And we pray that.

As we look to Jesus. His. Fulfillment. We would come. And acknowledge you. And be. Be gracious.

As you have been gracious with us.

In Christ's name. Amen. Come. And let us. Stand. And.