

Saturday Evening - English

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[0 : 00] in Matthew 12 about the Queen of the South rising at the judgment with this generation and condemning it for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom and now one greater than Solomon is here. What I would like to do with you tonight is to look with you at the story of the Queen of the South, the Queen of Sheba, as she came to Solomon and see how this story points us to one who is indeed greater than Solomon. I think that there are a lot of lessons that we can learn from the story for ourselves, not so much for us in relation to Solomon but in relation to the one whom we surely know to be greater than Solomon by far. The story is told in 1 Kings 10 and also in 2 Chronicles chapter 9 and it's in many ways a lovely story and it's one that's got many lessons to teach us and I think tonight as we find ourselves preparing for the Lord's day and for the Lord's supper it might be beneficial for us to go into a sort of devotional mode and mindset in order that we might be spiritually ready for what lies before us on the Lord's day.

So what I want to do is look with you at the passage as we have it here and try throughout you to see how it is pointing us to Jesus. The first thing that I want to say about the Queen of Sheba is that she came to Solomon having heard about his godly fame. She had heard of the fame of Solomon in relation to the name of the Lord and that was enough to make her go to him. She knew that there was something about this man that was godly and that drew her. That made her interested and that made her go to where he was.

She was aware of the fact that he was someone who was noted for his godliness at this particular point. He was someone whose reputation had gone far and wide in relation to the name of the Lord. So it's clear from that that at this particular time in the life of Solomon there were many things about him that pointed to the one who had put him on the throne and to the one whom he was acknowledging as God.

And she heard about this and she comes to him. We know of course that Solomon fell and fell dramatically and that Solomon for all his godliness was far from perfect.

[2 : 54] But we know that the one who is greater than Solomon is the one to whom we come. The one whose fame we must seek to spread throughout the whole world.

Namely our Lord Jesus Christ. Surely tonight the reason we're here is because we've heard of Jesus. And we've heard of Jesus concerning the name of the Lord.

We see in Jesus all those attributes that belong to the Lord. We see in Jesus none other than God himself.

Jesus is the one in whom it is to be found all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge. Jesus is the one who is not only sent by God but whom we know to be very God of very God.

Solomon certainly at this point was someone who was noted in relation to the name of the Lord.

Jesus is the one whom we know to be none other than that Lord.

[4 : 02] He's the one who alone could save us from our sins. He is the one whom we worship. We haven't come to worship Solomon. Neither have we come I hope to worship anyone else who's noted for their godliness.

But we've come to worship Jesus. We've come to bow before him having heard about him. What a privilege it was for her to have heard about King Solomon.

What a privilege it is for us to have heard about Jesus. There are many people in our world tonight who haven't heard about Jesus. There are many people in our own land tonight who are utterly ignorant in relation to who Jesus is.

And in all probability in this very town and island there will be those who genuinely don't know what the word of God has to say about Jesus. And how will they know if we don't tell them?

How will they hear if we don't make him known? It is through hearing that faith comes. And we must at all times of tonight where the Lord's people are in any way serious about our Christian witness, we must seek in our day and in our own communities to make Jesus known to those who don't know him.

[5 : 24] And as we do that, as we lift up his name, he promises to draw to himself. She was obviously drawn to Solomon because of what she'd heard about him.

And there may very well be those in this congregation tonight who can think of people who told you about Jesus, who told you about this one who is none other than very God of very God.

And as a result of what was shared with you, you came and you're glad you did. So she came having heard about his godly fame.

But she also came and tested him with genuine questions. We're told in our rendering here that she came to test him with hard questions.

Now that doesn't mean that she came to trip him up. What it means is that she was seriously wanting to know more. Not just about himself, but no doubt about this god concerning whom his fame had spread so widely.

[6 : 28] And so she comes with her hard questions. And she comes with her retinue. And she tells him all that is on her mind. Or as it could even be rendered, all that is in her heart.

She pours it all out before him. And Solomon answered all her questions. There was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her.

She asked him these questions. And he was able to answer them. And as we read about this and as we reflect on it, is that not exactly the way it is with us and the one who is greater than Solomon? All of us have many questions. None of us know it all. And the more we know, the more we know how little we know. But we can take all our questions to the Lord. If we are genuine tonight, there is one to whom we can go.

With all our cares. With all our concerns. And we can pour out our hearts before him. Even as she poured out her heart before the king.

[7 : 40] And when we do that, we will not be disappointed. Disappointed. Here in our story we are told that there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her.

Neither is there anything hidden from the one who is king of kings and lord of lords that he cannot explain. Whether he chooses to or not is another matter altogether.

There will be many times when we go to the Lord without hard questions. And there will be times when as we go he will answer. If not at the time, then later. But there may be other times when he doesn't answer at all and we might have to spend the whole of our lives wondering what the answer to the question is.

But one thing we can be sure of is that he knows. And he will only withhold the answer from us if that is for our spiritual good. Solomon's wisdom was such that he was able to answer all this woman's questions.

But Solomon's wisdom cannot compare with the one whom, as I've already said, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge.

[8 : 54] And so you can come to him tonight. You can't come to Solomon tonight. But you can come to Jesus. And whatever is on your mind, whatever is in your heart, pour it out before him.

Is anything too hard for the Lord? There may be questions that are hard for you to deal with. Just as there were questions that she found it hard to deal with or hard to answer.

But they weren't hard in Solomon's eyes. They weren't hard when it came to Solomon's wisdom and understanding. And there is nothing that is beyond your Lord's understanding.

There is nothing that he doesn't know. There will be many times, as I've said, when we won't get the answer straight away. We might not even get them at all in this world. But the scriptures tell us that we walk by faith, not by sight.

But there's something else about this story. And we're only just skimming the surface of it because it's so rich with lessons for us to take on board for our own lives.

[9 : 56] But we read in verses 4 and 5 that she came and she saw all his goods for herself. She saw all that he had.

She saw his wisdom, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, the attendance of his servants, their clothing, the list goes on, his cup bearers and his offerings that he offered at the house of the Lord.

And when she sees all that, she's overwhelmed. There was no more breath left in her, so to speak. We know there was, of course, because she didn't exactly die.

But the phrase is trying to get across just how overcome she was by it all. As she realized, as she recognized all that he had. And as you read through this list, and as you see the things that left her without breath, that left her overwhelmed, you cannot but think of how all these things are pointing us again to the one who is greater than Solomon.

Yes, we take this story literally. Of course we do. And I'm not a hope coming across as if I'm spiritualizing it, but just showing how it's pointing us to the greater than Solomon.

[11 : 14] And how all that she learned at the feet of her Solomon, we can learn and must learn at the feet of Jesus. She saw his wisdom, all his wisdom.

And we're here tonight because of that wisdom that drew salvation's plan. Because of the grace that brought it down to man. And because of the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary.

We're here tonight acknowledging divine wisdom. Acknowledging the one who has wrought salvation and brought it about. And we're here this weekend to testify to the wisdom of our God. She saw the house that Solomon had built. And in New Testament terms, we read of the living temple, made up of living stones, of which Christ is the head of the corner.

And we think of the church of Jesus Christ. As those whom God is building into a spiritual temple. And we take great pleasure surely in not only seeing this house that has been built, but in being brought to be part of that house for ourselves.

[12 : 32] The house that he is building. The church against which the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail. She saw the food of his table.

The great provision that he was making there in his palace. And we're here tonight surely as those who have tasted and seen that God is good.

As those who are thankful for the gospel table. And as those who have participated of the food provided on that table. Are now resolving.

In order that we might glorify him and enjoy him even more. To be found at his table tomorrow. The seating of his officials.

And the attendance of his servants. She saw the order that Solomon had in his household. She saw the positions that people had been elevated to.

[13 : 29] And she recognises. Again Solomon's wisdom in all of that. And again in the church. There are those who are given special roles. Not because of any worthiness that is of themselves.

But in order that the church of Jesus Christ might function. All the more and all the better. Their clothing. His cup bearers. She's seeing all this.

And we're seeing tonight God's people. Clothed in the righteousness of Christ. That's the clothing that matters. It's not the outward garment that one wears.

That is of any significance ultimately. But that we be clad with his righteousness. And we see that only the one who is greater than Solomon. Could provide such clothing.

And could provide such blessings for us. And then we read this. That she saw the burnt offerings. That he offered at the house of the Lord.

[14 : 30] And of course again we think of how diligent Solomon was. In the offering up of these offerings. And he was so meticulous in following the law.

As regards sacrifices and offerings. But the one to whom we look. The one who is greater than Solomon. Offered himself up.

As a sacrifice. To satisfy divine justice. And by which alone we are reconciled to God. And when we begin to think of this.

When we begin to think of whose offering. When we begin to think of what he has done for us. Then surely we see that no goods can compare.

With his goods. That no resources can compare with his resources. And we are quite overwhelmed. Especially as it dawns on us.

[15 : 27] That he has done all this for us. That he has done it for our benefit. That he has done it for his people. That he has done it for his own glory.

And that is the next thing that I want to highlight. She came having heard about his godly fame. She came and she tested him with genuine questions. She came and she saw all his goods for herself. And she came and she spoke of his glory. She said to the king. The report was true. That I heard in my own land.

Of your words. And of your wisdom. But I didn't believe them. Until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold the half.

Was not told me. Wow. Isn't that our own testimony tonight? If we know the Lord. If that was her testimony.

[16:31] In connection with Solomon. And it was. Surely it's ours. In relation to Jesus. We've come to know. That the report was true.

I say ask long ago. Who has believed. Our report. And to whom has the arm of the Lord. Been revealed. We heard about Jesus.

But until we came. And found out for ourselves. And found out for ourselves. Then we were still. Spiritually ignorant.

And there may be times when. When we hear the gospel. And it seems to be almost. If I can use the phrase. Too good to be true. And that was the way she reacted.

When she heard about King Solomon. To begin with. She says. The report was true. But verse 7. I didn't believe them. Until.

[17:32] I came. And. Saw for myself. And again. You may be like that. Here tonight. Maybe this is your testimony. Yes.

You heard the reports. You heard all about this. Greater than Solomon. But until you came for yourself. Until you saw for yourself.

Until you. Actually came to know him for yourself. You weren't convinced. But once. You came. And once you saw.

And once you heard. And once you believed. Then you knew. And your testimony was. That the half. Had not been told you.

And of course. That's always the case. The half. Is never told. Because there's so much to tell. But the great thing is.

[18:27] That she comes. And she speaks of his glory. She tells him. She says it to him. She says. I heard about you. They told me all this. But now I know.

Now I've come. Now I see. That it's all true. Your wisdom. And prosperity. Surpass. The report. That I heard. And again. Isn't that your testimony tonight? That no matter. That no matter what you may have heard about Jesus. When you came to know.

You could say. That it surpassed. All that you've been told. And surely this evening. If we know the Lord. Then there is.

No wisdom. No prosperity. That can compare. With his. A greater. Than Solomon. Is here. That. That. That.

[19:24] That. That. Therefore she says. Happy are your men. Happy are your servants. Who stand before you all the time. And hear.

Your. Wisdom. Again. Isn't that our testimony tonight. Happy. Blessed. Are your servants. Who are the Lord's servants.

Well all Christians. By definition. Must be the Lord's servants. Jesus himself is. The servant. Par eximos.

The servant. Of the Lord. And if we know Jesus. Then we too must. Have the servant spirit.

The servant mindset. It is only. Those who have the servant mind. Who have the mind of Christ.

The one who is Lord.

[20:22] Over all. Happy are your servants. There is a. Blessedness in serving the Lord. That isn't to be found.

Anywhere else. In the entire universe. There was a blessedness. And a happiness. In serving Solomon. That this woman.

This queen. Is aware of. Happy are your men. Happy are your servants. Who continually stand before you. And hear your wisdom. But the wisdom.

That we have come to hear. Namely the wisdom of Jesus. Is surely more. Glorious by far. And if tonight.

You can see. Not that you understand it all. But that you. Been made wise. And to salvation. Because of Jesus.

[21:20] Then surely. That's worth telling. She couldn't keep it to herself. When she came. And she saw. She spoke. And the scriptures tell us.

That. We're not just to believe. In our heart. That Jesus. Is Lord. And that God has raised him. From the dead. But we're to confess. With our mouth as well. We are to make Jesus known.

We must not be. Secret disciples. As Donald MacLeod. Put it so succinctly. Either the discipleship. Will spoil. Will spoil the secrecy.

Or the secrecy. Will spoil the discipleship. She's open about it. She speaks of his glory. And surely that.

Is what we want to do as well. To speak of the glory of the Lord. Of who he is. Of what he's like. And of what he's done. And to acknowledge.

[22 : 20] That is all of him. She's speaking here to Solomon. But ultimately. It's not really Solomon. She's talking about. As verse 9.

Makes clear. Yes. She's been saying all these great things. About Solomon. But then in verse 9. She says this. Blessed be the Lord.

Your God. Who has delighted. In you. And set you. On the throne of Israel. Because the Lord. Loved Israel forever.

He has made you king. That you may execute. Justice. And righteousness. Ha ha. This woman. This queen of the south. Is giving the glory. To the Lord.

She's acknowledging. That all Solomon is. Is because of. His Lord. Blessed. Blessed. Blessed. Blessed. Be the Lord. Your God.

[23 : 19] Who has delighted. In you. And so on. Are you able tonight. To say. From your heart. Blessed. Be the name.

Of the Lord. Can you say. About Jesus. That he's the one. Who's done. All for you. Even as she. Told Solomon. The Lord. Was the one. Who had done. All. For. Her. For him. Because the Lord. Loved Israel forever. He has.

Made you king. And here's your responsibility. That you may execute. Justice. And righteousness. We've been talking. About privilege. But along with privilege. Always. Always. Always.

Comes. Responsibility. Solomon. Wasn't just. To sit back. And. Enjoy. The glory. Solomon. Was to act.

[24 : 15] As one. Who was answerable. To the Lord. As God. For the way. In which he executed. Justice. And righteousness. And the same. Is still true of us.

We're answerable. To God. For the way we live. We're answerable. To God. For what we make. Of the. Great privileges. That he's given us.

To enjoy. And blessed us. With. And so she. Speaks of. His glory. But she's really. Speaking of. The Lord's glory. To God be.

The glory. Great things. He has done. So loved he. The world. That he gave us. His son. Who yielded. His life. And atonement.

For sin. And opened. The life gate. That all may go in. Praise the Lord. I can almost sing it. Praise the Lord. Let the earth hear his voice. Let all the glory. Be his.

[25 : 12] But we're not finished yet. We're told. In verses 10 to 12. That she came. And she gave to him. Of her gold. And of her. Substance.

Then she gave the king. 120 talents of gold. And a very great quantity. Of spices. And precious stones. Never again. We're told. Came such an abundance.

Of spices. As those. That the queen of Sheba. Gave to king. Solomon. And then we're told. In verses 11.

And 12. Of even more. That was brought to him. The fleet of Hiram. Brought gold from offer. A very great amount. Of Almacwood. And the king made use. Of what he received.

And so on. And so forth. It's all there. For you to read. She came. And she gave him. So much. She didn't want to hold. Anything back. From him.

[26 : 09] What about us. And the greater than Solomon. How can we hold anything back. From the one. Who held nothing back.

As he gave himself. For us. And so that. What we're here for. This weekend. When I survey. The wondrous cross. On which the prunes.

Of glory died. How can I withhold anything. Take my life. And let it be. Consecrated Lord. Take my silver.

And my gold. Not a mite. It's easy to say. Isn't it. Take my silver. And my gold. Not a mite. Would I withhold. Take my life.

And let it be. Consecrated Lord. Yeah we can. We can quote it. We can sing it. But doing it. Is another thing. Altogether. Do we mean it. And she obviously meant.

[27 : 04] That she didn't want. To hold anything back. She gave him. So much. But she received. From him. Much more.

Than she could ever give. King Solomon. Gave to the Queen of Sheba. All that she desired. Whatever she asked. Besides what was given her.

By the bounty of King Solomon. I think the way it's put in other translations. Suggest. Very strongly. That he gave her far more. Than. She ever.

Gave him. And again. That's it. Isn't it. Our giving of. All that we have. To the Lord. Can't compare with. Him giving his all.

Because if you belong to Christ tonight. Everything belongs to you. Everything. All things are you. You are Christ's.

[28 : 03] And Christ is God's. Heirs of God. Co-heirs with Christ. What more could God give us.

Than he's already given us. Surely. That's humbling. Surely. That's something. That ought to. May just respond.

By just. Wanting to worship. But there's something else. And this is the last point. We've said earlier.

That we can't keep these things. To ourselves. And I don't believe. The Queen of Sheaf. Had kept. What happened here. To herself. Because we're told. That. She turned.

And went back. To her own land. With her servants. And then in Matthew 12. As Jesus is. Warning. People. And. Especially.

[29 : 00] Warning them. As we saw. In our reading. Against. Sins. That they were. Guilty of. He quotes. Two Old Testament stories. And he wouldn't.

I don't think. Have quoted them. The way he did. If the people. Hadn't been familiar. With them. He quotes. And he refers. To the story of Jonah. And he also speaks.

Of the Queen. Of Sheba. Or the Queen. Of the South. And as he. Speaks. To them. To the scribes. And Pharisees. Who are looking. For signs. And so on.

They don't ask him. What are you talking about? They don't say. Oh. We've never heard. Of the Queen of the South. We've never heard. Of the Queen of the South. It's obvious they had. It's obvious.

This story. Was recorded. Was written down. It was there. In the scriptures. And. No doubt. She would have gone home. And she would have told. In her own home.

[29 : 56] About. Her great experience. With King Solomon. On the occasion. That she went to visit him. And again.

Surely. The same must be true of us. In the New Testament. There are occasions. When people come to know Jesus. And they want to just.

Follow in his footsteps. For the rest of their days. But Jesus says to them. No. No. Just go home and tell. The gathering demoniac. For example. Go home and tell. And he did.

Go tell. What the Lord has done. For you. Go to your own people. Go to. That place. Where the Lord has put you. And make.

Jesus. Known. There. Gladly. Spread. His fame. Wherever. He places you. Don't hold back.

[30 : 52] From telling people. About Jesus. Jesus. Any more than. She held back. From telling people. About Solomon. So as we prepare.

For the Lord's Supper. Tomorrow. I trust that. All of us here tonight. Will have. Already. Come to Jesus. Will know him. For ourselves.

As the one. Who is none other. Than God. Become man. To bring man. To God. I trust tonight. That whatever.

Genuine. Issues we may have. Questions we may have. Problems we may have. Difficulties in understanding. We may have. That we bring everything. To him. Before him.

Pour out. Your heart. I trust that. As we come to him. We will see. His. Goods. For ourselves. We will see that. We will lack nothing.

[31 : 49] If we are his. And he is ours. We will see him. As the one. Who is able to meet. All our need. According to his. Glorious riches. And we will speak. Of his glory. And we will give our.

Lives to him. And we will receive. From him. Far more. Than we. Could ever give. And recognizing. All these great things.

That the Lord has done. And is doing for us. We will surely. Go and gladly. Tell others. About him. Our vision. Statement. In our own congregation.

Was very simple. Know Christ. Grow in Christ. And go. For Christ. And if we know Christ. May he enable us.

To grow. In our knowledge of him. And to go. And spread. His fame. Abroad. That others. May be drawn to him. To him. And come with us.

[32 : 46] To worship. His glorious name. And give him. All the glory. All the honor. And all the praise. Lord bless these. Thoughts. And your word to us.

We've only just. Skimmed the surface tonight. There is so much there. That. You know. We haven't even. Referred to. But we pray. That each one of us. Here this evening. Would know for ourselves. And be able to testify. That in Jesus. A greater. Than Solomon. Is here. For his glory. Sake. We ask it all. Amen. We sing in conclusion.

From Psalm 145. In the Scottish Psalter version. The second version of the psalm. And singing verses 7 to 12. Psalm 145.

In the Psalter. The second version. 7 to 12. It's on page 444. They utter shall abundantly. The memory of thy goodness great.

[33 : 43] And shall sing praises cheerfully. Whilst they thy righteousness relate. Verses 7 to 12. To God's praise. The Lord and God is great.

The Lord and God is great. The Lord and God shall abundantly. The memory of thy goodness great.

And shall sing praises cheerfully. What did thy righteousness be laid? The Lord and God is great.

The Lord and God is great. Compassionate is he of hope. And mercy is plentiful.

God unto love and angered soul. God unto love and angered soul. God unto all men is the Lord.

[34 : 48] For all his works, his mercy is. Thy works of praise to thee afford.

Thy sins, O Lord, thy hymn shall bless. God unto all thy kingdom show. Shall we and all thy power tell.

The soul and son is his kingdom. His kingdom's grace at God excel. His kingdom's grace at God excel.

Amen. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all tonight and forevermore.

Amen.