

# Solomons End

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[ 0 : 01 ]     1 Kings chapter 11. This passage, this chapter, gives the last that we hear of King Solomon, at least in this part of the Bible.

We hear other passages, which he himself, of course, wrote, the Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes, and of course he's referred to in the New Testament.

But as far as the narrative or the story of his life is concerned, we now come to the end of what 1 Kings tells us.

We've spent some weeks going through the life and the reign of Solomon. I just want us to look together at how his life, as it's given to us, comes to a conclusion.

Verse 4, 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.

[ 1 : 12 ]     I so wish that the end of the life of Solomon was different to the way it was.

He was the most, by far, the most splendid king in the Bible. Even Jesus talks about Solomon in all his glory.

There was nobody like him in all the world, as far as the Bible is concerned. And having seen that already, having looked at something of the splendor and the majesty of Solomon, we know, of course, that nobody lives this side of eternity forever.

His life is bound to come to an end. You expect it to come to an end, but you'd expect his departure from this world to be as glorious as his life, surely.

You'd expect him to be on his deathbed and to give something like the last words of David. You can read the last words in David in 2 Samuel.

[ 2 : 19 ]     He knew he was going to die. He accepted the fact that he was going to die. And his death was as glorious and as much a dedication and a consecration and expression of love to God for all that he had done for him.

And you would expect Solomon to be even more so, having built the temple and having spent years of his life in the service of God, having put God first, you would expect.

And yet, this is what we have. A massive anticlimax. And it's not because the writer of 1 Kings has something against Solomon. He's just telling it like it is.

That's what we want. We want the truth. We don't want the wool pulled over our eyes. We don't want a flowery fairy tale. We don't want everything to be well and rosy in the Bible because it wasn't.

These were real men, real women who were defective in so many different ways. We saw that this morning with Abraham. Abraham was defective in that he lied to the king in Egypt saying that his wife was his sister.

[ 3 : 23 ]     All over the Bible, you have the great men and women of God who fail at some point and they're drawn back to the Lord. And here, but here, at the very end, you can expect a failure to take place.

I'm not saying it's right, but you can expect it to take place. Perhaps when the person is young and foolish, perhaps he's impetuous or impulsive. And that person like Peter, for example, who failed the Lord, who denied the Lord.

And after Jesus rose from the dead, Jesus went to him specifically and restored him again. His failure was momentary. It was strong. But what you don't expect is for a man like this to fail at the very end of his life and to leave the scene of time.

And nothing more is known about him than the fact that he drifted, that he backslid and that his heart was turned after other gods.

How can a man like Solomon, who's so exemplary and who's such a reflection of the grace and the glory and the majesty of God, as we have already seen.

[ 4 : 29 ] How can he be known at the end of his life for wrong, for the wrong that he did when he has spent the rest of his life serving God?

Well, I want us to spend the time, the next half an hour or so, usefully trying to analyze this passage in order for it to be of use and practical application to ourselves.

That's why it's in the Bible. It's there to scare us. It's there to warn us. It's there to remind us that if this can happen to Solomon, where in the world do we stand tonight?

How can it not, how it's equally possible for it to happen to ourselves? Nobody is immune. Nobody is above temptation.

And not even the older ones. This happened not at the beginning of Solomon's life, but towards the end of his life. It tells us in this passage that it was when he was old. That's the last thing you would expect.

[ 5 : 31 ] Especially as New Testament believers, we believe in growth and grace, don't we? That's what the apostles talk about. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior. And that means that we would expect the foolishness that we might be guilty of when we're young Christians.

All of that to be put away and that we might be strong in the Lord in later life. But evidently, not always the case. This is so scary to me. And it's right for me to be scary.

Because if I'm scared, if I'm fearful, then I'll run to the Lord. And that's the whole point of the passage. If we take this, if we're critical towards Solomon, that's not going to do us the blindest bit of good.

And if we're just pointing the finger at him and trying to analyze it without doing anything else, that's not going to do a scrap of good either. But if we see in Solomon something that's potentially there in all of us, even the most knowledgeable person here.

What God is looking for today is consistency in his people. Consistency of their character and their life. Not just how much they know up here. And whether or not they're able to dissect the finer points of theology.

[ 6 : 37 ] He's looking for a consistent Christ-like character. And that's not just something that we can assume. It's something we have to pay attention to from day to day and never become complacent about.

And if there's one passage that keeps me from complacency, it's this passage here. It scares me. It makes me tremble. Because here is a man who was quoted by the Lord himself as being the most glorious king.

Solomon said Jesus in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But where's the glory now? It seems to have disappeared and it seems to have faded.

And as we say goodbye to Solomon, we're not only sorry to see him go after all that we have seen and all that we have learned from his life. But we're so, so sorry about the way that he departed from this scene of time.

And I want to say something to anyone here tonight who's backslidden. Whatever you do, don't stay like that.

[ 7 : 47 ] Do not leave this scene of time with the only memory that people have of you is as being a lively Christian when he was young.

But who knows where he stood when he was older. I can tell you there is nothing more demoralizing.

Don't you feel it? Don't you feel the utter disappointment, especially having looked through the life of Solomon? Solomon, how can we, what's our assessment of, why was it that he went so badly wrong?

What are we to make of the wrongness of the way in which Solomon departed this life? He was wrong first of all in that he went against God's love, went against God's word.

That is always and only what makes sin, sin. It is when we go against what God tells us in his word.

[ 8 : 49 ] And God said at the very beginning when Israel asked for a king, they asked if you read back into 1 Samuel. When Israel gathered and they asked, we want a king in order for us to be like the nations around us.

And God answered them and he gave them a king. But he said that he must, the king must not take many wives. That was the express command of God. We'll go into that in a few moments time when we discover the weakness that lay at the root of Solomon's waywardness and his drifting.

But that was what God said. And moreover, he said that they must not take many wives. But he must not take foreign wives. That's not because God was racist in some way.

It's because he knew that foreign wives worshipped and loved foreign gods. And foreign gods were not the living and the true God. And in the process of love and interaction and marriage and communion between a man and a woman, it was all too easy for that wife to draw the heart of her husband away from serving and worshipping the living and the true God to worshipping.

And that's exactly what happened. You see, the theory becomes the practice. God's word is not just theory. It is to be obeyed. It's not just something for us to store up in our minds.

[ 10 : 10 ] It's something for us to get up every morning and to do and to take seriously. Because what God warns us against is something that will happen if we don't listen.

It will happen if we don't listen. That's the reality of God's word. And that's why he's so clear about what he says to us. It's because he knows that if we don't listen to it, exactly what he warns us will happen.

He was also wrong in that his life no longer reflected the glory of God. And his witness at the end was absolutely ruined.

We've been seeing that, haven't we? We spent week after week and our mouths have been opened just like the Queen of Sheba. We've seen how from the very beginning God chose the son of David to be king.

We've seen that God himself loved Solomon. We'll come on to that question in a few moments time. How can you reconcile the way that Solomon ended his kingship with the fact that God loved him?

[ 11 : 18 ] Was he truly a believer? We'll answer that in a few moments time. We'll try to anyway. And he planned, God planned for him to be the one, not David his father, but he was the one to build the temple as a place of worship and sacrifice.

We saw that God made sure that he, out of all the sons of David, was the one to be crowned king. And after he was anointed, God visited him one night, asking him, inviting him, offering to him, that he would give him anything that he wanted.

And Solomon chose the wisdom that he felt that he needed because he was so aware of the responsibility of being king over God's covenant and chosen people.

And we saw thereafter that God didn't just give him wisdom, but that gave him splendor and majesty and glory and riches so that he became an extraordinarily...

Remember how much we said that the temple was worth 50 billion pounds? In today's money, 50 billion, the most expensive building by far that there has been in the whole of the history of mankind, of humankind.

[ 12 : 24 ] We saw that he made silver as common as dirt. The gold was everywhere in his palace and in his temple, not only for himself, but that people in his kingdom, every man.

The symbolism was every man sat under his own fig tree, which means that during Solomon's reign, it was a reign of peace and prosperity, not just for himself, but for everyone.

Everyone was satisfied, not only so, but his fame went ahead of him and became the talk of the whole earth. No one was better known than Solomon. He was known everywhere for his devotion to the Lord, his wisdom, his knowledge of everything, plant life, natural things, wisdom, sayings, his knowledge of human beings.

We saw in the two women who came to them with a baby. We saw that he has extraordinary wisdom. And when the Queen of Sheba came, we saw that last week, when the Queen of Sheba, having heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to see him, she was utterly breathless.

We saw that. And she made this great exclamation of how amazed she was. And you know, way back then, at the very beginning, if you had gone to Solomon and said to him, one day you will be offering incense, burning incense to Molech and Shemosh, he would have told you to get out of the room.

[ 13 : 52 ] He would have not believed you for a one moment of time. The whole thing was just so unbelievable. Because at the beginning, his heart was fixed and dedicated and focused on one being alone, and that was God.

God took the first place. And yet, years later, we find him burning incense to other gods.

And yet, and the whole thing is so incongruous, isn't it? It just doesn't add up. The whole thing. It just, Solomon, if you were to go to him, and he's in whatever place he was, the high place, presumably it was away from public view, and he was surrounded by all his women, and he's burning incense to Molech.

Don't kid yourself, by the way. Molech and Shemosh, the worship of these gods involved sometimes human sacrifice. Now, I'm not saying that Solomon was guilty of human sacrifice, but in their home countries, that's what happened.

And that's part of the reason why God was so outraged when his people turned away from himself, the God of grace and kindness, the God who takes care of his people, to worship gods who were ruthless, gods who didn't exist in any case.

[ 15 : 19 ] And for them to choose and opt to commit themselves and to worship and to give their time and their energy and their devotion to gods who didn't exist, it just was incongruous.

After the glory of God had come down in full view of Solomon and all the priests, when he completed the temple, after God had come to him in the night time and had offered him, ask anything, anything at all, and I will give it to you.

And he gave him anything that he wanted. Everything was at Solomon's disposal. God could not possibly have made himself more evident or powerful or obvious to anyone other than Solomon.

Solomon literally had it all. The whole thing is so utterly senseless and incongruous, isn't it? You go to Solomon and you ask him, why are you burning incense?

You are Solomon. You've built this temple. You know God. You're a friend of God. He's spoken to you and you've spoken to him. And you know that there is no other God.

[ 16 : 26 ] Why then are you acting as if there is another God? And he wouldn't be able to tell you. He would probably make up some phony excuse.

Oh, well, you know what wives are like. You know what, you know, these women, they kind of dominate my life. And, well, I just want to please them. I want to keep them happy.

Well, in that case, and if, of course, if he had gone back to the beginning and if he had rediscovered what God's plan was, one man, one woman, then this whole problem wouldn't have existed in any case because it would be quite wrong to say we know what wives are like.

Well, I don't know what 700 is like. But God's plan was for one and for a very good reason. And if this doesn't demonstrate the wisdom of God and the grace of God in one man, one woman, I don't know what did.

But I reckon that was exactly the problem. That he wanted to keep them happy. He wanted to preserve the peace. And he wanted to make sure he had an easy life, whatever that cost.

[ 17 : 33 ] But the whole thing was so incongruous. And you go to him and you're asking this one single question. What are you doing here?

I want to stop. And I want to ask you tonight. Do you ever do stuff?

Or say stuff? Or do you go to places where if somebody was to come in the door, they would have to ask you, what are you doing here?

You're a Christian. I can't believe you're doing this. I can't believe you're in here. I can't believe you're talking like that.

I'm not talking about going to football games. You know, I think our forefathers were a wee bit extreme in this respect. But I think our generation's gone to the other extreme.

[ 18 : 39 ] Where it almost appears like nothing matters. I was in conversation with somebody. Now you'll forgive me for saying this. I know I'm going to be unpopular for saying this. I was unpopular when I said it before years ago. And I'm going to say it again because God has called me to take care of people.

To take care of their spouse. I was in conversation with a person the other day who was saying, well, what's wrong with going to clubs? This person was a student. They were saying, well, if I go to Glasgow or Edinburgh or whatever, you know, I get to know people and I go to...

What's the problem with going to clubs? A nightclub here and there. I can still be a Christian. That's not a problem. I can make sure that I'm strong. I can make sure I don't drink too much.

And I can make sure that I must preserve myself as much as I possibly can. Like, what's wrong with them? And I'm thinking, I think I'm kind of missing something somewhere.

And I don't want to be old-fashioned. I'm not saying this to be old-fashioned. I don't want to be an old fuddy-duddy. I don't want to be... I know I'm a grandfather and all these kind of things.

[ 19 : 44 ] But that's got nothing to do with it. What does this have to do with this? Where does God want us to go? And when you get the choice of doing what you want to do for your own selfish pleasure and when you have...

The other option is to take a stand for the Lord. Are you prepared to take a stand for the Lord? And I said to this person, what if I went?

I know this is the most ridiculous thing, but it really gets the point across. What if you were at a club and I walked in? And what if I... Even to make it even more ridiculous, I had my clerical collar on.

And I walked in and I started doing the same stuff as everybody else, drinking and getting involved and all the stuff that goes on. You would stand there absolutely incredulous and you would say, what in the world has happened to Ivermau?

You would think, I have taken leave of my senses and finally flipped altogether. You know what my answer to that is? Then why are you there? If it's wrong for me to be there, it's wrong for you to be there.

[ 21 : 00 ] And it's not going to preserve your witness and you're going to fall. Now I've said this before and I know it's controversial and I was really unpopular for saying this. That's okay.

I don't mind being unpopular. But if it means that you listen to God's word and act according to what God wants you to do and don't do stuff where people can come to you and say, what are you doing here?

Why are you doing what you're doing? And you might think, well this is a real hard line. You know there are some things you have to be absolutely hard line on. And I reckon I'm probably pretty open minded on a lot of stuff.

But the Bible is clear. I believe on the kind of lifestyle that a Christian, and I know that, I know that what I'm saying is hugely relevant, particularly to the younger ones.

Because I've seen all this stuff. I've seen all this stuff. And I've gone through these questions. I was a young person once and I went through exactly the same kind of questions. And I made some of the mistakes that I hear other people making.

[ 22 : 15 ] So I have personal experience of the misery that's caused when somebody backslides as a young believer. When you backslide. And it doesn't give you the pleasure that it promises.

You end up miserable. You end up with this feeling of guilt before the Lord. And you know why? Because you're sort of pushing them out towards the outside of your life.

And you're replacing them with other things. God has to take the central place in my life.

And he has to take the central place of your life as well. Give them the first place. That's what it means to be a Christian. Let me say one other thing to those of you who are going to be leaving.

Leaving home. I'm not very conscious of this because we have two in our own family who are leaving home. And perhaps I should be conscious of this every year. But perhaps I'm more sort of personally involved with it this year.

[ 23 : 16 ] Because a big thing when somebody's leaving home. Remember the truth that God has laid on your heart. And give God the first place.

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And that means having to stand alone. And this may be the first time that your faith has really been tested.

And God is saying to you He's saying I know you've been to fellowships and gatherings and you've had such a fantastic upbringing and you've had such a fantastic time with each other listening to my word learning my word and you've all the intentions of the world of living for me let's now see how you're going to stand the test.

Because as I said this morning wherever there's faith it's going to be tested. And sometimes that test involves you having to do what Daniel did and say no to what is wrong.

No. And it's not easy. And I reckon this was exactly the situation. Because Solomon had the choice of having to say no 700 times.

[ 24 : 35 ] And after maybe 100 he just gave up. Now how long is it going to take you to give up? I hope you're not going to give up.

That's the kind of people that God wants us to have. Otherwise your witness will be destroyed. And if ever this country needed Christians who were who meant what they said it's now and who were prepared to take a clear stand for the Lord.

Now I know that there are other issues and all these things should be discussed and all of these things but I'm just taking this passage and I'm I'm trying to picture this man Solomon and I'm trying to draw the contrast between this this fantastic king who was such an example of what it meant to serve the Lord and I'm looking at him now and he's he's worshipping he's on his knees before some some scrap of a god some idol somewhere and he's giving his and he knows perfectly well that there is only one god and yet he's doing he's going through the motions and I'm saying what are you doing?

please don't get yourself into that kind of situation please don't get yourself into that take a clear stand for the Lord and I tell you he will bless your life him that honours me says God I will honour that's what he says to us I spent longer than I thought on that particular point but who knows maybe it'll do someone some good tonight and as I believe that that there are things that need to be said it's wrong also left a future legacy a legacy to a future generation what happened was that God warned him he spoke to him afterwards and he was angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord and God allowed adversaries enemies to rise up these men had been on the sidelines all along they had been threats to Solomon all along and they had been waiting in the wings to see if they could take opportunity but so far

God hasn't allowed them but now God is going to allow them just as a goad to remind Solomon of the wrong that he has done and then what happened was as we follow the story when Solomon died the next king was his son Rehoboam and there was a disaster with Rehoboam because instead of consulting the old instead of doing what the older generation wanted him to do the why the wisdom he consulted his young friends friends who had watched Solomon and friends who had perhaps become confused by Solomon's latter actions and his drifting and Solomon's and the kind of confusion that they had well what did he stand for in the first place and this is the problem if your witness becomes confused it affects other people people who you've perhaps been trying to live in front of in your homes or in your communities or in your classrooms or in your workplace when you start drifting they say well what's going on here is that person following

[ 28 : 00 ] Christ or is he not I just don't know and you leave a legacy and it leaves a confusion for them as well and it affects the way that they think and that's exactly what happened there the second the next generation grew up and they gave the wrong disastrous advice to Rehoboam and it was all because Solomon had drifted and backslidden but you know the real source what we find here more than anything else is that his wrong grieved God it's not just that it confuses people it's not just that it ruins your witness it's that it grieves God the Bible tells us that we are not to grieve the Holy Spirit you know a person who has come to discover and to experience God's love that's the greatest that's the greatest experience that you can ever discover to know that the

Lord himself has laid down his life for you and that as a consequence of his death on the cross you have come to faith in him your life has been changed you're now a follower of Jesus your life is focused on him you want to serve him you want to love him because he's first loved you what do you think he thinks how does he feel and I use that word deliberately some people think God doesn't have feelings at all that's not what God says do not grieve the Holy Spirit that's what the apostle tells us and what Solomon did grieve the Lord I don't know quite how to explain that theologically it doesn't matter that's what the Bible tells me that what Solomon did grieved the Lord he became angry he became grieved at what he saw the travesty that was taking place how did it happen how did the whole thing happen well I've answered that in part already the time is going first of all first thing I want us to say is this that the more you have at your disposal the weaker you can become isn't that true imagine tonight we could do anything we wanted to anything at all you had all the money in the world at your disposal and you could wake up in the morning and you would do anything you could do anything you want do you know what that's exactly what Solomon had he could do anything he later on writes in the book of Ecclesiastes and he tells us

I denied myself nothing I didn't keep anything from myself because he was trying to find out how to find pleasure in this world and he of course he could do anything he wanted because he had everything at his disposal being an immensely rich king imagine that was you do you think that would be a good thing to have as a Christian I don't think so I would never like to see myself having everything at my disposal being able to do even as a Christian only be a matter of time before I would begin to drift and do stuff that I knew would grieve the Lord and would be sinful it's only a matter of time the more you have at your disposal the weaker you can become it's not that riches are sinful in themselves but sometimes riches can mean there's a subtlety and a deceitfulness and the more we have and it's not for no reason that when Jesus was being tempted in the wilderness that the devil came to him and said if you are the son of God turn these stones into bread see he knew that Jesus had everything at his disposal and he knew the weak point and it's the same with ourselves if we have everything at our disposal the more we have then the weaker we can become the second thing I want us to notice is that the devil is patient the devil is patient you can picture the devil in the life of Solomon as a young man and he is all out for the Lord he's all out for him there's nothing he won't do for the

Lord he's filled he's consumed with the glory of God he's spoken to the Lord he's met with the Lord he's the Lord has spoken to him he's seen the glory of the Lord he's been filled with such purpose in building the temple that was his life's ambition he wanted to do what his father wasn't able to do and he spent years of his life overseeing this work because he loved the Lord so much and this was going to be a reflection of what the Lord meant to him we've seen that already and I can picture the devil sitting on the sidelines and saying we'll see just wait and see just give him a few years and see how long his fervor is going to last and he's saying the same thing about me and he's saying the same thing about you we'll see we'll see how long it takes make sure please you prove him wrong because you can prove him wrong with God's help by the power of

God you can prove him wrong but believe me there isn't a moment in time don't think for a moment that once you reach a certain age once I'm 50 I'll be okay once I'm 60 I'll be okay once I'm 70 don't believe it for a moment the temptations that maybe we were surrounded by when we were 20 may be different to what we are when we're 60 or 70 but they're just the same ways in which the devil tries to bring us down and he will try as long as we have breath left in us he will try and bring us down don't let him every day let that be a day of following Jesus don't let a day go by without you committing the day to the Lord asking lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil Jesus said that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak he warned against the danger of temptation make sure make sure you listen to the example of



[ 34 : 35 ] Solomon make sure also those of us who are men watch his example as well Solomon loved men many women this is a man thing it is a man thing I'm not saying women don't have the part to play not saying that these women didn't have the part to play they didn't they did but there is a particular temptation which men have to wrestle with constantly continuously throughout their lives now God made an allowance in the Old Testament it's clear it's clear that God made a specific allowance for men to have more than one wife that allowance has now been done away with but that was never his intention in the first place when God created the world and when he created man and woman he said this very specifically therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and be united to his wife that was

God's intention whom therefore God has joined together let no man put asunder and that's the answer to all the questions that we have about sexuality it's all answered here it's the answer to living together living together is not God's way if you want what's best for you you commit to the person you make promises to that person and you come to that person and ask that God will bless your union together and do it publicly and do it in front of him it's the answer to the homosexual question you don't need to go looking at Leviticus or first Corinthians or Romans yes you can go to all these places but the answer primarily is at the beginning of the Bible because as soon as you get involved in Leviticus and all of these questions you get tied up in knots when I go back to the beginning this is God's way therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and this ought to have governed the

Old Testament as well these men ought to have been wiser to know that this was God's and how many instances you have of disputes that arise in households Jacob for example the disputes that would arise between Rachel and Leah it could all have been solved if they had just recognized how God had ordered from the very beginning one man one woman and it's the same the answer to our sexuality which is a God given the framework that God has established between one man and one woman and if you go outside that you're asking for misery and guilt and shame and everything that goes along with it you will never find happiness you'll find thrill you'll find momentary pleasure I'm sure Solomon did I'm sure he had a ball with his 700 wives and his 300 concubines

I have no doubt whatsoever and yet I don't believe he had peace with God you have to choose tonight what you want to do you want peace with God in that case live God's way seek first the kingdom of God love the Lord your God with all your heart and live as God has determined one man one woman and whilst it is impossible in the kind of society that you and I live in to have 700 wives thankfully it is not impossible to look at 700 pictures and to be turned on by 700 different images wherever you find them this is a man thing guys and I wonder how much shame there is throughout the believing community of

God's people if we were really honest Job said I have made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl will you please make that covenant I need to as well we're all in this together we're doing this for the Lord it's not easy and women have a responsibility as well to not act or dress in such a way that will provoke men to look at them in that way please it's a plea I know I'm being perhaps a little bit different tonight but all of this is found in the Bible it's all there and I have to be honest I have to be forthright

[ 40 : 01 ] I have to tell it as it is that's the fact and if we need to recognize these things as real dangers because it's real life and when we put these things in the right place who knows what the Lord will do through us we'll never be a people of power while we're giving in to weaknesses and the only way not to give in to them is to ask daily for the Lord's help and for us to bring ourselves and to devote ourselves and to recognize the danger that we're all in and as we recognize that we have to take our strength from the Lord himself there are some wrong ways of looking at this passage as well some people will say well if this can happen to Solomon then what's to stop it happening to me you may not be a member you may not have come to the Lord's table and you may be looking at this passage and saying well I was going to come forward at the next communion but how can

I do that now because I see myself so vulnerable and so weak and I might bring the same shame on myself as Solomon brought on the church and brought on God's kingdom and I might cause the same confusion and wouldn't it be terrible if I did that as a member yes it would yes it would but it would also be terrible if you did it as a non member and do know what I could use exactly the same argument I am just as vulnerable as you are not only as a member but as a minister and how much shame would it bring if someone like myself fell who holds such a public position believe me I'm with you all these men at the front are with you we're all we know our own weakness and we are aware of our own vulnerability so don't say that it's best for me to stay behind and not become a member for fear that

I might end up as Solomon that's not the answer at all the answer is to do what God has commanded you to do you will never get anywhere by not doing what God has commanded you to do and the I believe he was I believe with all my heart that he was some people might ask is it possible to be a Christian one year and not a Christian the next is it possible to fall from grace to start off as an enthusiastic young Christian dedicated to the Lord and then years later to not be a Christian and to end up in a lost eternity well the Bible's answer to that is no it is not possible because a Christian is someone who is a new person

Paul says if any man be in Christ he is a new creature the old has gone the new has come Paul says we've been risen we've been raised to newness of life we've been risen with Jesus we've been born again there is no such thing as born again the next day that's a ridiculous absurdity it's just not possible and yet it is possible for a person who is born again to drift for whatever reason to such an extent that his witness becomes unrecognizable that's the scary part isn't it that's awful isn't it to think of such a thing happening where people look at me and they say I remember him years ago but I don't know what he's like now I don't know who he serves now

I don't know whose side he's on that doesn't mean that the person isn't a Christian it means that there's utter confusion and there shouldn't be I believe that as Solomon lay dying that there was a royal bedroom somewhere with Solomon the old aged Solomon lying on his bed inconsolable weeping before the Lord and asking for his forgiveness I have no evidence for that except Peter who denied the Lord and who God sought out and who he restored I have no evidence in the Bible to say that I mean there's nothing that tells me that

[ 45 : 07 ] Solomon but I know God I know the grace of God that went out for Peter and to restore him again I know the grace of God that says he restores my soul and makes me to walk in the paths of righteousness because while God allows us to drift for his own reasons God brings us back we haven't seen it in Solomon but we can only imagine what a painful experience that must have been and if you're back slidden tonight let God's word speak to you open your heart and your ears and come and run to Jesus while you have some days and years perhaps left in this world so that the remainder of the time you have in this world will be an evidence to all the world round about you of the grace of

God in restoring your soul let's pray to the power to God rescue us and keep us and protect us and as Jesus prayed for his disciples keep us from the evil one in Jesus name Amen