

## ***FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA***

### **THE KEY TO SOLOMON'S SUCCESS**

By  
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*1 Kings 10:1-10*

I would like to use for a text **(1 Ki 10:23-24) So King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. {24} And all the earth was seeking the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart.**

Of all the men who have ever lived, Solomon is undoubtedly the world's ideal of success. Kings have sought to imitate him in the splendor of his court. Scholars have sought to attain the wisdom that he had. When you talk with people about the scriptures it is noteworthy that no one ever doubts that there lived a great king named Solomon, or that he was acclaimed as a wise man and that he acquired enormous wealth and had a name that was great in the earth. On another occasion I will discuss his sad lapse in his later years into idolatry, which caused his kingdom after his death to be torn in two and to lose its greatness and glory.

But before his lapse he attained in full measure the most sought after prizes of life -- riches, power, influence and fame. Only a limited number of men ever become rich and famous, and an even fewer have their cup full of wisdom.

When I speak of wisdom I am not talking about intelligence or education or scholarship. That can be a part of what contributes to wisdom but wisdom is a special attribute of the soul, which comes from God. It is not merely a computer-like feedback of memorized facts and data. Wisdom is that unique ability to distill knowledge and give forth-righteous judgments, correct insights. It might be called a fourth dimension of the heart and mind that can answer the hard questions of life and make correct deductions and decisions and forecasts about life.

The Queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord and she came to see if he was for real. She had some difficult questions about life that she wanted answered. Notice that she did not come seeking trade secrets or commerce alliances. She was a Queen of great wealth herself and her interest was not in the mundane matters of Solomon's kingdom. No! It was to know how to better govern her own kingdom by learning his maxims of policy. It is a sensible leader who would desire to improve his governing policies so as to be better qualified to discharge the responsibilities of his trust.

But the Queen of Sheba was chiefly interested in the knowledge Solomon had of God. The scripture says that his fame was due to his spiritual wisdom in the name of the Lord. She came with hard questions about God, questions that no doubt are still hard for people today. **Who is God? ? What is God's Name? Where is God to be found? When did life begin? Is there life after death? Why is there evil in the world? How can I learn about God and get the wisdom that you have?** And the scripture says that he answered all her questions. He wasn't stumped by any question she asked.

What a blessing to know God, know His Word and know the answers to the hard questions in life. But this morning I want to address the question in the title of this sermon.

#### **I. WHAT IS THE KEY TO SOLOMON'S SUCCESS?**

A. Men have searched for King Solomon's mines. Men have dug back into the archives of history to try and find clues to locate his gold and silver, as though there is some secret treasure trove that has not yet been discovered, some ancient ruins that can be unearthed where Solomon secreted his wealth. But the truth of the matter is there is no such place. There is no buried treasure. Solomon's secret is hidden only from those who do not look in the Bible for answers. It is in the Holy Scriptures that we get the explanation for Solomon's unparalleled success.

There is a formula, a discipleship formula if you please, that Solomon adopted for his life and God was pleased to bless him with wisdom, fame, fortune and great influence for good to both his own people and other nations and peoples as well. I believe there is a discipleship message from his life.

Now I do not want to say that we can duplicate Solomon's life. For one thing, he was the son of King David and he had a godly mother. But David had other sons who did not turn out nearly so well as Solomon. Solomon was special. Why?

**First**, I believe Solomon was a dutiful son. He was obedient to his father and mother. He sought to imitate those noble qualities he saw in his parents. Like all parents, David and Bathsheba were not sinless or perfect. They made their mistakes in life. God took their first son because of their sin of adultery. But David repented of his sin and Bathsheba joined him in that repentance and they were forgiven. So God gave them a second son, Solomon. I feel sure he was a prayed for son. And God gave Solomon the name *Jedidiah*, which means *beloved of Jehovah*.

Solomon knew he had that name. He believed God loved him and he took that name to heart. This becomes obvious when you see that God chose Solomon to be David's successor to the throne.

He was a covenant son who took seriously the birthright blessing that had been bestowed upon him. He resisted that natural temptation to be disobedient and rebellious. We don't read of any childhood problems with Solomon. He wanted to honor his father and his mother. He was an obedient son and both God and his parents took note of that.

You children listen to me, now is the time to learn obedience. As God says, **Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, (which is the first commandment with a promise), THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.**

We begin at an early age to develop those character qualities that will follow us into our adult years. Unless you learn early to obey your parents and honor them and respect them, you may become a very rebellious teenager and that can short-circuit your own blessing and future happiness.

**Second**, Solomon put obtaining knowledge and wisdom above any other desire in his life. He knew that wisdom was a very great blessing and he wanted to have it. One night, after he had been to a worship service, he had a wonderful experience with the Lord. **(2 Chr 1:7-12) In that night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask what I shall give you." {8} And Solomon said to God, "Thou hast dealt with my father David with great loving kindness, and hast made me king in his place. {9} "Now, O LORD God, Thy promise to my father David is fulfilled; for Thou hast made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. {10} "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can rule this great people of Thine?" {11} And God said to Solomon, "Because you had this in mind, and did not ask for riches, wealth, or honor, or the life of those who hate you, nor have you even asked for long life, but you have asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge, that you may rule My people, over whom I have made you king, {12} wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. And I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed, nor those who will come after you."**

This episode in the life of Solomon tells us something about Solomon. It tells us that when he had the opportunity to ask for anything in the whole world that he wanted he asked for wisdom and knowledge in order to fulfill the office of king.

But in the answer of God we learn something even more important than that, we learn that God was very pleased in his request, that God considered it a wise and most appropriate request.

God sees the thoughts and motives and intents of our hearts. He sees our goals and aspirations in life. And since God has everything to do with our success we do well to study this statement by God concerning his approval of Solomon's desire for knowledge and wisdom.

He commended him for it and listed the things that most people want, riches, wealth, honor, revenge on those who hate them, or for a long life on earth. God is telling us here that to desire knowledge and wisdom is to desire the best of all blessings. Solomon held to this belief that knowledge and wisdom are great. He stated in **Proverbs 3:13-24 How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding. {14} For its profit is better than the profit of silver, And its gain than fine gold.**

**{15} She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her. {16} Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. {17} Her ways are pleasant ways, And all her paths are peace. {18} She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast. {19} The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens. {20} By His knowledge the deeps were broken up, And the skies drip with dew. {21} My son, let them not depart from your sight; Keep sound wisdom and discretion, {22} So they will be life to your soul, And adornment to your neck. {23} Then you will walk in your way securely, And your foot will not stumble. {24} When you lie down, you will not be afraid; When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.**

What is the desire of your heart today? If God appeared to you tonight and told you to ask him for whatever you wanted, what would you ask for?

I urge you to make the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom one of the great goals of your life. To want to have wisdom so that you can better serve the people of God. This was the attitude and request that so greatly pleased God that he not only gave Solomon wisdom and knowledge but riches and wealth and honor as well.

The wisdom of God is to be found in the holy Bible. Many folks would agree that wisdom is a most desirable thing to have but they are not willing to pay the price it costs to find it. The cost is a study of the scriptures. The cost is attending upon Biblical teaching and preaching.

Some folks would like to play the piano. Wouldn't you like to be an accomplished musician? I would. But to be able to play the piano well takes hours of hard practice. It takes years of constant training by a knowledgeable piano teacher and there has to be personal devotion to pursue excellence. Not many will pay that price.

"If I miss a day's practice," a distinguished musician said, "I notice the difference in performance; if I miss two days practice, my best friends notice it; and if I miss three days, the loss is evident to all."

A piano teacher took her young students to see Paderewski. When teacher and student arrived, the master pianist was practicing. When the teacher asked the maestro for some message of encouragement to the students, Paderewski pointed to the music on the rack and said: "Do you see this composition? I -- I the great Paderewski -- eighty-five times I practice this page."

A teenaged girl said to a famous singer, "I would give anything in the world if I could sing like that." The singer smiled and replied. "Would you give eight hours of practice a day?"

**Thirdly**, Solomon had a great spiritual ambition in life. His father David instilled that ambition and desire in him. As a matter of fact, this ties in with his first desire to be an obedient and dutiful son for David commanded him, **(1 Chr 22:6-11) Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. {7} And David said to Solomon, "My son, I had intended to build a house to the name of the LORD my God. {8} "But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood, and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to My name, because you have shed so much blood on the earth before Me. {9} 'Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. {10} 'He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.' {11} "Now, my son, the LORD be with you that you may be successful, and build the house of the LORD your God just as He has spoken concerning you.**

Then we read (2 Chr 2:1-2) **Now Solomon decided to build a house for the name of the LORD, and a royal palace for himself. {2} So Solomon assigned 70,000 men to carry loads, and 80,000 men to quarry stone in the mountains, and 3,600 to supervise them.** He was obedient to the Word of the Lord spoken to him by his father David. He had a holy ambition to carry out God's will to build a house for the name of the Lord.

Isn't that a worthy goal for any Christian? Not that we will build a temple like Solomon built but to build the kingdom of God, to help build the church that Jesus called his body. To have a part in seeing it deepen in its walk with Christ and to see it strengthened and enlarged as the Gospel is preached to all men everywhere.

Every Christian should have a vision to build up the house of the Lord, to see the name of the Lord exalted and glorified. The fact that the vision was not original with Solomon did not lessen his enthusiasm.

**LASTLY**, Solomon was a man of true piety and devotion to the Lord. He stayed true to the Word of God until he lapsed into idolatry. This is that sad part of his life that we will discuss another time. But we know that when the Queen of Sheba came to see him that he was a man of regular worship and prayer. This is one of the things that greatly impressed her. He didn't just talk theology and explain things about God to her, he worshiped God. He made the Lord the most important focus of his life. She was impressed that he had a special stairway to go up to the house of the Lord. He was a true disciple, a faithful churchman.

So we read: **(1 Ki 10:23-24) So King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. {24} And all the earth was seeking the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart.**

God blessed Solomon because he desired and sought wisdom, desired to build up the kingdom of God by building the temple, and for his piety and true discipleship. All of those things you and I can and should do. We are not guaranteed success and wealth and fame. But I can tell you this: God is no respecter of persons. God tells us he was pleased in Solomon for wanting knowledge and wisdom, which can only come through a diligent study of His Word. And Christ is pleased with faith that demonstrates love for Him, His Kingdom and His people.

The Queen of Sheba went away a wiser and better woman after having met Solomon. Jesus said: (Mat 12:42) **"The Queen of the South shall rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.**

In Jesus Christ we have a greater than Solomon for in him is both the power of God and the wisdom of God, as it is written: **(Col 2:3) in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

Do you have him today? Is he your Savior and Lord? I invite you to ask him to be your Savior today.

\*HYMN #654 "O Jesus, I Have Promised"

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