

Service for Week 12th -18th August

2024 by Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Gracious God, we bring to you our broken world, racked by injustice and exploitation, hatred and division. We pray for those that work for change; all who strive to bring help and healing. May your will be done and your kingdom come, through Jesus Christ our Lord.**Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,

Amen

Bible Reading 1Ki 2:10-12,3:3-14

Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. He had reigned forty years over Israel—seven years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his rule was firmly established. Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the statutes of his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful

to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

"Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.

Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life."

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God

Reflection.

Our reading today from the book of Kings in the Old Testament describes how Solomon became the king after his father king David died. It describes how Solomon was a good ruler and it says he showed his love for God and God's laws in the way that he governed the people. God was very pleased that Solomon made such a good king and dealt fairly and justly with those he ruled over.

God then said to Solomon "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." Now if God had said that to you -what would you ask for? Money perhaps, or to be made free from illness or even to reverse the effect of growing older and the problems that brings.

Solomon could have asked for any of those things and God would have given it to him. But no, we learn that the thing Solomon asked God for was 'a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong'. We have a saying about 'the wisdom of Solomon' and that was exactly what Solomon asked God to give him. He asked God to make him wise to be able to discern or tell the difference between what is right and wrong in any situation.

And such a situation soon arose and you may remember how two women were claiming that a newly born baby was theirs and King Solomon had to

decide who was the real mother. Solomon ordered that the baby be cut in half and half to be given to each woman. Fortunately, this threat didn't have to be carried out because the real mother cared so much about her own child that she offered to give the baby to the other woman to save the baby's life. In this way the wise king Solomon determined who was really the baby's mother.

We are fortunate that we are unlikely to have to determine the truth in such a dramatic way as Solomon. But this account of Solomon teaches us something about prayer and what we ask God for. We may be tempted to ask God to improve our situation, either financially or perhaps physically. But as Solomon found it was because he asked for something that would help others not just himself, that God also rewarded him with the things he didn't ask for.

Solomon asked God for the wisdom to make laws, to govern his people, to bring justice and improve to their lives. What do you ask God for? **Amen**

Closing prayer

Loving God I pray for those around me that may be afflicted in body, wrestling with disease, or coming to terms with terminal illness. Reach out through all who work to bring them wholeness and healing. In the name of Christ I ask it. **Amen**

Prayer inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett