

BACK TO SCHOOL WITH GOD
1 KINGS 3:1-15

A Wise king – who knows God

We're reading the story of Solomon, who went on to be a great king, but this is the first part of his story; he went on to be very wise, but here is the start of his story. First of all, he is a wise king who knows God! He worshipped God – that's what all these sacrifices were about; that was their kind of worship just as our worship is singing songs, praying and listening to the Bible.

How did Solomon know God? He found out about God from his dad, David. David was king before him, and was a man of faith, a man who wrote lots of songs to express that faith. The story tells us that he copied his dad. He walked in the Lord's ways because his dad had taught him, and he watched his dad and did what his dad did. Solomon knows God and loves God and worships God and trusts God. His dad had shown him that, but Solomon then had made his own choices to love and follow God. There are people we know and trust – we copy them, learn from them! We learn faith from them.

Solomon didn't always get it right; he had choices to make and some of them were not always good choices; choices will be a theme through this service. Here's a little game to play as an example of choices and what is important. I've got some sweets here to offer to you; you can choose them or choose what's in the box. There are a few things in the box and some clues as to what these are; what choice will you make; the sweets or what is in the box? *Eilidh chose the sweets; here is what she missed!*

This object is round and green and eaten by millions of people round the world. – **Cabbage**.

This object can be runny, messy and often disappears quickly – **Chocolate**

This object is black, shiny, strong, and lasts almost forever - **Bin bag**

Solomon had to choose; sometimes he chose ways his dad had taught him, but other times he chose other ways; it was not easy. *Then we showed a powerpoint that illustrated the difference between what "people say" and about what "God says" in the choices we make about the kind of people we are.*

A Wise king who knows Himself

What are you good at? What do you say? What do other people say?

What are your weaknesses? What do you say? What do other people say?

Are the answers same? How well do you know yourself? "I'm really good at washing dishes but other people say I miss bits!"

God gave Solomon a wish – "ask for anything and I'll give it to you!" Did Solomon make a list? What to choose? Power, money? The answer: he knew himself! He had become king after his dad and we might think he would be super-sure about all of that and confident. But he said 3 things about himself:

1) "I am only a young king" – he not been king very long and was worried that he might make wrong choices; there was nobody to guide him and help him; everybody else, he felt, was waiting for him to make a mistake!

2) "I am a servant" He saw himself as someone who needs to learn God's ways so that he can live his life in the way God wants; but he doesn't know what that is all about yet.

3) "I am only a little child" – he wasn't! He was a grown man, but he felt like a little child; there were so many things he didn't know about life and being king; he felt as if he was a little child, in need of help!

He asks God for “a discerning heart”, to know what is right and what is wrong; he wants to know how to be king! So here are some choices that help us understand what is wise and what it not. Put up your left hand if think this is wise; and your right hand if unwise.

Statements:

- Washing your hands after playing football. **WISE** – or UNWISE?
- Staying up all night and getting no sleep. WISE – or **UNWISE**?
- Taking something that doesn't belong to you. WISE – or **UNWISE**?
- Looking both ways before you cross the road. **WISE** – or UNWISE?
- Eating a whole packet of biscuits all at once. WISE – or **UNWISE**?
- Ignoring your homework and pretending it got lost. WISE – or **UNWISE**?
- Saying 'sorry' when you do something wrong. **WISE** – or UNWISE?

Being wise is about knowing stuff, but it is more about choosing things and being the right kind of person. Knowing ourselves, we need to learn to be wise; there are things we know and things we don't know; there are times we get it right and times we get it wrong. Being wise is about knowing God and knowing ourselves.

A Wise king – who pleases God

God was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. When you get things right at school, what do you get? A sticker on your homework, or points for your house, or a good report card! The story tells us that God was pleased with Solomon and gave him what he asked for and some of the things that he didn't ask for as well; he became one of the Bible's greatest kings! So is wisdom about being great and getting everything right and all the right answers? Wisdom is about being the right kind of people. Here's what wisdom is: (you tell me!)

- Wisdom is... trusting in God
- Wisdom is... being a good friend
- Wisdom is... reading the Bible
- Wisdom is... including others
- Wisdom is... listening
- Wisdom is... talking to God
- Wisdom is... giving your best
- Wisdom is... making good choices
- Wisdom is... telling the truth
- Wisdom is... asking God for help
- Wisdom is... saying thank you
- Wisdom is... loving God

Jesus told the story about two men who were building houses; they had to choose where to build and on what foundation to build. The first man built his house on the rock: the rains came, the storms blew, the floods came up, but the house never moved; it stayed firm. The second man built his house on the sand: the rains came, the storms blew, the floods came up and the house fell down. What was the difference between the wise man and the foolish man: “You listen to my words and put them into practice” (the wise man); “You listen to my words and do not put them into practice” (foolish man)

Here is what wisdom looks like; sometimes it is hard to be like this because not everybody thinks the same way! But this is the best way to live life; this is what it means to be wise. Jesus teaches us to be wise; we become wise by listening to Him and by being the kind of people He wants us to be. Solomon knew God, but he also knew himself, as a child, a servant; most of all, most of the time, he wanted to walk in God's ways and be wise. This is our challenge too, for school, for work, for church, for life, to walk in God's ways and be wise.