

ORDER

MY

STEPS

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January 3, 2016

Sermon in a sentence: Let us ask God to lead our lives according to His perfect will for us.

Congregational reading: 1 Kings 3:5-14

Scriptures: 1 Kings 3:3-15; Psalm 37:23,30-31; Psalm 119:133

Solomon was a member of a sinful and highly dysfunctional family: the family of King David. He was the 10th of 19 sons born to David's wives.¹

His eldest brother from his mother Bathsheba died as an infant as a result of God's judgment on his adulterous parents.

Amnon, the eldest of all David's sons, lusted after his sister Tamar, and after agreeing on a plan of action with his cousin Jonadab, entrapped her and raped her. David did absolutely nothing about it. After two years had passed, Absalom, David's 3rd son, finally took matters into his own hands and killed Amnon.²

A while later, Absalom rose up to usurp David's throne and David had to run for his life.³ In the ensuing battle, Absalom was killed and David mourned for him as if for a favoured son who had done no wrong.

¹ 1 Ch. 3:1-9. Possibly there were 20 sons. It is not clear whether or not the name of Bathsheba's first son (who died) is included in the list in 1 Ch. 3:5.

² 2 Sam. 13:23,28-29.

³ 2 Sam. 15:14

In David's old age, his son 4th son Adonijah rose up and declared himself king. Nathan the prophet and Bathsheba quickly enacted a plan to have David declare Solomon king,⁴ which caused Adonijah to prostrate himself in fear before Solomon to beg for his life. Solomon spared him.

David then instructed Solomon on the things he wanted done after his death (1 Kings 2:1-9):

- **Priority #1: Serve God and keep all His commandments (v. 3-4)**
- **Then kill my nephew Joab⁵ (David's army commander) for killing Abner (Saul's cousin⁶, and army commander during his reign) (v. 5-6)**
- **Show kindness to Barzillai as he showed kindness to me when I was running from Absolom**
- **And also kill Shimei for cursing me when I was running from Absolom. I swore I wouldn't do it, so I am leaving the job to you (v. 8-9)**

In giving these instructions, David stating that Solomon should act in accordance with his wisdom, which evidently must have already been on display (v. 6,9).

David died and Solomon took the throne. In very short order, he killed Adonijah, Joab and Shimei because of their disobedience and indiscretions.⁷

Then, in what was considered an astute political move, he married Pharaoh's daughter to secure peace with Egypt.⁸

⁴ 1 Kings 1:11-14

⁵ 1 Ch. 2:13-16

⁶ 1 Sam. 14:50

⁷ 1 Kings 2:13-46

⁸ 1 Kings 3:1

(Of course, this was in total violation of God's command against intermarriage with pagans).⁹

Nevertheless, the Bible tells us that:

1 Kings 3:3 ... Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.

This is the contradiction we see in the lives of so many of God's people today! They love God but continue to follow the ways of man.

All of the preceding brings us to the main point of the lesson, outlined in the following text:

1 Kings 3:5-15 NKJV At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?" 6 And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day. 7 Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but *I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.* 8 And Your servant *is* in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. 9 Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" 10 The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11 Then God said to him: "Because you have asked

⁹ Deut. 7:1-4

this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, ¹² behold, **I have done according to your words**; see, **I have given you a wise and understanding heart**, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. ¹³ And **I have also given you** what you have not asked: both **riches and honor**, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. ¹⁴ So **if you walk in My ways**, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then **I will lengthen your days.**”

Dreams are very interesting phenomena. Whenever we have a truly memorable one, we try to analyze it to see where it came from and what it means. Quite often we realize that it flowed out of thoughts that were swirling around in our minds just before bed. This may have been part of the prelude to Solomon’s dream – his heartfelt desire to be a good king and a just judge over God’s people.

It began with humility of heart. Although David saw Solomon as a wise man that could make decisions and initiate action out of his innate abilities, Solomon saw himself as just a little child before God. And that is also how we need to see ourselves. It is not that we are without abilities and resources, but in light of the massive task we face in leading our own lives and the lives of those who are looking to us for direction, example, support and leadership, we realize we are just like little children trying to swim across an ocean. We need God’s help. We need Him to order our steps. David said:

Psalm 37:23,30-31 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way. ³⁰ The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of

justice. ³¹ The law of his God *is* in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

Psa. 119:133 Direct [KJV: "order"] my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.

God heard Solomon's prayer, and the text tells us that He was pleased with it. (In fact, since the word of God reveals His will for humanity, we are assured of His pleasure when we pray in accordance with His word.) God is pleased when we acknowledge our need of Him and turn to Him for help. We are *not* expected to have answers to all of life's questions and to walk this road alone. We honour God when we ask Him to lead and guide us on our journey.

God granted Solomon's request (and added a few bonuses for good measure). He gave Solomon wisdom. He gave him riches and honour. He gave him long life. And when we read the rest of the story, God also gave him peace with all his enemies. God permitted him to build an incredible Temple in Jerusalem in fulfillment of David's dream, and everything else he put his hand to do prospered.

So here we are at the start of a fresh new year. It is crucially important that we ask God to order our steps. With His help, we can conquer every situation we face. Without His help, we can be overcome by the smallest circumstance.

And so we pray: Order my steps in your word dear Lord
 Lead me, guide me every day
 Send your anointing Father I pray
 Order my steps in Your word
 Please order my steps in Your word.¹⁰

¹⁰ "Order My Steps", Glenn Burleigh, © 1991.