Children's Message

Show the children your watch, and ask them to tell you what time it is. Have them tell you how long the worship service has been going, and how long they think it will go until it is over. A long time? Point out that this is a special hour, one that is devoted each week to the worship of God. Say that the apostle Paul advised "making the most of the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16). Admit that we sometimes waste time and don't "make the most" of it, but in this hour we want to do what pleases God. Have the children suggest some of the ways we can do this. Then share Paul's advice: "Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves … giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:18-20). Emphasize that singing and giving thanks are two of the most important ways we make the most of this hour. Singing helps us express our love for God, and giving thanks is how we express our gratitude for all of God's gifts to us. Close by saying that singing and saying "Thank you, God" are never a waste of time! Let's express our love for God by singing this song twice through:

Thank you Lord for saving my soul,
Thank you Lord for making me whole,
Thank you Lord for giving to me,
Thy Great Salvation so rich and free!

“I now do according to your word”
11 Pentecost B

There are prayers that are said that are most pleasing to God. Solomon prayed for wisdom. He could have asked for power over his enemies, wealth, and long life. His prayer pleased God because Solomon did not ask for himself. If this scripture is true for all of us then praying for wisdom will move God on our behalf as it did for old King Solomon.

How did the king pray? Despite mention that he sacrificed offerings in the high places, God nevertheless heard Solomon’s prayer. The high places were of course used in pagan worship offering incense to foreign deities. This is reminiscent of Jesus’ words to the woman of Samaria…that the place of worship would not matter whether in Samaria or Jerusalem. There is no mountain high enough. There is no valley low enough for God. There is no man-made building important enough. There is no place of beauty pretty enough to worship God. The highest and most beautiful place there is for worship is what is resting on your shoulders!

Solomon’s prayers are heard by God and He appears to him in a dream. And God said, “Ask what I shall give you.” Whenever we are given a blank check, it is typically time to ask questions. *Buyer beware*! What impressed the LORD enough to have given the king whatever he wanted? The scripture simply says that Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the footsteps of his father David. This was true to the point that, like David, Solomon had a weakness for the ladies. Nevertheless, God knew what was in the king’s heart and felt his love. What would the king ask of God?

Solomon’s asking came from his single mindedness for wisdom. There was focus to his prayer for receiving an understanding mind. Solomon knew he was young and inexperienced. He knew his responsibility was heavy and the people he served were important and he also knew his father David was a great man. Before Solomon was a great challenge! He probably felt overwhelmed. Have you ever felt that you were not up to a task? Where did you go for help? Were you given a blank check like Solomon? What did you get?

One can never go wrong when asking for discernment. There is a discernment process that we are trying to implement here at Trinity via our Vestry. It allows us to discern what is right. Discerning between good and evil started in the Garden of Eden. And humanity has been trying its hand at this *without God’s help* for millennia. Truly discerning what is right takes heavenly wisdom which comes from God. It takes lots of prayer to hear, and practice to follow what God shows us is right. I wish there was one formula. There is not.

Solomon is our example that there is no one way to discern what is right. “God help to know the way,” is a good prayer and Solomon was wise to ask it.

Let me repeat: *There is <u>no one</u> way to discern what is right*. Yet there are right things to discern. Solomon asked for understanding to govern God’s people. That was the right decision. God wants us to ask for the things that are right. In today’s collect of the day, our prayer refers to the life of Jesus: “Give us grace to receive thankfully the fruits of His redeeming work, and to follow daily in the blessed steps of His most holy life.” Receive His fruits and follow His steps. Are these not the right things to pray?

God’s reply to Solomon was magnanimous! God gave the king a wise and discerning mind, *and* things for which he did not ask: fame, honor and riches. These latter things many seek. We dare not ask for these things in our sinfulness or they will end up being a burden. When these are not sought, but received through wisdom, the blessings upon the few can be blessings upon the many and give help for the greatest good.

Pray with me: God, give us all inquiring and understanding minds. May this prayer asked on behalf of all baptized be our prayer today. Give us wise leaders, understanding parents, and discerning children. You are always there to hear us and answer us when we pray with hearts that love you. Hear us Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.