



2 Chronicles 5:1-14
The Story
The King Who Had It Allⁱ

Rev. Brian North
December 3rd, 2017

This morning we continue the sermon series that we have been in the last several weeks, called “the story.” It is a chronological walk through the Bible, focusing on the main thread of scripture. Many in the church are reading the book called The Story, and the sermons correlate to each chapter that is read each week. Next Sunday we will take a break from the series as we worship through music at both services. The choir will be part of each service, the worship band will be at the first service, in the Hand- Bell choir will be at the second service. Then, the following Sunday, we will continue the story. And then we’ll take a break for the fourth Sunday in advent, Christmas Eve, and the following Sunday as well.

So far we’ve gone from creation and his expressed commitment to His creation, to the formation of Israel as His covenant people and as a nation. The last two weeks we looked at their change in governance so they now have a king who rules over them. And today we look at David’s son, Solomon, and his faith and his leadership of Israel. This morning’s scripture passage is just a small part of the life of Solomon, of course. In order to give us a little more background and understanding of who he was, I invite you to watch this video clip...<https://youtu.be/bVGeWzMA1-8>.

So that gives us a little context for who Solomon was. Solomon really is “the king who had it all.” Not just in the worldly, material sense, although he certainly had a lot of that as well: He was wealthy, he had every earthly need met, and he certainly was not lacking for anything when it came to material and physical needs. But as we saw in the video, he also was a man who realized that all that stuff was not adequate and sufficient for him to live and lead well. And so when we think of him as the king who had it all, one of the things he had was wisdom. Not only did he make the wise decision in deciding which woman was the true mother of that baby, but he also dispensed much wisdom in the form of proverbs. He wrote many proverbs that are recorded for us in scripture.

For instance, the start of the book of Proverbs reads like this:

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:
² for gaining wisdom and instruction;
for understanding words of insight;
³ for receiving instruction in prudent behavior,
doing what is right and just and fair;
⁴ for giving prudence to those who are simple,
knowledge and discretion to the young—
⁵ let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance—
⁶ for understanding proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.
⁷ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

In chapter 3, we read these words:

³ Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
⁴ Then you will win favor and a good name
in the sight of God and man.
⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
⁶ in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight

Later in chapter 6 we read this:

²⁷ Can a man scoop fire into his lap
without his clothes being burned?
²⁸ Can a man walk on hot coals
without his feet being scorched?
²⁹ So is he who sleeps with another man's wife;
no one who touches her will go unpunished.

And still later in chapter 20 we read this:

Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler;
whoever is led astray by them is not wise.

- ² **A king's wrath strikes terror like the roar of a lion;
those who anger him forfeit their lives.**
- ³ **It is to one's honor to avoid strife,
but every fool is quick to quarrel.**
- ⁴ **Sluggards do not plow in season;
so at harvest time they look but find nothing.**
- ⁵ **The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters,
but one who has insight draws them out.**

So we see that Solomon dispensed a lot of wisdom on a variety of topics, and in just those few verses we see a bunch of wisdom given that could positively impact a whole lot of people. Of course, this kind of knowledge and understanding is oftentimes learned from experience both successes and failures. And the fact is: **Even though Solomon was a person who had it all, he also had his struggles and his challenges.**

For instance, Solomon did not always worship only God his creator, Yahweh. In the biographical accounts of his life in scripture, we see him worshiping other gods. He also had many wives and concubines. So Solomon was far from perfect, and many of his writings undoubtedly come from his experiences, including what he learned from his mistakes.

In spite of that, Solomon desired to be faithful to God. This goes to show that even though people like Solomon had their sins and struggles, God still worked through them. This is good news for us because it is a reminder that God's grace and forgiveness runs deep, including for people like you and me. An elderly lady was well-known for her faith and for her boldness in talking about it. She would stand on her front porch and shout "PRAISE THE LORD!" Next door to her lived an atheist who would get so angry at her proclamations he would shout, "There ain't no Lord!!"

Hard times set in on the elderly lady, and she prayed for GOD to send her some assistance. She stood on her porch and shouted "PRAISE THE LORD. GOD I NEED FOOD!! I AM HAVING A HARD TIME. PLEASE LORD, SEND ME SOME GROCERIES!!" The next morning the lady went out on her porch and noted a large bag of groceries and shouted, "PRAISE THE

LORD.” The neighbor jumped from behind a bush and said, “Aha! I told you there was no Lord. I bought those groceries, God didn't.”

The lady started jumping up and down and clapping her hands and said, “PRAISE THE LORD. He not only sent me groceries, but He made the devil pay for them. Praise the Lord!”

So that lady was faithful, but she's not perfect. And her neighbor isn't perfectly imperfect, either. No one is all one or the other, and we all have our faults and our sins. If perfect people were the only ones God loved or who God worked through as leaders, there would not be such a thing as a leader within the Christian faith; there would not be such a thing as an object of God's love and affection. And we all know that in spite of how we sometimes behave, think, speak, or treat others, most people who have put their trust in Jesus want to be faithful to His call upon their life. Their desire is to live as God wants them to, even if it doesn't always happen. Solomon's life shows us this: he was far from perfect in living out his faith, but that was still his desire.

This morning's passage is one of the highlights from Solomon's life in terms of faithfulness to God's call upon him. As we saw last week, David began the collection of materials that would be needed to build a temple for the Lord and a place for God's people to gather in worship. Solomon was faithful to the call upon his life to oversee the construction of the temple. And when it was done they had a big celebration and worship service that included a parade of sorts, to transfer everything from the Tabernacle into the temple, and to give thanks and praise to God.

Now, the author of Chronicles is unknown, but he draws our attention in particular to the inner part of the sanctuary where the Ark of the Covenant would be kept. This was the most sacred and holy part of the temple. It was where they believed God's presence would dwell. And then he notes for us that the worship service is filled with musical instruments of various kinds including trumpets and cymbals, and they sing of God's goodness and his love that endures forever.

Then in chapter 6 we get some words from Solomon of praise and glory to God, and then he dives into a prayer after that. And part way through that prayer in chapter 6, in verse 18, he prays these words, **“But will God really dwell on earth with men? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!” (2 Chronicles, 6:18)**. This is good theology here. God doesn’t dwell in a place built by human hands. In fact, when Paul stood before the Areopagus in Athens and talked with them about all the idols he saw around town, and the temples devoted to different gods and goddesses, Paul said, **“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands” (Acts 17:24)**. And make no mistake about it, this God of whom Paul speaks, is the same God that Solomon and the Israelites are worshipping. It’s the same God, the one who created everything seen and unseen, who reveals himself to us and is not conjured up through our own efforts. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and we see that consistency throughout Scripture.

This is hard for us to fathom. Stuff around us and in our lives is constantly changing: Companies come and go; what was hi-tech 30 years ago is laughable today; my grandkids or great grandkids may think it odd that cars didn’t always drive themselves (I can imagine them asking, “You mean you used to actually drive a car back in ‘the olden days’?”). So change is constant. But not with Yahweh, this God of the universe...this God of creation and Lord of our lives. **He’s the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8)**. He has brought everything forth that exists, he loves it all - especially the pinnacle of his creation: you and me...humanity. He continues to forgive. His love endures forever. He is good and gracious, but he is also holy and just. That constancy is why the Israelites can sing these words in this worship service where they dedicated the newly built temple, “He is good; his love endures forever.”

And Solomon, in all his wisdom, reminds us that God can’t be confined to a particular location. No matter how grand the building, now matter how full the bank account, no matter how important the job, no matter how impressive the title, no matter how wise the person: God exceeds it all. He cannot be confined or contained by humanity

And Solomon, a king who had it all, realizes that same thing. In fact, at the very end of the book of Ecclesiastes, a book that is full of wisdom in much the same vein as the book of Proverbs, Solomon (or one of his understudies writing under his supervision) writes,

“Now all has been heard;

here is the conclusion of the matter:

Fear God and keep his commandments,

for this is the duty of all mankind” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

You see, “Having it all” as the world defines it, isn’t enough. And we’d be wise to recognize that and then turn to God with a sense of fear, of holy reverence, and live as He calls us to. This is the beginning of “having it all,” as God intends.

As we wrap this up, I want to mention briefly that there are two ironies about “having it all” in this deeper, spiritual sense. The first irony is that: **The way to have it all in this deeper, spiritual, and permanent way has nothing to do with “having it all” in a material or worldly way.** The two simply are not connected. You can have nothing of this world, and yet still have it all in the Biblical sense. That doesn’t mean that we who have worldly stuff shouldn’t be generous toward those who don’t...but it does mean that you don’t have to have it all in a worldly sense in order to have it all in a relationship with God. And oftentimes, having it all, materially, is actually an obstacle to seeing our need for God and all that He has to offer. We think we have it all when we have all the world offers, but it’s just a fake and an imposter for truly having it all, as God offers it.

The second irony is that the way in which God has once and for all given us the opportunity to *actually* have it all is through another King.

Solomon, in overseeing the building the temple, created a space for the people of Israel to worship God and be in relationship with God. But about 900 years later, *God* made a way for us to be in relationship with Him, and it was through yet another king. Except this King had nothing “in the eyes of the world.” He didn’t have a house to sleep in, didn’t have a steady job, didn’t keep company with the movers and shakers of the world, and wasn’t born into a royal family. And yet we call him King of kings and Lord of lords

because He is the way into a relationship with the God of the Universe. **His name is Jesus. He's the King who had nothing, and yet had it all.** And what he had, he still has. And he offers it to you and me through faith in Him. He's the king who is not above anyone; in fact, he sees himself as a servant of you and me. He's not arrogant and above it all in his ivory tower. He's a boots on the grounds kind of king who got dirty, got bloody, and took the shots that we should take, so that we would be in right relationship with a holy God and so we would "have it all" that God has to offer. May you know this king, King Jesus, in your heart and in your life today, so you would also have it all...have everything that God has to offer you, now and forever more. Let's pray...Amen.

ⁱ Today's sermon correlates to Chapter 13 in "The Story." We took orders for copies of the book, "The Story" at church, but now you can get a copy of the book on your own online through many websites (Amazon.com, cbd.com, etc.). In fact, cbd.com (Christian Book Distributors) has them for \$5, hardback. Just search for "NIV The Story Bible" at their website.