

“GOD OR WORLD”

TEXT: 1 KINGS 2:10-12, 3:3-14

GOD’S WORD: EPHESIANS 5:15-20

I – MINE:

With a two year old in the house I have very little control of the television. When it’s on we are usually watching something that fascinates and entertains her. We have been through Shrek and Moana. I am tired of little yellow people as we watched the Minions and Despicable Me – all three – over and over. The current movie de jour is finding Nemo. She is obsessed with it and will watch it again and again. I take solace in the knowledge that next week or the week after that she will move on to something else.

There is one scene in the movie though that came to mind as I was working on this week’s message. There is a flock of seagulls who occasionally make an appearance in the movie and I love the noise they make. They will look at something which represents food and all of them will break into the chant of ‘MINE-MINE-MINE.’ They are obviously only concerned with themselves and make sure all the other critters in the scene know it.

I think I noticed these scenes because they mimic the society we live in today. It appears to me that this is a common feeling in today’s society. No matter what it is I want it. It’s mine. I deserve it and you can’t keep me from it. I don’t really care what you have or even what you need as long as I have what I want. I will think first and foremost about numero uno and when I have everything I need or want I may take the time to attend to your needs and wants, but only if it doesn’t cost me anything or inconvenience me in some way.

II – DAVID TO SOLOMON:

I see this in the story of David as we transition from David to his son Solomon.

When last we spoke we were bringing the life of King David to a close. He had a little of the MINE-MINE-MINE thing going on in the story of Bathsheba we had looked at for a couple of Sundays. Now he’s on his death bed, dying of old age, when we get to the book of 1 Kings. As he’s dying we see this MINE-MINE-MINE being played out.

First his son Adonijah decides he’s going to be the next king and sets out to make it happen. He sets about lining up support from those who had served David, but not everyone got on board. Nathan the prophet went to Bathsheba and spoke to her and then she got into the MINE-MINE-MINE game too. She went to David and spoke to him about his previous promise to make her son Solomon the next king of Israel.

David did make Solomon the new king and Adonijah gave up his plans and asked for mercy. He tried the MINE-MINE-MINE game a little later and Solomon had him executed.

III – TEXT:

It's in the next part of the narrative that I see something refreshing. A person in power that cares more for the people than he does himself.

1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14 (NLT)

¹⁰Then David died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. ¹¹David had reigned over Israel for forty years, seven of them in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. ¹²Solomon became king and sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established.

³Solomon loved the LORD and followed all the decrees of his father, David, except that Solomon, too, offered sacrifices and burned incense at the local places of worship. ⁴The most important of these places of worship was at Gibeon, so the king went there and sacrificed 1,000 burnt offerings. ⁵That night the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!"

⁶Solomon replied, "You showed great and faithful love to your servant my father, David, because he was honest and true and faithful to you. And you have continued to show this great and faithful love to him today by giving him a son to sit on his throne.

⁷"Now, O LORD my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn't know his way around. ⁸And here I am in the midst of your own chosen people, a nation so great and numerous they cannot be counted! ⁹Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?"

¹⁰The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. ¹¹So God replied, "Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies— ¹²I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have! ¹³And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and fame! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life! ¹⁴And if you follow me and obey my decrees and my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life."

Our text this morning concludes the "succession narrative." David had died and the kingdom of Israel, the chosen people of God, is in the hands and rule of Solomon. God's promise to David in 2 Samuel chapter 7 has been completed.

Solomon would later build God's Temple, but had not done so yet. So he, like the rest of the people, had to worship God at the various other places it was done. One of these places was considered to be extremely holy, considered to be the most important place to worship, Gibeon. So it tells us that Solomon went there and worshipped in a large way. He made 1,000 burnt offerings to God. He evidently spent the night there, possibly following a near east belief that by sleeping in a sanctuary you were in hopes of receiving a divine message. And he was not disappointed as God did appear to him in a dream.

This is where I find some hope in humanity. God asked Solomon what he could do for him. Solomon could have requested great fame, great power, and great wealth. Or he could have sought a long life, but that's not what he asked for. He asked God for wisdom and an understanding heart so he could govern God's people well, the way God wanted them to be ruled. And God replied that since his requests were not for himself but for others he would give him what he had requested, but he would heap on everything else that he hadn't asked for too. God evidently respects those who seek his wisdom, his direction, instead of his own.

Imagine how different the world would be if all our leaders, past present, and future, would seek God in this way. If they sought what was best for the people instead of their own power or ego or own particular faction of followers. How different it would be for all of us and everyone else.

IV – EPHESIANS:

Last week Pastor Becky talked to you about the need to recalculate our lives. To take a long look at how we are supposed to live as compared to the way we do live. Today's message is about how to follow that new roadmap for your lives. How to live according to God instead of according to the World. This morning's God's Word mirrors what Solomon did. It tells us how God wants us to live.

In verses 15-16 Paul tells us that we should make the most of our time. He says that the present times have evil in them, but these will be replaced when Christ returns. Until then nothing is more important than living a Christ-like life until he comes again. Don't follow the foolish ways of the world, but choose instead the wise ways of God.

Then in verses 17-20 he tells us to focus on God. He gives us some don'ts but then changes them into positive, more general actions:

- Try to discover God's will
- Be filled with the Spirit
- Give thanks at all times and for all things

Paul was trying to motivate his gentile Christian audience to live as renewed persons in Christ. He was making the points that

- Do not harm others, benefit others
- The model to be imitated is not the world, but God. Forgiveness and love

The best way to imitate God is to relate our beliefs about new life in Christ into practical ways of wise living in our 21st century world and the chaos that seems to surround us.

V – CHOOSE WISELY:

As you begin the process of recalculating your way you are called to follow the example of Solomon – worry more about others than you do yourself. Be humble in the estimation of yourself. Ask yourself if you are following the foolishness of the world, or the wisdom of God. Are you imitating those in the world or Jesus? Are you overwhelming yourself with the things of the world, or the things of God?

The things you need to follow, the things you need to consider, the things you need to recalculate your journey through life are all in this book. You'll find all you need in the Word of God:

- HOLLYWOOD NEWS
- NOT IN THE STREET CHATTER
- NOT IN THE NEIGHBORS GOSSIP
- NOT ON TELEVISION
- NOT ON FOX NEWS OR MSNBC
- NOT FROM GOVERNMENT
- NOT FROM A REPUBLICAN OR A DEMOCRAT
- NOT FROM A PROGRESSIVE OR A CONSERVATIVE
- NOT FROM ONE OF THE TALKING HEADS
- NOT FROM GOOGLE OR FACEBOOK

If you want to have the right map, if you want an understanding heart and wisdom, then the only place to find what God wants you to have is in his sacred Word. It's supposed to be all about what God wants, not about what you want.

Like Solomon, may you choose wisely. Be a child of God...not a seagull.

AMEN