



Good Morning Church!

Today we are continuing our study of the Kings of Israel entitled **Choose Wisely**. This sermon series is helping us evaluate how to go about making decisions from a biblical perspective.

Last week we started by looking at the wisdom of King Solomon. From the context of I Kings 2-8 [Solomon's Life] we have learned that **wisdom is found in the choice to bring our inadequacy to God...to not grow comfortable but to press on into God's purposes for us...and to choose to grow our heart's devotion towards God.**

And last week I shared that while Solomon was a good king, he did have significant character flaws. Solomon was a complex person who had a sincere love for God, but his heart was drawn away due to a series of unwise choices he made. These unwise choices setting him up for disaster.

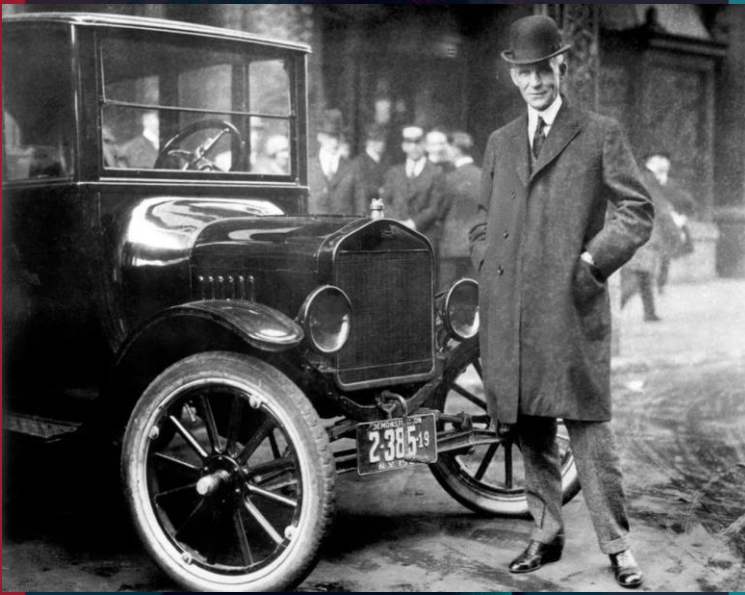
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Illus:
Speaking of unwise choices leading to disaster... Henry Ford is a name most of us here are familiar with. And in his day he was one of the biggest names in American life. His use of mass production in manufacturing the Model T not only shaped the US economy & industry, but also the values of 20th century America. A 2005 biography of Ford tells the story of the man who achieved incredible fame and fortune, and describes how, in the end, this "gifted man was undone by his own success."
Ford loved the ordinary folk and they loved him back. By 1920, half of all cars on US roads were Fords. But it wasn't just cars that Ford was selling. He preached a new gospel to a public raised on Puritan ideals of delayed gratification and self-control. Ford believed that money was for spending, and that workers should use their income to buy products that would improve their lives—products like his Model T.

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Seen as a hero for making it possible for the average family to own a car, Ford's opinion was sought out for every area of life, from world peace to marriage and child care. The adulation of others ultimately convinced Ford that he was infallible and led him to ruinously bad decisions. It blinded him to his own hypocrisy as he preached family values and old-fashioned virtue and yet kept a mistress.

It may also have driven him to destroy his only child....Henry Ford resented his son's gentle attitude and that he was more likely to be a professor than a business man like himself. Therefore he ruthlessly undercut his son at every turn, only then to mourn grievously when he died an early death.

Ford's last days were sorrowful. On a visit to the house where he had lived with his wife as newlyweds, he told his chauffeur, ***"I've got a lot of money, but I'd give every penny of it right now just to be here with Mrs. Ford."***



You see it was the money, the adulation, the never having anyone tell you NO, that was the undoing of Henry Ford.

Yes he had gained the whole world (*from a human perspective*), but as his life was ending, the book recounts that he was revisiting the places where his life began, no doubt wishing he had made ***different choices***, wishing he could do it all over again.

And many of us resonate with this same feeling don't we? Maybe we haven't had the exact same story as Henry Ford but there are moments in our lives when we think back on and we cringe because of our lack of wisdom, because of our lack of faithfulness to God, or because we now know how we could have avoided some of the mistakes.

And church I tell this story as a set up for what we are going to explore this morning in the life of King Solomon.



Solomon's story in many ways is the classic story of someone who is well intentioned, aimed in the right direction, who over time begins to tilt in the wrong direction, ***influenced by others.***

I am going to pray that the Holy Spirit will help us each to see what part of Solomon's story we need to learn from this morning.

Because whether you have been walking with

Jesus for 1 day or 10,000.....we can all grow in our faithfulness to our Lord.

Pray:

I Kings 11:1-6

King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter — Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. 2 They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. 3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.

Please turn with me in your Bibles to I Kings Chapter 11 starting in verse 1.

In the preceding chapter (10) we are told of Solomon's great wealth...this alone wasn't his undoing, his great wealth coupled with his love for many wives, was the beginning of the end for this once great king.

Read: 

I Kings 11:1-6

4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

5 He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done.

Continue Reading: ↑

It is hard to comprehend what it must be like to have 700 wives... not to mention 300 concubines... Keeping all those anniversary dates straight must have been tough 😊 for old Solomon. But he isn't supposed to be living like this!

In Deuteronomy 17:14-17, God provides guidelines for future kings of Israel, emphasizing that they should not acquire excessive wealth, horses, or wives. And so what would possess someone like Solomon, someone with apparently vast wisdom to have so many wives...especially when he knows this is against God's plan for him. Well there are at least **5 reasons** he might have chosen this path.

#1. Political Alliances: One common reason for kings to have many wives was to form political alliances and strengthen diplomatic relationships with other kingdoms. Marrying princesses or daughters of foreign rulers helped create bonds of friendship and mutual support, potentially deterring conflicts or securing military alliances.

I Kings 11:1-6

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#2 Dynastic Succession: Kings sought to secure the future of their dynasty by having many wives and producing a large number of offspring. The more heirs a king had, the greater the chance of a stable succession and the continuity of the royal lineage.

#3 Consolidation of Power: Marriage alliances could help consolidate power by incorporating noble families or influential individuals into the king's own family. This allowed the king to extend his control and influence over different regions or social groups, enhancing his authority and legitimacy.

#4 Displaying Wealth and Status: The number of wives a king had was often seen as a symbol of wealth, power, and prestige. Taking multiple wives, especially from noble or wealthy families, showcased the king's resources and demonstrated his ability to support and maintain a large household.

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#5 Personal Desire and Pleasure: In some cases, kings simply indulged in polygamy due to personal desires or for the sake of pleasure. Having multiple wives could provide the king with companionship, entertainment, and the fulfillment of his physical desires.

These are some of the reasons Solomon may have made this choice to have 700 wives. And while from a historical perspective this may have made sense...all of these reasons are of the flesh.

This reasoning is political, it is a means to move up the social hierarchy, it is a way to gain power for ones self.

God has no need for this. And clearly Solomon has forgotten this truth.

I Kings 11:1-6

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Last week we talked about the Hebrew word shalēm it carries the idea of being whole or sound in every aspect, indicating sincerity, and undivided loyalty.

Shalem was what God had asked Solomon for, and at that time Solomon was willing to give God his Wholehearted Devotion.

But as we see Solomon in chapter 11 of I Kings, he has given himself over to be influenced away from his God by his many wives, who serve another master.

Solomon probably thought that these marriages were going to strengthen the kingdom, but in fact they were actually going to be the kingdom's ruin.

It is foolish to trade
eternal promises for
short term gains.

And that brings us to our first truth for this morning. ***It is foolish to trade eternal promises for short term gains.***

Illus:

We live in a culture/time of short term gains don't we?

The New Yorker had a recent article that said that researchers are working right now on a magic pill that we can take once a day so we can skip the gym but get the benefits anyway. *[Can't wait to see what the side effects are 😞, and no I'm not telling you the name of it, I don't want to be complicit].* **Short Term Gain**

ChatGPT is all the rage right now amongst students who haven't read to book but need to turn in a report. Now ChatGPT can write the report for but you can't take the knowledge with you...ChatGPT will most certainly make a segment of our society less wise, as far as educating our students goes ChatGPT it is a **Short Term Gain.**



NIGHTLY
NEWS

I love taking naps, anyone else in here love a Sunday nap?

But NOT WHILE I'M DRIVING A CAR. This is a couple in their Tesla who make the evening news because they used the autopilot feature to navigate them home on I-90 near Boston, and then fell asleep.

This is a **Short Term Gain**, whatever they benefited from that nap, could have had tragic results. *[Imagine when they saw themselves on the news. Sooo embarrassing!]*

It is foolish to trade eternal promises for short term gains.

In our text Solomon is looking to make **Short Term Gains**, he isn't making decisions with eternity in mind...how do we know? Think about it. God promised (2 Sam 7) to secure David's Kingdom **FOREVER**. The God of the Universe made David, (*Solomon's father*), this promise.

Solomon knows this (*he has to know this*), and yet he still chooses to violate God's law and to marry unbelieving women, in part to try to broker treaties, to strengthen and secure the Kingdom **himself**.

This is so short sighted. But how often do we do similar things?

We say with our mouths, "God will provide", but our actions indicate that we do not trust him. Our actions indicate that we trust ourselves, and here we see Solomon's trust in himself is his undoing.

It is foolish to trade eternal promises for short term gains.

And friends don't get me wrong. In our own strength we can make some great short term gains. We can make money, we can become influential, we can have what looks like success.

But it doesn't last because ***we do not live forever.***

But the eternal promise for you and I in Christ Jesus is found in John 11:25 & 26 where Jesus says, **"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. And then Jesus asks, Do you believe this?"**

Our belief in the eternal promises of God is paramount; Jesus knows this. Friends if you believe in the eternal promises of God for you and your life you will be able to make the ***wisest choices*** because you will be inoculated against the allure of short term gains.

I Kings 11:7-11

7 On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. 8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods. 9 The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.

Solomon is swimming in a sea of short term gains, and as we continue to reading he is getting ready to drown.

Read: 

I Kings 11:7-11

10 Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord's command. 11 So the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.

Continue Reading:

I want to give some context for what the "high places" are that the text refers to... "high places" refers to elevated sites or hilltops where worship and religious rituals were conducted.

These high places were typically open-air locations, often featuring altars, pillars, or sacred stones.

Originally, high places were used by the Israelites for worshiping Yahweh. They served as local centers of worship ***before the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem.***

But what we are seeing here in our text is that after the construction of the Temple [*which was completed back in chapter 7*]... Solomon is still building high places of worship for his foreign wives to worship their own god's.

I Kings 11:7-11

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The problem with what Solomon has done is that this goes directly against what God has commanded. In the Law of Moses, God had designated a specific place of worship, which was initially the Tabernacle and later the Temple in Jerusalem.

God instructed the Israelites to offer sacrifices and worship Him exclusively at that chosen place, to maintain unity and purity in their worship.

Building high places for the worship of foreign gods was a violation of God's commandments. It led to **syncretism** [*a theological term for*], the blending of different religious beliefs and practices, which undermined the worship of the one true God Yahweh.

So imagine these "high places" as a polytheistic free for all, where you can worship Yahweh, but also sprinkle in a little Chemosh, and a dash of Milcom.



Over time many of the Israelites were starting to become polytheistic because *their leader Solomon* had confused the worship of God to appease his wives and allies.

And so God decided that Solomon needs to be called to account be for this. His punishment is that his kingdom will be torn away from him...and given to one of his subordinates.

Remember this is Solomon who said to the

people at the conclusion of the temple
dedication in I Kings 8:60, 61

**⁶⁰ May all the peoples of the earth know that
the Lord is God. There is no other! ⁶¹ Be
wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord our
God to walk in his statutes and to keep his
commands, as it is today.”**

How the mighty have fallen!

It is foolish to worship
idols when you know
the one true God.

And that brings us to our second truth for this morning.

It is foolish to worship idols when you know the one
true God.

There is no shortage of idols in our current day and time,
all vying for our attention and worship.

But gone are the days of Chemosh and Milcom.



We now have the idols of **Apple** and **Android**, these two juggernauts battling it out for the prize of our minds.

- A survey conducted by Deloitte found that the average American checks their smart phone approximately 58 times per day.
- A 2020 report by App Annie revealed that global users spent an average of 4.2 hours per day on their smartphones.
- A survey conducted by Common Sense Media revealed that 50% of teens felt addicted to their mobile devices, and 72% of teens reported feeling the need to immediately respond to text messages, notifications, and social media.

And then there is **Nomophobia**, do you know what Nomophobia is? (Fear of Being without a Mobile Device):



- A study published in a Human Behavior journal found that 58% of participants experienced symptoms of nomophobia, such as anxiety, when they were without their mobile phones.

- A survey conducted by SecurEnvoy reported that 66% of respondents feared losing or being without their phones, while only 41% feared a physical assault. **This survey is telling us that people in our culture would rather be ASSAULTED than be without their phone.**

Houston I Think We Have A Problem!

Here's why I'm picking on our phones...many of us spend more time reading our feed than reading the word of God.

Many of us spend more time texting and tweeting than we do seeking and praying.



Now hear what I am saying. Do not leave here and take a hammer to your phone because Pastor Todd said they were of the devil. That is not what I am saying.

What I am saying is just like the idols of old, the idols of our present can steal time away from the one true God.

And the less time we have with the Lord...the poorer our decision making.

The less time we are invested in Him and His purposes...the more foolish we become.

Perhaps your idol has nothing to do with a phone, for many of you that isn't a struggle, but that doesn't mean you possess no idols of the heart, because we all do.



Illus.

When I was in college I had an awakening of sorts. It was the summer after my freshman year...and God had been trying to get my attention for a while...and I had been ignoring Him “for a while.”

God was trying to get my attention that **He** was calling me into full-time vocational Christian ministry. For some reason I had been very resistant to the idea of being a Pastor. I didn't walk away from the Lord, but I didn't want to hear God's plans for me.....I had my own plans for my life. The honest truth was that I had a lot of EARTHLY HINDERANCES that were causing me not to want to submit to God's will.

In short, I had an overwhelming lack of SURRENDER.



I was a bit like Solomon in that I wanted to be in control. ***I didn't want to take my hands off of my life.*** I thought I knew what I was doing but in fact I had no idea.

But during my summer break, God got ahold of me big time....he exposed the idols I had in my life...the ***idols of control, and personal security*** and he gave me a strong desire to submit to his will, no matter what that looked like.

And I can remember once I surrendered to the Lord it was like a weight had been lifted. **HE CHANGED MY HEART** as I chose to follow HIS plan for me.



Back in our text. Solomon is not following God's plan for his life.

In I Kings chapter 11 we see after God removes his hand from Solomon, all of his enemies begin to come out of the wood work.

[As we read earlier]... God is going to make one of his subordinates [Jeroboam] King. Jeroboam had been one of Solomon's trusted administrative officials...and now he will rule the Northern Kingdom.

Here in chapter 11 Jeroboam meets with the Prophet Ahijah...who is going to prophesy to Jeroboam about what God is preparing to do.

And as we continue to read in verse 30 of chapter 11 we are going to see a fracture in the Nation of Israel due to Solomon's Unwise Decisions.

I Kings 11:30-33

30 and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. 31 Then he said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon’s hand and give you ten tribes. 32 But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe.

Read: 

I Kings 11:30-33

33 I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molek the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in obedience to me, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my decrees and laws as David, Solomon's father, did.

Continue Reading:

Here we see Ahijah proceed to deliver God's message to Jeroboam...God will give ten tribes to Jeroboam, reserving one tribe for the sake of David.

Consequently, Jeroboam will assume leadership over the majority of Israel. God chooses to transfer much of the kingdom's rule to Jeroboam as a form of divine judgment.

This prophecy serves as a rebuke for Solomon's transgressions and a pivotal turning point in the history of Israel.

Our foolish decisions may
cause us to miss out on
amazing blessings.

And that brings us to our third truth for this morning. ***Our foolish decisions may cause us to miss out on amazing blessings.***

You have to remember that God was patient with Solomon. But Solomon's foolishness at the end of his life was persistent.

No doubt he had heard the prophets warnings, but he paid them no mind.

No doubt he was warned but perhaps he thought, *"I'm the Son of David, my place is secure no matter what I do."*

And you see God is still going to keep his promise to David, he is going to keep his word, but he is going to minimize the blessing Solomon could have received because of his unfaithfulness.

Our foolish decisions may
cause us to miss out on
amazing blessings.

Friends God wants to bless your life.

But you will not live in his blessing by living life your own way on your own terms.

Blessing from God is closely associated with obedience.

This doesn't mean you have to be perfect, but what this does mean is that you are seeking and walking with God.



Some of us get bummed out when we hear about the trainwreck at the end of Solomon's life. We feel as though he should be hero to be admired, and we are left flat by his checkered life/lifestyle. There are a couple of things I would say about that to bring perspective.

#1. The fact that the Bible does not hide anyone's character flaws, not even the Good Kings, highlights that the Bible isn't a made up

history, written by fanboys to glorify a nation, but rather it is an accurate accounting of actual people, who were working out their faith in God, just like we are.

#2. Because of the flaws of Solomon and many others that are put on display, we can learn. If we had the cookie cutter version of Solomon's life there wouldn't be much we could take in and learn from. Understanding his mis steps with the Lord can help us to level up in our relationship with God, because He is the same God.

Communion

Remembering His sacrifice.



And **#3** we must remember that God is the main charter of this story. He gets the glory, He is the Hero.

While there are many influential and inspiring people in the Bible. Jesus is the only one we should look to with complete admiration.

Why? Because when He had the choice. He chose to go to the cross for you and I.

He chose to be beaten, stripped naked, shamed, scorned for you and I.

He chose to suffer the rejection of His Father, as he bore the sin of the world.

He chose obedience, and because of that we can receive NEW LIFE. And so this morning let's take some time to remember the sacrifice of Christ.

Communion

Remembering His sacrifice.



We celebrate an open communion here at Brandywine, which means you don't have to be a member in order to partake with us, but we do ask that you be a believer in Jesus Christ.

We observe communion here at Brandywine because we see clear instructions from Jesus in scripture to remember Him in this way. In Matthew 26:26-28 we read, "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

Communion

Remembering His sacrifice.



These are the words that Jesus spoke to his disciples as he was preparing himself to be our sacrifice. And within the observance of Communion we see several opportunities to reflect and confess.

First, we should look back. We are to participate in Communion in remembrance of Christ. Communion also speaks of the intimacy and fellowship we now have with God. And so we look back. We look back to the cross. We remember what Christ accomplished for us. And we are reminded of His love for us.

Second, we are to look ahead. The Scriptures say to do this "until he comes again" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Communion

Remembering His sacrifice.



The first time Jesus came to this earth, He came as the Suffering Servant. The next time, He will come as our glorious forever King.

Communion is also an observance to remind us that Jesus is coming again.

And Third, Communion is a time to look within.

We are to look within and ask the Holy Spirit to show us any areas of our lives that we have not surrendered to God. And once we acknowledge these areas, we are to seek forgiveness, looking for God to transform us from the inside out.

***Let's take a moment to reflect and confess.**

Communion

Remembering His sacrifice.



Bread:

Taking the bread Jesus broke it and gave it to His disciples, He said, “take eat this is my body”, do this in remembrance of me.

Cup:

In the same way Jesus took the cup, saying “this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” do this in remembrance of me.

Prayer:

Thank you for your sacrifice

May we live to honor what you have done for us

May we look forward to your glorious 2nd coming.