

How do we use what God has given us?

- This was part of series "That's tricky...."; Communion this morning too

Introduction

- We all have resources of various types:
 - how should we use them?

Exposition

Context

- Solomon's accession to the throne
- he had a legacy of resources left from his father David... troops, stable economy, a good tax base (passing trade from Egypt to Mesopotamia), tribute from surrounding nations
- he also had a legacy of his father's activity - his (mostly) God focused heritage, and in particular the beginnings of the Temple building project

Question

- The question Solomon is facing at the start of his rule is:
 - what will I do with my time on the throne?
 - what will I do with these resources?
 - what will I do with my family heritage, the gifts and abilities and expectations I've been left with?
- He begins with a mixed start!
 - v.1 - political marriage, marrying outside the faith
 - v.3 - loved the Lord, walked according to his father's statutes, but offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places
- How will he then proceed?

Answer

- We then have the account of the vision of the Lord, the dream, that is the heart of our passage:
 - v.5 - God's initiative
 - God asks him this amazing question: "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."
 - now there's a question for you!!
 - Bill Gates (rich) or Tony Blair (powerful) coming to you and saying, ask whatever you want..."
 - what would we say? Really, really say?
- God's purpose is not to find out - he knows!
 - God's purpose is that Solomon discover and own for himself and commit himself to God's way
 - God's saying: not just king - you can have anything, do anything - what will it be?
 - what is your heart set on? Spell it out, lets get it into the open!
- And Solomon's answer is wonderful!
 - v.7 - first of all categorises himself a humble servant
 - v.7-8 - second, recognises himself too weak for the task; he realises the greatness of the task, the huge burden of responsibility for all of God's people
 - v.9 - finally asks for a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish right and wrong
- Not his people, God's people; not his wisdom, God's wisdom; not his strength, God's strength; not his way of doing things, God's way of doing things
 - this is a cry of practical discipleship - your will, not mine - in the specific context of using the resources, the legacy of the past in new leadership

Response

- **God's response**
 - favour! blessing upon blessing!
- **Solomon's response**
 - worship!

Application

- So what?

Congregation

- one of things CCC team will talk about next Sunday and with the Kirk Session a week on Monday...
- legacy of halls, particularly the large hall
- we also have a heritage of relationships with the community, with schools, and many others working in the community, very much encouraged by the CCC process
- we have the potential of resources from grant awarding bodies (cf the resources Hiram of Tyre, an outsider, provided for Solomon to build the temple in 1 Kings 5!)
- **what will we do with this legacy?**
- we need, like Solomon, to be humble, recognise that we are too weak to accomplish any kind of good in the community, and that we need his wisdom to discern the right path forward
- So? **PRAY**, this week, constantly!

As Individuals

- All have a legacy of resources:
 - homes, cars, TVs, bank balances
 - personality, our gifts, abilities, skills, hospitality, or whatever
 - our relationships, the people we know, the contacts we have
- **"Ask for whatever you want me to give you."**
 - test of our true character!
 - what will we ask for?
- Ask!

- **May we be like Solomon here: humble, conscious of his weakness, and asking God to lead**