

Pass the Crown

- (Kids)
- Bring a couple of pre-made crowns, one for each side of the congregation
 - in "pass the parcel" style, pass them back through each side
 - I'll turn my back and after a while shout "stop"
 - person who has the crown on each side has to give an answer to this question: "if you could ask for anything, what would you choose?"
- *Then get readers up to do the reading of Solomon being offered wisdom...*
- Solomon could have chosen power, popularity or wealth for himself - but he chose wisdom
 - because he wanted to please God in the way he ruled the people
 - he put God and the people before himself
 - he honoured God
- We're exploring the nature of the wisdom that Solomon asked for and seeing how God honoured him, because he had first honoured God

Introduction

- Alfred Nobel
 - Swedish mining engineer and scientist, invented dynamite!
 - used in quarrying...
 - very soon used destructively as a weapon of war...
 - Nobel regretted this and created the Nobel Peace Prize, hoping that people would look for peaceful resolutions to conflicts
- Power does not equal wisdom!
 - we know that in our daily lives too...
- **Godly wisdom** comes from a **relationship with God**
 - it requires **submission** to him, and a teachable spirit
 - it is not an intellectual ability, but **the ability to make the right moral choice** - even when under pressure from people, when hemmed in by circumstances, when under financial constraints...
 - it is behaving as God wants us to in any given situation

Solomon asks for wisdom (vs.4-9)

- Solomon asked for a heart with a skill to listen
 - he asked for this wisdom because he knew that being king was a heavy responsibility
 - (he'd grown up seeing his father struggle to get it right!)
 - Solomon appreciated God's faithfulness (v.6), but felt inadequate for the task (v.7)
 - he knew that without wisdom he could not be the kind of king God required
- Needed humility to ask - cf Caspian in "Prince Caspian"
- God's wisdom helps us make the right choices and decisions and carry those out

God gives Solomon wisdom (vs.10-15)

- God was pleased to honour Solomon's request
 - promising him the wisdom, but also (generously) giving him the other stuff too!
 - as Jesus put it: "**But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**" (Matthew 6:33)
 - him first, and other stuff follows
 - or James, in his letter, "**If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.**" (James 1:5)

Solomon uses his wisdom (vs.16-28)

- Solomon's wisdom is put to the test:
 - he must decide between these two women, both claiming to be the mother of the baby
 - his wisdom is shown as he produced an emotional response from the true mother of the child
- In today's church, leaders need wisdom and discernment in directing the church's strategy as well as in pastoral support for individuals and groups

Conclusion

- Wisdom needs to be asked for - God gives generously - wisdom then needs to be applied...

Case Study 1

- Lyne and Tom have two children - Vicki aged 14 and Alex aged 10; Lynne feels

Vicki's school work should come first and thinks that on school nights she should not go out. Tom thinks that social skills are more important. The difference between them is causing tension...

Case Study 2

- Alice, a health visitor, has enjoyed her work for 15 years. She needs to work to pay the mortgage on the house where she cares for her mother. A new manager arrives and insists that Alice must record 70 visits in the community per month. Alice explains that the maximum possible in any month is 60. Alice is told that no matter how many visits are made, the record must show 70...
- Maybe those feel over-simple, artificial!
 - real life is more complicated than that - which is why we need God's wisdom
 - the humility to ask
 - and the courage to use it