

Merry Christmas! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas. As you may recall, there are twelve days of Christmas, and so we are still in the season of Christmas. Thus, our readings and hymnody reflect that reality. Join us Thursday night for our Epiphany service at 6:30 wherein we celebrate the arrival of the Wise Men to visit Jesus and conclude the Christmas season.

Did you get what you wanted for Christmas? Today's sermon is going to focus on gifts, and three gifts that our Heavenly Father gives to us. As we look at our Old Testament text, we see three things that God gives.

Perhaps it's a familiar story from Sunday School. King Solomon offers a sacrifice to God. Almost as a side note, we hear that Solomon used to offer a thousand offerings there. What generosity! Later on, the Lord comes to Solomon in a dream, and the Lord gives Solomon a blank check: you can have anything you'd like.

Solomon asks for wisdom, and this request pleases the Lord. Because of this humble and selfless request, the Lord also promises to give him riches and honor as well. As we examine our text, we are going to look at each of the times we read the word "give."

We're actually going to start with the last one first and work our way backward. What Three Gifts Does Our Heavenly Father Give? First, 3. Our Father gives riches and honor (v. 13).

The Lord says to Solomon: **"I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days."** Solomon will be the richest king in the history of the world. 2 Chronicles 9 tells us that Solomon received 25 tons of gold a year. He had stables that could fit 4,000 horses and chariots, and 12,000 horsemen. The Lord certainly made good on His promise to Solomon!

Did you get what you wanted for Christmas? Perhaps many of us did. Perhaps some of us didn't. Regardless, even if we might consider ourselves poor, we are richly blessed. We live in one of the most prosperous nations in the history of the world, and what might be considered poverty in our era is riches in another.

Riches and honor is one thing that the companies on Madison avenue would like to make you believe is the true meaning of Christmas. My value as a husband is whether I can get my wife the gold necklace. My worth as a parent is about whether or not I can make my kid's toy room the envy of F.A.O Schwartz. I had a good Christmas only if I had a full living room filled with family and friends.

All of these are lies from the devil. To be certain, we are called to be generous and share the good we have with others. However, we need to know where true riches and honor lie. Our text from Ephesians gives us a hint. What an amazing Epistle text for us this morning! **"Blessed be the God and Father of our**

Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,”

Us having riches and honor starts with us realizing where our true riches lie: in Jesus Christ who gives us *every* spiritual blessing. Your Peloton bike is going to collect dust. That video game console is going to end up in a box in a closet that will be forgotten until your kids dig it up years later. That pearl necklace might be lost or stolen. **“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. [So] seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”**

What Three Gifts Does Our Heavenly Father Give? Second, 2. Our Father gives a wise and discerning mind (v. 12).

Solomon is honest with the Lord. He tells God that he’s just a child, he doesn’t know how to lead an army. He doesn’t know how to rule the people. The people of Israel deserve better. They are a great and mighty people. **“Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”** The Lord replies, **“Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.”**

A discerning mind could be literally translated as a hearing heart. And isn’t that the root of wisdom? In seminary one of the main lessons they taught in pastoral counseling and theology classes is to listen, listen, listen. I don’t always listen as well as I should, but you can’t begin to relate to people unless you have that listening heart.

Did you get what you wanted for Christmas? Wisdom cannot be undervalued. Wisdom is the ability to make decisions on the best course of action. Whereas intelligence is simply the amassing of facts and figures. Intelligence might be able to determine that your girlfriend fits best into medium sized sweaters. However, wisdom tells you that if you girlfriend says her sweater size is small, then you get her a small sweater. In the case of Solomon, intelligence might be able to ascertain the size of the enemy’s army, but wisdom determines whether you should go to war or send a delegate to negotiate peace.

Nobody had as much of a wise and discerning mind as Solomon, until Jesus. In our Gospel text, we see that as a child Jesus was filled with wisdom and wowed the temple teachers. Elsewhere, the Bible refers to Jesus as the wisdom of God. Jesus was not only knowledgeable, but he had the wisdom to know the right choices to make.

Our lives may sometimes seem like they go on without rhyme or reason, but Jesus is wise. Jesus walks alongside us in our trials and tribulations, and as the very wisdom of God He is working to use pain and suffering for our good. Just like

Solomon and Jesus, may God give us a wise and discerning mind in 2022 so we can make good decisions!

What Three Gifts Does Our Heavenly Father Give? Finally, there is one last “give.” 1. Our Father gives a son (v. 6)! We read in verse 6, **“And Solomon said, ‘You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day.’”**

This last bullet point may be cheating a little bit, as this isn’t technically something that the Lord gives Solomon, but rather, this is something that the Lord gives King David. The gift is the gift of a son, namely, King Solomon to sit on the throne of David.

King Solomon was the greatest king in the history of the nation of Israel. With one exception, of course. All throughout the Gospels, Jesus is called the Son of David. We sometimes gloss over those genealogies in Matthew and Luke, but part of what these genealogies prove is that Jesus is in the line of King David.

Did you get what you wanted for Christmas? Beyond the latest gadget or article of clothing, beyond wisdom and understanding, you have the greatest Christmas gift under the tree waiting to be unwrapped. It’s the gift of a son!

This Christmas, a Son was born in Bethlehem: Jesus the Son of David and the Son of God. As the Son of David, He came to redeem every faulty and sinful grandfather and grandmother he had in his family tree. As the Son of God, He came to pay for the sins of the whole world.

Apart from Christ, we would deserve nothing but the wrath of our Heavenly Father for our sins. Sinners standing before a holy and righteous God, we would burn like moths before a flame. Apart from Christ, God would have no choice but to consign the world to the fires of hell, not even letting it enjoy the blessing of the tiniest of stocking stuffers.

But this Son of David restored the relationship between us and the Father. He paid the penalty for our sins and atoned for the Father’s wrath. The relationship with God is restored, and we put on Christ through faith. You are clothed in Jesus’ perfection. You are declared holy. Those who put on Christ through faith can stand before that holy and perfect God on the day of judgment.

Because of the gift of this Son which started at Christmas, went to the cross, and then to the empty tomb, we can confidently say that we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. **BECAUSE OUR FATHER GIVES A SON, WE HAVE WISE AND DISCERNING MINDS, AND RICHES AND HONOR.** Did you get what you wanted for Christmas? In Jesus Christ you need ask for no more!