

Introduction:

- A. You are probably familiar with C. S. Lewis's famous statement, "*It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.*"

I am afraid that may be true of our church. "*We are far too easily pleased.*" There are so many wonderful things about Village Church; so many evidences of God's love and blessing. It is the *home* we have longed for. Jesus is honored. Scripture is taught. Christians here love one another. We know that the Holy Spirit is at work among us.

- B. But when we plan, when we do the work of the ministry, when you decide what you want from a church, I believe "*Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are far too easily pleased.*" I'm glad if you're pleased with the worship services and preaching, if you love your Growth Group or your kids' classes, if VCL is home to you. But don't be too easily pleased. **Unless we make a habit of inquiring of the Lord we will never know what great grace he might be waiting to give us.**
- C. Turn to **2 Chronicles**. 1 & 2 Chronicles retell the stories of Israel's kings, beginning with Saul, who lived about 1000 years before Christ. We don't know the writer so we call him the Chronicler. He takes the stories from 1&2 Samuel and 1& 2 Kings and retells them, sometimes verbatim. If you're watching this drama unfold on the pages of your Bible you might be inclined to think, *Wait a minute! This is just a rerun.*
- D. Chronicles was written about **500 years after the stories it tells**, about **475 BC**. This would be like us hearing stories of our own people from the 1500s! **To understand Chronicles, don't just look at the action on the stage. Look at the audience.** The audience helps us understand

the purpose. It was written for the Jews who had come out of captivity and exile in Babylon. A remnant of them had returned to the rubble of their homeland and the ruins of their heritage. They were insignificant, powerless, king-less vassals of another nation. Their national glory was gone. They were disoriented. They didn't quite know who they were any more, or what they had to hope for.

- E. So the Chronicler *retells* the stories they already had in their Scriptures but it is as though he is reframing the stories, or relighting them, so that these Jews would see to the heart of their identity as God's people. Chronicles isn't so much a history book as it is a sermon. **Chronicles is crafted to challenge God's people to remember who they are, and how God works among them.** We are studying 2 Chronicles so we will not be too easily pleased, half-hearted, missing the infinite joy God wants to give us.
- F. So let's begin. **2 Chron 1:1-6...** (Gibeon was about 8 miles NW of Jerusalem. Israel had worshipped there in that same tabernacle/tent since they first came into the Promised Land.) So at the beginning of this new era for Israel, King Solomon takes everybody who is anybody to Gibeon to the 500 year old Tent of Meeting, where Moses once met with God. Why are they all there? V.5: *They inquired of the LORD there.*
- G. This wasn't just ceremony or tradition. King Saul, David's predecessor, was a failure: **1 Chron 10:13-14...** David himself made an arrogant decision to count all his troops without inquiring of the Lord and thousands died under God's judgment. So that's why King Solomon and his leaders came to inquire of God. They didn't come with a particular question or need. They simply came to ask God what he wanted of them.
- I. **WE HERE, EACH AND ALL OF US, MUST INQUIRE OF THE LORD FOR OUR CHURCH LEST WE BE TOO EASILY PLEASED**
 - A. By summoning all those leaders Solomon made it clear that they were all responsible, along with him, to listen to the Lord. **As leaders and members of VCL it is our**

responsibility to inquire of the Lord *together* so that we know what he wants of us, whether in attitude or action, so that we know how to handle the attacks of the enemy or the sin that lurks among us, so that we know where God is waiting to work, where his kingdom is poised to expand. We won't know if we don't ask God!

- B. It takes humility to come before God like Israel did. Humility because it is our natural inclination just to take care of things; to forge ahead. I don't know how it was for Israel, but I know us. We want to *do* something. *Decide* something. We want to have meetings, state our opinions and vote on things. We're all for plans and committees but it is mighty difficult for us to pray together and to wait before God till we know what he wants us to do.
- C. Here, waiting together before the Lord, Israel was united. **Prayer unites us as leaders and as a church as nothing else will.**
- D. Solomon came to this place to offer 1000 sacrifices to God. That was expensive! We, of course, rely on the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ for our sins, but like Israel's leaders we must come to pray in a posture of self-sacrifice and dependence on God's mercy and grace.
- E. In **Deut. 4:7** Moses asked Israel, "*What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him?*" The privilege of prayer—of praying together for God's work among us—is what would make our church great. But our desires are too weak. We are too easily satisfied. We are too sure of ourselves; too sure that we can be effective as God's people in this place without inquiring of the Lord together.

Leaders: In Jer. 10:21 God warned Israel's leaders, "*The shepherds are senseless and do not inquire of the Lord; so they do not prosper and all their flock is scattered.*" Leaders: **please do not take us anywhere without inquiring of the Lord first.** Don't start a class, or plan a dinner, or spend money; don't plan a worship service or teach our kids or make decisions about missions or compassion ministries or outreach without inquiring of the

Lord. *Don't just do something. Stand there... and inquire of the Lord.*

Israel went to their tents that night without an answer but then Solomon had an extraordinary visit from God: **vv.7-12...** This was a unique encounter in the Bible. But every believer who reads this is challenged by Solomon's request:

II. GOD REWARDS THOSE WHO WANT NOTHING SO MUCH AS HIS WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE (1:7-12)

- A. Even before he prayed this, Solomon was brilliant, talented, and privileged. So what did God give him? Illus.: Do you remember when you learned how to draw with perspective? God taught Solomon how to see the world from God's perspective. I doubt that God made him smarter, but God taught Solomon how to see the world with God at the center, to see what the essential truths were, what mattered most, what lasted, what lay hidden in motives and plans. God enabled him to see principles and to craft timeless proverbs. He brought divine wisdom to architecture, governing, international relations, writing, and psychology.
- B. Solomon got much more than he asked for: **vv.13-15...** And that's just a hint of his wealth and accomplishments. There's no doubt that God poured out wealth, influence and peace upon Solomon and his people, but it also stands to reason that God's wisdom makes life work well. Things go better with wisdom. Wisdom works. Fools fail. God may have better things for you than wealth but his gift of wisdom will make you rich indeed.
- C. The really astonishing thing is that we can be wiser than Solomon because we know Jesus Christ. Paul tells us in **1 Cor. 2** that the Holy "*Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.*" And since we have the Holy Spirit, he says, "*we have the mind of Christ.*" The Holy Spirit gifts us with the capacity to think and understand even as Jesus!
- D. This prayer of Solomon changed my life. I don't remember where or when I made it my own prayer but I vividly remember reading this as a young man and feeling my own heart stirred: "*That is what I want, too.*" Only my prayer

for salvation was more important in my life than this prayer. It is still my prayer. I say to all of us, but especially to you who are young: **Nothing—nothing—can so shape your future as this prayer can.** Not your talents, education, relationships.... No heartfelt prayer will change your life like this one: ***Lord, give me wisdom and knowledge to serve you. I want nothing else so much as that.***

Imagine you were among those Jews listening to the Chronicler, reminded of Israel's glory days, and of the king who took Israel to the pinnacle of greatness. Now they didn't even have a king. They were under a king in Persia! They must have sighed, "*I wish we had a king like that now.*" I think the message of this passage to them was, *don't forget God's promise to send you the Messiah.* Don't forget God's promise in Isaiah that someday the people walking in darkness would see a great light. "*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*"

III. IN JESUS CHRIST, WE HAVE A WISER KING THAN SOLOMON TO LEAD US TO GREATNESS

- A. Solomon was the son of David, a king whose name meant *Peace*. He was not only Israel's wealthiest, most influential king, he was also a human prophecy of the King to come, *the Son of David.* Jesus Christ *is* our peace. He reconciles us to God, gives us peace within, and guarantees us citizenship in his kingdom of peace forever. Paul wrote in **Col 2:2-3**, "*My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know **the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.***"
- B. When we love and obey Jesus we are sure to walk in wisdom. When we "inquire of the Lord" about anything God's reply will be rooted in Christ. We will be pointed to Christ, led by Christ, enriched by Christ.

C. Having such a great King makes us a great people.

Solomon had asked God, “*who is able to govern this great people of yours?*” God’s wisdom and knowledge equipped him for that impossible task. Part of the story the Chronicler reminded Jews of was the reach of Solomon’s reign. 2 Chron. 9 tells how the Queen of Sheba came to visit him and see his wisdom and wealth first-hand. **2**

Chron. 9:5-8 says,

She said to the king, “The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. But I did not believe what they said until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half the greatness of your wisdom was told me; you have far exceeded the report I heard. How happy your people must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! Praise be to the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on his throne as king to rule for the Lord your God. Because of the love of your God for Israel and his desire to uphold them forever, he has made you king over them, to maintain justice and righteousness.”

What would draw people to Jesus the way she was drawn to Solomon? We would! We are the supreme evidences of Christ’s wisdom. We are the wealth and the glory of Christ’s reign. When we inquire of the Lord and when our heart’s desire is to walk in God’s wisdom, our church will be great.

What makes a church great is following a King like Jesus. When we inquire of the Lord we cannot imagine what grace-gifts await us. Let us not be “half-hearted creatures” whose desires are too weak. Let us not be ignorant children satisfied with slum-living, too easily pleased. Instead, let us be the kind of congregation who inquire of God together and whose hearts’ desire is to have God’s wisdom in Christ. Then people will rightly say, “*How happy your people must be, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom.*”