

## Sermon followed by Service

January 22, 2023      1 Kings 3

“Whatever ... whatever you want ... whatever you ask for is yours!” What do you say to an offer like that? We know what Solomon said. Solomon could have asked for riches and power ... he could have asked for glory and honor ... he could have asked for an “easy button” with servants and angels to do whatever he wanted ... Solomon could have asked for a life-long vacation ... but he didn’t ask for any of that. In fact, he really didn’t ask for anything for himself. Listen to Solomon’s answer: **“You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David .... Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ... So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”** Instead of thinking “Wow! ME! ME! ME!” Solomon’s heart looked up: “God, you are so kind and gracious!” Instead of just: “What’s in this for me?” Solomon’s heart looked out for God’s people. So, Solomon asked for a “discerning heart.” A heart to figure out right and wrong, a heart wise to govern God’s people. When Solomon heard God’s offer: “Whatever you want ...” Solomon didn’t just think: “what’s in it for me?” He thought of God and God’s people and what he needed to serve them right.

“Whatever you want.” When God opens the doors of his treasure-house for us inviting “Ask whatever you want ...” what

do you reach for first? What the world calls treasure? Or what God calls treasure? What the world sees as power? Or what God sees as power? What the world sees as wisdom? Or what God says is wise? Do we go first for what God calls first and best? Or do we fill up on dessert or worse, and then wonder why our insides ache?

Solomon didn't always have his priorities right. He let himself get distracted by his work, his family and friends, his fun. He let himself get distracted by the devil and it almost destroyed him. Solomon let his time and his heart get filled with the treasures of the world - sure, most of it good, but some not so good - and Solomon let God get squeezed out. Sound familiar?

Here's a question - Am I being fair to Solomon? I'm not, am I? Solomon wasn't some helpless victim of time and temptation. Solomon wasn't a helpless, witless victim who didn't know any better. Solomon didn't just let his heart and mind get distracted by temptation and the treasure of the world. Solomon turned his heart from the treasure of God to the treasure of the world; he chose the devil's temptation over God's treasure. And it cost him. Solomon lost his kingdom for his children and he nearly lost his soul.

That's what is at stake for us. On Lutheran School Sunday, with the God-lived Life, we're not just recruiting to raise up Bible experts and if that's not for you - if you don't have the time, if Bible Study just doesn't interest you - you can take it or leave it. For a long time Solomon left it and it almost cost him his soul. By God's grace, Solomon saw that no matter how much stuff he had, he was missing something. And by God's grace

Solomon realized what he was missing - Solomon was missing God as first. In his heart and mind, he had filled that first place that belonged to God with this and that.

But God didn't give up on Solomon. God wanted to be there for Solomon, and praise God, he wants to be there, first in our hearts, for us. That's why he gave us his Word, not just these words on paper, but Jesus His Word in the flesh. You remember Jesus the 12 year old boy at the Temple - God himself, asking questions, looking to learn, setting God and the wisdom of God first in his heart. You remember Jesus on the cross - obeying His Father's Word, shouting his own Word - "It is Finished!" Having to pay ... having to obey to be right with God - it's all finished. Jesus did it all for you. That's the wisdom of God that sets you right with God, the wisdom that says: "You are forgiven," the wisdom that makes you alive with the heart and the power of God, the wisdom that opens for you the home of God, heaven for you.

Today when God opens his treasure store: "Ask whatever you wish ..." don't get suckered by the treasures and priorities of the world; don't leave God's greatest treasures - his wisdom, his power, his heart - on the shelf. Don't settle for the wisdom of the world, let God show you what he knows. Don't settle for the power of the world; plug into the power of God. Don't settle for the heart of \_\_\_\_\_ whoever is singing the love songs today; let God fill your heart with his love. Don't settle for the justice of People's Court, Divorce Court, Judge Judy, or Jerry Springer; be part of the justice that God works for his people.

How? Let God reward you with his wisdom. It's a great thing to learn the wonders of science and the lessons of history. Here at school it's not just science - we get to learn the wonders of God's creation and see what an awesome God we have. Here it's not just history; it's his story - the history of God's grace, God working history to bless his people. Here in our school, even after our morning Bible lesson, we and our students get to soak throughout the day, not just in the smarts of the world, but in the wisdom of God - his love and grace.

Today, in our classrooms, we'll get to see the wisdom that God is sharing with our children. And starting next Sunday, in Family Bible Hour, we'll get see and review what God says to us in his Bible. We'll start at the foundations and see what God has for us. We might think we know it all already; we might think we don't have time. But God will share his wisdom with us and tell us his secrets, the secrets and the wisdom of heaven.

I asked one of our fellas what he thought of the Bible Information Class we're starting next week. He said: "I think everyone should take it. So many of the questions that I hear from people are answered in that class. And even if we think we already know it all, no matter how much we think we know, God has more for us." That sounds like an answer Peter would give. It sounds like something Solomon would say. Even better, it sounds like something Jesus would say - "Come to me, learn from me, listen to me and be filled with the treasures of heaven."

Today, this year, here in his word, in church and in school,  
in Sunday School and Bible Class, God is offering to bless you.  
We invite you to the blessing of God! Amen.

January 21 & 22, 2023

**NEW MORNING PRAISE**

**IN OUR WORLD TODAY ...** there's a Master of Deceit at work to confuse fact and fiction, wisdom and foolishness, truth and lie.

**IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ...** the Spirit of Christ shares with us a great Treasure – Truth! We get to share this Treasure with our children. Help us Lord!

**OPENING HYMN**

*“Blessed Jesus, at Your Word”*

**Hymn 919**

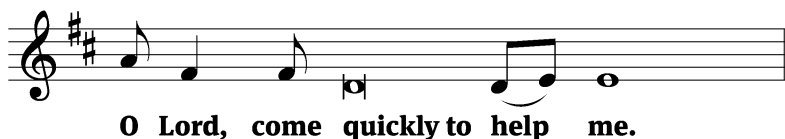
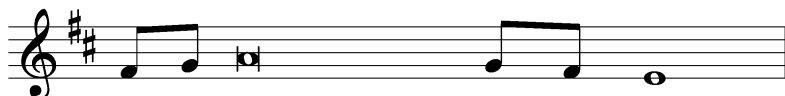
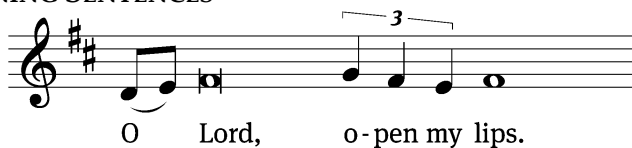
Blessèd Jesus, at your Word we are gathered all to hear you.  
Let our hearts and souls be stirred now to seek and love and fear you,  
by your teachings, sweet and holy, drawn from earth to love you solely.

All our knowledge, sense, and sight lie in deepest darkness shrouded  
till your Spirit breaks our night with the beams of truth unclouded.  
You alone to God can win us; you must work all good within us.

Gracious Savior, good and kind, Light from Light, from God proceeding,  
open now our heart and mind; help us by your Spirit's pleading.  
Hear the cry your Church now raises;  
hear and bless our prayers and praises.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, praise to you and adoration!  
Grant that we your Word may trust, confident of our salvation,  
while we here below must wander, till we sing your praises yonder.

## OPENING SENTENCES



## CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: **Amen.**



Give glory to God, our light and our life.



**Come, O come, let us wor - ship.**

### COME, O COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD

Come, O come, let us sing to the Lord,  
let us shout with joy to our saving Rock;  
come, enter in with our songs of praise,  
come, enter in with thanksgiving.

You are a great and a wondrous God,  
cupping in your hands all the depths of earth.  
You made the hills and the mountains high,  
you made the seas and the dry land.

Come, let us worship and, bowing low,  
kneel before the One who has made us all.  
You are the God whom we call our own,  
we are the flock that you shepherd.

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

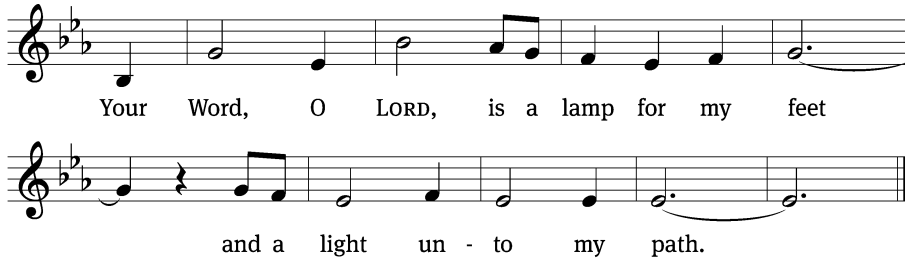
Good Shepherd of the sheep, we thank you for the ministry of St. John as its faculty and staff work to nurture the hearts, souls, and minds of your precious lambs. Bless the partnership between teachers, parents, and caregivers so that students are well equipped to give an answer for the hope they have and serve their communities in love. In everything they do, help teachers and students fix their eyes on you so that they may run with perseverance the race marked out for them. **Amen.**



PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 78C

Refrain



Your Word, O LORD, is a lamp for my feet  
and a light un - to my path.

Tone



My people, hear my / teaching;  
listen to the words / of my mouth.  
I will utter hidden things, things / from of old—  
things our ancestors have / told us.

We will not hide them from their de- / scendants;  
we will tell the next gener- / ation  
the praiseworthy deeds / of the LORD,  
his power, and the wonders / he has done. *Refrain*

He decreed statutes for / Jacob  
and established the law in / Israel,  
which he commanded our / ancestors  
to teach their / children,

so the next generation would know them, even the children yet / to be born,  
and they in turn would tell their / children.  
Then they would put their / trust in God  
and would not forget his deeds but would keep / his commands.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son  
and to the Holy / Spirit,  
as it was in the be- / ginning,  
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. Refrain**

**FIRST READING**

*1 Kings 3:5–12, 4:29–34*

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

Solomon answered, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

“Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. ...

God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon’s wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls.

He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SCHOOL CHILDREN SING**

*"Father Welcomes"*

*Refrain*

Father welcomes all his children To his fam'ly through his Son.  
Father giving his salvation; Life forever has been won.

Little children, come to me, For my kingdom is of these.  
Love and new life have I to give, Pardon for your sin. *Refrain*

In the water, in the Word, In his promise, be assured;  
All who believe and are baptized Have been born again. *Refrain*

Let us daily die to sin; Let us daily rise with him,  
Walk in the love of Christ our Lord, Live in the peace of God. *Refrain*

**A MEDLEY OF SCHOOL THEME VERSES**

M: I am strong for all things

C: **through Christ who strengthens me.** (Philippians 4:13 ~ 2014-2015)

M: Be kind and compassionate to one another,

C: **forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**  
(Ephesians 4:32 ~ 2015-2016)

M: Do not be anxious about anything,

C: **but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,  
present your requests to God.** (Philippians 4:6 ~ 2016-2017)

M: I have told you these things,

C: **so that in me you may have peace.**

M: In this world you will have trouble.  
C: **But take heart! I have overcome the world.** (John 16:33 ~ 2017-2018)

M: So do not fear, for I am with you;  
C: **do not be dismayed, for I am your God.**

M: I will strengthen you and help you;  
C: **I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.** (Isaiah 41:10 ~ 2018-2019)

M: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,  
C: **and I will give you rest."** (Matthew 11:28 ~ 2019-2020)

M: "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,  
C: **"plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future."** (Jeremiah 29:11~ 2020-2021)

M: Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.  
C: **They will soar on wings like eagles;**

M: they will run and not grow weary,  
C: **they will walk and not be faint.** (Isaiah 40:31~ 2021-2022)

M: Therefore go and gather disciples from all nations  
C: **by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 28:19 ~ 2022-2023)

#### SCHOOL CHILDREN SING

#### *"Go into the World"*

Go ye, go ye into the world And make disciples of all nations.  
Go ye, go ye into the world, And I will be with you there! **Repeat**

I am the vine; you are the branches, ever the fruit to bear.  
I am the light, you, the reflection ev'rywhere.

Go ye, go ye into the world And make disciples of all nations.  
Go ye, go ye into the world, And I will be with you there! **Repeat**

## GOSPEL

*Matthew 13:44-46*

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

## APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## HYMN

*“Speak, O Savior, I Am Listening”*

**Hymn 631**

Speak, O Savior, I am list'ning, as a servant to his lord.

Let me show respect and honor to your holy, precious Word,  
that each day, my whole life through, I may serve and follow you.

Let your Word e'er be my pleasure and my heart's most precious treasure.

Oh, what blessing to be near you and to listen to your voice;

let me ever love and fear you, let your Word still be my choice!

Many hardened sinners, Lord, flee in terror at your Word;

but to all who feel sin's burden you give peace and words of pardon.

Lord, your words are waters living where I quench my thirsty needs.  
Lord, your words are bread life-giving; on your words my spirit feeds.  
Lord, your words will be my light thro' death's cold and dreary night;  
yes, they are my sword prevailing and my cup of joy unailing.

As I pray, dear Jesus, hear me; let your words in me take root.  
May your Spirit e'er be near me that I bear abundant fruit.  
May I daily sing your praise, from my heart glad anthems raise,  
till my highest praise is given in the endless joy of heaven.

## SERMON

## HYMN

*"Speak, O Lord"*

**Hymn 633**

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy Word;  
take your truth, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us in your likeness,  
that the light of Christ might be seen today  
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.

Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility;  
test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.  
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see  
your majestic love and authority.

Words of pow'r that can never fail, let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds,  
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us,  
truths unchanged from the dawn of time,  
that will echo down through eternity.

And by grace we'll stand on your promises,  
and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.

Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built,  
and the earth is filled with your glory.

## PRAYER

*Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.*

Eternal Father, your Word is a lamp for our feet and a light to our path.

You inspired the Scriptures for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that your servants might be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**Lead us to love your Word more and more and to receive your message with great eagerness.**

You have given us your Word that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing we may have life in his name. Enable us to see the wonders of your love in Christ from the beginning to the end of your holy book.

**Help us to see Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.**

Work in all your people, especially in parents, the resolve and patience to teach children the simple truths about the Savior who loves them. Walk with us as we take our children to the manger, the cross, and the empty tomb. Help them see Jesus in the Bible stories, songs, and prayers we teach.

**Move us to bring up our children in the training and instruction of the Lord.**

Provide wisdom and commitment to teachers who train our young people in our school, in Sunday Schools, and youth Bible classes. Deepen their knowledge of your Word as they prepare and share the lessons they teach. Move them to model a sincere devotion to the Scriptures.

**Lead us to plan for and support the Christian training of children.**

We thank you for enabling our congregation to provide elementary (and high school) education for our children. We know our schools are your special blessing, and we pray for the resolve to establish and maintain standards of excellence in all aspects of education. Move us to be generous in our offerings so that teachers may teach and students may learn in fitting surroundings.

**Lead us to provide Christian schools that reflect the immensity of your love.**

Bless the schools and teachers who prepare public ministers of the gospel for service in our churches and around the world. Lead teachers and professors to be faithful to your Word and provide insights that enable them to pass on your truth to their students. Ignite the zeal of young men and women to be willing and eager to share the truths of Scripture with others. Move us to support with our prayers and gifts the schools our synod has established.

**We pray that you send workers in your harvest fields.**

Work in us that we may find the lasting value of growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ. Lead us to be faithful in our own personal study of the Scriptures and in participating in regular Bible classes. Rid us of all thoughts that Christian education ends in our youth. Make us life-long students of your precious Word.

**Lead us to believe that at every age your Word remains a lamp for our feet and a light to our path.**

How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your Word. Even when we are old and gray, lead us to meditate on your decrees that we may delight in your wonderful deeds.

**Do good to your servants, Lord, according to your Word. Amen.**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.



## BLESSING (SUNG)

M: The Lord bless and Keep you.

C: **Amen.**

M: The Lord's face ever shine upon you.

C: **Amen.**

M: The Lord grant you peace for all your days.

C: **Amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN

*"God's Word Is Our Great Heritage"*

Hymn 640

God's Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever;  
to spread its light from age to age shall be our chief endeavor.  
Through life it guides our way, in death it is our stay.  
Lord, grant, while worlds endure, we keep its teachings pure  
throughout all generations.

## OFFERING

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## Challenged to Live the God-Lived Life ... of a Disciple

- **Join us for Family Bible Hour - "4 Key Concepts" (starting 1/29)**

Time for a faith-foundation check?

Looking for answers to your questions?

Want to help others with their questions?

Our Bible Information Class offers all that and more! We start with "4 Key Concepts," move on to "Faith Builders" and, then as growing disciples, we dig deeper into what God says to us in the Bible.

Sundays at 10:30. (If Sundays don't work, let's find a time that does!)