

**Coop's Scoops # 228 August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide  
in me and I in them, says the Lord.**



**Readings: 1 Kings 2: 12-12;3:3-14**

<sup>10</sup> Then David slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of David. <sup>11</sup> The time that David reigned over Israel was forty years; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. <sup>12</sup> So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.

<sup>3</sup> Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David; only, he sacrificed and offered incense at the high places. <sup>4</sup> The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the principal high place; Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. <sup>5</sup> At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." <sup>6</sup> And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, 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 today. <sup>7</sup> And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>8</sup> And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. <sup>9</sup> Give your servant therefore an understanding mind

to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

<sup>10</sup> It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. <sup>11</sup> God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, <sup>12</sup> I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. <sup>13</sup> I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life; no other king shall compare with you. <sup>14</sup> If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life."

## **Psalm 111**

### **Ephesians 5: 25-20**

#### **The Collect:**

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and sent into our hearts the Spirit of your Son. Give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that all people may know the glorious liberty of the children of God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

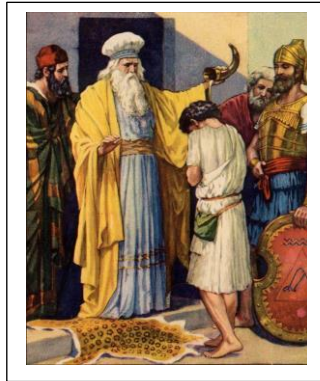
#### **The Holy Gospel: John 6:51-58**

<sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

<sup>52</sup> The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" <sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; <sup>55</sup> for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because

of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

**Sermon:**



*There the priest Zadok took the horn of oil  
from the tent and anointed Solomon.  
then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said,  
“Long live King Solomon!” 1 Kings 1:39*

We begin this morning with news of the death of King David. How the people would have wept! David, the slayer of Goliath, the liberator from the Philistines, the unifier of the tribes, the master musician, the man after God’s own heart has been buried with his ancestors. And that left one very young son named Solomon as heir to the throne and head of the family. Although the Scriptures do not say exactly at what age Solomon became King, tracing through timelines of those around him leave scholars quite certain he was a lad between 12 and 18 years of age. A teenager! A child, in his own words. How is he doing with his grief and the duties to which he has now been called?

Pretty much as we might expect. He is alone, confused, unsure of his abilities, quite adrift in spirit. We are told that he loved the Lord, walking in his statutes as did his father David.....(good!)....” **only** or **except** or **but** “he was making sacrifices in the high places”. Definitely not good. Solomon’s first actions as the new King involve breaking those statutes of the Lord! God had commanded the kings of Israel to make sacrifices in Jerusalem. Solomon is in the wrong place, because it would be inconvenient to go to the right place. The “high places” were worship sites for all kinds of gods and filled with all kinds of idols. Solomon had

been taught much better than that. When God comes looking for Solomon, He finds him in the wrong place!

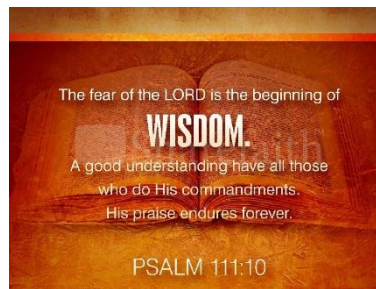
Now that is something that encourages me so very much! First of all, Solomon did not have to go looking for God ...God came to him in a dream right in those awful high places. God came to Solomon where he was, not where he “should” be. And God tells Solomon IF YOU WILL WALK IN MY WAYS, KEEPING MY STATUTES AND MY COMMANDMENTS, THEN I WILL LENGTHEN YOUR LIFE”.

That little word “if” is as powerful as that other word “only”. It means that Solomon could go either way....he could follow hard after God, or he could not. It’s like a neon sign blazing out the message ‘STAY TUNED’. And that little word “if” applies to you and me as well. We constantly make choices about how we will live out our faith and our relationship with God and with others. Until we die, every evening closes with a great “Stay Tuned” echoing in our hearts and minds.

Even so, despite the “if” and the “only”, God came to Solomon anyway. God loved Solomon and was faithful to him at his best and at his worst. Despite all his wisdom, Solomon would fail spectacularly. And as he aged, he once again turned toward the idols and gods worshipped by his wives. The high places were there at his beginnings and at his endings, yet God loved him and God came to him over and over again. God, you see, is free to come to us, to grab our attention, and change us whether it’s on our schedule or in our plans at all. And He does. And we can always have hope that even when we stray away, God will not forsake us. He’ll find us where we are. NOT to punish us, but to call us again to follow in His ways. NOT to diminish us, but to give us that which we both truly need and truly desire.

When Solomon replies to God’s question “what do you want me to give you?”, Solomon’s true heart comes shining through. He admits that he is but a child, doesn’t know which way to go or how to get where he is going; He speaks his fears about being able to govern such a great people, his uncertainty about what is good and what is evil. He asks God to give him a heart to understand how he can best serve God’s people. Wow! God is pleased and gives Solomon a wise and discerning mind greater than all who have come before or follow. And then

God adds what I called the “cookies and Kool-Aid” – things not essential but wonderful – and promises riches and honour as well.



God’s word to us today is not just all about Solomon, it’s about all of us, about all whom God loves, and that’s everyone. Even when we are being faithful and loving and obedient, well.... ONLY, EXCEPT .....when we aren’t ; even when the “if’s mean we can and sometimes will make choices that do take us into wrong directions, even when we have to “stay tuned” to see what God is doing and others have to “stay tuned” before they judge us where we are..... IN EVERY TIME, PLACE AND CIRCUMSTANCE OF OUR LIVES; GRACE IS EVER NEAR.

There is no place God will not go to find us, and nothing He will not do to save us. Jesus says over and over in our Gospels these past three weeks that He is going to give His Life, his very flesh and Blood in order that He may raise us up to eternal life. God gave Solomon wisdom. God, in Christ, gives us His very Self. With God there are no ifs, ands, or buts. God did not wait for us to try to find a way to Him, but took the initiative and searched us out. Our response, of course, He leaves entirely up to us.

Perhaps our response this morning, as we come to receive the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation, is to bring with us all of our own “And’s, if’s, but’s and only’s” and give thanks that even with all of them, we are loved, we are redeemed, and we are forever in Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Prayer:**

**Lord God, please meet each of us where we are today. Whether places of joy or discouragement or peace or confusion — regardless of how we feel — we trust that Your ways are good and that Your wisdom is perfect. We know**

that you give generously to all who ask for the gift of wisdom. Knowing that you will provide, we ask for guidance and clear thoughts.

For those that are facing big decisions, we pray for Your wisdom to lead them.

For those that are feeling relief, we pray that they will rejoice in Your provision.

For those that are feeling afraid, we pray for Your divine presence to comfort and guide them.

For those that feeling confused, we pray for You to clear their eyes, ears and minds that they may hear your voice and lean upon your love.

For those that are doubting, we pray that Your Word will bring comfort and clarity to their thoughts, and open their hearts to hope.

As we move on into our day, we pray together for love to motivate our deeds, faith to uphold our hope, and joy to be our companion on the journey. With much thanksgiving, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Blessing:**

May the blessing of God almighty, the Love of Jesus the Son who gave Himself for us all, and the vitality of the Holy Spirit lift up your hearts and bring you joy in serving Him and one another, this day and always. Amen.

**Dismissal:**

As we go out into the world and through the week ahead, may God give us wisdom to know what is good, to do what is right and to see His Kingdom all around us, in us, and shining through us. Amen.