

Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: 1 Kings 3:15-28 (OT page 338-339)

The text verse is from verse 26: "The woman whose son was alive was filled with compassion for her son and said to the king, "Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!"

Solomon was David's second son with Bathsheba, the first after their legal marriage. He succeeded his father on the throne in early manhood, probably about sixteen or eighteen years of age. His father chose him as his successor, passing over the claims of his elder sons. During his long reign of forty years the Hebrew kingdom gained its highest splendour.

In the verses before our reading God appeared to him and said: "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

Solomon asked for "a discerning heart to govern the people and to distinguish between right and wrong." God was so pleased with his answer that He gave Him everything he did not ask for like honour and wealth. The Lord promised him a long life if he obeys His commands like his father David did.

Solomon's new gift of wisdom is immediately demonstrated in the well-known story of the two prostitutes arguing over a baby. Prostitution, although it was condemned, were common in biblical times. They often referred to foreign women as "prostitutes".

Israel's kings were sometimes called upon to settle particularly hard cases, and this situation is quite perplexing. Two prostitutes^Ó have had babies. One woman quite carelessly smothers her child in the night, then switches babies while the other woman sleeps. Now both women claim the living child as their own. Without other witnesses or evidence, Solomon must devise some way to solve the case.

The king uses his wisdom to test love, the love of the real mother. Calling for a sword, he orders the child cut into halves, with each woman getting an equal share. The real mother, who has already cared enough for her child to plead her case before the king, acts out of "compassion for her son." She begs Solomon to give the baby to the other woman. In startling contrast the careless, dishonest woman is willing to take her "half." Her cruelty has been revealed, just as the other mother's love have emerged.

Solomon can now give a just verdict. The woman who loves unconditionally, who is willing to give away her son just so that he can live – she is the real mother. Love cannot be faked.

When this verdict became public knowledge, the nation was in awe of the king. The nation was convinced that he received wisdom from God to rule as a just king.

In our reading there are one message that is as clear as daylight namely that God is the ONLY one who can give wisdom because He is the ONLY one

who knows everything in comparison to the idol gods of Solomon's time who did not even exist.

And God's wisdom made Solomon see the difference between someone who loves and someone who fakes love.

It must be our lesson too. We must realise that we cannot fake love. Love can always be tested and only real love will pass the test.

We experienced real love from God when He sent his only Son to die for us on a cross, was resurrected and ascended to heaven. We are the receivers of God's sacrificial love and nothing can come between His love and us. God's love was indeed tested when Jesus suffered on a cross. A theologian once said God knows suffering because He suffered as God because His children will never obey him fully because of sin and as a Father to sent his only Son to die on behalf of his children.

And Jesus said that we have received this love to share with one another. We are part of His triangle of love, if we love God, we can love ourselves and one another. If we do not love God, one another and ourselves unconditionally and sacrificially, we have no love. Then we need to know that his TRIANGLE of love will become something like the Bermuda triangle full of calamities and tragedy in our lives.

Can you imagine the tragedy if the real mother of the baby did not have any love? The outcome would have been what we saw in the news this week as a mother pleaded guilty of killing her son in Edinburgh.

The same must be true of you and me. We must love to avoid tragedy and hopelessness. And to love means to face tragedy, difficulties and brokenness. Yes God showed us that Real true love will bear us grief and pain in the present to ensure eternal peace for the future.

At least we know because God is love we have a true destiny and a true faith and a living hope. And because God is love, we can know whatever happen to us or our loved ones, He will protect and guide us. He will do what the mother in our story did. He will protect us with his life as He has done through Jesus Christ!

The Love of God will help you and me to survive, to journey through pain, suffering and bereavement.

May we be as wise as Solomon to always discern between real love and fake love – and if you love and it hurts, then you know it is certain, true and real. Let us love one another and let us not hold back when we share our gifts and talents... and above all thank God every day for His love.

So come to the Lord's table. The Bible says: God is love, and those who dwell in love are dwelling in God, and God in them. Come and experience

His love for you in a real and personal way and go away knowing that He loves you just as you are... just like a mother did a long time ago when she chose to give up her son just so that he can live.

Amen