

The Soundtrack of Your Life

Psalm 111

1 Kings 3:7–14

We all have songs that stay with us or that we cannot get out of our heads. What about scripture? Do we have scripture that stays with us? Do we have Scripture in our hearts and minds that we are reminded of when we feel like celebrating or are going through a rough time?

The Psalms are scriptures that give us words to say when we want to celebrate or get angry or need hope, like “Praise the Lord” or “Halleluiah” or “How long O Lord” or “You are my strength and salvation.”

Psalm 111 teaches us that wisdom comes through humility in relationship with God. “The worship of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.” God’s instruction, God’s wisdom is what we need to have as the soundtrack of our lives. When we value God’s wisdom above that of our culture and even of our own best intentions, we can experience abundant life.

The Hebrew Scriptures show the importance of wisdom in the Psalms and Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. In 1 Kings Chapters 2 and 3, Solomon becomes king and an example of a wise person with his request for the gift of “an understanding mind to govern your people and able to discern between good and evil.” Solomon understood the need to get wisdom. He was perhaps as young as sixteen when he became king. He had to fill the shoes of his father, King David. Those were big shoes to fill. In order to do the monumental work that lay before him, Solomon needed wisdom and discernment.

A listening heart, an understanding mind, the ability to discern what is right and good—these are qualities essential to good leadership, qualities we should pray to find in all our leaders. It speaks well of the young king that he recognizes the enormous responsibility he has and seeks not material gifts for himself, but gifts of character that will benefit his people.

It is interesting that God seems just as pleased by what Solomon doesn’t ask God to do for him. God delights that Solomon doesn’t ask for wealth; he doesn’t ask for long life; he doesn’t ask to win battles. Solomon receives those things but does not ask God for them. He asks for wisdom.

“Wisdom” in the biblical tradition has to do in large part with what Solomon requests: the ability to discern good and evil, the ability to listen well, and to judge rightly. In this story, Solomon’s great wisdom is understood as a special gift from God. In the biblical wisdom literature, wisdom is also understood as a gift from God. It is given, however, not just to kings, but to all who faithfully seek it (Proverbs 2:1–6; 8:1–17). Wisdom is not to be sought simply for personal gain. It is integrally tied to one’s life in community (Job 29:7–25) and to one’s life with God—“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (Psalm 111).

Solomon, like his father David before him, is a complex character. They both show faithfulness as well as flaws. Solomon is like our own leaders, a mixture of good and bad. Solomon is like all of us, saints and sinners at the same time. Perhaps his story, then, can inform our own stories.

So what is the soundtrack of your life? What plays over and over in your head? Is it the wisdom of God found in the psalms, proverbs, and other scripture?

Think about it – Pray about it – Live it

Bob