

Wise Men and Women Christmas 2.. Jan 2, 2011

Sometimes we think we're pretty smart, don't we? I Read a story of a visitor to a mental asylum asking the Director how they determine whether or not a patient should be institutionalized. "Well," said the Director, "We fill up a bathtub with water, and then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup, and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub." "I'm pretty sharp; I understand," answered the 'visitor, "A normal person will use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or teacup." "No," said the Director, "A normal person will pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?"

OOPPSS! Not so smart, huh? That's one of the reasons I've always liked the story about Solomon. Of all the things Solomon could have asked God for, he chose to ask for wisdom in the sight of God. He wanted to be able to discern between good and evil so he could be a blessing to his people. God answered his prayer and gave him much more; which is what God does anyway.

There is a pattern for wisdom in God's sight. . Number 1, who do you listen to for advice? Number 2, what are you asking for? Number 3, what will you do with it? Remember how discerning good from evil got its start? Yes, in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve first listened to the Devil. They asked for the knowledge to discern between good and evil. They wanted this gift so they could be like God. What does this teach us? All of that Devil- provided knowledge led to sin, death, and destruction. Listen to the Devil; get something for yourself, use it in a selfish way leads to death and destruction.

Solomon, on the other hand, called out to God for help. He wanted to know good from evil, not for himself, but to help his people. God answered the prayer of Solomon because this king trusted God, believed in Him, and wanted to bless others.

What we learn from Solomon's faith applies to the visitor to the asylum. Solomon didn't want to fill himself with Satan's selfish lies like Adam and Eve. Solomon listened to God and wanted what was God-pleasing in his life. What does that say to each of us? Like the bathtub, our lives are filled with sin. Like Adam and Eve, we enjoy seeking to be like our own gods, doing what we want that makes us happy. If we ever feel like we should confess our sins and ask for forgiveness, the teaspoon is the way to go because we don't want to empty the tub of sin. Sin is too much fun. God says that this is not smart.

Solomon trusted God as we can trust in Jesus. Confessing our sins before our Lord is like asking Jesus to pull the plug and free us from those burdens. Jesus came at Christmas and died and rose to pull the plug on our bathtubs of sin and take the burden away. This is wise in God's sight.

Because God is Good.. . All The Time, He wants us to grow in wisdom. How do we grow? We grow in wisdom as we seek out God's help when we study His Word, attend Holy Communion regularly, worship, and pray. Now that's smart in God's sight! Amen.. .pastor matthews