

## Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 5, 1 Kings 3

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We're looking tonight, at the middle section of Solomon's story. In chapters 1 and 2, we saw how the kingdom came to be in existence under Solomon. In chapter 11, we'll get the final judgment on his experience, but chapters 3 to 10 are that middle section, as I've said, or yes, 3 to 10.

On the surface, as we look at these chapters, everything looks very good, but there are hints here and there that something is not quite right here. And when we look more closely, we see, yes, things aren't quite right. The author doesn't tell us what to think most of the time.

Now, once or twice, he will say, this was a good thing, or that was not so good, or something of this. But like the author of Judges, he basically tells us, and he thinks that we're skillful enough readers that we're going to pick up on these hints. And we're going to say, wait a minute, wait a minute, what's going on here? And tonight, in chapter 3, we're going to see that.

Now, the situation as Solomon comes to the throne, religiously, seems to be very, very chaotic. Because about 60 years earlier, 70 years earlier, the Ark had been captured. And for those who are watching us and don't have the benefit of my artfully designed map, let me just sort of pick out some highlights there.

The tabernacle was at Shiloh. Now, it's interesting to think about, over here is the Jordan River, and down there is the Dead Sea. Jerusalem here somewhere, and Bethel there.

We're told in the book of Judges that at one point, at least, the tabernacle was at Bethel. So evidently, it was moving in those years. Ruth tells us quite clearly that it is located at Shiloh.

And when the book of Samuel opens, that's where Samuel is with Eli and Phineas and Hophni, his two sons, his crooked two sons. So, the Philistines are now a problem. And the border of the Philistine territory is something like that.

They're on the coast, and they've got iron. They've got iron chariots. And the Hebrews had not been able to displace them.

And the Philistines, because of their technological superiority, are gaining power. And so, they come up to attack the Hebrews. And the Hebrews say, hey, we need a rabbit's foot.

So, let's go to the tabernacle and get the Ark of the Covenant. Bad move. And so they take the Ark of the Covenant over here.

This is the town of Aphek. The battle is at the Rock of Ebenezer. We don't know exactly where that was, but it was somewhere west of Shiloh and east of Aphex.

And immediately, the Philistines, when they hear the shout of the Israelites when the Ark comes into the camp, they say, man, we're in big trouble. We've got to do everything possible. We've got to win this battle.

And they did. God does not particularly care for being used as a rabbit's foot. He doesn't care about that box.

Yeah, it's a gold box. It's really fancy. But he didn't care about a box.

And so, almost certainly, the Philistines came on up the pass and destroyed Shiloh. Jeremiah tells us this. Jeremiah, when the Hebrew people are saying, well, nothing bad can happen to us.

We've got the temple. Jeremiah says, the temple, the temple, the temple. Don't you understand? I can do the same thing to this house that I did to the one at Shiloh, which says that, indeed, the Moses Tabernacle was destroyed at that point.

So, they took the Ark back down the International Highway and took it over to Ashdod. They put it there in front of their God--spoil from the battle.

The next morning, when they get up, God is lying on his face in front of the Ark, its hands cut off. That's how they did body counts in those days. They cut off the soldier's hands and divided them in two.

Oops. One thing after another. So, they said, this thing is too hot to handle.

They sent it down to Gath. The Philistines had five major cities, and it appears that the rule of the territory traveled from city to city. Well, things didn't turn out well in Gath, either.

A little problem with hemorrhoids. So, they said, well, let's send it up to Ekron. Evidently, the people at Ekron had not heard about this thing yet.

And that was no good either. And so, they said to the Israelites, hey, look, we don't want your box anymore. So, what to do? Take cows that have just had calves.

Shut the calves up in the barn. Attach the cows to an ox cart. And if they go to Israel, leaving their calves behind, you know, God's in this thing.

And sure enough, that's exactly what happened. The cows went down the road, mooing all the way. We don't want to do this.

We don't want to do this. We don't want to do this. But we've got to, like some of us.

So it goes to Beth Shemesh, and the people there are very excited about this. We get to take care of God's box.

But a bunch of people fool around with it and die. And the people at Beth Shemesh say, hey, Kiriath Jerem, would you get this box? And so, at Kiriath-Jearim, the box sat for 20 years. Tabernacle is gone.

The box is sitting here. There is a tabernacle at Nob. Nob is on the hill overlooking Jerusalem.

It's where Hebrew University is located today. But we're told here in chapter three that Solomon went to, and I didn't do my map very well here. Let's move Kiriath Jerem a little bit south.

The road goes up this way and out this way. Ultimately, it ends up in Joppa. And Gibeon is on this road.

We're told that Solomon went to this high place and offered sacrifices. So, are there two tabernacles, neither of which has the Ark of the Covenant in it? It looks like general chaos is what's taking place. It may well be that we have conflicting priestly families.

We've talked about this before. Eli is from one family, and his son Abiathar, grandson, is actually from that family. Zadok is from the other family.

So, is it possible that we have two competing tabernacles here with two competing sets of priesthood? I am not sure, but it certainly looks as though things are in a totally chaotic situation as we come into this period. What's going to happen here now? What's going to become of us and of the worship of God? And the ultimate focus on the temple with the Ark is sort of getting the nation back on track. In many ways, this religious chaos is the bottom of the judges.

I was doing a crossword puzzle the other day, and I found the word nadir, N-A-D-I-R, at the bottom. Yes, this was the nadir. This was the bottom.

In a real sense, what's happening with David? Solomon is getting them back to center again. And that's clearly very high on God's agenda. Now, right from the outset, God had said, do not worship their idols.

Do not worship at their high places. The Hebrew word is bama, which is literally a high place. But it's pretty clear that these were not always mountaintops.

I think that's clearly where the idea got started because the gods live on the mountaintops. That's closer to heaven. And so, you worship in high places, but it's pretty clear that eventually, any worship shrine was called a high place.

And you notice what we're told is that Solomon went to Gibeon because that was a famous high place. What? What? But again, I suspect that with the chaos that followed in the loss of the ark, I think, I think clearly the Bible would say to us there was a good deal of this stuff going on anyhow through the period of the judges, especially. But it seems likely to me that during this chaos, this whole thing gained more traction.

Now, I think that, probably in most cases, they worshiped Yahweh in these high places. They, I don't think the, certainly those who were keeping the faith during these years were worshiping Baal or Asherah or other gods or goddesses. But I do think they were worshiping Yahweh in these places.

And. This becomes the line. From now on, until Hezekiah.

But they worshiped on the high places. Now, what's the problem with that? The problem with that is it localizes Yahweh. Oh, I worship Yahweh of Beersheba.

You poor clots. You only worship Yahweh of Hebron. How easily then does God in his oneness get divided up?

And that's the whole thrust of Deuteronomy. You've got to worship me at one place. Now, that was a big problem.

That was a big problem. Even though Shiloh is very central in the land, it's still a good 80 miles from Beersheba and a good 90 miles from Dan up in the north. That's a long walk.

But God says it's this important. Don't divide me up. But in fact, that's exactly what was going on.

It's a whole lot more convenient. Again, if you've read Samuel, you remember that every year, Elkanah took his whole family and went to Shiloh to worship. Wow.

That's not only taking time out. It's also expensive. So again, how important is it to keep God one, to keep him central? It's absolutely important.

And for 200 years, they didn't quite get the point. One last thing, and I realize I'm still in the introduction here. One last thing is when countries made treaties with one another, they very, very commonly did two things.

Number one, there was a marriage. And number two, you recognize the other people's gods. So, in chapter three.

I'm, I'm, I used to sort of cluck my tongue at Dr. Kinlaw when he would say, you know, I read this for years. I think I was 65 years old before I saw that. Well, yeah.

I really did not see the import of the first three verses of 1 Kings 3 until I was working on the commentary. We tend to see this chapter as about Solomon, who is given the gift of wisdom.

Thank God. And it's true. But look at how the chapter starts.

Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and married his daughter. No, no. Yes.

Yes. I mean, I mean such a deal. Egypt was on the downward road that it was going to pursue for the next thousand years, but it's still, I mean, Egypt was Egypt 2,000 years of wisdom and glamor and elegance and power.

And they are willing to make a deal with us. All I have to do is marry his daughter. And I'll keep my fingers crossed when I bow down before Ray and Horace and Osiris and ISIS and all those other 10,000 gods.

Have you ever been there? Have you ever been there? Do not love the world. Say, is that in Kings? It's in the book. He made an alliance with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and married his daughter.

He brought her to the city of David. I don't think that's an accident, not Jerusalem, but the city of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the Lord and the wall around Jerusalem. Later on, we're going to be told he made her a special enclave outside the walls.

I mean, you want to keep the pollution a little bit out of the center of things. Now, what's wrong with this? Look, please, at Exodus chapter 34, verses 12 to 16. This is God renewing the covenant after the golden calf incident.

And by the way, have you noticed it's a unilateral renewal? God simply commits himself from his side. And he says, be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you're going, or there'll be a snare among you. That's why the Canaanites break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, and cut down their Asherah poles.

Don't worship any other God, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Now, you know the word there. It can also be translated as zealous, zealous, and jealous.

And I think that's intentional in English. For us today, jealousy is a petty emotion. You know, Karen and I are walking down the street.

We meet Quentin Schultz, and Karen smiles at him. And I say, what'd you do that for? Petty. That's not what we're talking about here.

This is the zeal of a father for a daughter. When Elizabeth was dating, I insisted on meeting her young man at the front door. Karen said, if you keep on doing that, she'll never get a boyfriend.

I said that's okay with me. I was jealous. I wanted the best for her.

I didn't want these clods she was hanging around with. That's our God. God is jealous.

Don't hang out with those things. Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land. Now I can imagine Solomon with the letter of the law.

Well, it said that those who live in the land, the Egyptians, don't live in the land. For when they get the word, prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them. They will invite you, and you will eat their sacrifices. And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

Deuteronomy 17 says that every king is to make his own copy of the covenant and read it every day. I wonder how many ever did, but there it is. Why don't you want to marry an unbeliever? Because they will do what with their gods? What did it say? Prostitute themselves.

Now, what's that thing about God's desire for us? What kind of a covenant does he want with you? Exclusive. What else? Pure. What is prostitution? It's a violation of the wedding.

He wants a marriage covenant with us. He thinks you're the cutest thing he's ever seen. And to worship anything in this creation other than him is to prostitute yourself.

Wow. Solomon. Oh, but he is. I've erased the map, but not quite all of it.

Right down here is a big, big fortress city that guarded this international highway, guarded this highway to Joppa, a very, very big deal called Gezer. You know what he's going to do? He's going to capture Gezer and give it to me as a wedding present. Who wouldn't do that? Oh, the world will pay a very high price to get your soul.

In verse two, the people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places because the temple had not yet been built in the name of the Lord. Now, the, however, is not actually in the Hebrew, but NIV has it. So does NRSV.

They're saying the syntax here suggests that what is however meaning here? He brought her to the city of David till he finished building his palace in the temple of the Lord and the wall around Jerusalem. The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places. What's that, however, about? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

You can say Solomon is focused on building a temple for the Lord, but the people aren't. The people don't particularly want a temple. David, if you remember our study of Chronicles right at the beginning, David.

Had wanted to build a permanent house for God, and God said, you're not the man. Your son can do it. David collected all these materials, and when he announced that Solomon was to be his successor in Chronicles, he said, I have accumulated all these materials.

I've got this stuff already so that he can do it. So, there's a focus in David's mind, and he has passed it along to Solomon in some sense. But the people haven't gotten the picture.

They don't need a temple. They got the local high place with the paganized Yahweh there that they can do rituals with and make him do what they want. Now, in verse three, Solomon shows his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given to him by his father.

Let's stop there. How did he show his love? What does it say? He walked in the statues of his father. What does that say to you and me? Do you love the Lord? Yes.

I feel all fuzzy about him. That shows my love for the Lord, doesn't it? We show our love for the Lord by doing what he wants. Oh, I love you, Daddy.

Would you please go wash the car? I'm too busy. I love you. He showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given to him by his father, David.

Praise God. But the sentence isn't finished, is it? Except. Except he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

And again, I just wonder, as I look in the mirror, are there accepts in my walk? Oh, yeah. I'm doing really well here. Never mind there.

No, God, no exceptions. No excuses. Some years ago, I think it's original with me, but I'm not sure.

But I came up with the phrase all yours without a limit, without a rival. May it be. May it be.

So, the king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place. And Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on the altar. 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. And all the angels are holding their breath. What's he going to ask for? Jesus said it to James and John.

What do you want me to do for you? And they said, let us sit on either side of your throne. And I think Jesus' heart sunk. He's asking us every day, what do you want me to do for you? And what's our answer? Well, Solomon comes off very, very well.

You have shown great hesed to your servant, my father, David, because he, and NIV sort of softens a little bit, but it says, he walked before you in truth and in righteousness and in uprightness of heart or straightness of heart. Here's walk again. It's not a position.

It's not a state. It's a walk day after day after day. And I like that walk before you.

I don't think it's so much walk in front of as it is walk in your presence. So it's not God sitting over here saying, okay, yeah, I like the way you walk. No, it's with him, with him in your presence.

Now that word, some of you have heard me talk about it until you're tired of it, but that's all right. Repetition is the soul of education. The word used does not occur in any other Semitic language, but it occurs 250 times in the Hebrew Bible, three-quarters of them referring to God.

And it is not something you feel. It is something you do. You do hesed with others.



And what that is is the passionate devotion of a superior to an inferior, especially when it is undeserved. And that's the character of our God. That's who he is.

That's what he does. The term can go all the way from the lowest level of kindness, but you know, what is kindness? It's doing something for somebody that they haven't earned. They don't deserve it.

You just do it out of the goodness of your heart. From there, it goes on up to forgiveness when we have killed his only son. That's hesed folks.

So here Solomon says, you've done hesed to David. That is, David did not deserve this wonderful kingdom. David did not deserve to have a son on the throne and the kingdom in peace, in prosperity, but you've done it in kindness.

You've done it because he was on your side. He was walking with you, and you have continued this great hesed to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. Now, Lord, my God, you've made your servant king in place of my father, David, and you just have to love him.

But I'm only a little child, and I don't know how to carry out my duties. Humility is the place to begin. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number.

So, give your heart, your servant, a discerning heart. Interestingly, the Hebrew is a listening heart, a listening heart, a heart to listen to them, a heart to listen to you. Wow.

I know what to do. It was a great sermon in the seminary chapel today by a minister who is exceedingly successful. And his closing statement is so powerful.

He said, you're all bright people. You wouldn't be here if you weren't. You're all capable people.

You're competent people. You do your work here. You study.

You can go out, lead people, lead them where? No, unless you come to the place, he said, where it is this Holy Spirit using your abilities. They will be deadly. Wow.

Absolutely right. Absolutely right. So, give your servant a listening heart to judge your people.

Now, here's another important Hebrew word. Again, we've talked about it before. And as long as you keep coming, you'll hear it again.

But this word judge, and I like what the NIV has done here. The NIV has translated it govern. And that is the sense of it here.

It's not just to pass judgment upon, but it is to bring your people into the appropriate order that you have planned for the people of God. That's what. And so the psalm says, oh, give thanks for the judge is coming.

I don't normally give thanks to the judge. But yes, praise God for the one who's coming and going to put the world in order. We could use the judge right now.

So, distinguish between right and wrong. Who is able to govern these great people of yours? Well, as I say, if God didn't love him before this, he surely loved him now. Now, let me stop here. You say, well, no, no, wait a minute.

Is this the right picture of Solomon or is versus one to three the right picture of Solomon? And the answer is yes. Yes. His failures, as in versus one to three, do not cancel out his great, great successes.

But his great success, spiritually speaking, is tainted by this other thing. So, the beginning of this account has this little checkmark on it. I heard a wonderful sermon years ago.

It started out by talking about one of America's greatest philosophers, Yogi Berra, who said, it ain't over till it's over. And that's the story of Solomon. That's the story of Solomon.

A germ is planted here at the outset that is, in the end, going to bear tragic, tragic fruit. Again, I want to say that to young people every time I get a chance. What are you choosing today that is going to catch you 50 years from now? What are you denying today that's going to stand you in good stead 50 years from now? But there it is.

This is Solomon, a man of humility, a man who loves the Lord and wants the best for his people. Man, I'd like to have a king like that. God said to him, since you've asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourselves, yourself, nor ask for the death of your enemies, but for discernment in administering justice, in administering government, I will do what you've asked.

I'll give you a wise, discerning heart so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I'll give you what you've not asked for, both wealth and honor, so that in your lifetime, you'll have no equal among kings. Again, it's a terrible cliché, but clichés become clichés because they're true.

You cannot out give God. God says, stand back, Solomon. Here it comes.

Wow. Wow. Again, again, you don't see God qualifying anything here.

You don't see him saying, now, wait a minute. You have a little problem there. And until we get that little problem sorted out, I'm not going to bless you.

No, he's not like that. Give him half a chance, and he'll bless the socks off you. That's what Jonah knew, and he hated it.

Sure, as the world, I'll go there to Nineveh and tell them they're going to all die, and they'll repent, and you'll forgive them. I know what kind of a God you are. That's why I tried to get away from you.

But verse 14, if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David, your father, did, I will give you a long life also. Oops. Oops.

No, God, I want an ironclad guarantee that because I've been a good boy now and you have really blessed me and are pouring out your blood, I want an ironclad guarantee that everything's going to go on the same forever. It's not the way God works. It's a relationship.

It's a relationship. A relationship that he means to keep. But the question is, am I going to keep it now? My mother-in-law grew up in a Methodist church, a good, strong Methodist church.

But when she became a Baptist, the little Methodist church in the town in which they moved was as dead as a stone. She really, really loved eternal security. For the first time in her life, she was secure in her relationship with Jesus.

You see, sometimes we in the Methodistic tradition, we definitely don't preach eternal security. We preach eternal insecurity. It's up to you whether God keeps his promises to you or not.

And you better walk the straight and narrow because he's just looking for a chance to kick you off. Dear God, no. Dear God, no.

I'm so glad God let me get married because I've learned so much theology from it. Karen is not looking for a chance to kick me out, not because I'm a perfect husband.

If she weren't here, I would tell you I am. But she knows my heart. She knows that I want to be her husband with all my heart.

And although my performance is not always what it could be or should be, she knows that I'm hers: poor woman, lock, stock, and barrel. And when I began to get a glimpse of that, I began to hear God saying, now you understand me.

I'm not looking for a chance to get rid of you. I'm not looking for a chance to push you off the edge. I'm willing to cut you as much slack as you need.

As long as you are mine. Without a limit, without a rival. So yes, there's an if there.

Not the if of a God who's looking for a chance to get rid of us, but the if that says this is an ongoing relationship. And if I come to the place where I say, I don't care what you want. I don't care what you like.

I don't care what you need. I'm getting what I want. The relationship is in desperate trouble.

Okay. Then Solomon woke and realized it was a dream. Wow.

He returned to Jerusalem and stood before the Ark of the Lord's Covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast to the whole court. I think that's kind of significant.

Whoa, whoa, this is, this is God. And God is to be worshiped where the sign of his covenant is. Maybe there's a tabernacle here at Gibeon.

Maybe there's an altar here at Gibeon, but the Ark of the Covenant is back in Jerusalem. I need to get back there. I think that's what's going on.

So, before we leave that, let me look at question five. What are the guidelines for our praying that come from Solomon here in verses seven, eight, nine? What would you say? What's number one? Humility. Absolutely.

Oh God, I'm not coming to you in all my gifts. I'm not coming to you trying to twist your arm. I'm coming to you as one who is desperately, desperately.

What else do you see in this prayer? Yes. Yes. Acknowledge who God is and what the evidence is of who he is. His hesed.

All our praying ought to be rooted right there. We know what kind of a God he is. We know that he's faithful.

We know that he chooses the best for us, even if it costs him a cross. Good. What else? For a listening heart to know his ways.

Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. And I, I don't know about you.

This is not easy for me. I tend to be subject to whims. And I've known people who say, oh, I can, I can tell the Lord's voice every time.

And I'm envious of them. It's not easy for me, but I keep studying in school to know his voice and to follow it. What else? Well, the obvious one is concern for the people, not himself.

Again, I said it there. This is his shining hour. This is his shining hour.

This is God saying, hey, blank check. What do you want? I'm, I'm given this incredible responsibility, God. They need somebody to govern them.

Help me. Help me. There's one more thing in verse nine: he wants a listening heart for two purposes.

Number one, to govern his people. What's the other one? Discern between good and evil. Oh, my.

There's a sermon hiding in there somewhere. All right. We've got just a few minutes left here.

Let's look at the bulk of the rest of the chapter, which we can do pretty quickly, I believe. What is the deal with two prostitutes? You know, here's our example. We're going to have an example of a guy who is discerning.

And again, I would want to say wisdom in this context is that wisdom to administer, to govern, to decide between competing points of view, that kind of thing. It's not necessarily to have world-class smarts, which I don't think he has. But, that capacity to discern, to see into things and see what's going on, that's wisdom.

So, here's one example of his powers of discernment. The terms author, editor, compiler, and I'll use them. I think there's no question but that these books are put together.

They're using records. They're using personal anecdotes. They're using all kinds of things.

So, there's selectivity going on here. Why select this now? Hey, don't be afraid. I don't have an answer.

Why use prostitutes? Couldn't you use nicer people as an example? What do you think? I think you're right. That's the one that grabs me. These are the people who are least deserving of the king's attention.

The king is concerned about right and wrong. These are, these are the bottom of the heap, socially speaking. Part of the reason that they're coming to the king is that they don't have husbands to help them out with this.

So, I think David is exactly right. I think, again, I don't know for sure, but that makes sense to me. Two prostitutes come to the king, and the king says, verse 23, both of you are saying, oh, excuse me.

Look at verse 23. That's the one I want you to see. Look what the king says.

Do you see what he says about the two women? What, how does he quote them? My son is alive, and your son is dead. No, your son is dead and mine is alive. One begins with life and the other begins with death.

Maybe a listening heart heard that. So, these two women have two different motives. What's the motive of the one woman? Yes.

Uh-huh. One is after food. They're both starving.

I think Solomon perceives that difference of motivation. I don't care whether I get anything to eat. If my baby lives, I don't care whether they're dead or alive.

I'm just hungry. So, what's the issue for us? What do I want? Do I want what is mine? No, don't kill him. You take him.

Just let him live. In verse 26, the woman whose son was alive was deeply moved out of love for her son and said to the king, please, my Lord, give her the living baby. Don't kill him.

And the other one said, neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two. I'm going to have my rights, and my rights are half that of a baby.

Give the living baby to the first woman. Don't kill him. She's the mother.

That's discernment. Looking at the motivation of these two people, the one motivated by what she wants, her rights, and the other one motivated by love for the child. What are you motivated by? What am I motivated by? I'm going to have what I want.

No, no, I'm going to have life. I'm going to have what's best for the other. When all of Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice.

I think that's; again, I think that's a good translation, not just to judge but to govern. All right, questions, comments, observations? Well, they've got Deuteronomy, and Deuteronomy says, the place where my name is, and I think after the tabernacle is destroyed, the place where his name is, is the ark. And I think the very fact that they would leave the ark out there in the wilderness for 20 years is an indication of how far they have sunk.

Because, as I say, Deuteronomy is very clear. Where my name is, there's where you worship, no place else. Now, I have to say, some critics use that as an argument to say, well, Deuteronomy didn't exist then.

It wasn't written until later. I don't buy that. I think sin is very good at ignoring what it knows, and it's just inconvenient.

I often think that George Barna is the closest to an Old Testament prophet who's alive today, and he says the death of the church is convenient and simple. It's not simplicity, convenience, and simplicity. It's not easy.

I do what's easy. Yeah, good. Anything else?

Father, thank you. Thank you for your patience with Solomon. Thank you for your love for him. Thank you that your giving to him was not constricted by what you knew about him.

Thank you, Lord, for your kindness to David, Solomon, and us. Thank you that we may indeed live for you without a limit and without a rival. In your name, we pray. Amen.