

## ***Sermon ~ Bible Reading 1 Kings 11:1-13, 26-43; 12:1-13.10; Psalm 1***

Psalm 1 makes it perfectly clear that the wise person is the one who rejects the advice of evil people, who does not follow the example of sinners, who does not join those who have no use for God – no, the wise person is the one who finds joy in obeying the Law of the LORD and studies it day and night. And so the wise person is the one who enjoys the Lord’s guidance and protection.

Today’s first readings show how foolish the one to whom God had given wisdom had become, for Solomon no longer found joy in obeying the Law of the LORD or studied it day and night. The wise Solomon had become the fool who turned away from the LORD and disobeyed his commands. No wonder things fell apart.

### **Sowing**

However acceptable intermarriage was to the surrounding nations – after all, political alliances with foreign kings were sealed by marriages – God had made it perfectly clear that marrying outside his people was an evil in his sight. Solomon the fool chose to use the world’s values, and not God’s, to guide him and married daughters of foreign kings. It led him into the worship of false gods and led him away from total commitment to the Lord. And his disobedience sowed seeds that would divide the kingdom.

A certain practice or way of life may be quite acceptable to our society, but if God says it’s wrong we must avoid it like the plague. Instead, let us hear what God says is right, and not only hear it but do it. We mustn’t allow the world around us to squeeze us into its own mould. Our loyalty to God must not be divided or compromised, our commitment must be total. What kind of seeds are we sowing?

### **Reaping**

God became angry – not in the sense of blowing a fuse or going ballistic or throwing his weight around – his anger is quite different from ours; no, he expressed his anger in the way he allowed conflict and rebellion to threaten the kingdom. God had warned Solomon: “If you disobey the laws and commands I have given you and worship other gods, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you.” God was now fulfilling his warning. The people who had been united in celebration were now divided through compromise.

We need to be clear, sin does affect our relationships with people and cause pain and heartache; compromise with sin does take our peace away and can affect future generations. As we come to the table today, let us seek forgiveness and inward cleansing, peace with Christ and with each other and the spiritual enrichment of our poor hearts.

### ***FOOD FOR THOUGHT***

Rowland Bingham (a founder of Sudan Interior Mission) told how he met a quiet Scottish lady in Canada, who told him how God had called her eldest boy (Walter Gowans) to the Sudan. She talked to him about the vast extent of the country and the teeming masses of people. Convinced of the need, Bingham went to the Sudan. A year and a half later, he returned to Canada, alone. Walter lay buried in Nigeria. He visited Mrs Gowans to take her the few personal belongings of her son. They stood there in silence. Then she said these words: ‘Well, Mr Bingham, I would rather have had Walter go out to the Sudan and die there, all alone, than have him home today, disobeying his Lord.’

### ***GOING DEEPER***

Questions on the Bible passage and sermon for you to think about during the week, either on your own or in a small group:

1. Solomon compromised in order to make his kingdom secure. In what ways might we compromise towards God in order to achieve our aims?
2. If Solomon had the gift of God’s wisdom, how could he have been drawn away from God?
3. How can we put God first in our work, at home and in the church?