Message for uploading

 **May he turn our hearts to him
1 Kings 8:54-66
Key Verse 8:58**

**May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands, decrees and laws he gave our ancestors.**

There is a saying, “The heart wants what it wants.” I learned “Emily Dickinson” wrote it first. Woody Allen used it when he wanted to marry his step daughter who was 35 years younger at the cost of divorcing his wife. I found one singer Selena Gomez used it for one of her song title. What it says assumes what our hearts want is really what we want. So I guess many young people may use what their hearts want for their romance and marriage.

But the bible says very differently about our heart. Jeremiah says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and beyond cure.” Surprising? The word of God says our heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. It is so corrupt that no one cure it.

But we want fully committed heart to the Lord. That is why one of Solomon’s blessings for his people is – “May he turn your hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands, decrees and laws he gave our ancestors.”

So today we will think about how we can receive the fully committed heart from the Lord.

My message has two parts.  **Part I. He stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel (v.54-61)
Part II. They blessed the king (v.62-66)**

**Part I. He stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel (v.54-61)

Verses 54-55
“54When Solomon had finished all these prayers and supplications to the Lord, he rose from before the altar of the Lord, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out toward heaven. 55He stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel in a loud voice, saying:**

Last Sunday we learned that Solomon offered seven specific prayers. The passage reveals that the Lord hears, forgives, and acts.

After Solomon finished his prayers and supplications to the Lord he rose from before the altar of the Lord, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out toward heaven. During his prayer, he must have knelt down before the Lord although he started his prayer standing at first. Our position in prayer is not matter as long as our hearts are given to the Lord in prayer.

Now Solomon wanted to bless his people. When he blessed his people he must have believed that his blessing would work.

He was the leader as the king, and his blessing to his people by faith in the Lord was so precious to them. In our situation, parents’ blessings for their children by faith are so precious. So parents must believe the Lord would accept their blessings for their parents and bless them as much as they want. Indeed, to bless our children is the demonstration of our faith in the goodness of the Lord.

 **Verses 56-61
“56“Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses. 57May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our ancestors; may he never leave us nor forsake us. 58May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands, decrees and laws he gave our ancestors. 59And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the Lord, be near to the Lord our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel according to each day’s need, 60so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is no other. 61And may your hearts be fully committed to the Lord our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time.”**

Solomon’s blessings have four points.

1. He praised the Lord who gave them rest according to his promise (v.56)
2. May the Lord be with them (v.57)
3. May the Lord turn their hearts to him (v.58, 61)
4. May the words of Solomon be near to the Lord day and night (v.59-60)

First Solomon praised the Lord who kept his promise and give them rest.

1. **He praised the Lord who gave them rest according to his promise (v.56)**

**56“Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.”**

Solomon praised the Lord first because he has given rest to his people according to his promise given to Moses. The promise given to Moses probably refers to

**Deuteronomy 12:10-11**

**10But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety. 11Then to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name—there you are to bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the Lord.**

Finally about 500 years later after Moses gave the Lord’s promise, the Lord’s promise to give his people rest was fulfilled. Here ‘the rest’ probably refers to no more wars with neighboring nations. During Solomon’s reign Israel ruled over all the neighboring nations, and they had peace. To the people of Israel ‘rest’ means ‘peace’ and ‘safety’.

**1 Kings 4:24-25 “ 24For he ruled over all the kingdoms west of the Euphrates River, from Tiphsah to Gaza, and had peace on all sides. 25During Solomon’s lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree.”**

 “Peace” and “safety” can essential part of rest.

In Jesus Christ, we have also the promise of rest.

**Matthew 11:28-29**

**“28“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”**

Second,

1. He praised the Lord who gave them rest according to his promise (v.56)
2. **May the Lord be with them (v.57)**
3. May the Lord turn their hearts to him (v.58)
4. May the words of Solomon be near to the Lord day and night (v.59-60)

**Verse 57, “May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our ancestors; may he never leave us nor forsake us.”** “The presence of God” is the source of all other blessings. Moses did not want to enter into the promised land when the Lord wanted to send them with an angel instead of himself. Moses knew that the true blessing is “the presence of God.” All other blessings come in with the Lord’s presence.

Third,

1. He praised the Lord who gave them rest according to his promise (v.56)
2. May the Lord be with them (v.57)
3. **May the Lord turn their hearts to him (v.58)**
4. May the words of Solomon be near to the Lord day and night (v.59-60)

**Verse 58 “May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands, decrees and laws he gave our ancestors.”**

“Heart” is always matters before the Lord. In the heart is our faith and commitment to the Lord. Solomon who offered this prayer suffered from his heart problem later.

Solomon’s blessing is for the Lord to turn their hearts to him.

The status of our heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. (**Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”)** No one can understand such corrupted heart apart from curing it.

How can we cure our hearts which are beyond cure? We cannot do it but the Lord can do it. That is why Solomon blessed his people to experience the Lord’s blessing. It is to turn their hearts to him.

The Lord is able to turn our hearts to him. We can call this “grace of God”. The Lord has power to turn our hearts to him fully.

**Matthew 7:7-8**

**7“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.**

How can we have fully committed heart to the Lord? By God’s power. By God’s grace. The Lord is able to turn our hearts to him fully. Period. That is why Solomon prayed, “May he turn your hearts to him.”

The bible says, Jesus’ blood has already cleansed our conscience. And our hearts and conscience are closely related.

**Hebrews 9:13-14 “13The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”**

Jesus gave his life and blood to cleanse our conscience and heart for the Lord.

So how can we turn our hearts to the Lord fully? We cannot do it, but the Lord is able to do it. The power of the Lord which is grace upon us through the blood of Jesus can turn our hearts to him fully. We must believe in the power of the Lord and grace of the Lord.

I heard one person’s testimony who experienced how the Lord turned his hearts to him fully by the power of the Lord and grace of the Lord.

He was a Christian. So he wanted his heart to be fully committed to the Lord. But every other month on average, he fell into porno addiction and suffered from it. When he fell into it, he could not do other productive work for several days. When it was over he suffered from immense sense of guilt and condemnation. He had to spend another several days to overcome such condemnation and guilt. So his job performance was very poor. Because of his addiction, his heart was never fully committed to the Lord.

His addiction lasted several decades. So we can imagine his agony and anguish because of this addiction. And he had to lie so many times to people around him because he could not confess his sin whenever he committed. It was too many. So he ended up lying and it added to his guilt all the more. His heart was almost dead.

From time to time he gave up to pray, but at the same time he prayed out of anguish from time to time.

But then one day he found his heart was completely cleansed from such lustful desires. At first he could not even notice it because it came from the Lord who did it. The miracle the Lord performed for him was so complete that he even did not think about porno anymore. When the Lord turned his heart to him, his desire for porno was completely wiped out from his heart. Even a little desire did not arise from his heart. And of course, he made so sure he would not suffer from such terrible addiction anymore. So he paid super attention to any kind of desire for porno arising in his heart, and shut it down immediately. But the amazing work of God is the Lord took away his lustful desires. He found unbelievable power and grace of the Lord. His lustful desire for the porno was completely gone!

Therefore, the Lord is able to turn our hearts to him fully! So if we want our hearts to be committed to the Lord fully, let us ask the Lord. If we are suffering from any addictions, let us ask the Lord, and seek the Lord, and knock the door of the Lord. He has power to heal our hearts! He is able to cure our deceptive hearts and free our hearts from all kinds of addictions and fear.

Fourth,

1. He praised the Lord who gave them rest according to his promise (v.56)
2. May the Lord be with them (v.57)
3. May the Lord turn their hearts to him (v.58)
4. **May the words of Solomon be near to the Lord day and night (v.59-60)**

**Verse 59
And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the Lord, be near to the Lord our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel according to each day’s need**

Solomon asks the Lord to hear his prayer and the prayer of the Israelites and answer them by upholding their cause according to each day’s need. As we have learned, the Lord God hears, forgives, and acts. So this blessing can be given in the form of the swift answer from the Lord. Maybe that is the meaning of the word, “May these words of mine be near to the Lord our God day and night”. Solomon wants the Lord’s answer quickly. In addition, this blessing is related to each day’s need.

This blessing also has another aspect. It is for all the peoples of the earth.

**Verse 60. “So that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is no other.”**

Here, “the Lord” means “the God of Israel”, and “God” means “the only true God”. At that time, all the other peoples of the earth except the Jews believed different gods. They are not gods but idols. They are demons. The only true God is the Lord, the God of Israel. To receive answer for their prayers in their daily needs is the testimony to all the other peoples of the earth, and they will know that the God of Israel is the only true God, and they will come to him.

Abraham’s life shows a good example for this.

**Genesis 21:22-23**

**“22At that time Abimelek and Phicol the commander of his forces said to Abraham, “God is with you in everything you do. 23Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you now reside as a foreigner the same kindness I have shown to you.”**

Abraham did not preach Abimelek and Phicol. He just lived by faith in God. Then what happened? The unbelieving Abimelek and Philco came to Abraham and said, “God is with you in everything you do.” Although they did not believe in God, they ended up believing in God because he saw that God who was with Abraham in everything Abraham did. So they confessed, “God is with you in everything you do”, and they wanted to make a peace treaty.

Solomon wanted the same thing happened to all the peoples of the earth as his people Israel committed their hearts fully to the Lord and the Lord would answer their prayers.

**Now verses 61 is the repetition of the third blessing in verse 58. Verse 61 reads, “61And may your hearts be fully committed to the Lord our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time.”

Verse 58 reads, “58May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands, decrees and laws he gave our ancestors.”**

But there is a little difference between these two blessings. What is it? Yes! The subject is different. The one in action in verse 58 is “the Lord”, and the on in verse 61 is “Their hearts”. So Solomon says, “May he turn your hearts to him.” “May your hearts be fully committed to the Lord our God”.

Once the Lord turns our hearts to him, we need to make sure our hearts are fully committed to the Lord and stay there.

**Verse 61b “to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time.” The phrase “as at this time”** shows that Solomon wanted his peoples’ heart to be fully committed at the time when he blessed his people. In our case, it is like the end of our bible conferences. At the end our bible conferences, we want our hearts fully committed to the Lord even after the conferences.

 **Part II. They blessed the king (v.62-66)**

 **Verses 62-64
“62Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the Lord. 63Solomon offered a sacrifice of fellowship offerings to the Lord: twenty-two thousand cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats. So the king and all the Israelites dedicated the temple of the Lord.
64On that same day the king consecrated the middle part of the courtyard in front of the temple of the Lord, and there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings, because the bronze altar that stood before the Lord was too small to hold the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings.**

Now in these verses we see that Solomon and his people dedicated the temple by offering so many sacrifices, the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the fellowship offerings.

Solomon offered 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats as the fellowship offering to the Lord.

On the same day, the place of the bronze altar was so narrow for all the offerings that Solomon consecrated the middle part of the courtyard in front of the temple of the Lord for burnt offerings, grain offerings, and fat of the fellowship offerings.

Now all these amount of offerings and sacrifices are the shadow of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. All these sacrifices ultimately related to God’s forgiveness through the blood of Jesus.

**Verses 65-66
“65So Solomon observed the festival at that time, and all Israel with him—a vast assembly, people from Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt. They celebrated it before the Lord our God for seven days and seven days more, fourteen days in all. 66On the following day he sent the people away. They blessed the king and then went home, joyful and glad in heart for all the good things the Lord had done for his servant David and his people Israel.”**

It was days of festival. When you think about “festival” what do you usually expect? Yes, delicious food! Without delicious food, I don’t know what kind of festival we can enjoy. It was the days of enjoying delicious food. It was the day of joy and gladness in the hearts of the Israelites. The Lord blessed the Solomon’s prayer and turn their hearts to walk in obedience to him and keep his command, decrees and law he gave their ancestors during the festival.

Originally the festival would be one week. But they extended one more week. There was a vast assembly from **Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt.** That would be the largest land of Israel ever in their history, and it was even larger than the territory under king David.

At the end of fourteen days festival they were so happy and joyful that they blessed their King Solomon and then went home. The king blessed them and now they blessed the king. They were joyful and glad in heart for all the good things the Lord had done for his servant David and his people Israel.

There are so many blessings in Jesus Christ. Whenever we think about how much he blesses us, we are so happy and thankful that we also want to bless others out of our overflowing joy and thanks. With numberless blessings we receive from the Lord, we bless others. And we will be joyful and glad all the more.

In conclusion, we learned Solomon’s blessings for his people Israel. Among them we learned the blessing of fully committed heart to the Lord. And the Lord is able to turn our hearts to him fully. It is by his power and it is by his grace for all of us. Praise the Lord who is able to turn our hearts to him fully to walk in obedience to him and keep his commands, decrees and laws he gave our ancestors!

**One word: May he turn your hearts to him**