

A Generous God and His Wise King -- Part Two

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- [0 : 0 0] But this evening we are going to be looking at 1st Kings chapter 4 and chapter 5 with Phil once again. So perhaps you'd turn with me now in your Bibles to 1st Kings chapter 4.
- We're going to read through both chapter 4 and chapter 5 here. So be patient as I try and read through all of these tangled web of names.
- Anybody looking for names for potential offspring, there's a great retinue here. However, some may be more appropriate than others. 1st Kings chapter 4.
- King Solomon was king over all Israel. And these were his high officials. Hazariah, the son of Zadok, was the priest.
- Heleareph and Ahijah, the son of Shisha, were secretaries. Jehoshaphat, the son of Elihud, was recorder. Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was in command of the army.
- [1 : 0 7] Zadok and Abiathar were priests. Azariah, the son of Nathan, was over the officers. And Zebud, the son of Nathan, was priest and the king's friend. Ahishar was in charge of the palace and Adoniram was the son of Bada was in charge of the forced labor. Solomon had 12 officers over all Israel who provided food for the king and his household. Each man had to make provision for one month in the year and these were their names: Ben-Hur in the hill country of Ephraim, Ben-Decker in Machas, Shalbim the Shemith and Ebenef Hanan Ben-Hesed in Araboth to him belong, Sukkah in the land of Heifer, Ben-Abinadab in the Napath, Door he had Taphath the daughter of Solomon as his wife, Bana the son of Ahilud in Tanah Megiddu and all Bethshan that is beside Zarathan below Jezreel and from Bethshan to Abel Melahar as far as the other side of Jockmim, Ben-Gaber in Ramath Gilead he had the villages of Jair son of Manasseh which are in Gilead and he had the region of Argob which is in Bashan 60 great cities with walls and bronze bars, Ahinadab son of Idoh in Manahaim, Ahimaz in Naphtali he had taken Bazimath the daughter of Solomon as his wife, Bana the son of Hushai in Asher and Baloth Jehoshaphat the son of Parah in Izachar, Shimei the son of Elah and Benjamin Geber the son of Uri the land of Gilead the country of Sion king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan and there was one governor who was over the land Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea they ate and drank and were happy. Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt they brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life. Solomon's provision for one day was 30 cores of fine flour and 60 cores of meal if you look at the footnote there a core is a 220 liters so we're talking a lot of food there 10 fat oxen 20 pasture fed cattle a hundred sheep besides deer gazelles roebucks and fattened fowl for he had dominion over all the region west of the Euphrates from Tifsa to Gaza and over all the kings west of the Euphrates and he had peace on all sides around him and Judah and Israel lived in safety from Dan even to Beersheba every man under his vine and under his fig tree all the days of Solomon. Solomon also had 40 000 stalls of horses for his chariots and 12 000 horsemen and his officer supplied provisions for King Solomon and for all who came to King Solomon's table each one in his month they let nothing be lacking barley also straw for the horses and swift stees they brought to the place where it was required each according to his duty and God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt for he was wiser than all other men wiser than Ethan the Ezraite and Haman Calco and Darda the sons of Mahal

and his fame was in all the surrounding nations he also spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs were a thousand and five he spoke of trees from the cedar that is in lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall he spoke also of beasts and of birds and of reptiles and of fish and people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of solomon and from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom now hiram king of tyre sent his servants to solomon when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father for hiram always loved david and solomon sent word to hiram you know that david my father could not build a house for the name of the lord his god because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him until the lord put them under the soles of his feet but now the lord my god has given me rest on every side there is neither adversary nor misfortune and so i intend to build a house for the name of the lord my god as the lord said to david my father your son whom i will set on your throne in your place shall build the house for my name now therefore command that cedars of lebanon be cut for me and my servants will join your servants and i will pay you for your servants such wages as you set for you know that there is no one among us who knows how to cut timber like the sidonians as soon as hiram heard the words of solomon he rejoiced greatly and said blessed be the lord this day who has given to david a wise son to be over this great people and hiram said to solomon saying i've heard the message that you sent to me i'm ready to do all that you desire in the matter of seabir and cypress timber my servants shall bring it down to the sea from lebanon and i'll make it into rafts to go by sea to the place you direct and i'll have them broken up there you shall receive it and you shall meet my wishes by providing food for my household so hiram supplied solomon with all the timber of cedar and cypress that he desired while solomon gave hiram 20 000 cores of wheat as food for his household and 20 000 cores of beaten oil solomon gave this to hiram year by year and the lord gave solomon wisdom as he promised him and there was peace between hiram and solomon and the two of them made a treaty king solomon drafted forced labor out of all israel and the draft numbered 30 000 men and he sent them to lebanon 10 000 a month in shifts they'd be a month in lebanon and two months at home adhan iram was in charge of the draft solomon also had 70 000 burden bearers and 80 000 stone cutters in the hill country besides solomon's 3 300 chief officers who were over all the work who had charge of the people who carried on the work but the king's command they quarried out great costly stones in order to lay the foundation of a house with dressed stones so solomon's builders and hiram's builders and the men of gebel did the cutting and prepared the timber and the stone to build the house amen and may god bless to us his word what a picture of magnificence in god's kingdom under the rule of his anointed king please do have your bibles open to first kings chapters 4 and 5 we'll refer a little bit to chapter

5 this evening but we'll spend most of our time in chapter 4 and we'll look at chapter 5 god willing another evening in more depth well in the dining room of our house is a big wooden toy box and inside this box you will find a disordered mess of a lot of random unrelated toy pieces there's bits of jigsaw probably from about five different jigsaws none of the complete jigsaws are there they're all mixed in together there's bits of lego there's bits of broken off toy helicopter there's a fireman sam hat for a fancy dress party there's a torch the list goes on and on and on my boys my two boys hardly ever touch the contents of this box it seems to be the box where the kind of more disinteresting or less interesting toys end up in fact when we read first kings 4 and 5 we might be tempted to think that this section is a bit like that wooden toy box in my dining room just full of unrelated and possibly less interesting stuff you get these two list of somewhat bizarre sounding names to our ears today followed by comments about geography followed by comments about the food provisions from solomon's palace followed by lists of solomon's publications and the subjects that he liked to speak about and then you go on to chapter 5 and you see this treaty with a neighboring king followed by a passage about stone cutters is this section of the book just like that wooden toy box in our dining room full of maybe boring content that is randomly chucked together carelessly by the author well of course not of course not chapters 4 and 5 are not full of boring and random details if you think that about these chapters then you've definitely not understood them they are actually some of the most exciting chapters in the whole of one and two kings i might even go so far as to say these are some of the most exciting chapters in the whole of the old testament and friends don't miss the tone of the text the tone of the author here is extremely excited he's extremely excited you see what the author is describing to us here in these verses is the beauty and the glory of the kingdom under solomon and all of the good and glorious things that he mentions here about the kingdom all of the things that are mentioned here they are really fruits of solomon's wisdom last sunday evening in chapter 3 we saw that the lord graciously came to solomon in a dream and he made an incredible offer in chapter 3 verse 5 god said to solomon ask what i shall give you in other words the lord gives his king a blank check an open-ended offer now solomon could have asked for anything riches military success his name to be well known throughout the whole of the world death of anyone who opposed him you name it he could have had it but solomon doesn't ask for any of those things solomon asked the lord to give him wisdom that is he asks the lord for the ability to discern between what's right and what's wrong and to act upon that and he asks for that so that he could rule and reign over the people of the lord really well so that he would be a real blessing to the lord's precious people bring them blessings such as justice and remember that the lord was very pleased with solomon

for asking for this and the lord says a paraphrase the lord says to his king i will give you wisdom i'll give you what you ask for that was a great thing to ask for and solomon i'm going to make you the wisest man on the earth and on top of this solomon i'm also going to give you all of the things that you didn't ask for riches and renown throughout your life solomon there will be no other king on this earth like you and if you walk by the obedience of faith like your father david did then solomon i will lengthen your days that is what the lord said to his king and you remember in chapter 3 verse 16 to 28 we saw the initial proof the initial outworking uh the initial proof that the lord made uh good to his promise to give solomon wisdom for solomon shows incredible wisdom and dealing with an almost impossible case with these two prostitutes come towards him and they're in the middle of a dispute over who is the rightful mother and there were no witnesses there was no dna tests that solomon could have used to find the answer instead solomon uses his god-given wisdom and astoundingly he gets to the truth and he reunites the baby boy with his rightful mother and just look at the chapter 3 verse 28 what is the result just run your eye over that where we're told that as a result all israel heard about it and they were in awe because they knew that the lord had blessed their king with wisdom to bring justice to bring justice even to the most lowliest and vulnerable people in his kingdom such as these two this prostitute and the baby boy and as i've said in chapter 4 really what the author does is he continues to show us the way in which solomon's wisdom works its way out in kingdom life in everyday life of his kingdom and i've got three points this evening and since wisdom is the major subject of this section of the book all the teaching points are about wisdom so here's the first thing that we see chapter 4 verses 1 to 19 we see the order that wisdom brings the order that wisdom brings so in verse 1 the author joyfully exclaims king solomon was king over all israel now back in second samuel chapter 8 we are told that david reigned over all israel in fact an almost identical phrase that's used here in verse 1 is used in second samuel 8 to describe david now there had been a time when the tribes of israel had not been united under one king but they'd been divided and full of discord however the nation eventually came together and surrendered and submitted to the rule of king david and what verse 1 is telling us is that solomon in his wisdom was able to maintain this unity it's so crucial the bible is full of wonderful encouragements as to why the people of god should be united and later on in the book tragically we will see this unity being torn in two but for now the author is full of joy that god's wise king has kept his people united and in the following verses we're really told the means that the king used to keep that unity in his wisdom the king established orderly leadership structure so just run your eye over verses 2 to 6 i will not read them again these lists that we read earlier but they see here in 2 to 6 a list of those holding cabinet positions in solomon's government such as the high priest the secretary of state the king's administrator and his army commander etc etc

we don't have time to go into every single one of these names but if you read them later on you will see that solomon shows great practical wisdom here and the fact that he brings in some new faces for obviously a new time in his reign but as well he keeps more experienced men on his leadership team it's a wonderful balance there a practical wisdom and then just run your eye over verse 7 to 19 you'll see another list of 12 officials and solomon has anointed sorry appointed he's not anointed them he's appointed them and given them a really great privileged task of providing food for the king and his household and historians estimate back at that time that there would probably have been about 4 000 to 5 000 people in solomon's household needing fed it was a big deal it was a big responsibility and it was a privilege to be asked to do this later on in the chapter we're told about the colossal amount of food that was needed to be given to the palace in order to feed everyone every day we'll look at that in a in a minute but it was no small and insignificant role and it was absolutely crucial that solomon put this structure in place for the benefit of the kingdom now some cynical commentators what they do is they read in a lot into the significance about them being 12 men these 12 officials mentioned here and they claim that solomon is actually trying to make a bad move here and get rid of the 12 tribes of israel yes they try and accuse solomon of setting up his own oppressive kingdom but i just don't think that's right it jars massively with the tone of the text which is one of joy i don't think solomon is doing anything malicious here in fact he's exercising great wisdom and the order that he puts in place here will ensure that his kingdom will function you see friends what these verses teach us is a fantastic point it's this there is a wideness in wisdom there is a wideness in wisdom wisdom is not only concerned with moral and accurate judgments it is but it's also concerned with so much more it's concerned with efficient and orderly structure that keeps chaos and waste from running life through the wisdom that solemn received it has moved him to establish this order and without this order in place the kingdom would not be a stable life would not flourish let me just give you an illustration from some of my own experience here a few years ago now i was asked by a friend of a friend of a friend uh to speak at a youth weekend away down south and let me tell you the whole weekend away was absolute chaos it was carnage it's probably the most miserable few days of my life i've ever had now the head church youth leader uh he had not exercised any wisdom in leadership and as a result there was no order at the weekend away so the volunteer leaders turned up having no idea what they were supposed to be doing they had no idea about the program what was happening and then the youth arrived and they discovered that pretty much it was a free-for-all and it was a free-for-all in fact i remember starting off my first bible talk on the friday evening at quarter to eleven at night in a tent full of sugar-high teenagers it was insane no wisdom in leadership meant there was no order which led to chaos and carnage and actually a miserable time for everyone well it was not so with king solomon and as god-given wisdom he brings order to the kingdom and that protects the kingdom and friends it's the church of jesus christ

[21 : 28] as the manifestation of his kingdom on earth today surely these verses should challenge us and encourage us to think properly about how important it is for a church to have wise leaders who organize the household of faith one commentator puts it like this he says this there is a kind of super spirituality in the church today which despises practicality and thinks that sloppiness and a lack of organization is somehow more glorifying to god well first kings 4 verses 1 to 19 smashes straight into such thinking only orderly leadership good administration attention to detail and accountability these things are necessary for a church family to flourish and the ability to implement and carry out such things properly it comes from real godly wisdom so friends pray for the leadership pray for us in the leadership of the church pray for all the team leaders in the church it is crucial that if we want to flourish we have to be organized which encouragingly we are but pray that we'll remain that way and pray that our organization will be fueled by wisdom well that's the first thing we see in the passage the order that wisdom brings here's the second thing verses 20 to 28 we see the joy that wisdom brings the joy that wisdom brings and as i said earlier i think these verses could very well be some of the happiest most wonderful verses in the whole of one and two kings throughout this section 20 to 28 we're told again and again about many great covenant blessings that the people of the lord experienced under the reign of wise king solomon and if the tone of the first 19 verses was that of excitement i think the tone in these verses goes up a gear and actually the author here becomes very ecstatic he is very very very excited about what he says to us here and he wants us to be gripped by the joy in these verses as well so let's just look at some of the blessings that are mentioned look at verse 20 please we're told that judah and israel were as many as the sand by the sea and what did they do well they ate and drank and they were happy so the promised land is full of human life full of human flourishing full of feasting full of real satisfaction full of real happiness and celebration and then in verse 25 we are told that for the first time in years for the first time in years there are no military threats against judah and israel the people lived safely and securely throughout the whole land from dan to beersheba that's north to south also east to west there are no wars no rumors of wars every man was able to live in peace and notice to enjoy rest under his vine tree which is a symbol of prosperity and affluence and as for solomon well the author takes great delight in describing the scope of his rule just look at verse 21 please solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the euphrates to the land of the philistines and to the philistines and to the border of egypt and they brought tribute and served solomon all the days of his life then look on to verse 24 solomon had dominion over all the region of west of the euphrates from tifsa to gaza over all the kings west of the euphrates he had peace on all sides around him so all the regions that have been such a source of pain and difficulty in the past for judah and israel they are no longer a threat there's peace because they've surrendered

to the lord's anointed one most of these lands were actually lands that were won by david's armies in the past and here king solomon in his wisdom continues to reign and rule over them and what about the food enjoyed at the king's table each day i took particular interest in this part of the passage brothers and sisters there was a sensational amount of food at that lord at that king's table every day luxurious meat luxurious food every single day in verse 22 to 23 just run your eyes over that friends living under god's wise king solomon at this stage in his reign it was it was truly spectacular it was breathtakingly beautiful it was a time of great joy and friends when we go into the deeper details of the text we actually see past king solomon and his wisdom and you know we find the true source of all these good things yes these good things did come to the people because king solomon was wise and faithful but actually there was a deeper foundation to all of these wonderful blessings and it is the fact that the lord is faithful absolutely faithful to his covenant promises last week in chapter 3 the start of solomon's prayer was completely taken up by this fact that the lord had been utterly dependable and faithful to all of his gracious words and promises to his servants in the past and here the writer picks up that theme for example in verse 20 that we read a moment ago but it says the people of judah and israel were as many as the sand on the seashore that is straight from god's promise to abraham in genesis 15 when he promised the people sorry genesis 22 and in verses 21 to 24 again that we read a moment ago where the author tells us about the scope the geography of solomon's reign that's not boring dull geography that is precisely the same land dimensions that the lord showed abraham and promised to give his descendants back in genesis 15 and then there's verse 25 the fact that the nation dwelled safely and was in peace that's picking up on the lord's covenant promises to david in second samuel 7 let me read second samuel 7 verses 10 and 11 just listen to it don't need to turn to it the lord said to david i will appoint a place for my people israel and will plant them so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more and violent men shall affect afflict them no more as formerly from the time that i appointed judges over my people israel and i will give you rest from all your enemies do you hear what the author's doing he's telling us about the wonder of solomon's wisdom but he's also going deeper to say this is all the lord's covenant faithfulness to his people this is the foundation of this kingdom the real foundation again and again and again promise made promise kept promise made promise fulfilled friends here in the golden days of solomon's reign we see god's dependability and his firm word displayed clearly and that's why really the author is full of excitement that's really what's gripped his heart and his soul this is why he's full of joy he's full of joy because he sees that the lord's word is firm that's the thing that really gets the author excited and these verses should also excite us today arguably with an even greater joy for when we look back at the golden days of solomon's

kingdom we see that whilst it was a stunning period of salvation history solomon's kingdom was really a partial fulfillment of the lord's promises for as we were hearing earlier in the service the final fulfillment of the lord's covenant promises well they're still yet to come because they're found fully and finally in the established global kingdom of the lord jesus christ you see for a while solomon's kingdom was a well-ordered kingdom of peace joy happiness of rest human flourishing it was a kingdom marked by justice fairness a kingdom of bountiful eating and drinking of feasting and fun a kingdom free from the threats of enemies a kingdom that was stable marked by constant prosperity the people in this kingdom lacked nothing and for us today when we look at all of that we know that that is just a tiny little preview of the greater kingdom that's to come a kingdom though that has already been inaugurated and that one day will be fully established throughout the whole earth when our glorious king one who is wiser than king solomon appears at his second coming friends this is this is actually a picture of where we are going as believers our eternal home will be a well-ordered kingdom completely free from chaos and carnage be a kingdom of everlasting joy everlasting rest everlasting life everlasting human flourishing a kingdom of happiness and peace freed from the very presence of our greatest enemies sin satan and death they will be done away with they'll be a thing of the past it'll be a kingdom of abundant beauty a kingdom of great feasting and celebration a kingdom where all the kings and all of the peoples will never ever lack anything ever again a kingdom of eternal learning actually in person face to face with the king who is greater than solomon and wisdom the one who is the full embodiment of wisdom now friends let me just stop there say it may be that you're here this evening or maybe you're watching online and maybe you're not yet a christian maybe you've not yet surrendered your life to jesus as king well if that is you then it's great that you're with us you're very welcome to be here and perhaps you wonder why is it that we trust in jesus as christians well there are many answers to that many answers to that many reasons why we trust him but one of the main reasons is because we long to be with him in his kingdom of perfection forever and it's displayed here in the preview in verse 20 to 28 we get a tiny foretaste of what life will be like for all those who trust in christ and friends as we wait for the appearance of the lord in this present age remember that we christians have already just started to experience the joys of belonging to this kingdom already we have started to experience in the current age blessings of the kingdom let me give you some examples we for example experience the great blessing of knowing our sins are forgiven the blessing of a clear conscience before god the wonder of being able to call god our father and to pray to him and the joy of having brothers and sisters and family in christ and his church these are blessings of the kingdom now and they're a foretaste of the full blessings that are to come and if anyone surrenders their lives to the lord jesus as king they too will experience all the same glorious blessings and they too will look forward in sure and certain hope to the end of the age when our savior will come and his paradise will be

ushered in so that's the second point in our sermon this evening the joy that wisdom brings and here's the third the third and final point this evening we see the renown that wisdom brings and that is really what verses 29 and 34 are all about the renown that wisdom brings see king solomon's god-given wisdom is so great that it brings him global renown and kings and peoples are drawn to him please look at verse 29 and god gave solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure and the breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore so again the author wants us to be clear this isn't solomon trying really hard this is all a gift of god's grace god has given wisdom to solomon to rule and notice how he uses similar language used here and he uses back in verse 20 where he's clearly alluding to the lord's gracious fulfilling of his promises to abraham i take it the author does that on purpose to drive home the point that this wisdom is a gift of god's grace just as the lord graciously fulfilled his promises to abraham so too is the lord fulfilling his promises made to solomon back in chapter 3 and having told us about the source of solomon's wisdom we are now told about the superiority of that wisdom please look at verse 30 solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of egypt so see back then particular areas of the world were synonymous with great minds and the people of the east the people of egypt were thought of as being the wisest people to have ever existed well not in comparison to solomon their wisdom is totally eclipsed by the lord's king by this graciously this one the lord is graciously gifted with precious wisdom and just look at verse 31 we get this list of really wise men and their names so you have ethan the ezraite and haemon and calcol and darda the sons of mahal see in those days these names would have been synonymous with wisdom just like in our time if i was to say einstein to you you would think immediately intelligence well in those days if you said ethan the ezraite you would think wisdom haemon the ezraite you would think wisdom and if you go to tron growth group when you studied psalm 88 you will remember that who was it who wrote psalm 88 was haemon this haemon here he was a very very wise man one of the wisest men of his day and yet even he is eclipsed by the wisdom of solomon and just look at the scope of solomon's wisdom it's superior to all others and it's also massive in its scope just look at verse 32 we're told that solomon spoke 3 000 proverbs and his songs were in 1005 verse 33 solomon had wise things to teach on pretty much every subject and aspect of the created order he was a man who joyfully investigated and spoke wisely about all of god's wondrous works and what is the result of this and here's the climax of the whole chapter at the end of chapter 3 god gave solomon wisdom solomon exercised that wisdom and the climax of chapter 3 was all israel knew that solomon was wise in chapter 4 the climax is that all the earth comes to know that solomon is wise look at verse 34

and people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of solomon and from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom both peoples the peoples of the nations and their rulers their flock to hear this wise one this is the global renown that godly wisdom brings the people and the kings of the earth are attracted to the lord's anointed one and friends at this moment you see what's happening here if you know your deuteronomy what is happening here is israel is being the light to the nations that it was supposed to be israel are looking at the beauty of the wisdom of of the anointed king and his kingdom in action and they're thinking look at these people let's go visit them let's investigate they're drawn to see the people of the lord and although this isn't explicitly stated by the text surely it is implied that as people are drawn to the people of the lord the one whom they're really drawing near to is the lord himself the one who's behind the wise king in fact i reckon some of these kings may well have come to know the lord as the living and true god over all the earth and if you don't believe me let's look on to quickly into chapter 5 you can read it again when you go home when we meet this haram the king of tyre he's a gentile king who's reigned in tyre for some years at this point he reigned during the time that david reigned in israel verse 1 tells us that he loved david he loved the house of david and when he hears that solomon has been anointed as king and when he listens to solomon's wise plans to start building a temple for the name of the lord haram cries out in praise to the lord and he uses the covenant the relationship name of the lord just look at chapter 5 verse 7 as soon as haram heard these words of solomon he rejoiced greatly and said blessed be the lord this day who has given to david a wise son to be over this great people and at that point onwards haram actually enters into a peaceful treaty a joyful wonderful treaty of love with solomon to assist in the preparations for building the temple god willing we shall return to that the next time we study first kings together hopefully at the end of the summer but to conclude this point then i take it that this is one of the reasons as to why wisdom was given by the lord to solomon it was witness godly wisdom brings renown it shines out brightly from god's servants into the ignorant and dark world that surrounds it and friends i think this is very challenging for us today as people who by grace belong to the kingdom if we want to reach glasgow and the nations with the good news of the kingdom of jesus christ then we must of course reach out with the gospel but another thing we can and should do is as a church and as individuals we should seek to walk by the same wisdom we should be turning to the lord all the time to ask him for wisdom and the ability to walk by it now here's a slightly altered classic line we are not solomon but we have solomon's god and we also have loads of solomon's proverbs we have lots of solomon's wisdom right here written down for us we also have other wisdom books in the bible for us to walk by to study we also have the spirit of the lord jesus christ who is the spirit of wisdom and understanding and so friends today we really do have all that we need as a church

[41 : 45] as kingdom people today to walk by wisdom to grow in wisdom and to let it master and shape our everyday lives and friends when we the church walk in wisdom it doesn't go unnoticed by unbelieving people lost people round about us often people are drawn to christ by the witness of people living wisely again i remember a few years ago i was at a baptism service at another church and i remember hearing the testimony of a recently converted christian uni student and it was beautiful he was being interviewed and he was asked to share about his background and he said he grew up in a household that was where his mum and dad weren't religious in fact they were probably geared towards atheism if they didn't confess that they were atheists they lived in a kind of practical atheism in the days of their lives and then the person interviewing this recent convert said well how do christian things begin for you in your life and he said i had a christian teacher at school and i had a classmate at school both of them were christians and when i looked at the integrity of their lives when i saw how wise they were and the way they walked i thought to myself i must go to church i need to find out about this and i think over the next four years after much study much conversations much input from this teacher and from the school friend this man turned to jesus christ in faith and repentance and i know for a fact actually that he's just finished off a two-year apprenticeship at a church in the north of burmingham in the north of england and he spent most of that time reading the bible with international students who do not know christ he is a burning passion to see jesus known you see the difference that wisdom can make it is a powerful witness when god's people live wisely they are a powerful witness to the goodness and the beauty of the lord and so friends let's keep on working hard to grow and walk in wisdom's way over the past couple of years as a church if you look back through our youtube videos you'll see that we spent time in books like job ecclesiastes proverbs let's make sure that we do not forget or neglect the things that we've been taught in these studies let's revisit them again and again asking the lord to help us obey them by the power of the spirit of christ so that we will walk wisely as a church and as individuals so that we will attract people to come and see that jesus christ is lord well amen let's be quiet for a moment close our eyes bow our heads we'll have a moment of quiet to respond to the lord's words on our own and then i'll pray for us our gracious god and heavenly father we praise you for the gift of wisdom more precious than gold we praise you for the way in which you are such a generous a generous amazingly generous god to your people and we ask you to help us grow in wisdom to walk in wisdom's way by the power of the spirit of christ in us so that we will show off your beauty and your light to those who are walking in darkness around us father we praise you also

for the glorious glimpse that we get in this chapter of the kingdom of your son we praise you that we can look back to look forwards to all that lies ahead for us in the future all that awaits us by grace and we pray that the knowledge of this future and all that lies ahead of us would spur us on as a church to love you to live for you to surrender our lives to you more and more and to reach out with a gracious invitation of the gospel to all people and we pray this in jesus precious name and for his sake amen amen