

Victory of the Lamb – July 9, 2017 – Pastor Bill Limmer

1 Kings 3:5-15 - Prayer is Powerful – Grace, Green Light, Go with the Flow

A couple of weeks ago, Derek Carr, the quarterback in the National Football League, for that black and silver team, the Oakland Raiders, signed a five year, 125 million-dollar, contract. Suddenly black and silver, looks a whole lot like green and gold. Right? Steph Curry is a basketball player for the Golden State Warriors. Last week he signed a contract with the Golden State Warriors that will pay him about 40 million a year for the next five years. What would you do with that kind of money . . . besides pay taxes? What would you do?

A guy named, well not any just any guy, a King, by the name of Solomon, had a life changing invitation from God. It was a gracious, he didn't do anything to deserve it, it was just out of God's unconditional love, invitation to pray. Here it is: (1Kings 3:5) **The LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."** That's a pretty awesome offer my friends. God throws open the treasure houses of heaven and says to the King "whatever gift you want – it is yours! He gives King Solomon a blank check! What do you think a king would ask for? Money? How about power? With power you can do whatever you want whenever you want. Money and power would seem like good bets for us and for a king. Solomon got the green light from God and **⁶Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.⁷"Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"** Solomon could ask for anything and he asked for wisdom. Some people are like "what a fool." As Pastor Ben talked about last week – humility is a key part of prayer. And we see that clearly in Solomon. He is the King. And he says, I'm young, I don't know what I'm doing. I need help He asked for wisdom. Wisdom is a very practical sense is knowing what to do, how to do it and why you are doing it. I find it intriguing, in our selfie world, that Solomon asked for something FROM HIM that would be FOR THEM.

This is God's response: 1 Kings 3:10- **The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹²I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.** So Solomon received the gracious invitation to pray. He took the green light and made his request. God filled the request but . . . there is more. God continues: **¹³Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. ¹⁴And 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."** Do you see the generosity of God? God not only gives him what he wants, he adds to it. Wealth and honor. Nobody will be your equal. As an aside, Solomon also was blessed by God to write three parts in the best-selling book of all time (Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs) but again that is an aside and that benefits you and me and not him because this was before there was massive book deals. And God had already promised him money, anyway. ☺

So, God comes to this person, not just any person, royalty and invites them “Ask me for anything you want, and I will give it to you? If God offered you a blank check, an ask for whatever you want, what would you ask for? Each Christian has a position given to him or her by God. God has appointed us by baptism to serve him as his royal representatives in this world. 1 Peter 2:9 **But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.** The offer is still on the table for you! Jesus says to you and me in John 15:7: **If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.** God graciously invites you and me to come to him in prayer. Friends, even though we have fallen short, even though there have been times when we have turned our back on God, even though we are sometimes selfish, through Jesus God loves to hear your voice, he loves to hear your heart beat. More than that he loves to hear what is on your heart. Your prayers are precious to God. Your prayers don’t stop at the ceiling. They go right to God’s heart. He never forgets any of your prayers. Understand that God comes to you in grace with a blank check signed by Jesus blood which opens all of heaven to yo

So what is on your heart? So who are you? What station in life are you? Up and coming, experienced so that you know what is wrong because you have already done that or you have seen others do that, a stay at home parent, retired, a coach, counselor, young old, rich, poor, privileged, disadvantaged, mistake ridden, abused. Solomon offered who God who he was, nothing more and nothing less. That is good for you and me to do as well. Offer God who we are. The whole person. A lot of people say things like well I’d do this if I had this or if I were like him or her. Skip that. Offer God who and what you are and watch him multiply the gift exponentially. God is the God of generosity. See, it is ok to be bold, to fill in the blank check that God has signed for you. Ephesians 3:20 God **is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.** Jesus went over and above. Remember the account in Scripture when the guys brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus. They went to all the trouble of carrying their friend on his mat to the house where Jesus was at. And remember the house was packed. They couldn’t get in the front door, the backdoor or any door. So, they took him to the roof, open the roof and lowered him down by Jesus. Remember what Jesus did. He forgave the guys sins, healed him spiritually and then he healed him physically too. The man got a two for one. And got something better than he imagined. Friends is there someone you know who needs life direction change? Who needs forgiveness? Take them to Jesus. You have the green light to ask for things that will aid and help others FROM HIM FOR THEM because God has you and will provide all that you need in his generosity. Matthew 6:33 **seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

Do our prayer requests say anything about the size of our God? Do our prayer request says anything about how far we think the scope of God will go and how generous he is? Are we confident in things both small and large? Have you ever considered that God has answered some of our prayers “No” because we are asking for things to small? Are you afraid of success? Are you afraid to ask God for something big? What do you think God wants you to ask for? Here is something you can rely on – no matter who you are: God is generous. He loves to give. He loves to out give. He loves to bless richly. Romans 8:32 **He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?** Our sins are taken away. Friends we live under grace with the triumphant Jesus at our side and the Holy Spirit in our heart! You have the green light to ask away. Go with the flow of God’s generosity. God in his generosity will provide more than you know.

Last Tuesday, as we were walking the Franklin parade, listening to our teens sing out praises to God, and handing out candy. This is what happened. I had four pieces of candy in my hands and I went over to a couple of kids along the parade route. Each one took a piece. And I went on. Later, I had a few pieces of candy in my hand and I went over by some kids standing along the parade route. And the first kid took two pieces trying to take all three but another kid got their hand in there and salvaged a piece. A little while later the same scenario is played out and this time, the first kid takes it all. What do you think about that? Are you thinking some kids are more polite than others? Are you thinking that some kids are more greedy than others? What if I told you the young kid who took all the candy out of my hand turned around and then handed it out to the small children who were sitting and standing in the back? God comes to you and me in grace with a green light and an essence that exudes generosity. God who has the whole world in his hands, has a God-sized handfuls of blessings for you. God offers you a blank check. What are you going to ask for? It is your prayer to a gracious and generous God!