

“A Blank Check?”—1 Kings 3:5

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “A Blank Check?”, is 1 Kings 3:5 → *At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I shall give you.”* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

If God gave you a “blank check” offer allowing you to ask Him for anything you wanted, how would you respond? This is a rather challenging question because it forces you to “take inventory” of your life and desires. Yet, it’s not a foreign concept especially in preparation for Christmas where the frequently asked question, “What do you want for Christmas?” opens up the unlimited possibilities of your “wish list”—at least in your dreams! Realistically, we know that people can’t give us everything we want in life, although we act like it sometimes.

Speaking of dreams . . . Solomon found himself in this very situation while taking his rest one night. Not only had he recently become the new King of Israel but he was commanded by the LORD in a dream to ask for anything he wanted! According to our text *the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and . . . said, “Ask what I shall give you.”* Quite a command to receive

from the LORD, don't you think? A blank check of sorts!

How would you respond to such a command or "offer?" I suppose it would be very natural for most people to respond selfishly. Our sinful nature could "kick in gear" and we'd request something for ourselves that we want very much. We might think of all those possessions which we "dreamed" about having in life. However, are you sure your list is complete enough so that you will not miss something in the end? Or we may see this as our chance to obtain those "mega-bucks" which we feel would solve so many of our problems in life. However, are you sure you'd ask for the right amount of money? Or maybe we'd immediately think of this as our opportunity to be completely restored to health! However, at what age would we limit our restoration and be willing to die, since death would be inevitable?

For some, sinful skepticism might immediately show its face, questioning the "offer" analytically: "Is God trying to test me? Why would He make such an 'offer' to me?" Our minds might be flooded with all kinds of doubt, wondering, "What's the catch? Sounds too good to be true. There just has to be a catch!" This is actually most people's perspective of God's grace in their lives. God may give freely but there's got to be an "angle" to it somehow. Somehow He's going to demand something from me so it's best not to get involved! Such an attitude lacks trust in Jesus **as Savior from sin** and leads to eternal

separation from Him in hell.

Yet, how many times in your prayers do you find yourself telling God what you want or desire without even a consideration of that which God wants for you? It turns prayer into an act of manipulation of God as the “Cosmic blank check dispenser” or kind of a “fairy God-father.” James 4:3 speaks about combining selfish desires with prayer when he says: *You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.* **Humble faith submission in prayer is expressed in the desire for God’s will to be done in our lives**, as expressed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Petition of the Lord’s Prayer where we pray “**Thy** will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Solomon considered his situation as King of Israel while recognizing his inexperience for such a task and said in 1 Kings 3:7 → *I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in.* His response to God’s command was made first and foremost **on the basis of God’s great and steadfast love toward His people!** He recognize in faith that the LORD is the great Promise Keeper, the evidence of which he was experiencing by succeeding his father David as King.

Notice the emphasis in Solomon’s response in 1 Kings 3:8 → **Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen.** He recognized his position as King, the people of Israel and even his own person

as belonging to God! Faith and trust in God recognize that your entire existence is a result of His creating and sustaining activity for the purpose of fulfilling your salvation in the Christ! King Solomon and the people of Israel served that purpose.

How did Solomon respond to God's "blank check" command? He asked Yahweh to *give him an understanding mind to govern Yahweh's people and discern between good and evil.* (cf. 1 Kings 3:9) His response reflected an attitude of humility in connection to his responsibilities for leadership of God's people.

Humility is central to discipleship because it reveals total submission to God's plan for your life in the ultimate expression of His *great and steadfast love* for you **in Jesus!** Humility was central to the Person & Work of Jesus Christ for us "entitled" sinners. We even refer to His life from conception to burial as His state of humiliation. Philippians 2:5-9 tell you to *have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, (i.e. didn't think He was "entitled" to it) but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* If Jesus would have functioned with the same kind of entitled

attitude which we display today we would be lost in our sins.

Humility is also the key to repentance. When you are humiliated by your sinful actions in the sight of God and others it should lead you to your knees in repentance. Such humiliation connects you to the humiliation of Christ's cross on your behalf so that you receive forgiveness of sins and are born anew by the Holy Spirit! Jesus put it this way in Luke 14:9 → *Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.* Forgiveness (i.e. being *exalted* or "lifted up" by grace) is for everyone because *Christ humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death . . . on a cross **for all people!***

Solomon reflected the important aspect of Jesus' teaching on humility in connection to leadership. At various points during Jesus' earthly ministry His disciples would engage in discussions about the positions they would hold as leaders in the church. This prompted Jesus' teaching in Mark 10:42-45 → *You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.* And what does Jesus give as the motivation for acting so contrary to world's ways of functioning in leadership? *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and*

*to give His life as a ransom for many.* He puts forth His own humiliation!

Entitlement is dangerous to the life of humility. We feel entitled to treat others in abrasive ways because of the money we've invested in a product. We feel entitled to treat others disrespectfully when we think we have "earned" the right to do so by longevity or seniority in an organization. We reflect entitlement whenever we view others self-righteously, thinking, saying or doing things which intentionally humiliate them. The mixture of sin and entitlement is so serious that we even think everyone driving on the roads should be looking out for us and getting out of our way!

What would your response be to God if He gave you a "blank check" offer in your life? In one sense we have been given the same command by Jesus in John 14:13-14 → *Whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.* Kind of sounds like the same command which the LORD gave Solomon.

To ask for anything in the name of Jesus means that you come to Him in humble faith, trusting in His Person & Work for the forgiveness of your sins! As you bring your requests, petitions and intercessions to the LORD in the name of Jesus as He commands you to, do so in humility, desiring God to *be glorified in the Son*. He desires to "exalt" you by giving you forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus. His desire is to provide for you physically on a daily

basis! The LORD desires to bless you generously in His grace. In fact, He always gives much more than that to which you are entitled or deserve! Solomon received the wisdom for which he asked and much more because he considered God's desires and His people more important than himself.

Thus its not simply about your own needs or wants being met but its about praising God, worshiping Him and giving Him thanks in submission to His Will for your life as you trust Him to take care of **all your needs!** Amen.

*Do not be anxious about anything,  
but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving  
let your requests be made known to God.  
And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,  
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

(Philippians 4:6-7)