

1 Kings 12:1-17, 25-30a
Good Advice Not Taken
WRCoB 10.29.23

They say that Solomon, the son of David
Was the wisest of men.

The whole Book of Proverbs is credited to him
And there's lots of wisdom there.

But if indeed he was the wisest of men
He didn't live by his own wisdom.

We know all about his partiality
For having a few women around the house.

We also know the influences
All these feminine voices had on King Solomon
Leading him away from his devotion to YHWH.

Yes, he built upon King David's empire
Built the temple to house the Ark of the Covenant
Built a palace that rivaled the Taj Mahal

And further expanded the borders of Israel.

It's true, Under King Solomon, Israel was a powerful nation.

But his wisdom ended there.

He built all of his empire on the backs of his people.

He drove many of his own people into forced labor
And levied heavy taxes on everyone
But even heavier taxes on the northern tribes.

King Solomon ruled for forty years
And then he died, passing the kingdom
On to his son Rehoboam.

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But trouble was brewing.

People were anxious with the change in leadership

They hoped for better things to come.

That King Rehoboam might lead the people
In a fairer more equitable way than his father.

He was crowned king in the city of Shechem
A border town between Israel a northern tribe
And Judah a southern tribe.

He did so because much of the trouble
Was brewing out of the north.

In Shechem, Jeroboam met Rehoboam.

Jeroboam, who fled Solomon's wrath
Came out of Egypt and became a spokesperson
For the more oppressed tribes of the north.

A three-day council took place.

King Rehoboam had brought with him
A seasoned group of statesmen
Who counseled King Solomon
During his tenure.

And he brought another group
A bunch of personally selected cronies.

Jeroboam approached the new king.

1 Kings 12:4 MSG “Your father made life hard for us—worked our fingers to the bone. Give us a break; lighten up on us and we’ll willingly serve you.”

Rehoboam told the assembly

He needed three days to think about it.

He approached the more seasoned political advisors

And asked for their advice.

1 Kings 12:7 The Message

“If you will be a servant to this people, be considerate of their needs and respond with compassion, work things out with them, they’ll end up doing anything for you.”

But Rehoboam rejected their wise council

And went to the younger political advisors

Who were spilling over with toxic masculinity.

1 Kings 12:10-11 The Message

¹⁰ “These people who complain, ‘Your father was too hard on us; lighten up’—well, tell them this: ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist.

¹¹ If you think life under my father was hard, you haven’t seen the half of it. My father thrashed you with whips; I’ll beat you bloody with chains!’”

Three days later the king met with the gathered assembly

With his preferred political party standing behind him.

And rejecting the good advice

Of the more seasoned council members

Rehoboam told Jeroboam and the gather tribes of the north
The words handed down to him.

And Israel's response?

1 Kings 12:16-17 The Message

Get lost, David!

We've had it with you, son of Jesse!

Let's get out of here, Israel, and fast!

From now on, David, mind your own business.

This resulted in the kingdom division around 925 BC.

The northern tribes that split away
Would be called the ten lost tribes.

They included

- Asher
- Dan
- Ephraim
- Gad
- Issachar
- Manasseh
- Naphtali
- Reuben
- Simeon
- Zebulun

The northern tribes became known as the kingdom of Israel
With its capital Samaria.

Judah and the very small tribe of Benjamin
Remained united under the leadership of Rehoboam.

Jerusalem remained its capital.

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Jeroboam returned to Israel

And became king of the newly formed nation.

And fearing Jerusalem's continued influence on his people

He created two golden calves

And placed them at Bethel and Dan

He ordered the people to worship the calves

Instead of going to Jerusalem

To worship in the temple.

And so, began the northern tribes' downfall.

Even up to the time of Jesus

Israel which became known as Samaria

Had become a hated cousin to Judah.

So not only did King Rehoboam's decision

Divide a nation into two

It also caused a split in the Jewish faith

I can't help but think of the divisiveness in our country.

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Good advice not taken.

Its been a downfall to many an organization

The rift between the northern and southern tribes

Began with a problem in leadership.

The good advice not taken

Was to change the current style of leadership.

The heavy-handed, iron-fisted authoritarian rule
The dominant and oppressive
And if necessary the violent control
Of the government over its constituency

The good advice that should have been taken
Was a different model of leadership

One that focused on the wellbeing of all tribes
The sharing of power and ideas
And placing the needs of the constituency first.

This kind of leadership was described by the elders.

1 Kings 12:7 NLT

**“If you are willing to be a servant to these people today
and give them a favorable answer, they will always be
your loyal subjects.”**

This style of leadership is called just that.

Servant/Leadership.

Moses upon the good advice of Jethro
Changed his leadership style doing everything himself

Jethro told him that what he was doing was no good.

He would become exhausted and worn out.

Instead, he told Moses to put in place officials
To judge over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens

That would lighten his load.

Esther heeded good advice
And exhibited qualities of a servant/leader

When Mordecai encouraged her to go to the king
In order to save God's people

She called all the Jews living there
To fast and pray for three days.

Instead of going alone
She shared her troubles
And asked the people to join her in prayer.

Peter took on a servant leader role
Following the death and resurrection of Jesus

And he offered good advice
For others in leadership positions.

1 Peter 5:2-3 CEV

Just as shepherds watch over their sheep, you must watch over everyone God has placed in your care. Do it willingly in order to please God, and not simply because you think you must. Let it be something you want to do, instead of something you do merely to make money.

Don't be bossy to those people who are in your care, but set an example for them.

The greatest example in the Bible of servant leadership
Comes from Jesus Christ.

Luke 22:25-26 NLT

25 Jesus told them, “In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called ‘friends of the people.’

26 But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant

Jesus knelt before his disciples
And washed his disciples’ feet.

It was an expression of humility and servanthood
Jesus, our Lord, was willing to humble himself
And serve their needs.

Mark 10:45 NLT

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

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In my previous congregation
I had a church member
Who always said to me

“You’re the boss!”

A decision had to be made and he’d say, “You’re the boss”.

I would remind him that, no, I wasn’t the boss.

The congregation had the ultimate authority
And the church board has authority over me
In Church of the Brethren polity.

Well, he didn’t like that.

He thought I should be more authoritative.

I embrace the principles Jesus taught
And try to model a servant/leader approach.

And thinking about it, whether you are a leader of a country
A boss in an organization
A teacher in a classroom
Or head of the family

The approach should be the same.

Here are principles we should remember
As we emulate what Jesus taught us.

- **Humility**
- **Empathy**
- **Active listening**
- **Direct engagement and team mentality**
- **Work yourself out of a job**

As we saw in Rehoboam's poor decision

An authoritarian style of leadership
Or really, in any relational interaction

When you lord it over others
Nothing good will ever come of it.

Let's take some good advice from the Apostle Paul.

Philippians 2:1-4 NIV

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and

compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

We would do well

To follow the example of our Lord and Savior
And develop servant/leadership skills

In the home

At work
And in the church.

Let us help to build God's kingdom

Using Jesus and his Spirit
As a guide to better relationships.