Murray Baptist Church – 12/1/20 – Bible Study Outline – Judges

**Judges 11**

Jephthah is a reminder that your past and your background cannot keep you down when God has made up his mind to lift you up. Your past is a reminder of where you’ve been not necessarily who you are. As people and as believers we should continue to evolve and grow.

The opening verse reveals insight into Jephthah

* He’s a mighty warrior
* His father was Gilead
* His mother was a prostitute

Vs. 2-3 – speaks to human nature and human circumstances

* Jephthah had a different mother so Jephthah is being treated unfairly because of his father’s decision. He had no control over who is father slept with.
* The brother’s outcast him because they have a different mother than Jephthah
* While one group outcasts Jephthah, another accepts him. Two images come to to mind: 1) Robin Hood – he led a band of robbers, he led those who received him. 2) David – when he as in the cave of Adullam. His brother and father’s household joined him but then all those who were in debt or discontented joined him and he became their commander. There were about 400 of them (1 Samuel 22).
* God is using the setback as a means for the comeback

Vs.4-6 – God has a way of using people that we least suspect.

* Israel is fighting against the Ammonites
* The elders go to Jephthah in Tob and ask him to be their leader so they can be successful
* Remember Isaiah 53:3 tells us that Jesus was despised and rejected. Rejection doesn’t mean God can’t use you, it simply means man has limited vision.

Vs. 7-11 – Jephthah wants to confirm the people’s intentions

* He has been outcasted, disregarded and made fun of
* When those who have been against are now asking you to play in their sandbox, it causes feelings of doubt and mistrust
* Jephthah didn’t want to be the hero only to be discarded again
* The elders and people assure him if he goes up against the Ammonites, he’ll be the leader of Gilead

Vs. 12-27 – Jephthah tries diplomacy rather than battle with Sihon, king of Ammon.

* V.12 – now that Jephthah is in command, he is all in. What can we learn from this? What in regard to church or God’s leading can you say you are all in?
* V. 13 – the Kings feels like land was taken by the Israelites unjustly
* Vs. 14-27 – Jephthah gives Sihon a history lesson about the land. Israel took over the land of the Amorites not the Ammonites (see vs. 21-22).

Vs. 28-40 – the king of Ammon ignored Jephthah’s words and the battle is waged

* V.29 – The Spirit of the Lord came on Jephthah and Jephthah initiates his plan and advances against the Ammonites
* V.30-31 – Jephthah makes vow to God that would prove to be a costly one
  + Whatever greets me out of my house when I return in triumph, I’ll sacrifice as a burnt offering

V. 32-33 – Israel get the victory over the Ammonites

Vs. 34-40 – Triumph turns to tragedy and a problematic passage

* V.34 – Jephthah returns home to Mizpah and his daughter comes out of the house dancing to the music, to make things worse his daughter was his only child
* V. 35 Jephthah recognized the vow he made to God which he is obligate to fulfill
* Vs.36-37 – seems to imply Jephthah’s daughter knows the vow he made will directly impact her, she asks for a little time – 2 months
* Vs. 38-40 – foreshadowing that the vow would be fulfilled
  + But we don’t know if she was killed or
  + If she lived she probably lived in or near the temple and did service there
  + We aren’t told specifically what happened. In this case the words of v.39 ‘conceal more than they reveal.’

Lessons to be learned:

In biblical times it was common to make vows to God. However, we need to remember that it is not what we promise or do for God that is helpful. What is helpful is remembering that God accepts us on the grounds of what he has done for us in Christ.

Questions for further study

What are the similarities between God’s response to the Israelites’ prayer in Judges 10:11-16 and the rebuke given through Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 1:10-20? What things were missing in their prayer (Judges 10:10).

What do Proverbs 13:3, Ephesians 5:6 and Titus 2:8 tell us about the significance of the words that we speak?

Think about things that you have said to people during the past day. How many of the words you have spoken were empty or destructive? Consider how you can use your speech to build people up.

How careful should you be about volunteering for a task? Should you hesitate to respond until you know that you can fulfill the commitment? Consider this in relation to activities in your church you would like to get involved in. How should this affect the way in which people are recruited for activities like Sunday school, door-to-door work or cleaning the church building?