

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: Men of Strength

SERMON REFERENCE: Judges 11:1-11, 29-40

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The great need today is for real men who are the following:
 - i) Men of character.
 - ii) Men of integrity.
 - iii) Men who will stand.
 - iv) Men of strength.
- b) America is in trouble because America's homes are in trouble.
 - i) America's homes are in trouble because men have failed to be the men of God that they ought to be.
- c) Jephthah was a real man; he was a man of faith.
 - i) Most of us have not heard of Jephthah, but God has heard of him.
 - ii) His name is listed with the great heroes of the faith.
 - (1) Hebrews 11:32
 - (2) Jephthah was one of these mighty men.
 - (3) He was one of the handful of men that God put in the Hall of Fame in Hebrews 11.
- d) Judges 11:1-3
 - i) Jephthah was a man of strength.
 - (1) "A mighty man of valor."
 - ii) If anyone ever had a background that he could use for an excuse, it was Jephthah.
- e) In today's message, we will look at the marks of Jephthah's character to see what made him such a man of strength.

2) HIS CHARACTER IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTIES (JUDGES 11:1-3)

- a) We need to learn to be unshackled from the past.
 - i) We need to quit making excuses for our background.
 - ii) We need to stop blaming our circumstances.
- b) Jephthah was the son of a harlot.
 - i) Judges 11:1
 - ii) He was an illegitimate child.
 - (1) There are no illegitimate children in the truest sense of the word, only illegitimate parents.
 - (a) Every child has the right to live.
- c) He was looked down upon by his half-brothers who disowned him.
 - i) Judges 11:2
 - ii) He was exiled.
 - iii) He was driven out.
- d) The Bible tells us that he was in a consort of "vain" fellows.
 - i) Judges 11:3
 - ii) He had a bad environment.
 - iii) He had known failure, rejection, and poverty.
- e) Today, people would not expect much of Jephthah.
 - i) They would say that he had an excuse if he turned out badly.

- (1) Psychologists and sociologists would say that he was not to blame.
 - (a) They would say that it was someone else's fault.
 - (b) He was the creature of his environment.
- ii) We use our background as an excuse.
- f) There is in our world today a war on guilt.
 - i) Nobody is to be responsible for what they do wrong.
 - (1) It's somebody else's fault.
 - ii) To feel guilty is considered unproductive.
 - iii) The word "guilt" is obsolete.
 - iv) Guilt is an affront to our dignity and self-esteem in this day where me-
ology has taken over for theology.
 - v) One advice columnist said the following:
 - (1) We must stop blaming ourselves.
 - (2) Our compulsive behavior is not our fault.
 - (3) Refuse to accept blame; and, above all, don't blame yourself for what
you cannot control.
 - (4) Heaping guilt on ourselves only adds to our stress, low self-esteem,
worry, depression, feelings of inadequacy, and dependence upon
others.
 - (5) Let go of your guilt feelings.
 - vi) We want to live in a no-fault society.
- g) There is a generation today of victims.
 - i) Nobody is responsible; we are just casualties.
 - ii) Our sin is not sin; it is sickness.
 - (1) It is a disease.
 - (2) It is a dependency.
 - iii) People are not alcoholics or drug addicts.
 - (1) They have a chemical dependency.
- h) The therapy industry is thriving.
 - i) People are spending millions of dollars for someone to tell them that they
are not sinful.
 - (1) They are just sick and are not responsible.
 - ii) We are told not to think of ourselves as sinners, but our problem is that
we are addicts.
 - (1) There are sex addicts, gambling addicts, nicotine addicts, anger
addicts, debt addicts, envy addicts, etc.
 - (2) The problem with this is that if a wrong diagnosis is made, then we will
never get the cure.
- i) Jesus didn't die for mistakes; He died for sin.
 - i) The Bible teaches that guilt is real and that we are responsible.
 - ii) The Bible also teaches that grace is wonderful and forgiveness is free and
full.
- j) Jephthah had a bad birth and a bad background.

- i) The Bible teaches that if we were born wrong the first time, then we can be born again.
 - (1) We can be a child of the King.
 - ii) If you have had a rough background, then remember that it may be the black velvet on which the diamond of God's grace is displayed.
 - k) The Bible speaks of those who came out of great difficulty to great power.
 - i) Joseph was disowned by his brothers, sold as a slave, lied about, slandered, and was put in prison.
 - (1) His abasement was God's plan for his advancement.
 - (a) Genesis 37, 40-41
 - ii) The Lord many times will humble a man before He exalts him.
 - (1) If the devil has been against you, then God often uses the sword that Satan has sharpened to cut off Satan's own head.
 - iii) The power of God is greater than all the odds that are stacked against us.
 - l) The grace of God is greater than all of our sins.
 - i) We need to stop making alibis and stop making excuses.
 - (1) Disentangle yourself from the past.
 - ii) You can be what you ought to be by the grace of God today.
- 3) HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE FACE OF DANGER (JUDGES 11:4-11)
- a) It came to pass.
 - i) If trouble comes, it will pass.
 - ii) Jephthah had a reputation for being good, honorable, and a strong man.
 - (1) They said, "Send for this man that we've cast out."
 - b) Jephthah had great confidence in God.
 - i) He was a man of faith.
 - ii) Out of a bleak background of people hating him and despising him, he had somehow seen God.
 - (1) He had an insight into the things of God.
 - iii) He had character in spite of difficulties.
 - iv) He had confidence in spite of danger.
 - v) His foes didn't faze him.
 - vi) He wasn't fettered by his fear.
 - (1) Fear is a dark room where negatives are developed.
 - vii) He had incredible faith.
 - (1) Hebrews 11:32
 - c) They cast him out; but when they were in trouble, they ran to him.
 - i) This is like America.
 - (1) We live high, wide, and handsome; but we come to God in times of trouble.
 - d) Jephthah's confidence was not in himself but in God.
 - e) Judges 11:7-9
 - i) In this passage, we see a glimmer of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- (1) Jesus was despised and rejected; yet when we are convinced of our sin and our difficulty, we ask Him to come and help us.
 - (2) Jesus will ask us exactly the same question that Jephthah asked.
 - (a) “If I deliver you, then will I rule over you? Will I be your head?”
 - (3) Jesus is the head of the church.
 - (a) Unless the Lord Jesus is your Sovereign, He will never be your Savior.
 - ii) How much like our Lord was Jephthah?
 - (1) Those who despised him, rejected him, hurt him, and cast him out were the ones whom he came to save.
 - f) Judges 11:11
 - i) Before the battle ever began, Jephthah went to God in prayer.
 - (1) He asked God for strength.
 - (2) Prayer was not his last resort; it was his first thought.
 - (3) He entered into battle in prayer.
 - ii) Never claim to be a person of strength if you are not a person of faith.
 - iii) Never claim to be a person of faith if you are not a person of prayer.
 - g) Jephthah was not bound by the past.
 - h) Jephthah was not bound by his foes, his enemies, nor danger.
 - i) He could unshackle himself from the past and refuse to let present dangers intimate him.
 - i) What dangers are you facing right now?
 - i) Get on your face before God, and tell Him all about it.
 - (1) 1 John 4:4
 - (2) That is what a man of strength is.
- 4) HIS COMMITMENT IN THE FACE OF DISAPPOINTMENT (JUDGES 11:29-36)
- a) In this passage, “vowed a vow” means to make a promise.
 - i) Jephthah made a solemn promise to the Lord.
 - (1) If God gave him the victory, then he would sacrifice the first thing that came out of his house when he got home.
 - ii) God gave Jephthah the victory.
 - iii) When he got home, out of the house came his daughter.
 - iv) Verse 31 does not speak of human sacrifice.
 - (1) Jephthah did not kill his daughter.
 - (2) No man would have made a vow concerning human sacrifice if he was a man of God.
 - (3) Whatever Jephthah had said, he said with the anointing of Almighty God upon him.
 - (a) Judges 11:29
 - (b) He was a man of faith, and he was led of the Spirit.
 - (4) The Bible expressly condemns human sacrifice.
 - (a) Deuteronomy 12:31
 - (i) God has strictly forbidden it.

- (b) The Spirit of God would never have led Jephthah to contradict the Word of God.
- (5) In verse 31, the word “and” is translated “or”.
 - (a) It would be consecrated to the Lord for His service, or it would be a burnt offering.
- v) Jephthah didn’t know what was going to come out of the door.
 - (1) The choice was the Lord’s, and Jephthah trusted Him.
 - (2) He kept his vow, and he consecrated his daughter to the Lord.
- b) Why was this a great disappointment to Jephthah?
 - i) Jephthah was a family man.
 - ii) He never knew the joys of a family when he was a child.
 - iii) He had hoped, like every Hebrew, that he would be a part of the line of the Messiah.
 - (1) He had hoped that the Savior would be in his descendancy.
 - iv) What girl in Bible times did not have the true value of being a wife and a mother?
 - v) Jephthah gave his daughter over to being a perpetual virgin.
 - (1) Her life was to be separated; never to get married but to serve the Lord.
 - (2) Jephthah knew he would have no grandchildren.
- c) Judges 11:37-40
 - i) In verse 37, the daughter is stating that she’ll never know the joys of a home and a baby.
 - ii) Someone would be set aside to perpetual virginity to serve the Lord.
 - (1) The counterpart of that today would be a nun in the Catholic church.
 - iii) They didn’t speak of her as dead but as living.
 - (1) In verse 40, the word “lament” may be translated “to talk with”.
 - (a) They went yearly to see her and to talk with her.
- d) If there is anything that the men of this generation need to learn, it is to keep their word.
 - i) Numbers 30:2
 - ii) Deuteronomy 23:21-23
 - (1) We don’t have to make the promise; but if we make it, then we had better keep it.
 - iii) If someone makes a wicked vow, a wrong vow, then he should not keep it.
 - (1) It was wrong for him to do it, and he needs to repent of it.
 - iv) If someone makes a righteous and a holy vow, then he needs to keep that vow.
 - v) Think of the promises that people make.
 - (1) People join churches and promise to be faithful to their church, and they are not.
 - (2) Men stand at the altar and promise to be faithful to their bride until death, and they break their word.
 - (3) Men break their word to their family, friends, and children.

- (4) Politicians stand up and take an oath of office with their hand upon the Word of God, and they become dishonest and untruthful.
- (5) People make commitments to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and they don't keep their word.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) What we need today are men who are not shackled by the past, men who are not fettered by the enemy, and men who are bound to their word.
- b) Because Jephthah believed God's Word, Jephthah kept his word.
- c) The reason that Jephthah was a man of faith was because he knew the Lord.
- d) Faith is the gift of God.
 - i) We don't manufacture it.
 - ii) It is your fault if you don't believe.
 - (1) God hath dealt a measure of faith to every man.
 - (a) Romans 12:3
 - (b) Revelation 22:17
- e) Salvation is the gift of God, and the faith to believe for salvation is the gift of God.
 - i) If you need faith, then God will give it to you.
- f) Acts 16:31
 - i) The word "believe" here doesn't mean intellectual belief.
 - (1) It includes that, but it means "trust".
- g) Commit your life to the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.
 - i) To be saved means that your sins are forgiven and buried in the grave of God's forgetfulness.
 - ii) To be saved means that the Holy Spirit of God comes to live in you to give you power, strength, purpose, peace, joy, and companionship.
 - (1) You are never alone.
 - iii) To be saved means that you will go to Heaven.
 - (1) Heaven is not some sentimentality.
 - (a) It is a real place.
 - (i) John 14:2-3
- h) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- i) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) John 3:16