

The Unlikely: The Scoundrel Judges 10, 11 Passim

- PIX: North Buffalo Community Church
- Judges 10:18 ⁻¹⁸ The leaders of the people of Gilead said to each other, “Whoever will take the lead in attacking the Ammonites will be head over all who live in Gilead.”
- Judges 11:1-3 Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute. ² Gilead’s wife also bore him sons, and when they were grown up, they drove Jephthah away. “You are not going to get any inheritance in our family,” they said, “because you are the son of another woman.” ³ So Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob, where a gang of scoundrels gathered around him and followed him.
- ⁶ “Come,” they said, “be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites.”
- ⁷ Jephthah said to them, “Didn’t you hate me and drive me from my father’s house? Why do you come to me now, when you’re in trouble
- ⁸ The elders of Gilead said to him, “Nevertheless, we are turning to you now; come with us to fight the Ammonites, and you will be head over all of us who live in Gilead.”
- ⁹ Jephthah answered, “Suppose you take me back to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me—will I really be your head?”
- ¹⁰ The elders of Gilead replied, “The LORD is our witness; we will certainly do as you say.” ¹¹ So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them. And he repeated all his words before the LORD in Mizpah.
- Involve God first
- ²⁹ Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jephthah. He crossed Gilead and Manasseh, passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from there he advanced against the Ammonites.
- God can use unlikely people he did not even choose for His will.
- Be aware of God in your life.
- ³⁰ And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD: “If you give the Ammonites into my hands, ³¹ whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD’s, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.”
- Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
- Don’t bargain with God, submit to God.
- ³⁴ When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of timbrels! She was an only child. Except for her he had neither son nor daughter. ³⁵ When he saw her, he tore his clothes and cried, “Oh no, my daughter! You have brought me down and I am devastated. I have made a vow to the LORD that I cannot break.”
- Do you ever give God something God does not want?
- ³⁹ After the two months, she returned to her father, and he did to her as he had vowed. And she was a virgin.
- Leviticus 5:4-6 ⁴ or if anyone thoughtlessly takes an oath to do anything, whether good or evil (in any matter one might carelessly swear about) even though they are

unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realize their guilt— ⁵ when anyone becomes aware that they are guilty in any of these matters, they must confess in what way they have sinned. ⁶ As a penalty for the sin they have committed, they must bring to the LORD a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering^[a]; and the priest shall make atonement for them for their sin.

- **Your relationship with God is not a bargain to be struck.**

Starter Question: In your opinion, when are people most likely to bargain with God?

1. Read Judges 10:17-Judges 11:10
2. In your opinion, why did the elders not pray for God's guidance in choosing a leader?
3. Given what we know about Jephthah, how do you think he felt when the elders approached him?
4. Was Jephthah right to reject the initial offer of the elders and hold out to be the leader the originally sought?
5. Read Judges 11:29-31
6. In your opinion, why did Jephthah feel the need to make an oath? Do you think people take oaths to God as seriously today?
7. Read Judges 11:34-40
8. Notice again how God is not consulted. Why do you think Jephthah does not pray to God?
9. Jephthah's daughter submits to her father's vow. What does this say about her?
10. In your opinion, what is God's reaction to this part of Jephthah's story?