

Jephthah - Say “Yes”

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Judges 11:1-11;29-39

¹ Now Jephthah of Gilead was a great warrior. He was the son of Gilead, but his mother was a prostitute. ² Gilead's wife also had several sons, and when these half-brothers grew up, they chased Jephthah off the land. "You will not get any of our father's inheritance," they said, "for you are the son of a prostitute." ³ So Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob. Soon he had a band of worthless rebels following him.

Note: All readings taken from the New Living Translation

Judges 11:1-11;29-39

⁴ At about this time, the Ammonites began their war against Israel. ⁵ When the Ammonites attacked, the elders of Gilead sent for Jephthah in the land of Tob. ⁶ The elders said, “Come and be our commander! Help us fight the Ammonites!” ⁷ But Jephthah said to them, “Aren’t you the ones who hated me and drove me from my father’s house? Why do you come to me now when you’re in trouble?”

Judges 11:1-11;29-39

⁸ “Because we need you,” the elders replied. “If you lead us in battle against the Ammonites, we will make you ruler over all the people of Gilead.”

⁹ Jephthah said to the elders, “Let me get this straight. If I come with you and if the Lord gives me victory over the Ammonites, will you really make me ruler over all the people?”

Judges 11:1-11;29-39

¹⁰ “The Lord is our witness,” the elders replied. “We promise to do whatever you say.”

¹¹ So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him their ruler and commander of the army. At Mizpah, in the presence of the Lord, Jephthah repeated what he had said to the elders.

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Judges 11:1-11;29-39

²⁹ At that time the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he went throughout the land of Gilead and Manasseh, including Mizpah in Gilead, and from there he led an army against the Ammonites. ³⁰ And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord. He said, “If you give me victory over the Ammonites, ³¹ I will give to the Lord whatever comes out of my house to meet me when I return in triumph. I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.”

Judges 11:1-11;29-39

³² So Jephthah led his army against the Ammonites, and the Lord gave him victory. ³³ He crushed the Ammonites, devastating about twenty towns from Aroer to an area near Minnith and as far away as Abel-keramim. In this way Israel defeated the Ammonites.

Judges 11:1-11;29-39

³⁴ When Jephthah returned home to Mizpah, his daughter came out to meet him, playing on a tambourine and dancing for joy. She was his one and only child; he had no other sons or daughters. ³⁵ When he saw her, he tore his clothes in anguish. “Oh, my daughter!” he cried out. “You have completely destroyed me! You’ve brought disaster on me! For I have made a vow to the Lord, and I cannot take it back.”

Judges 11:1-11;29-39

³⁶ And she said, “Father, if you have made a vow to the Lord, you must do to me what you have vowed, for the Lord has given you a great victory over your enemies, the Ammonites. ³⁷ But first let me do this one thing: Let me go up and roam in the hills and weep with my friends for two months, because I will die a virgin.”

Judges 11:1-11;29-39

³⁸ “You may go,” Jephthah said. And he sent her away for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because she would never have children. ³⁹ When she returned home, her father kept the vow he had made, and she died a virgin.

Jephthah – A man of faith

In spite of all the challenges Jephthah faced, God chose him, and he said yes.



Hebrews 11:32

*³² How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, **Jephthah**, David, Samuel, and all the prophets.*

Despite everything, God chose him

Now Jephthah of Gilead was a great warrior. He was the son of Gilead, but his mother was a prostitute...



Despite everything, God chose him

- Now Jephthah of Gilead was a great warrior. He was the son of Gilead, but his mother was a prostitute...
- ...The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah



1 Corinthians 1:26-28

²⁶ Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. ²⁷ Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. ²⁸ God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important.

Despite everything, God chose him

- No matter what our background, past failures, current lifestyle...
- God can choose you. You are not disqualified.



Despite everything, he said “Yes”

- Jephthah could have been tempted to say *“I’m not helping you. Go and fight your own battles”*
- Psalm 4:23 - Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.



Despite everything, he said “Yes”

- Jephthah could have been struggling with his own self worth - *“I’m not worthy. I’m a son of a prostitute. I’m an outcast...”*
- Great exploits lie on the other side of ‘Yes’ (Ness Wilson)



Despite everything, he said “Yes”

- No matter what our background, past failures, current lifestyle...
- You can say “Yes”. You are not disqualified.



A seed of faith

- Why did Jephthah make a vow to God? Was it out of fear of being killed? Was it inspired by the Holy Spirit?
- Did Jephthah actually kill his only daughter?
- Why didn't she run away?



A seed of faith

- When Jephthah said “Yes”, and the Holy Spirit came upon him, a seed of faith started to grow.
- As an act of worship, Jephthah wanted to offer something to God.



A seed of faith

- Jephthah gave his daughter to serve God for the rest of her life.
- The seed of faith meant that Jephthah was willing to give *everything* to God
- His name is written in God's hall of fame.



Summary

- In spite of everything...
 - God wants YOU to be part of his family and to serve his purposes.
 - Just say “Yes”. You are not disqualified.
- Saying “Yes” is costly, but the rewards are immeasurable

