JEPHTHAH – THE NEGOTIATOR – PART 2

--JUDGES 11:12-33--

INTRODUCTION:

Last Sunday we began to look at Jephthah the Gileadite, a valiant warrior who in the beginning was an outcast of his own people but rose to become commander of the forces of Gilead and head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. Jephthah accomplished this through the art of negotiation with the elders of Gilead. We ended last week at Mizpah of Gilead, where what Jephthah had negotiated with the elders of Gilead was ratified before the LORD and the people of Gilead.

At the end of my message, I acknowledged that so far in this history of Jephthah the LORD had been a silent witness to all that had taken place and I asked: What will God do, because we had learned He could bear Israel’s misery no more, so what will He do? Will He choose Jephthah as the Gileadites had done? Is this valiant warrior who is a hard-headed, self-interested negotiator going to be the next judge of Israel? These questions will be answered today as we continue to look at the history of Jephthah the Gileadite.

1. NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE KING OF AMMON (Judges 11:12-28)
   1. Jephthah wastes no time but immediately begins to rule in Gilead and he does so by dispatching \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the king of Ammon, they carry a message from Jephthah.
   2. When the messengers return with a response, a carefully worded response is sent back that includes several arguments to back Israel’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on the land.
   3. Jephthah begins his response to the king of Ammon with a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ argument that the land belongs to Israel.
   4. This then leads Jephthah into his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ argument for Israel’s right to possess the land.
   5. Having made his points historically and theologically, Jephthah now turns to a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ argument.
   6. Finally, Jephthah offered one final argument, this one based on the \_\_\_\_\_\_ that Israel had lived in the land.
   7. Jephthah makes clear through these negotiations that he has not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ against Ammon, but that Ammon is in the wrong.
2. NEGOTIATION WITH THE LORD (Judges 11:29-33)
   1. Since the LORD’s rebuke of the people of Israel in the end of chapter 10, He has remained \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   2. All of this changes in verse 29, when the author states, “*Now the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD came upon Jephthah…*” (Judges 11:29a, NASB95)
   3. Energized by the Spirit of the LORD, Jephthah’s natural ability to lead and direct men is enhanced by the Spirit’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and all that ability is now directed to a single purpose.
   4. The opening statement of his vow, “*If You will indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand*,” (Judges 11:30b, NASB95) expresses for us Jephthah’s deep anguish and \_\_\_\_\_\_.
   5. Jephthah’s vow is essentially a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   6. \_\_\_\_\_\_ or what will the sacrifice be?
   7. Having made his vow, Jephthah commits himself and the men under his command to the battle and they have a tremendous \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

CONCLUSION:

Today, we learned because the LORD could no longer bear Israel’s misery, He broke the silence by intervening into the history of Jephthah. He came upon Jephthah by His Spirit thus commissioning him as the next judge of Israel. The moment God’s Spirit came upon Jephthah victory over the sons of Ammon was assured. All Jephthah had to do was to look back in the history of his people to see God’s deliverance. The fear of failure and rejection blinded his eyes to what the LORD had done over and over for his people. That fear and the pagan religion that so permeated the nation caused Jephthah to believe he had to offer something to God in return for salvation.

Last week I said, “What place does negotiation have in our relationship with God? Can we negotiate with Him? Is it a good idea?” As we have seen this morning and how that will be vividly

played out in the life of Jephthah, I can say that negotiation has absolutely no place in our relationship with God, we cannot negotiate with Him and to try to do so is a bad idea. What did Jephthah have to do for the Spirit of the LORD to come upon him? He did not have to do anything; it was a pure act of God’s grace to save His people once again. There was absolutely nothing that the Israelites or Jephthah could have offered to God to bring about the victory that they had over the sons of Ammon. Jephthah’s vow was irrelevant to the outcome of the battle with the sons of Ammon. Salvation for the people of Israel was a gift of God’s grace. In the same way, we cannot negotiate our salvation with God, it too is a gift of God’s grace paid in full by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We have nothing that we can offer to God, all we can do is by faith accept the gift of His grace and salvation is ours. All of this is due to God’s love for us and the fact that He could bear our misery no more. “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*” (John 3:16, NASB95)