

THE OUTLAW AND THE OUTCAST

Judges Message Series Week 7

Judges 10:10-11:40

Pastor Jeff Burkholder

November 10, 2019

Five myths that are exposed through the life and story of Jephthah:

Myth 1: What is important spiritually is to have sincerity, faith, commitment, and zeal, not biblical knowledge.

“In his ignorance, he makes a serious theological error in equating the worship of Yahweh with the worship of other gods. It is this theological error that leads him to execute a religious practice used in the worship of these other gods—child sacrifice! In other words, ignorance of God's Word leads him to emulate a pagan religious practice. Theological accuracy is important. What one thinks about God is important.”

K. Lawson Younger Jr., *The NIV Application Commentary: Judges/Ruth*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 259.

Truth: Biblical knowledge is critical. (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105)

Myth 2: I don't need to deal with my past.

“The tragedy of this passage is repeated again and again in our modern society. Hurt people hurt people. Jephthah came from a dysfunctional background. He was an illegitimate son, born of a prostitute, rejected and disinherited by his family, leader of a gang. He became a man who was hurt, angry, bitter, ambition-driven, ready to fight, manipulative, ignorant of God’s Law, abusive of his daughter, lacking boundaries, contentious, emotionally reactionary, revengeful, and doing what is right in his own eyes for his own gain.”

K. Lawson Younger Jr., *The NIV Application Commentary: Judges/Ruth*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 269.

Truth: I need to face and deal with my past.

Myth 3: God cannot use me because of my past.

“Jephthah was, for whatever reason, a loser. Yet the Spirit of Yahweh came upon this loser (11:29), and Yahweh gave the Ammonites into his power (11:32). ‘But God chose’ what men had rejected.”

Dale Ralph Davis, *Judges*, Christian Focus Publications, Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain, 2000, p. 139.

Truth: If God can use Jephthah, He can use me.
(1 Timothy 1:15, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

Myth 4: God's blessing equals God's approval.

Truth: God blesses those who don't deserve it and brings suffering to the righteous. (Matthew 5:45; Job 1:1, 2:3)

Myth 5: The outcomes and situations in our lives depend on us.

"It may appear as though God answered Jephthah's prayer by giving him victory over the Ammonites (certainly Jephthah thought so). But Yahweh gave the victory because as Judge of all the earth he defended his people and brought defeat on the Ammonite king. As outlined above, Jephthah's prayer (and hence vow) was utterly unnecessary. God worked out of pure grace on Israel's behalf, not because he was *manipulated by Jephthah's prayer and vow*."

K. Lawson Younger Jr., *The NIV Application Commentary: Judges/Ruth*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 268-269.

Truth: God's blessings and victories are a result of His sovereignty and grace. (1 Chronicles 29:10-14; James 1:17)

Recommended reading: *Knowing God* by J. I. Packer