

## Jephthah, The Ultimate Underdog

### Judges 11

We often believe God only chooses the polished, the prepared, and the well-positioned to do great things. We look at our past mistakes, our broken family history, or the painful labels others have placed on us, and we assume we are disqualified from being used by Heaven.

Most of us have never heard of Jephthah, but God named him in Hebrews chapter 11 when He lists the great heroes of the faith, *“And what shall I more say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak and of Samson and of Jephthah and David also and of Samuel and of the prophets.”* Hebrews 11:32 He’s in a pretty good list of names.

We don’t read much about him in the New Testament, except for this one statement. Judges 11 is a story of how God transforms a rejected outcast into a mighty warrior. He was a man defined by his scars. He was an outcast living on the margins of society. Yet, when the nation of Israel faced its darkest hour of oppression, God did not look to the palace or the temple for a deliverer. He looked to the wilderness. He looked to Jephthah. If you have ever felt left out, passed over, or broken by your past, this story is for you. God uses the unlikely to accomplish the impossible.

Jephthah’s life proves that it does not matter how you start. It only matters how you finish. You might be feeling broken, rejected, and exhausted from fighting life’s battles in your own flesh. The same Holy Spirit that came upon Jephthah is available to us. He surrendered his weakness, received fire, and stepped into the victorious life he was created to live.

*“Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute. 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.’ So Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob, where a gang of scoundrels gathered around him and followed him.”* Judges 11:1-3

#### 1. **Your Past Does Not Determine Your Purpose.**

*“Jephthah the Gileadite”* means he was from the *area* of Gilead was the part of Israel that lay *east* of the Jordan River, comprising the territory of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh. These are the people who did not enter the Promised land but settled for less by not experiencing all that God had for them. Coincidentally, Jephthah’s father was also named Gilead. In spite of his background he rose to be great. The pages of history, scripture, and modern biographies are filled with individuals who started in deep deficits—abandoned, abused, impoverished, or rejected—yet achieved world-changing significance.

Abraham Lincoln was born in a dirt-floor log cabin to illiterate parents. Lincoln faced a brutal childhood. His mother died when he was nine, and his sister died shortly after. He grew up working backbreaking manual labor, received less than a year of formal schooling, suffered severe clinical depression, and failed repeatedly in business and early politics. Lincoln refused to let his setbacks define his future. He taught himself grammar, mathematics, and law by candlelight, turning his personal suffering into a profound empathy for human suffering. He preserved the United States during its bloody Civil War, issued the Emancipation Proclamation to destroy the institution of slavery, and authored the Gettysburg Address, redefining democracy for the world.

Frederick Douglass was born into the absolute degradation of American slavery. He was separated from his mother as an infant, suffered starvation and physical abuse, and was legally forbidden from learning to read. He secretly learned the alphabet from white neighborhood children and used scraps of paper to teach himself to write. At age 20, he made a daring escape to the North disguised as a sailor. Douglass became one of the most brilliant orators, authors, and abolitionists in world history. He advised Abraham Lincoln, shattered the racist myth that enslaved people lacked intellectual capacity, and spent his life fighting for the civil rights of women and Black Americans.

Oprah Winfrey was born to an unwed teenage mother in rural, impoverished Mississippi. She grew up without indoor plumbing. She suffered horrific physical, mental, and sexual abuse from relatives during her childhood, became pregnant at age 14, and tragically lost her infant son shortly after birth. She found solace in public speaking and

reading, landing a job in local radio during high school. When she moved to television, executives told her she was “unsuited for TV news” because she got too emotionally invested in her stories. Instead of changing her empathy, she leaned into it. She revolutionized the daytime talk show format, became the world's first black female billionaire, built schools for marginalized girls, and became one of the most influential cultural forces of the 20th and 21st centuries.

All these people stopped viewing themselves through the lens of what happened *to* them (victim) and started viewing themselves through the lens of what could be built *through* them (steward). By human standards, Jephthah was a statistic of failure, but God does not consult your past to determine your future! The enemy loves to write a script for your life based on where you started.

*“His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute.”* Judges 11:1

Jephthah was an illegitimate child. He was the son of a harlot. Every child has a right to live. Every child has a right to belong. In today's lingo, he was an illegitimate child, and as a result, he was looked down on and disowned by his half-brothers. To God, there are no illegitimate children!

Have you ever been driven out by the words of others? Have you ever been disqualified by people who only know your history but don't know your destiny? Jephthah was labeled an outcast, but God labeled him a mighty warrior. God does not judge your future by your past. Your current crisis is simply the stage for God's coming turning point. Jephthah rose from the trash heap of rejection to become a mighty deliverer of God's people. He did not achieve this victory through human strategy, political networking, or physical strength. He won because he moved from isolation into the empowerment of the living God.

*“Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior.”* Judges 11:1

- People judge our pedigree. God evaluates our potential.
- People see our scars. God sees our assignment.
- People cast us out. God sets us apart.

The world tried to label Jephthah a reject, but when God has a call on your life, human rejection is just a divine setup for a supernatural comeback! He was not hindered by his past. He didn't make excuses for his life because of his background. He didn't blame his circumstances. He took personal responsibility for his life. Part of what's wrong with America is that everything is somebody else's fault or something that happened to us at some point.

They said, *“You're not going to share in the inheritance. So Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob.”* Judges 11:2

He was exiled and driven out of the city *“and a gang of scoundrels gathered around him and followed him.”* Judges 11:3

Jephthah grew up in this area in what would be modern-day Syria. “*Scoundrels*” doesn't necessarily mean criminals. The word means in this place *poor persons*, without property, and without employment. He knew failure, rejection, and poverty and was living in a bad environment.

No one expected much of Jephthah. He had an excuse if he turns out bad. Psychologists and sociologists would say, “He's not to blame. It's someone else's fault. He is the creature of his environment.”

Today, we use our background as an excuse. Nobody is to be responsible anymore for what they do wrong. It's somebody else's fault. To feel guilty is considered unproductive, and so the word guilt is obsolete.

He took personal responsibility for his life. In the book of Ezekiel, God gave the prophet a series of messages about Judah's fall and the judgment of God coming upon Israel. Judgment is coming, but the exiles are taking the position that they are not to blame for the judgment. They put the blame on their ancestors. They are saying that the sins of their ancestors are the reason why the judgment is coming. They proclaimed they are innocent in the matter. They said

they are simply suffering the results of the sins of their ancestors – “We are not to blame for what is taking place. We are not personally responsible.”

Irresponsibility is a problem that is still with us today. Not many people are willing to take responsibility for their own personal behavior and actions. It is a tendency of our fallen human nature to want to put the blame on someone else.

People today say they're not responsible because of their genetic composition. We know more and more about genetics today. We are in a brand new world scientifically. We are finding out that many things are genetically driven, but you have to take personal responsibility, it's not just genetics. People say, “I'm genetically wired a certain way. I'm predisposed to be like this. I can't be held accountable.” The truth is when sin entered into the human family, it did damage to the genetic composition of the whole human race. We are all broken, and we are all responsible for our own decisions.

Some people want to blame their parents. They say they are just a victim of their childhood and the home they came from so they are not personally responsible because their behavior can be excused because of other people.

Other people say it is the government's fault. It's because of the economy. It's because they were born in an economically deprived situation that they aren't accountable for the way they live, because they were brought up in a poor home. Most of us were brought up in a poor home. Some of you were poor, and people called you poor. What are you going to do? Wallow around in your poverty the rest of your life and refuse to accept blame? No.

Irresponsibility and refusal to take personal blame started back in the Garden of Eden. When sin entered the world, God came to Adam and he said, “*The woman whom You gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it*” Genesis 3:12. Adam not only blamed his wife, but he said, “the woman You gave me.” He was saying, “God, You are the one to blame. In other words, “She made me eat it.” Eve said, “No, it's not my fault. The serpent tempted me.” Genesis 3:15. It's all his fault—“The devil made me do it.” Irresponsibility has been around a long, long time.

God sends a message to Israel through the prophet Ezekiel and says, “*What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: ‘The parents eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?’*” Ezekiel 18:2

Instead of repenting for their own wrongdoings, the exiles used this proverb to shift blame. They argued they were completely innocent and were only suffering because previous generations had broken God's laws.

“*Eating sour grapes*” refers to a person eating sharp, unripe fruit. “*Teeth set on edge*” refers to the involuntary, sharp, physical puckering sensation left in the mouth from a sour taste. The proverb paints a picture where one person eats the bad food, but a completely different person feels the terrible aftertaste.

To paraphrase that in more current terminology, the proverb might read something like this. “The fathers have eaten green apples and the children got the stomachache.” See how they are refusing to take personal responsibility?

By clinging to this proverb, the people developed a victim mentality that paralyzed their spiritual lives. There is a principle in the Word of God that the behavior of others does have an impact on other people. Your behavior will have an impact on your spouse. Your children are affected by your behavior and decisions. Our actions DO have an impact, but there is a misapplication here. People are not punished because of the sins of someone else. It is true that the consequences of the sins of others affect us. It is not that the guilt of others, because of what they have done, is passed on and attached to us because of what they have done. Nor is it true that God punishes us for the sins of other people.

In Ezekiel 18, God ends the proverb by instructing them, “don't say that again.” “*As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me. The one who sins is the one who will die.*” Ezekiel 18:3

God says to Ezekiel in this passage of Scripture that they are not to use that proverb that they are being punished because of the sins of their forefather or parents anymore. *“The soul that sins, it shall die.”*

Here’s why this is a big deal. If you put yourself in the position of being a victim, then you remove yourself from personal responsibility and accountability for your sin. If you are not personally responsible for your sin, then there is no need for you to repent. If you don’t repent, then that means you don’t need a Savior. If you don’t need a Savior, that means you don’t have any hope. The idea that everybody is a victim is one of the most destructive thoughts that has ever been believed by the human race.

In Acts 17:30-31, Paul was preaching and said, *“In the times of ignorance God overlooked; but now he commands men that they should all everywhere repent: For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”* Acts 17:30-31

In Ezekiel 18, God says, *“Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?” declares the Sovereign Lord. “Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?”* Ezekiel 18:23

You don’t get into heaven on the basis of how much good and how much bad you did. You get into heaven on the basis of whether or not you received the Lord Jesus who died on the cross of Calvary for your sins. It is God’s call for repentance, but it has to be a personal matter. Nobody can repent for you. Your mother can’t repent for you. Your father can’t repent for you. Your friends can’t repent for you. You have to repent for yourself.

*“If a wicked person turns away from the wickedness they have committed and does what is just and right, they will save their life. Because they consider all the offenses they have committed and turn away from them, that person will surely live; they will not die. Yet the Israelites say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Are my ways unjust, people of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust? Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!”* Ezekiel 18:25-32

We live in a world where people refuse to take responsibility. One advice column said—“It’s not your fault. The first step you must take is to stop blaming yourself. Your compulsive behavior is not your fault. Refuse to accept blame, and, above all, do not blame yourself for what you cannot control. Heaping guilt on yourself only adds to your stress, low self-esteem, worry, depression, feelings of inadequacy, and dependence upon others. Let go of your guilt feelings.”

Ann Landers wrote, “One of the most painful, self-mutilating, time and energy consuming exercises in the human experience is guilt. It can ruin your day, or your week, or your life, if you let it. It turns up like a bad penny when you do something dishonest, hurtful, tacky, selfish, or rotten.”

What she’s saying is, “If you do something dishonest, hurtful, tacky, selfish, or rotten, don’t feel bad about it.” Never mind that it was the result of ignorance, stupidity, laziness, thoughtlessness, weak flesh, or clay feet. You did wrong, and the guilt is killing you. Too bad! But be assured the agony you feel is normal. Remember that guilt is a pollutant, and we don’t need any more of it in the world. Get rid of guilt. It’s somebody else’s fault.

Jephthah could have said, “Don’t blame me. If anybody ever had a bad background, I am a victim.” We have a generation today of victims. Nobody’s responsible. We’re just casualties. Our sin is not sin—it’s sickness. It’s disease. It is a dependency. We’re not an alcoholic or an addict—we have a chemical dependency. We’re not a glutton—we have an eating disorder. We’re not a sex addict—we are sexually charged. It’s somebody else’s fault.

The problem with all of this is if you make a wrong diagnosis, you’ll never get the cure. Jesus did not die for mistakes—He died for sin. Stop blaming your past. Stop saying it’s somebody else’s fault. You’ll never rise to be what you ought to be. The Bible teaches that guilt is real, that we are responsible, but the Bible teaches that grace is wonderful, and forgiveness is free and full.

Jephthah had a bad birth and a bad background. But the Bible teaches that if we were born wrong the first time, we can be born again and become a royal child of the King. If you've had a rough background, you're the black velvet on which the diamond of God's grace is displayed.

Jephthah had every right to be bitter, angry, and inactive due to his painful upbringing. Instead of wallowing in isolation and self-pity, he gathered a following and developed his leadership skills. You cannot use your family background, past trauma, or current limitations as permanent excuses to sit on the sidelines of God's kingdom.

Think about the people in the Bible who came out of great difficulty to great power:

Joseph was disowned by his brothers, sold as a slave, lied about, slandered, and rotted in prison. But his humiliation was God's plan for his advancement. The Lord many times will humble a man before he exalts him.

God often uses the sword that Satan has sharpened, just like David cut Goliath's head off with Goliath's own sword. The power of God is greater than all the odds that are stacked against you, and the grace of God is greater than all of your sins. Stop making excuses and start making a difference. You can have character in the face of difficulties.

Jephthah had a bad background, but he's listed in the Hall of Fame in Hebrews 11.

His character shows up in the face of difficulties. Separate yourself from the past and quit living in the past. Quit saying, "Well, I'm just a victim. I'm just a bundle of bad genes." Say, "I can be what I ought to be by the grace of God today." Say, *"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."* Philippians 4:13

## **2. Stop Making Excuses, And Start Making A Difference.**

*"Some time later, when the Ammonites were fighting against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. 'Come,' they said, 'be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites.' 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?' 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.' Jephthah answered, 'Suppose you take me back to fight the Ammonites and the Lord gives them to me—will I really be your head?' The elders of Gilead replied, 'The Lord is our witness; we will certainly do as you say.' 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."* Judges 11:4-11

Jephthah fled to the land of Tob. Tob means "good," but it was a barren wasteland filled with desperate men. Jephthah didn't sit in the desert crying over his rejection. He became a leader. He grew strong.

- **Your wilderness is not your graveyard. It is your training ground!**

The anointing isn't birthed in palaces of ease. It is forged in the fires of affliction! God uses the dry places to strip away reliance on flesh. God uses isolation to teach us how to depend on His voice. God uses our seasons of obscurity to build a war room in your spirit.

When the enemy thinks he has isolated you to destroy you, he has actually just given God the room to build a giant out of you. Every tear you shed in secret is investing in a public victory! Jephthah must have already developed a reputation for being a courageous, good, honorable, and strong man because they said, *"Send for the man that we've cast out."*

*"The people of Ammon made war against Israel."* The nation of Ammon, the Ammonites, lived to the south of Israel. They were a semi-nomadic group of people who descended from Abraham's nephew Lot.

They said to Jephthah, "Come and be our captain, that we may fight with the people of Ammon." Jephthah said, "If you bring me back to fight, and I win the battle for you, will you follow me? Will I be your leader?"

Jephthah was a man who had great confidence in God. He was a man of faith. He knew, “I don’t have to worry about it. I don’t have to think about it, or apologize about it, or wonder about it.” Here was a man from a bleak background, yet out of all the people in Israel, those hating him and despising him—even his own flesh and blood, he was the one who had seen God. Somehow, he had an insight into the things of God. He had character in spite of difficulties, and he had confidence in spite of danger.

His foe did not faze him. He’s not handcuffed by his fear. He had an incredible faith.

- **He Was Rejected By His Family, But Blessed And Used By God.**

We come to God in times of trouble. Jephthah’s confidence was not in himself. It was in God. Jephthah said, “*You’ve sent for me, but I know it’s not me that you need. It’s God that you need.*” He said, “*If I give you the victory and deliver you, will you follow me? Will I be your head? Will I be your leader?*”

When Israel faced an impossible enemy, the elders who kicked Jephthah out had to travel to the wilderness to beg for his help. Why? Because you can reject the man, but you cannot deny the anointing of God on his life!

This is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was despised and rejected, and yet, when we are convinced of our sin and our difficulty, we say, “Lord God, come and help me.” But Jesus will ask you exactly the same question: “If I deliver you, will I rule over you? Will I be your head? Will you follow Me?” Unless He is your Sovereign, He’ll never be your Savior. Unless you say, “Lord Jesus, deliver me, and You will be my head.”

How much like our Lord was Jephthah? Those who despised Him and rejected Him and hurt Him and cast Him out—those were the ones that He came to save.

### **3. Live In The Power Of The Holy Spirit To Experience A Victorious Life.**

*“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. And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord: ‘If you give the Ammonites into my hands, 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.’ Then Jephthah went over to fight the Ammonites, and the Lord gave them into his hands. He devastated twenty towns from Aroer to the vicinity of Minnith, as far as Abel Keramim. Thus Israel subdued Ammon.”* Judges 11:29-33

When we are empty of the Spirit, we see ourself through the lens of our past trauma, our family’s mistakes, and the words spoken against us by others. But when the Holy Spirit takes residence in our life, He rewrites our identity. He takes us from rejected to accepted. He takes us from victim to victorious. He breaks the generational failures of our bloodline and anchors us in the bloodline of Jesus Christ.

The enemy wants us to stay focused on who we used to be. The Holy Spirit demands that you look at who God says you are. Notice that Jephthah prayed.

In verse 11 he goes to God in prayer before he ever begins the battle. He asks God for strength. Judges 11:11: “*He repeated all his words before the Lord in Mizpah.*”

Mizpah was the same place where the famous agreement between Laban and Jacob was made (Genesis 31:43-50). Mizpah means “watch.” This would be a promise of God that “If you do wrong according to this Word, God will see it and bless you.

Jephthah did not see this battle as primarily between two armies, but between the God of Israel and the false god of Ammon. Jephthah showed true wisdom in seeing this as a spiritual battle *first*.

Jephthah prayed, “Lord I need You. God, I’m in a battle against my enemies.” He goes to prayer before he goes to battle, not afterward. Prayer was not his last resort—it was his first thought. He enters into battle in prayer. Don’t ever

claim to be a man of strength if you're not a man of faith, and never claim to be a man of faith if you're not a man of prayer.

He refused to let his past limit him, and he refused to let his present dangers intimidate him.

What dangers are facing you right now? Get on your face before God and tell Him all about it. Victory begins the moment you align your thoughts and words with God's Spirit and His Word.

Judges 11:29 declares: "*Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah.*"

This is the turning point of the entire story. Before this verse, Jephthah was a capable leader of a band of rebels. After this verse, he became an instrument of divine judgment against the enemies of God. The empowerment by the Holy Spirit is the difference in every moment of our lives. Human talent can take us only so far. Education can open doors, but only the Holy Spirit can break chains. Wealth can buy influence, but only the Spirit can destroy the powers of darkness.

When the Spirit of the Lord comes upon us, we receive supernatural boldness to face mountains that used to terrify us. We receive wisdom beyond our years. We receive the power to stand firm when the wind blows, knowing that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world.

1 John 4:4 says, "*Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.*"

Once Jephthah was clothed in the Holy Spirit, he advanced against the Ammonites. Judges 11:32-33 records that Jephthah crossed over to fight, "*...and the Lord gave them into his hand. He devastated them...with a very great slaughter.*" A Spirit-led life is not a life free from warfare. Jephthah still had to march to the battlefield. He still had to draw his sword, but the outcome of the battle was already settled in the heavens before the first blow was struck on earth. When you walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, your victories are decisive. The addictions that held you captive must shatter. The depression that clouded your mind must lift. The spiritual attacks against your home and your children must cease. You do not fight *for* victory. You fight *from* victory. You are operating from the finished work of Calvary, backed by the fire of the Holy Spirit.

"*He advanced toward the people of Ammon.*" Judges 11:29

The filling of the Spirit makes God's people *advance*. They go forward in the sense of spiritual progress, and they go forward in the sense of confronting the enemies of God.

There is a disturbing part of the end of the story where Jephthah makes a rash vow. He made a promise to the Lord, that if God will give Jephthah the victory, he will sacrifice the first thing that comes out of his house to meet him when he gets home. God gives him the victory. When he gets home, out of the house, dancing and leaping with joy, is his beautiful daughter. Can you imagine the situation? What would you have done? Well, what is all of this about? This is not human sacrifice. The Bible expressly condemns human sacrifice. Jephthah did not kill his daughter. No man would have made a vow concerning human sacrifice if he was a man of God. Jephthah was led by the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God would never lead Jephthah to contradict the Word of God.

Deuteronomy 12:31 shows that God has strictly forbidden human sacrifice. "*You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the Lord hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.*"

What's the answer to this? Verse 31 says, "*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.*"

The word, AND is the same word that is translated as OR.

When you read it that way: "*Jephthah made a vow to the Lord: 'If you give the Ammonites into my hands, 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, OR I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering. ”*

That's what it means. It's going to be consecrated to the Lord for His service, or it'll be a burnt offering—because he didn't know what was going to come out of the door. He's simply saying, “Lord, the choice is Yours, and I can trust You. What comes out of the door—it'll be consecrated to You, or it'll be a burnt offering. And, God, I can trust You to do the right thing.”

So his beautiful daughter came out of the door, and he kept his vow. He consecrated her to the Lord. He gave his daughter to being a perpetual virgin—that her life was to be separated, never to get married, but to serve the Lord. And that Jephthah knew that he would have no grandchildren from this daughter.

We also have the further proof in verses 36-39, *“Father grant me this one request,” she said. “Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry.” “You may go,” he said. And he let her go for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because she would never marry. After the two months, she returned to her father, and he did to her as he had vowed. And she was a virgin.”* Judges 11:36-39

Today we would we would call them nuns. Jephthah was a man of his word. Men in this generation need to learn to keep their word! Numbers 30:2 says, *“When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.”*

Deuteronomy 23:21-23 says, *“If you make a vow to the Lord your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the Lord your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty. Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the Lord your God with your own mouth.”*

God says you don't have to make the promise, but if you make it, you keep it. Think of the promises that people make. Think of people who join churches and promise to be faithful to their church, and they're not. Think of men who stand at the altar and promise to be faithful to their bride until death, and they break their word. Think of men who break their word to their family, their friends, and their children. Think of politicians who stand up and take an oath of office with their hand upon the Word of God and become dishonest liars.

Think of people who've made a commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and don't keep their word. I'm telling you that what we need today are some men and women who are not shackled by the past, who are not handcuffed by the enemy, but men and women who are bound to their word. Jesus always kept His Word, and God's promises are sure and certain.