



Promises, Promises

I Promise To Keep My Promises (Judges 11)

By Pastor David Hillis, 25 September 2016

BIG IDEA: Empty promises promise pain, but we honor God when we follow His lead and then follow through.

Empty Promises (Matthew 5:33-37; Psalm 76:11; Proverbs 20:25; Deuteronomy 18:9-10a,12; Hebrews 11:32)

- Some people have misunderstood the words of Jesus in Matthew 5 to mean that we should never make a promise to God or anyone else, but that's not true. Why did Jephthah make such a promise to God and why did he follow through with his promise? Human sacrifice was never OK with God.

Lessons Learned

1. Promises honor God when they start with God. (Judges 11)

- Making promises, or commitments, is a good thing, a Godly thing, but only if they are inspired by the heart of God in the first place.

2. Promises aren't meant to be put off. (Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Ecclesiastes 5:4-6; Numbers 30:1-2; Matthew 12:36-37)

- Being faithful to your promises, as a follower of Jesus, reflects the goodness and faithfulness of the one you follow.
- Can people trust you with your words? Do they believe the promises you make? How has God used your faithfulness to follow through on promises for His glory?

3. Broken promises are always forgivable. (Leviticus 5:4-6; 1 John 1:8-9; Isaiah 1:18, 55:7)

- 1 John 1:9 reminds us that if we confess our sins, He's faithful and just and will forgive our sins. The promises God guides us to make, and we do not keep, are forgivable in His eyes.

NEXT STEP: *How many promises do I tend to make? Are they God-inspired? Do I tend to follow through, or put them off? Track yourself.*

FOR MY PERSONAL TIME WITH GOD THIS WEEK:

1. Read Judges 11. The grief of Jephthah and the willing submission of his daughter give us a glimpse of the drama of Good Friday. What is different in the two stories? What is similar? What message does it bring to you most about promises and commitments?
2. Read Psalm 61:5,8 and Psalm 76:11. As you think about the value of being a person of your word, how might you evaluate the large and small commitments you make to others? Do you make any? Too many? Why? Do you follow through?
3. Proverbs 20:25, James 5:12 and Matthew 5:33-37 warn us not to swear or make rash, empty promises. As you read these verses, consider any promises you have made that were outside of God's direction in your life. Why did you make them? What were the consequences?
4. Are there any promises or commitments God wants you to make this week?