Judges 11

“The Right Sacrifice”

**Scripture:** Judges 11

**Memory Verse:** *“For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You not delight in burnt offering.* ***The sacrifices of God*** *are a broken spirit, A broken and an contrite heart…”*

Psalm 51:17

**Lesson Focus:** God wants us to live our lives for Him.

**Activities and Crafts:** Coloring page, Work Sheet

Craft for 1st & 2nd Graders: God wants to change our hearts boy & girl paper dolls

**Introduction:** The “Promise Keeper Game” Tell the kids that you have some sheet of paper that have something on them. You need some kids that will keep their promise and do what is on the paper. Give several different kids a slip of paper with the action on it. Say to them as you read the paper to them… “do you promise to????” Then let them do their action.

Tell the kids after the game, that lot’s of times we make promises so that we can get things we want. It’s kind of like making a “deal.” If you do this then I will do that. Today in our Bible story we will see a man make a promise that he does not need to make.

**Bible Lesson:**

 **Judges 11:1-3: “Meet *Jeph’thah”***

 √ What is the first thing that we learn about Jeph’thah? (A mighty man of valor)

 √ What is a mighty man of valor?

 √ What is the second thing that we learn about Jeph’thah? (son of a harlot)

 That means that he was not the son of his father and his wife.

 √ What happened after Gilead (Jeph’thah’s father) had more sons?

When they grew up – they forced Jephthah out of his father’s house. They would not let him share in the inheritance of their father. Basically they said that he did not belong.

√ What did Jeph’thah do? (he fled – ran away and dwelt in a land (Tob) on the border of

Israel. He got together with worthless men and was raiding or stealing from others.)

Jeph’thah got involved in what we would call a gang. He was kicked out of His father house and was told that he could have no part in belonging to the family.

√ How do you think this would make Jep’thah feel?

 **Judges 11:4-11: “*The Deal with Jeph’thah”***

 √ Who was waging war with Israel? (Am’mon)

 √ What did the elders ask Jeph’thah? (To come and be our commander in our war

 against Amon.)

 √ How did Jeph’thah respond to their request?

1. Reminded them that they hated him.
2. Reminded them that they kicked him out.
3. Asked them why they want him now when they are in trouble.

√ How did the elders respond to Jeph’thah?

 The elders told Jeph’thah that they have turned to him because they are in

trouble. Evidently they have heard that Jeph’thah was a man of valor, even though he had done things in an unconventional manner. They needed a leader and there was no one who fit the bill. They only one they could think of was Jeph’thah.

 √ What does Jeph’thah ask of the elders in verse 9? (that he would be their head or

 commander.)

 √ What do the elders tell Jeph’thah? (that they promise before God that he will be their

 leader.)

 √ What happened in Judges 11:11

1. Jeph’thah went with the elders
2. They made him their head and commander
3. Jeph’thah spoke before the Lord – this is the first time that we get to see that Jeph’thah has a relationship with God. He has been doing the wrong thing in his past, but we see here that he turns to God. He must of known God as a child and here we see him turning back.

√ What type of man does God use? Does he have to have everything perfect in his

life? It seems from this and many other references in the Bible that God uses people whose hearts are teachable and whose hearts can belong to God.

 **Judges 11:12-28“*Jeph’thah as their leader”***

 √ What question does Jeph’thah send to the king of Amon?

 What do you have against me?

 Why are you fighting against me?

 Jeph’thah is letting this king know and everyone know that when the fight

 against Israel they are fighting against him personally.

 √ How does the king respond to Jeph’thah?

 Because Israel took our land when they came out of Egypt.

 Jeph’thah gives the king of Am’mon his response:

1. Israel only took the land that God gave them. (Judges 11:24 b, *“So whatever the Lord our God takes possession of before us, we will possess.”)* Jeph’thah is telling them that God gave us this land.
2. Jeph’thah asks the king why did you not try to recover this land for 300 years.
3. Jeph’thah reminds the king that he has not sinned and that God is the Judge.

Jeph’thah tries to solve this problem with the King of Am’mon through peaceful means. He does what is right in God’s eyes first. He does not rush in to war. Does that sound like a man who use to lead raids?

However, the king of Am’mon did not listen to the words of Jeph’thah.

 **Judges 11:29-40:** *“The Right Spirit, the Wrong Promise.”*

**Judges 11:29:** God’s Spirit comes upon Jeph’thah. Do you see how the word in the Bible for “Spirit” is capitalized? That means that this is the Holy Spirit that comes upon Jeph’thah. In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God did not live inside of people all of the time, He would come and go. But in the New Testament after Jesus goes back to heaven, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to live inside of us all the time. But here, God sends His Spirit to Jeph’thah and Jeph’thah is being led by God through the Sprit’s power.

So Jeph’thah led by the Spirit goes into battle.

**Judges 11:30-31: “**The Wrong Promise”

√ What is a vow? (a promise)

√ What does Jeph’thah ask of God and promise to God?

“If you help me win – then I promise to offer to you the first thing that I see when I return home.”

√ Do you think that Jeph’thah had to make this promise to God?

God already sent His Spirit in Jeph’thah. God would win the battle and He was leading EJph’thah. Jeph’thah evidently felt a little unsure of himself so he made a promise to God. He was making a “deal” with God.

 √ Do you think it is a good thing to make a “deal” with God?

 Do you ever ask God…. “if you help me on the test, then I will read my

 Bible every day?”

Or… “God if You help me when this game, I will be nice to my sister forever.”

 We do not need to make a “deal” with God. We just need to follow Him

and live the way the Bible tells us to live. The only “sacrifice” that God wants is our lives to belong to Him.

Romans 12: “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present you bodies a* ***living sacrifice****, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”* God wants us to live a holy life – that is the only sacrifice that He desires for us.

Psalm 51:16: *“For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You not delight in burnt offering.* ***The sacrifices of God*** *are a broken spirit, A broken and an contrite heart…”*

God wants our hearts. It is repeated many times in the bible in different ways. A heart that is teachable, moldable, and willing to listen to God.

So the bottom line is – the best sacrifice that you can give to God is your heart and your life. Live for Him, live like Him!

But Jeph’tham must not know that he does not need to “make a deal” with God.

He makes a deal and then he needs to keep it.

 **Judges 11:32-33**

 √ Who won the battle for them? (The Lord)

 **Judges 11:34-**

√ Who was the first one that Jeph’tham saw when he returned home? (His

 daughter)

 Jeph’tham returns home and the first thing that he saw was his daughter.

Coming to him dancing and praising God for the battle that He won for them. She is his only child.

**Judges 11:35:**

√ What does Jeph’tham tell his daughter? (that he has given his word to the Lord and he cannot go back on his promise.)

 **Judges 11:36:**

 √ How does his daughter respond? (She tells her dad to keep his promise to

 God)

 **Judges 11:37-40:**

The daughter takes some time for herself and then she comes home. Jeph’tham

 carries out his vow to God.

**Conclusion:** √ What can we learn from this?

1. The only sacrifice that God wants is our lives lived out for Him.
2. We do not need to make “deals” with God we just need to trust Him. The sad thing about Jeph’thams life is that he did not yet know the character of God well. If we know God then we know who He is and we can base our faith and life on Him.
3. Jeph’tham was used by God.

Hebrews: 11:32, Jeph’tham is recorded for all of time as a man of faith. Even though we read his story and don’t understand much of it…God saw his life as a life lived in faith. Jeph’tham made mistakes in his past, but God saw that he was a man who could be a man of faith.

Can God use you? No one is perfect, but God knows your heart and He knows if you will let Him use you or not.

Do you promise to?

 Sound like a train

Do you promise to?

 Act like a monkey

Do you promise to?

 Bark like a dog

Do you promise to?

 Sing like an angel

Do you promise to?

 Cluck like a hen

Do you promise to?

 Flap like a bird