

## Judges 11:1-11 – Delivered from the Past

I want to begin today by telling you the story of a **young man** by the name of Jeffery.

A)As I tell this story some of you might think – you know Jeffery or **at the very least** you know someone like him.

B)For others of you - your own story is a lot like Jeffery's.

1)You will **identify with his struggle** and some of his pain.

Jeffery was born on the **wrong side of the tracks**, his mother made her living **turning tricks** in the trailer park where they lived.

A)Jeffery's dad was **one of her Johns** – So Jeffery was the byproduct of a one night stand.

(It would be years before Jeffery would ever meet his father.)

B)In School Jeffery was labeled as **trailer park trash** – kids would tease him by asking him –

“**Jeffery who is your daddy.**”

C)Jeffery loved his mom but he hated her lifestyle - he hated going to bed at night by himself

1)And he hated waking himself up in the morning making **his own breakfast** usually cereal or toast while his mom lay passed out half clothed on the couch.

D)On the surface Jeffery's life seemed Destined for tragedy and trouble.

1)His future looked bleak.

That all changed one day when his father – **the guy who conceived him** entered into his world.

A)Jeffery's mother reached out to this man looking for some financial help. –

B)A Paternity test proved that he was indeed the father of Jeffery.

C)When Jeffery's father saw him (now 7yrs old) living in that trailer park – surrounded by drugs, trash and poverty –

1)He **had compassion on him** and decided to rescue him out of that lifestyle –

C)Jeffery's own mom knew that it would be better for him, and let him go.

1)That would be the last time that Jeffery saw his mother – **she would die of an overdose – 3 weeks later.**

Bringing Jeffery home to his dads seemed like a good idea at first.

A)But it meant that Jeffery was going into a home with **a step mom who didn't like him.**

B)He was a **constant reminder of her husbands sin** and unfaithfulness –

1)He was the constant reminder of **that time** in their marriage that was rocky

C)On top of that he had half-brothers who didn't accept him either.

1)They teased him, picked on him, left him out of almost everything.

D)**The resentment inside of Jeffery was growing!**

In his teen age years - Jeffery tried really hard to **fit in in school**

A)He tried being an athlete but was **more clumsy** than gifted.

Aa)He tried being **the class clown** - but most kids saw it as him trying too hard to be liked.

B)He tried being **the cool kid**- he was smoking at 13 - he would wear a leather jacket to school.

1)But that really didn't give him the attention and acceptance that he was seeking.

C)But there was **one thing** that Jeffery could do well - **that was fight**.

1)He had so much pent up anger inside of him that would come out when he was provoked.

D)Anyone who provoked him would suffer the consequences of picking on the guy with a serious **chip on his shoulder and rage in his heart**.

1)Jeffery would lash out at his provoker and beat them to a pulp.

**In High School Jeffery had the reputation as one tough Dude!**

A)But **Jeffery wasn't a bully**, in fact he was the opposite of that.

**Aa)Because his own misfit tendencies never feeling like he fit in he had a heart for the less fortunate kids in School.**

B)Whenever he would see **a bully** picking on a kid, Jeffery would quickly come to their defense.

1)Whenever he saw **an athlete or one of the "cool kids"** picking on one of the misfits,

2)he would **"conveniently"** meet that athlete or cool kid after school and so rough them up - he would leave them begging for mercy.

C)And Jeffery always made them go and apologize in his presence to the kids they were disrespecting.

1)That gained him the acceptance and the respect of many in his school.

D)A band of ruffians and other misfits quickly aligned themselves with Jeffery.

1)**Jeffery was their hero.**

(They were his Family of sorts)

**When a gang moved into his high school and tried to claim it as their turf, the whole student body, turned not to the authorities but to Jeffery.**

A)And Jeffery to their amazement somehow took care of the problem, without there even being a brawl.

**B)Jeffery's reputation had grown so much that the gang members decided to stake their TURF claim on another school**

1) than mess with Jeffery and his band of ruffians.

C)But none of this seemed to **fill the void** that resided in Jeffery's heart.

1)He lived in the reality of continually trying to chase after or maintain his acceptance.

**Deep down he still felt lonely and rejected.**

A)It would be the Achilles heel he would struggle with his whole life.

B)Jeffery kept everyone at arms length and was reluctant to LET anyone get really close to him. {For fear of being rejected – YET AGAIN!

C)His life was **built on a persona** that was fueled by rejection!

1) and a deep longing and desire to overcome – **the label** that had been attached to his life for a long as he could remember. – **Illegitimate**.

**Maybe you know a Jeffery/ or someone like him?**

A) Maybe in your own way – YOU ARE JEFFERY –

B) YOU KEEP PEOPLE **AT ARMS LENGTH** to avoid being rejected

C) And it has even affected your **RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!**

1) Jeffery's story is not real - I made it up - **but it is the story of countless thousands thru the ages.**

It is the story of so many today. People **who because of their past they live their lives either –**

A) **Fueled by their past** – always trying to prove that they are better than the label that has been attached to them.

B) They live to prove their labelers and the naysayers wrong – it motivates everything that they do –

1) Problem is – **THAT IS AN EXHAUSTING WAY TO LIVE!**

C) **Others live lives that have been crippled by something that happened in their past –**

1) Something that they haven't been able to overcome?

D) They keep getting sucked back into that time in their lives - so much pain.

1) There is a stigma – a label – a pain - they can't seem to move past it.

**Our Society says that we are the byproduct of our environment - our environment is what shapes us.**

A) But the Bible teaches us that thru Christ and by the grace of God we can rise above our environment.

**The Character in our Story today is a lot like Jeffery!** A) But the story of Jephthah is a great illustration of how God often chooses those who others would label – **Rejects - Misfits or Outcasts.**

B) How the Lord desires **that our identity** would be in Him and that His work would be in our lives

1) That would be the **LABEL THAT STICKS TO US.**

Rd Verses 1-11

**Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, but he was the son of a harlot; and Gilead begot Jephthah.**

(Gilead is His Dad's name - he bears the name of the region he lives in – leads us to believe – **high ranking official**)

**2 Gilead's wife bore sons; and when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out, and said to him, "You shall have no inheritance in our father's house, for you are the son of another woman."**

(Most commentators believe that after he was born Gilead brought Jephthah into his family –

**but it is obvious that his half-brothers** didn't accept him - for you are the son of another woman –

the mention **of an inheritance** also suggest – that **Gilead the father died** – and with no one to stand in his corner – now – his half-brothers drove him away.)

**3 So Jephthah fled from his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob; and worthless men banded together with Jephthah and went out raiding with him.**

(Now the idea here is not that Jephthah and the Tob Mob – went out robbing the people of Israel – **bandits and robbers** )

(but again most Bible commentators believe they were raiding the enemies of Israel **What happens next I believe supports that idea.** )

4 It came to pass after a time that the people of Ammon made war against Israel. 5 And so it was, when the people of Ammon made war against Israel, that the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob.

(The enemy is coming against them and they go looking for the **baddest toughest dude** in the Region – **the Reject** from Gilead.)

6 Then they said to Jephthah, “Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the people of Ammon.” 7 So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, “Did you not hate me, and expel me from my father’s house?”

A) That last phrase is an interesting statement that could mean one of two things.

B) First it could mean because – an inheritance was a legal issue –

1) it could mean that the **elders of the city** – supported his brothers claim that **because he was an illegitimate child** – Jephthah had no claim.... Inheritance.

C) This would also indicate that the Elders of the city - supported the decision to banish him from his father’s house.

D) But It could also mean that his brothers were now a part of the Elder board.

E) Whatever the case - Jephthah is sort of calling them on the carpet for **the cruelty and injustice** that they showed to him – years earlier.

**SO JEPHTHAH SAYS: V.7b “Why have you come to me NOW when you are in distress?”**

A) You wanted NOTHING TO DO WITH ME BEFORE – but now when you need a DELIVERER – **YOU COME RUNNING TO ME?**

B) That is also the way a lot of people treat God!

1) They ignore God or reject God when everything is going well.

C) But the minute that things blow up in their lives – they run to God – Help me – God – I need you.

1) **They start making PROMISES**

D) **COMING HOME PAST CURFEW** – “Lord if my parents are asleep – I promise – I will .....

1) **Policeman pulls you over** – God get me out of this and I promise – I will be a missionary.

8 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, “That is why we have turned again to you now, that you may go with us and fight against the people of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”

HERE IS THEIR PROMISE {WE WILL MAKE YOU OUR HEAD - OUR LEADER!

**SO JEPHTHAH SAYS: LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT – YOU ARE SAYING**

V. 9 “If you take me back home to fight against the people of Ammon, and the Lord delivers them to me, shall I be your head?”

10 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, “The Lord will be a witness between us, if we do not do according to your words.” 11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord in Mizpah.

Look back at V.1 I find it interesting that the first thing we are told here about Jephthah is that **He was a mighty man of Valor.**

A) This is before there is any mention of the Lord in his life!

B) He has the reputation of being this TOUGH GUY – THIS WARRIOR

1) HE SEEMS TO BE FEARLESS AND COURAGEOUS!

**C)I can't help but wonder if some of that was fueled by this Need to prove himself –**

1)Somehow FUELED BY – the pain and the rejection that he felt from being rejected **NOT JUST BY HIS FAMILY – BUT A WHOLE CITY!**

D)The Fact that he brings this up – definitely suggest to us that this **STILL weighed heavy on his heart!**

1)Not sure how many years have passed but he still has this chip on his shoulder.

**Perhaps Jephthah WAS one of those people whose whole motivation in life was to PROVE THAT HE WAS WORTH SOMETHING.**

A)I can't help but wonder if his motivation in life is to **ESCAPE or better yet RE-WRITE** the label that has been attached to him.

B)So many people today Struggle in this way!

C)I am teaching a Class out at the Bible College on Wed mornings –

1)One of the things I like to do in the beginning of a class is to have the students write down their stories – **Who they are – how saved - why at BC**

D) I so appreciate their honesty - I am always amazed at how many of them come from **Broken homes –**

1)Many of them have something in their past that they are **trying to forget – trying to move past – trying to get over – trying to figure out**

**I meet people all the time who's whole focus and motivation in life is to overcome their past –**

A)To shake or rewrite a label – **THEY LIVE ALWAYS FEELING** like they have to prove themselves.

B)Seen many of them as a result **become over achievers –**

1)They are highly successful – they have been able to create a whole new persona

C)But the problem is deep down they are not really happy – because they are always wondering if – they did enough.

D)They live exhausted lives – fueled by this desire to Prove themselves to everyone around them – **but most of all to themselves – toughest one to please**

E)That **might have been** Jephthah!

**I ALSO often meet people though who have been crippled by their past!**

A)They live with a **low sense of worth and value** because of their upbringing or because of something that has been done to them.

B)Or because of some sin that they have committed – They struggle wondering if God has really forgiven them ?

**C)AND if they CAN SOMEHOW believe that God has FORGIVEN THEM**

1) they are still struggling to forgive themselves.

D)Often times I SEE THIS IN women who have had an abortion

1)or men who pressured a girl into having one – or went along with her decision to have one

E)Live with tremendous guilt over that decision.

1) It hinders them from having a right relationship with God!

**Because of that guilt they often fall into this trap of thinking that their relationship with God is all based on Performance.**

A) If they are performing and doing all the right things – then God is pleased with them.

B) They spend their whole life doing penance – never really living under the spout of God's grace and love!

C) Because they don't realize – that they have God's favor – He loves them – because they belong to Jesus

1) They often live in that realm of trying to make deals with God !

D) Lord – If I do this will you.....? Lord if you .... I promise

**E) We see this attitude in the story of Jephthah V. 12-28 which Pastor Jason is going to go into in detail on Wed night**

A) Quickly summarize - We see that Jephthah first tries to negotiate with them - the Ammorites

B) He does **an excellent Job of retracing the history** of the Land and the Lord's hand in placing Israel in the land.

C) We will learn from this that at the very least –

1) Jephthah has a knowledge of the Lord and his faithfulness to Israel.

D) We will also see that as Jephthah goes out into battle he seems **to recognize** the Lord's hand in the Victory.

E) Which is good – he is humble enough to realize he didn't do this on his own.

**But we read something in v.29 that seems to be new in his life – NEW EXPERIENCE –**

A) In V.29 we read that the **Spirit of the Lord comes upon** Jephthah – He advances

B) There seems to be a notable change in fighting – he is cruising through territory with an ease.

C) JEPHTHAH gets a taste of God's hand - it is like nothing he has seen before.

**E) I don't know if that meant people were fleeing before he even laid a hand on them**

1) or if they were falling in fright –

D) BUT JEPHTHAH KNEW THIS WAS DIFFERENT.

**Years ago – when I was on a mission trip in Russia**

A) Denise was home alone – studying for Monday night

B) Hot August day – windows were open – Three Burglars broke into our home.

1) Hid in the Closet – praying don't let them find me

C) One of them did – He opened the closet door – Eyes got this Big - Ran as fast as he could.

**Now I admit that my wife is a tough girl – She grew up in Oregon – shooting guns ...rivers - horses**

A) She is tough – but the last thing – she is not Scary – she is this 5'2 pretty little thing.

B) So why did the THE BURGLAR – take one look at my wife and run for his life?

C) MY THEORY- he saw her Guardian ANGEL- FLAMING SWORD.

1) if you are the burglar and now saved, you are thinking - that was your wife, don't tell me finding my wife

scared you. KEEP THE STORY IN MY MIND THAT HER GUARDIAN ANGEL STEPPED IN BECAUSE -

### **JEPHTHAH EXPERIENCED SOMETHING:**

A)He doesn't want it to leave him – so Jephthah does what so many **immature believers** do who don't understand God's heart

B)He makes a deal with God – He says – **If you give me victory - I will give you the first thing that comes out of my house.**

1)**God gives him victory** – and when he comes home the first thing that comes out of his house is his beloved only daughter

C)He is faced with a dilemma – what do I do – I made a promise to God – does that mean – Does - He have to sacrifice his daughter to God?

1)For the answer to that question – have to come out on Wed.

**The thing that I want you to see today is this – the whole deal Jephthah makes with God was completely unnecessary .**

A)See the Bible says in 2 Chronicles 16:9 **“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.”**

B)Even though that was written after this event – That reality of that statement has been true – throughout the history of Israel

### **C)God's heart is for his people**

1)God is looking to show himself strong on behalf of those who's hearts are loyal to him.

**Jephthah did not need to bargain with God – God was for him and with him.**

A)He didn't need to prove himself to God –

B)God loved Jephthah and wanted his life to be a testimony of someone **who by the Grace of God WAS** able to **RISE ABOVE HIS PAST**

C)Instead of being someone who was **being defined by his past** –

**How often do we make the same mistake or worse yet – we live defeated lives**

A)never being able to measure up – or get away from our past

B)Paul the apostle had some great insight to share about dealing with our past in Phil 3 – turn there.

**Note 3 principles for being delivered from our Past.**

A)Paul was not one who was not tempted to be **fueled by his past** and he was definitely not **crippled by his past**.

B)Paul's temptation would have been **to be confident in his past**.

**V.4 If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: <sup>5</sup> circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.**

A)Paul was the picture **of the religious zealot** – if you come from a catholic back ground –

B)Paul would have been the student who made **perfect marks in Catechism**

C)The perfect altar boy – who was now training to be a Priest.

D) Paul took his religion seriously - **concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.**

**If there was anyone who could think that he could make it into heaven by his religiosity**

A) If anyone would think he could make it..... good works – it would have been the Apostle Paul.

B) But no matter how good Paul was he knew it wasn't good enough to be considered **RIGHT WITH GOD!**

C) Paul came to understand that – He was a sinner and that only the blood of Jesus could make a way for him **to be Right with God!**

D) So Paul declared:

<sup>7</sup> But what things were gain to me, these I have **counted loss {Past tense}** for Christ. <sup>8</sup> Yet indeed I also **count** all things loss **{Present tense}** for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have **suffered the loss** of all things, and **count** them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

**Paul declared: There came a time when I realized that who I was in my flesh wasn't good enough –**

A) So I counted it as loss – put it behind me.

B) I put my faith in what Christ did for me on the Cross – He made a way for me to be saved –

C) Not my righteousness – but His righteousness

1) Not my good works – **but HIS ONE WORK – THE CROSS!**

D) Not about who I am – that matters – it is about who He is!

1) I need to put who I was behind – that I might gain Christ - and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, my goodness) but the righteousness which is from God by faith;

E) So I counted who I was as loss – in fact Paul says - I continue to count it as loss.

**Now why would Paul say I continue to count it as loss?**

A) I suggest to you because – who he was in the past – had the tendency to **rear it's head from time to time.**

B) Paul could find himself thinking – I am a pretty religious guy – **God must really love me. –**

1) I am surely better than that guy!

C) Paul says – Not only have I counted – Past tense - at the point of my conversion – **who I was apart from Jesus to be loss –**

1) Paul says I continue to count {PRESENT TENSE} who I was apart from Christ – as loss!

D) Any time that thought, those attitudes – come to the service – **I count them as loss! –**

**In fact – Paul declares in the last part of v.8 Everything I was – I count it as Rubbish –**

A) Literally – Manure – Cow poop! –

B) All my accomplishments – who I was outside of Jesus – **WORTHLESS !**

C) Paul's struggle was his Confidence in his past –

1) But you know that Paul could have easily been **crippled by his Past?**

D) V.6 Persecuted the Church – Christian's killed.

**Paul could have very easily thought – God could never love me ? Never use me?**

A) For years – I tried to destroy Christians – for years I hated Jesus!

B) He could have easily sunk into that place of thinking – I am glad to be saved – but I am useless

C) Paul understood - Your past is a part of that story – only to be a testimony of what God has done and is doing –

1) Part you play in His plan of Redemption.

**Paul could have also been fueled by his Past!**

A) Prior to getting saved – he had the LABEL – persecutor of the Church – killer of Christians

B) Paul could have made the MOTIVATION FOR everything in his life about changing that Label –

C) BUT Paul understood Christ's love for him and His forgiveness.

1) Paul would declare in 2 Corinthians 5:14 **“The Love of Christ compels us.”**

D) **Compels – motivates – Drives** – Not Paul's love for Christ – But Paul's understanding of Christ's love for Him!

E) That is what fueled Paul's life – Grace – the Love of Christ !

**Principle #1 Delivered from my past – Remember who you are in Jesus!**

A) Righteous (Right standing ) because of My Faith in Jesus!

B) Whether – tendency is to be Confident in your past – or fueled by your past or crippled by your past.

1) What matters is not who you were – but WHO YOU ARE NOW IN JESUS!

C) Last summer – series – In Christ - looking at the In Christ statements found in the NT

I am blessed beyond measure – **Ephesians 1:3**

I am a Saint – **Philippians 1:1**

I am deeply loved – **Ephesians 1:4-6 / Romans 8:39**

I am a new creation – **2 Corinthians 5:17**

I am accepted – **Ephesians 1:6**

I am approved by God – **Romans 16:10**

I am a possessor of infinite promises - **2 Cor. 1:20 / Eph 3:6**

I am chosen - **Ephesians 1:4 / Ephesians 2:1-9**

I am redeemed – **Ephesians 1:7**

I am reconciled to God - **2 Corinthians 5:18**

I am forgiven - **Ephesians 4:32**

I am free - **Galatians 2:4 / Romans 8:2**

I am no longer under condemnation - **Romans 8:1**

I have been made alive – **Ephesians 2:5**

I am saved – **2 Timothy 2:10**

I am secure – **Colossians 3:3-4**

I am being renewed – **Colossians 3:1-10**

I am complete – **Colossians 1:28**

I am a person with an eternal destiny – **1 Peter 2:9**

I am a masterpiece in the making - **Ephesians 2:10**

I am a partaker of a glorious inheritance – **Rom 8:17**

C)By **Continuing to count** – who He was apart from Jesus as loss – and as Rubbish

1)Paul was Reminding himself of who he was in Jesus!

Continue V.10 <sup>10</sup> that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, <sup>11</sup> if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. <sup>12</sup> Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

### **Principle #2 Realize that You are a work in Progress!**

A)Paul says – Look – I haven't attained – I am not perfect. – **NO I AM A WORK IN PROGRESS** – Jesus is still working on me!

B)My whole focus is in wanting to know Him – His Person – His power –

1)The More I Know Christ – the better I understand Paul –

C)The Closer I get to Christ – the more I understand His Plan for my life!

D)V.12 - that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

ESV – “Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.”

KJV “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”

D)**Christ apprehended me** – He went after me – he pursued me for a reason

1)Ongoing revelation - Marriages in Grass Valley- You picked me for this

### **MY life is about seeking to know Jesus more – Pressing into Him**

A)The more so I can discover – why did He pick me?

B)What is His plan for my life!

1)**Ongoing revelation** – Seasons - Marriages in Grass Valley- You picked me for this { Men's conf

C)God has a specific plan and purpose for your life!

1)Everyday encounters

D)Sitting talking with someone – going thru a tragedy

E)We each have a part to play in God's plan of redemption – why – He apprehended us

1) **that is what makes the Christian life exciting!**

<sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

### **Principle #3 Forget the Past by Reaching forward in Jesus!**

A)QUIT LOOKING BACKWARDS - that is not who you are any more

B)**Redeemed – His Son – His Daughter** – of the King

1)You have a Rich glorious eternal destiny

C)Everything is upward and onward from here.

**But I want you to notice that Paul says I am not just looking forward – looking is sort of passive**

**A)I am REACHING forward – actively participating in this process of GROWING IN CHRIST.**

**B)Discovering who I am in Christ!**

**C)The **greek word reaching** - points out the strong exertions made by an athlete in the *race*;**

**1)every muscle and nerve is exerted, and he puts forth every **ounce of his strength in running**.**

**D)All my energy – is reaching toward – Jesus – Knowing Jesus – growing in Jesus – serving Jesus!**

**Paul's Conversion: Passion and His pursuit**

**A)Who are you? **Passion** – Know Jesus –**

**B)What do you want me to do? Pursuit**

**Listen if you are here today - tendency is to put your confidence in the Past? – Goodness?**

**A)Good outweighs your bad?**

**B)Question – **how do you know if you are good enough?****

**1)Why did Jesus have to die ? Answer – You are a sinner – missed the mark – ME TOO!**

**C)Count it as loss today – Be found in the Goodness of Jesus – His righteousness**

**Fueled by your past – Crippled by your past – Living in Condemnation – Guilt**

**A)Throw that down at the foot of the Cross today and be set free once and for all.**

**B)Receive His grace and love – Bask in his forgiveness**

**C)When the **Past – rears it's head** – Count it as loss again**

**1)See yourself today in Christ –**

**D)Work in Progress – But someone He loves and He apprehended for a Reason!**