

Home Group Study Notes - 25/10/20

Jephthah - 'Promise Keeper' (Judges series No 3)

Introduction

Have you ever made a rash promise? One that you regretted but felt you had to keep, or that you decided on second thoughts not to keep? Is it a good idea to make promises?

Discovery

Read Judges 11 about Jephthah's life, his mission, and his promise to God. Chat about it all. How do people feel about the promise he made?

Sacrifice to God in the OT was for sin, but never for favour for an exploit. Only other gods (or idols) 'demanded' that - see God's shock at it in Jeremiah 32:35.

Many people who don't know him think God is a harsh, judging God. Maybe read through a few short verses that show how compassionate and forgiving ('relenting') he is (*they're OT passages, but God doesn't change!*): Judges 10:16, Jeremiah 44:3, Jeremiah 18:7-8, Jeremiah 15:1. Chat about these, just for a minute or two...

Discussion

In making his vow to God (Judges 11:30), Jephthah seemed to be saying to God that he was willing to give up anything for God's help in the mission he'd give him. Was Jephthah's heart right?

Does God call us to give up things that really matter to us today, so that we're 'free' to follow him and do great exploits for his kingdom. *You could drop in the (bad?) idea of making bargains with God if you like.*

How can we prepare ourselves, so we say 'Yes!' when we get God's call to something big?

(Responses could include: increasing our faith in God - by getting to know him better and seeking to become more like him - through the word and prayer and in the power of the Spirit. Maybe look at 'taking up your cross daily' as per Luke 9:23)

In some countries people aren't allowed to own a bible, and are punished if they're found with one (eg some communist and Islamic nations).

What it would it be like if you weren't allowed to own one in this country?

Response

A challenge: Invite people to get to know God better through his word. Maybe challenge them to learn a psalm or a favourite section of scripture between now and Christmas. (*Ps 103 is a great one - full of truth and encouragement*) You could make a note to check periodically how it's going, and after Christmas see how everyone's done. Just a suggestion, but do encourage people to dig deep into the word daily, or at least regularly.

What has God been calling you to that you haven't responded to? Why? What's stopping us? Not good enough? Not strong enough? Pray for each other to be bold and step out. Maybe pray to hear what God has for each one to do.

God bless you as you meet today. Mike