



want to talk on the topic, the tragedy and triumph of a vow. The tragedy and triumph of a vow. Please join me in a word of prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we want to thank you again for this immense pleasure that we have today to come to you in worship. Lord, many of us have gone through ups and downs this week and it's just so nice to know that we can come at this time just for these hours, Lord, just to hear from you, just to rest in you, just to hear the gospel and to grow even more in our love for Jesus. And

Father, I pray that this message today will continue that pathway that we have gone through throughout this service. Lord, let your name be honored, let Christ be glorified and ultimately help us to love the salvation that we have if we are believers and help us to come to salvation for those who are not believers. So Father, we pray that you will bless this message today. We pray that you will give me the words I ought to say, hold back anything I ought not to say. Let everything that is said be done for your glory, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. You know, it's often said that there are three guarantees in life, life, death, and taxes. However, in saying this, I would like to add one more guarantee, regret. Those times in our lives where we make promises that we wish we didn't have to keep.

And I recall when this truth became a reality for me. You know, ever since I was a child, I've been a huge, huge fan of wrestling. And even today, there's no wrestler that I have loved more than the nature boy Ric Flair. Woo! And I can recall one day when I was a child, and I was going to one of the local toy stores in our town, and entering that store, I immediately ran over to the aisle where I knew that his wrestling figure was located. Now, when this particular situation occurred, it was a few weeks after Christmas. And my parents always had this unwritten rule that they wouldn't buy me anything recreational at least three months afterwards, because it took at least that amount of time for their wallets to cool off from all of the buying that they had done during the Christmas season. So nevertheless, but nevertheless, I had to have this Ric Flair doll, and I had to have it that day. Okay? So despite their rule, I went to my mom and pleaded with her to buy that figure for me with the promise that she wouldn't have to buy me anything, at least until my birthday, if she did that for me.

[ 7 : 04 ] So based on that promise, my mom bent her rule and bought the figure for me. And afterwards, everything was great in the kingdom of Jarvis. That was until about two weeks later, when now this time happened in another store, I went over to the wrestling figures and saw the Macho Man Randy Savage wrestling figure. So like in the case of Ric Flair, this time I was with my father, I picked it up and pleaded with Pop to please buy it for me with the same promise, you don't have to buy me anything, at least until my birthday, if you buy this figure for me. But unfortunately, to my disappointment, I didn't know that my mom had tipped my father off to my promise. So thus, because of that, my father refused to buy the figure for me. So in essence, I did have to wait until my birthday, which was about five months later, in order to get that Macho Man doll. And when I got that doll, everything was wonderful in the kingdom of Jarvis. That was until three weeks after that. And I saw the Shawn Michaels and

Marty Jannetty Midnight Rockers tag team set. And I think I'll stop right there because as you can see, this story can go on for months, if not for years per se. But nevertheless, I learned a valuable lesson through this experience that I had to be careful about making vows because there might actually be times where I might find myself in a position where I have to keep it, often to my own disappointment.

And when we think of someone in the scriptures who was known to make the same mistake that I did, but on a much grander scale, there's usually one person that immediately comes to mind, namely the man that we saw today by the name of Jephthah. Now, for those of you who are not familiar with Jephthah, he was described in scripture as a mighty warrior who was one of the many judges of Israel who governed the people of God before Saul was anointed as Israel's first king. Now, his father was a man named Gilead, and he also lived in the land called Gilead. And his mother, who is unnamed in scripture, she was a prostitute. And because his mother was a prostitute, he drew the ire of his brothers, as well as the elders of the land. And eventually they drove him out of his homeland and away from his inheritance. And during this time away from his family, Jephthah lived in the land of Tob and became a real wild card of sorts. In short, he developed a reputation of hanging out with thugs and unsavory characters. And he continued to be this way until he was called back by the same elders in Gilead, who again were the ones who drove him out previously, to lead them in battle against the

Ammonites, who at the time were accusing the Israelites of stealing their land, a land which, by the way, God had given the Israelites to possess. And the elders cut a deal with Jephthah upon his return. Namely, if he was successful in resolving his task in defending Israel and overcoming the Ammonites, then the elders would elevate him as judge over the people of the land. So after unsuccessfully coming to terms on a settlement with the king of the Ammonites, Jephthah finally led the Israelites in the battle against them. But unfortunately, in an effort to secure victory in battle, Jephthah made a vow to God, a vow that would ultimately cause unnecessary tragedy and pain to himself as well as to his entire household. So today, I want to do this today. I want to look at this account in Judges 11. And in doing so, I want to unpack three things pertaining to this story, which both will show, like our title indicates, the tragedy of the vow that Jephthah makes. And this will ultimately lead us to discuss the triumphant vow that we see in Scripture that will serve as a means of comfort and blessing to the people of God. So here's our outline for today. First, I want to talk about the characteristics of Jephthah's vow. The characteristics of Jephthah's vow. Secondly, I want to talk about the hapless victim of Jephthah's vow. The hapless victim of Jephthah's vow. And then third and finally, I want to close with the comforting beauty of a greater vow. The comforting beauty of a greater vow. And for those of you taking notes, I'll announce these points as we move along so you will have them. But first, let's look at the characteristics of Jephthah's vow. Look with me at verses 29 and 31 of our text. It reads, Now, in reading these verses, there are three things I want to highlight concerning Jephthah's vow. Three things.

[12:40] First, it was a foolish vow. It was a foolish vow. Now, in reading this story, you might be saying to yourself, well, duh. I mean, look at what happened at the end of this story. It's hardly breaking news that this vow was a foolish one to make. However, if we were to look at verse 29 of our text, we would actually see that what makes the vow foolish is not what happens at the end of the story.

But rather, the foolishness of the vow is seen in what Jephthah was given before he made it. Because in verse 29, we see that before Jephthah went to war against the Ammonites, quote, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. Now, when we see this phrase, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, we're not being told that Jephthah came to faith on the cusp of the war. That's not what it's saying here. But rather, this phrase can also mean that God had empowered Jephthah to defend and govern his people, which is another aspect of the work of the Spirit most notably seen in the Old Testament.

And thus, by God giving Jephthah this empowerment for battle against the Ammonites, God was also guaranteeing that his people would come out of this battle victorious. So in short, beloved, Jephthah's vow was foolish more so because God had already given him victory through the dispensing of the Spirit.

Therefore, Jephthah didn't have to make a promise to God to gain favor because in having the Holy Spirit, he already had God's favor. And beloved, I believe there's a message in here for us as God's people today. Namely, as his people, we don't need to make promises to God in order to gain his favor because in being his people, we are already recipients of his favor. You know, some years ago, I was doing jail ministry and I met a young man in the ministry who was really, really downtrodden.

And he wanted to speak to me about why he was feeling the way he was. And in the midst of our conversation, he told me that he was upset because he had made a promise to God that when he was released from jail the previous time, that he wanted to make God proud of him by being totally obedient and living for him. And unfortunately, he had failed to do this because here he was again back behind bars.

[15:16] And in hearing this story, I told him that while his desire to serve God with all of his heart, as well as his recognition that he had sinned against God and the remorse that came from it, while all those things were good, it was in essence unwise to promise God what he did.

And one of the reasons why it was unwise is because if he was truly in Christ, he was already a receiver of the pleasure of God. And thus there was nothing he could do over and above what Christ had already done, which could make the Lord any happier with him, which was actually his end goal. That came out in our conversation. And as Christians, we often find ourselves in this same trap, the trap of wanting to please God in ways over and beyond what Christ has already done for us. And beloved, we forget that the very reason why God sent Christ in the very first place

is because we can't do anything in and of ourselves to please him all by ourselves. Our position in Christ empowers our obedience. We have a passion to obey God because we are in Christ. The things that these things are not separate from each other. In other words, beloved, if I can put it this way, there is no extra credit in the Christian walk.

You see, we must never forget that our righteousness, as Isaiah puts it, is as filthy rags in the sight of God. And the only way those rags can become acceptable is if we acquire new rags, which have been dipped and washed in the purifying blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And beloved, for us to think that we can possibly give God anything over and above the gift that is found in his son is to, in essence, make common the only way which God has ordained both to save and redeem us. So again, what makes Jephthah's vow foolish is that he tries to gain God's favor over and above the means which God had already provided.

And likewise, beloved, we must realize that in being God's people, we have been given his son. And by virtue, we have been given his favor as well. Beloved, God's pleasure with us does not come through our promises to him, but rather they come through his promises to us. And we'll talk more about that in our last point. However, moving on, not only do we see that Jephthah's vow was foolish, but secondly, we see it was faithless. It was a faithless vow. Now, what's interesting about this fact is that Jephthah is actually mentioned as a man of faith in Hebrews 11. And that is due in part to a lot of things that he did surrounding this incident, namely answering the call to deal with the Ammonites to earn victory for the people, and even trying to negotiate with the Ammonites, thus trusting in God's sovereignty and promises that he would keep the land with Israel as God said he would.

However, despite these examples, when it came down to him actually having to battle the Ammonites for possession of the land, Jephthah really didn't believe that God would give him victory over them.

[18:45] Now, how do we know this? Because he made the vow. To be more direct, beloved, instead of continuing to trust the Lord as he had done up until this point, and trusting in the Spirit that was guiding, Jephthah thought that he had to try to manipulate God to gain victory.

One commentator puts it this way, And beloved, when we think about all the silly things that we have to do, the Lord is to do, and to embrace the gift of the Spirit, rather than to embrace the gift of the Spirit, what comes to him freely, he seeks to earn and manipulate. The meaning of his words then is doubt, not faith.

It is control, not courage. To such a vow, the Lord tellingly makes no reply. And beloved, when we think about all the silly and unnecessary vows that we often make towards God, we can easily see that all of them follow that same pattern of unbelief that Jephthah makes here. For example, these are some vows which I have heard some self-professed Christians make towards God in an effort to get the things that they want.

Lord, if you give me that promotion on my job, I promise I'll do more to support my church financially. Lord, if you give me that mate, I promise that we'll start coming to church together and serve you.

And here's one that I heard a lady pray consistently in a Bible study I used to attend. Lord, if you bless me with that new car, I promise I'll use it to bring people to church with me every Sunday.

[20:18] Now, to be honest, I'm not sure what happened in the first and second examples. I'll be willing to bet that those promises weren't kept. But I do know that third example, namely the lady with the new car, for months she didn't allow anybody to ride in her car for fear that it would get dirty. So she lied. However, in saying this, let's stop for a moment and take a deeper look at what is actually being said here. Namely, what these people are saying is, Lord, I know what you said you, excuse me, Lord, I know you said you will provide for my needs.

You will provide for me how you see fit. However, what you said isn't enough to appease me. I need more assurance than what you've told me in your word. And thus this vow makes me more comfortable that you will actually do what you said. And here's where we find Jephthah. He is saying to God, I know you gave me your spirit, Lord. I know you put me in charge of your army to protect and defend your people. However, that's not enough. I need more, more assurance to know that I will win this battle.

So I'm going to make this vow in order to get it. And to such a statement like this, beloved, God shows nothing. I mean, it shows nothing more than a lack of faith in the character and provisions of God. Again, it is saying, I trust my vow more than I trust you, Lord. So once more, we've seen

Jephthah's vow was foolish because God had already given him everything he needed to win the battle.

And it was also faithless because he felt the need to rely on manipulation to gain victory. And finally, we see that it was fatal. We see that the vow was fatal. Look with me at verses 34 and 35.

When Jephthah came to his house at Mitzvah, behold, his daughter was coming out to meet him with tambourines and with dancing. Now she was his one and only child. Besides her, he had no son or daughter.

[ 22 : 30 ] When he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, Alas, my daughter, you have brought me very low and you are among those who trouble me. For I have given my word to the Lord and I cannot take it back.

Now I'm reading this story throughout the years. I've always been perplexed by one question and you probably have had that question too. Who or what did Jephthah think was going to come out that door when he got back home from war? I see I'm not the only one here thinking that. I mean, seriously, did he think it would be one of his sheep or goats? Did he think it would be one of his oxen or donkeys?

Or maybe he thought it would be the family dog or cat. Again, what did he think was going to come out of that house? Well, one thing is obvious. He wasn't thinking it would be a person who would come out first. And we see this in his own words in verse 31. Look with me there. Again, he says, then it shall be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the Lord's and I will offer, watch this, it up as a burnt offering.

It. However, in retrospect, he should have counted on a person being the first one to meet him. I mean, after all, who would be the obvious choice to come and meet him in his successful return from war, but someone he loved? You know, I was thinking about this point in my preparation and my mind traveled back to all the commercials that I've seen throughout the years concerning the U.S. Armed Forces or the USO or the USAA. And in every advertisement where they showed a soldier returning home after a tour, there was always one of three people who came to meet that soldier. First, it was either the soldier's wife, their children, or their parents. In short, there was never anything or anyone of significance that came to greet them. And Jephthah should have realized this before he allowed the words of that vow to form from his mouth. However, in saying all this, here's another element of this story that really brings this tragedy to a higher level. And that is Jephthah actually could have gotten out of this vow and spared his daughter's life. Because we're told in Leviticus 5 that if a person makes a foolish vow to the Lord, they can confess their sins to the priest, give a guilt offering, namely a lamb or a goat, as an atonement for that sin. So in saying this, now we have to deal with another question. Why didn't Jephthah just do that and spare his daughter's life? Well, beloved, I believe that the theologians, Dr. Kim Riddlebarger and John Gill, I think they give the best answer and the most thought-provoking answer to this question. You know what that is? They didn't know. They didn't know. Beloved, keep in mind that during the time of judges, Israel was in high disobedience and ignorance to the things of God.

[ 25 : 57 ] And Jephthah was no exception to what was going on. Let's not forget what we said earlier. When the elders called him to be a potential judge, Jephthah was not living a God-honoring life, but rather he was pretty much a gangster. Thus, we see that ignorance to God's word plays a major role in the tragedy which occurs in this story. And beloved, unfortunately, ignorance to God's word is still playing a major factor in the tragedies that we see with many in the body of Christ today. You know, some time ago, a pastor friend of mine put a post on his Facebook page where a famous televangelist was trying to convince people to acquire a prayer shawl for a donation of \$107 or more. And when they purchased the shawl, the evangelist promised that it would give people the power to back the devil up out of the circumstances in their life if they prayed with the shawl on. And as I was listening to a televangelist go on this rant, it saddened me to think about all of the people who were going to write checks, use their credit cards, and give their last dollars to purchase this shawl and completely ignore what God said in his word about how we overcome Satan and the power in his lives. Because beloved, if we just look into God's word, here are a few things that we'll discover. In 1 Corinthians 15, 57,

Paul tells us that God has, quote, given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Here's one from James 4, 7, submit therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

And in 1 John 4, 4, we're told that greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world. Beloved, this is how we defeat Satan and his power over us, by having our faith placed in Christ and knowing and relying on the power of God to deliver us from his hand, just like Jesus also tells us in the Lord's Prayer. Namely, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Beloved, this doesn't come by purchasing and wearing a prayer shawl, but rather it comes by wearing the grace of God, which was purchased for us by our Savior through the work of his life, his death, and his resurrection and ascension being credited to us. And beloved, all of this is shown and exposed to us through the word of God. The word of God is how we know that Jesus has gained our victory over the kingdom of darkness. And the word of God lays out the way that we overcome Satan and his attacks in our Christian walk, even after we obtain our salvation. Again, the word of God is our only rule of faith in practice. But despite this truth, beloved, it still will not stop people from buying into these types of gimmicks, finding out that they are false. And sadly, many of these same people are going to end up getting mad with God and abandoning, and some may even abandon the Christian faith because they feel that God has lied to them when in fact it was the false teacher that was deceptive.

And unfortunately, beloved, we see and hear about these types of situations again all of the time. You know, the UNCF, the United Negro College Fund, has a very famous slogan that says this, a mind is a terrible thing to waste. And when it comes to us as modern day Christians, we really need to adopt a parody to that slogan, namely, a Bible is a terrible thing to waste.

[ 29 : 57 ] Beloved, we need to not be proud of being ignorant of God's word, because ignorance of God's word leads us into spending money on prayer shawls, as well as buying into other gimmicks that only pull us away from the grace which is found when we understand the message of the gospel. So beloved, when we fail to understand how God sees us, when we don't believe that what God has given us is enough, and or we just plain are ignorant to what the scriptures entail, then we shouldn't be surprised when we find ourselves just where Jephthah is in this passage, namely in a place where we come into our spiritual battles more confused than confident. So to start, here are three things that we see which adds more emphasis to what we should know about this vow. Namely, again, it was foolish, it was faithless, and finally, it was fatal. And all this now gets us to our second point in this message, namely, the hapless victim of Jephthah's vow. The hapless victim of Jephthah's vow. Now, all though this is a relatively short narrative, there are a lot of things said here about the victim of this vow, namely Jephthah's daughter. So what I want to do here is discuss briefly four things that this text tells us about her that will also serve as a launching pad for the rest of our message together.

Now, the first thing we're told about Jephthah's daughter is that she was an only child. She was an only child. Look with me at verse 34. When Jephthah came to his house at Mitzvah, behold, his daughter was coming out to meet him with tambourines and with dancing. Now, she was his one and only child.

Besides her, he had no son or daughter. So in reading this, we see that this tragedy is heightened even more because in sacrificing his daughter, Jephthah was offering something unique, something precious, and something irreplaceable. His daughter was a one-and-a-kind treasure, beloved. She was his beloved. She was the apple of his eye. So when sacrificing her, he was parting with, without questioning, something very valuable to him. But secondly, we're also told that Jephthah's daughter was a willing sacrifice. She was a willing sacrifice. In verses 35 to 36, we read the following.

When he, that is Jephthah, saw her, his daughter, he tore his clothes and said, Alas, my daughter, you have brought me very low and you are among those who trouble me. For I have given my word to the Lord and I cannot take it back. So she said to him, my father, you have given your word to the Lord.

[ 32 : 47 ] Do to me as you have said, since the Lord has avenged you of your enemies, the sons of Ammon. So even though Jephthah's daughter was absolutely innocent in this matter and had every right to be angry and bitter at her father for making this vow. And although she could have went to the mountains, as we'll see later, and not come back, thus escaping the tragedy altogether. Nevertheless, in an amazing act of love, selfishness, and grace, she submits to the terms of the vow and gives her life for the sinful actions of her father. To quote Pastor Anthony Carter, where while Jephthah was given the gift of the spirit for battle, his daughter in her submission showed she had the fruit of the spirit in her life. To this young lady, the only thing that mattered at that moment

was making sure that her father was honored, even to the expense of her own demise, beloved. Now, thirdly, we're told in verses 37 and 38 that Jephthah's daughter was a virgin. She was a virgin. The text reads as follows.

She said to her father, let this thing be done for me. Let me alone two months that I may go to the mountains and weep because of my virginity. I am my companions. Then he said, go. So he sent her away for two months and she left with her companions and wept on the mountains because of her virginity.

Thus, we see from the repeated phrase of because of virginity, as well as in verse 39, where again is emphasized that she had no relations with the man, that Jephthah's daughter had purity. There was an element of her that was spotless and without blemish. And by virtue of this, the writer wants us to make note of the fact that she is going to be sacrificed, watch this, without violating that purity. In short, she will have this intact even when she dies. And fourth and finally, beloved, we see in the latter part of verse 39 and verse 40 that she's remembered. She's remembered. It reads, thus it became a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went yearly to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah, the Gileadite, four days in the year. So every year for four days, the daughters of Israel took time to remember this young lady. And we can deduce that this time of commemoration was actually twofold. One, to remember the purity which she held on to, even in death, as well as being the humble sacrifice that brought honor to her father. So we see from this text four things.

Jephthah's daughter was the one and only of her father. Number two, that she was a willing, she was willing to be sacrificed for a sin which she didn't commit to bring honor to her father. Thirdly, she dies without violating her purity.

And fourth and finally, that her life and death are commemorated by her people. Now, in saying all this, the question I now want to ask is this, who else do we know who carries similar characteristics like these in scripture? Well, beloved, we don't have to look far to find out there's only one that does, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus was also the one and only of his father. He also was willing to be sacrificed for sins which he did not commit to bring glory to his father. When he was on Calvary's cross and died, he did so without violating his purity. In essence, he went to the cross as a perfect sacrifice. And his life and his death are also commemorated by his people, most notably through the proclaiming of the gospel and the institution of the sacraments of baptism in the Lord's Supper. So again, we see that Jephthah's daughter serves as a beautiful typology of the Lord Jesus [ 37 : 02 ] Christ himself. However, while there are similarities in this text between Jephthah's daughter and Christ, there are equally things in this text that reveals Christ as being greater than Jephthah's daughter.

And for the sake of time, let me give you two reasons. The first way that we see that Christ is greater is because his death was necessary and more sufficient. His death was necessary and more sufficient. Like we stated before, the vow which ultimately takes the life of Jephthah's daughter, it was unnecessary because the Lord had already equipped Jephthah with everything he needed to defeat the Ammonites by way of the Holy Spirit. Equally, Jephthah's ignorance of the Old Testament law also made him unaware that such a sacrifice of his daughter was actually an abomination against the Lord.

And we see that in Deuteronomy 12 31. And one reason among many why this is an abomination is because it is impossible for one fallen human being to satisfy God by sacrificing another fallen human being.

So while Jephthah fulfilled his promise to God in the greater scope of things, God found no real satisfaction nor did Jephthah receive any form of righteousness in this sacrifice. However, in Jesus Christ, we have someone who's different because in Jesus Christ, we have the holy eternal son of God in human flesh. Therefore, since he is holy, the sacrifice which he made for us is holy. And thus through him, beloved, we have obtained the righteousness and satisfaction of God. Here's how the writer of Hebrews puts it in chapter 2 verse 17. He says, therefore he, that is Christ, had to be made like his brethren in all things so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation or satisfaction for the sins of the people. Therefore, the sacrifice of Christ proves to be better because it was a perfect sacrifice, one that was both necessary and sufficient to pay for our sins for us to receive the righteousness which God requires and thus to gain the satisfaction he provides.

But in continuing on this point, we see secondly, that Christ is greater because while Jephthah's daughter's death guaranteed no family for her, the death of Christ did guarantee a family for him.

[ 39 : 51 ] While Jephthah's daughter's death guaranteed no family for her, the death of Christ did guarantee a family for him. And verse 37, after agreeing to be sacrificed, Jephthah's daughter asked to be given two months so that she, quote, may go to the mountains and weep because of her virginity. And in hearing this, we know that these two months had to be emotionally heart-wrenching for this young lady due to the fact that because of her father's vow, she again would never experience her wedding day, nor would she experience having children or having a family, beloved. However, again, in Christ, we see something vastly different. We see that although he was never married nor had any physical children during this time on earth, his death does bring about these things in a spiritual way.

The apostle John puts it this way in chapter 1, verses 12 and 13. He says, But as many as received him, that is Christ, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Therefore, beloved, everyone who believes on the person and work of Jesus Christ, not only do they receive his righteousness, not only do they receive the satisfaction of God, but they also become God's children. Children who by the power of the Holy Spirit are being conformed into a pure adorning and glorious bride that will live eternally in eternal unity and fellowship with his son. And beloved, when we think about Jephthah's daughter in light of this truth, it brings forth a wonderful, ironic postscript to this story. And that is even though her father's vow destroys her opportunity for earthly marriage, beloved, it ultimately doesn't destroy the reality that she will indeed be a bride one day. In essence, because we see that this young lady possessed genuine saving faith in Christ, she has a promise that she has been received by the true bridegroom, namely Christ himself, a bridegroom who has necessarily and sufficiently laid down his life so that those whom have been given to him by his father can be presented back to him as a beautiful and alluring bride, one that is perfect in creation, having neither spot nor wrinkle. So again, while this young lady will never experience a beautiful wedding day here on earth, her joy even in her death is knowing that she has a heavenly wedding day to look forward to. A wedding day where she will be joined with her true bridegroom, Jesus Christ, along with everyone else who is a recipient to the promise of eternal life, which is found through his work of redemption. And speaking of promises, this now gets us to the final point of this message, the comforting beauty of a greater vow. The comforting beauty of a greater vow.

All throughout our time together, our focus has been squarely on Jephthah's vow and the tragedy that came about from it. However, beloved, I would like to mention that Jephthah is not the only one who is known for making vows in the scriptures, but rather there's another one who does this as well. And the vows which he makes are never regrettable and they're guaranteed to happen 100% of the time. And this vow maker, beloved, is almighty God himself. In fact, listen to some of the vows which God has made for you if you are indeed one of his children. In Genesis 3.15, he vowed that the seed of the woman, namely Christ, would crush the head of the serpent, the devil. In Isaiah 53.5, he vowed that Christ would be pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, the chastising of our well-being would fall upon him, and by his stripes, we would be healed. In Jeremiah 31.34, he vowed that in the new covenant of which Christ is the mediator and has ratified through the shedding of his blood, that he would forgive our iniquity and remember our sins no more. In Matthew 11.28 and 29, he vowed that for those of us who are weak and heavy laden because of our sin, we can find rest for our souls in Christ. In John 3.16, he vowed that whosoever believes in Christ, they will not perish but have eternal life. In John 8.36, he vowed that whom the Son sets free, namely free from the bondage of sin, they will be free indeed. In Romans 8.1, he vowed that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. In Colossians 3.4, he vowed that because Christ is our life, when he is revealed, we also will be revealed with him in glory.

And beloved, in Revelation 21.4, he vowed that when his people get to glory, he will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no longer any death, no longer any mourning or crying or pain, for the first things have passed away. And you know the most wonderful thing about these vows, beloved? That God has also given his word, and he cannot nor will not take it back. Therefore, if you are in Christ, all of these promises will forever apply to you, and many more like them. So again, beloved, we don't need to be like Jephthah and make promises to God, which we are unable and also unwilling to keep. But all we have to do is trust in the ones that he has made towards us. And when we hold firm to the vows that God has made towards us, we find that when we face those

ugly seasons in our lives, when we face those times where our situations are at its darkest, our souls will still have a solid foundation to stand, a foundation that is described beautifully in these following words, standing on the promises that cannot fail.

When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail, by the living word of God, I shall prevail, standing on the promises of God. And beloved, in the end, that's all that matters, that we continue to stand on the promises of God, because it's in his promises where we find comfort. In his promises, we can find security. And in his promises, we can find the strength and the power to stand faithful in triumph. So while Jephthah made a vow that he wished he could have taken back, beloved, aren't you glad that you serve a God who made a vow to you that he's more than pleased to keep? Aren't you glad that you serve a God who will never desire nor will go back on his word? Beloved, when we are faithless, our God is more than faithful. So even in your despair, even in your hurts, even in your pain, pains, continue to trust in him. Because he is the God that has made a glorious and triumphant vow towards you. And he is a God who never regrets keeping his word. As Dr. J.I. Packer tells us, how does God faithful, how does God's faithfulness show itself? By his unfailing fulfillment of his promises? He is a covenant keeping God. He never fails those who trust his word. Join me in a word of prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, that again, while we are often faithless, you are faithful.

[ 48 : 38 ] Lord, thank you that your salvation doesn't rely on what we do or what we promise, but it's all relying on what you do and what you have promised. And Lord, you have made many vows in scripture. But unfortunately, many times we walk this life forgetting those vows or doubting those vows in some way. But Lord, let your word be true and everything else, even the things that we may think that are against your word. Be a lie. Because truly, Lord, our salvation, our security, our rest, our glorification, all relies on you. So help us every day to trust you, to love you, and to rest in you, knowing that again, you are the one that is truth. And that truth sets us free. So thank you, Lord, for all you've done, all you will do and all you are doing. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.