

1/26/20 - Judges 11:29-12:7 - "Jephthah: A Tragic Vow"

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- [0 : 00] So we're going to be getting into the second part of the judgeship of Jephthah. And hopefully if you missed the message from last week, you were able to view it on YouTube. We put all the messages on YouTube if you were missing it. Or we also have the sermon audio and the video on our website whenever you're not able to make it to stay up to date of the ministry of the Word in our church.
- And we're going to connect the dots a little bit more today with Jephthah. This is a man who was appointed as, he was a man-appointed leader.
- That man was looking around for a leader and they were looking because they were under distress. There was a foreign enemy about to come and take them out. They didn't have anybody in charge at that time to lead the battle initiative.
- And so they were looking around and scrambling. They figured out what to do in their distress because they sensed abandonment from God in this passage.
- [1 : 07] They were out of options. And we spoke about that last week, didn't we? About the abandonment that God dealt with this nation of Israel at this time. It was a really, really wake-up call, I think, to many of us of how God deals with us.
- Because this is a difficult theological reality of how God deals with this nation of Israel, like through something that we mentioned as tough love last week. That sometimes, while we know that God is omnipresent, he has to manufacture sometimes this sense of abandonment that he might be trying to wake us up, making us seek him more diligently through times when we can't, we don't sense him near.
- And this nation was in that place right now, this nation of Israel. And Jephthah was appointed as their head.
- And it's important to know one thing that we spoke about last week was that while they did feel that abandonment, we know that God didn't forget them. Just as a parent is dealing sometimes very strict with your child and saying, okay, whatever you say, if you know best, go do what you feel is right.
- And, you know, during that process, it's painstaking to watch your child go and make bad decisions and things like that. And a parent never forgets their child either.
- [2 : 36] So, we're going to be continuing this. We're going to see more manipulation of God. Jephthah using God to manipulate man.
- We're going to see all of this. It's going to come into full circle today as we see the end of Jephthah's judgeship. But we're going to also see the mercy of God today as he, as God chose to actually empower this man-appointed leader and used him as judge despite man's feeble plans to solve a problem that only God was meant to solve.
- God was meant to be the only one to raise up leaders during the nation of Israel. Israel. They, this was, it was, it was an offense. It was a sin to, to play God in that, in that way.

And they actually had a ceremony that we spoke about last week that looked legitimate. Everyone was gathered. It looked like, you know, God was up to something. But indeed, he was removed from this nation.

They were just trying to do what they thought was right. So, let's pray and we're going to read as this narrative continues and comes to a close. Please join me in a word of prayer this morning.

[3 : 43] Amen. Lord God, we give you our attention today. And we give you our hearts today. We pray that you prepare our hearts for, to receive your words.

Receive the nourishment in your words to, to help us to know who you are as you reveal it to us. Father, we pray that we can, we can experience your grace today.

And Father, help us navigate this very difficult situation of sin today. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen? Okay.

Let's read. We're going to be in Judges 11, verse 29. I'm going to read down to 33.

We're going to talk about it. Verse 29 says, in Judges 11, Then the spirit of the Lord was upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed on to Mizpah of Gilead.

[4 : 56] And from Mizpah of Gilead, he passed on to the Ammonites. And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord and said, If you'll give the Ammonites into my hand, then whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me, will I return in peace.

When I return in peace from the Ammonites, shall be the Lord's. And I will offer it up for a burnt offering. So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them, and the Lord gave them into his hand.

And he struck them from Uroar to the neighborhood of Mineth, 20 cities, and as far as Abel-Kerim, with a great blow. So the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel.

So we're going to see in scene one today a brief battle and a vow. Knowing God, that God's involvement up to this point, remember in last week's message, in the passage last week, looking at the context of this, it's actually something important to note when we see the verse starting out.

Then the Spirit of the Lord was upon Jephthah. Because we know that up to this point, God's involvement with Israel at this point was understood to be more passive.

[6 : 15] And we see in this passage that in God's sovereignty, he saw fit to empower Jephthah at this moment. To fulfill a task only determined by his will, and his will alone.

His involvement in this account is a grace that's revealed. After telling this nation, go cry out to your gods, I'm not helping you anymore.

You keep turning from me, you keep abandoning me, so go ahead and figure it out for yourselves. What grace we receive in this passage when we see that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Jephthah.

Regardless of man's plans, and regardless of this corrupt nation, he did not forget them indeed, just as we spoke last week. He chose to intervene.

But as we continue, will he intervene again in the midst of possible internal strife among the nation? Or is this going to be something that we see is empowering, just dealing with external strife against the enemy?

[7 : 21] Well, let's continue here. In verse 30, it talks about this great battle. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Jephthah.

He moved, he pressed on to the Ammonites. And then in verse 30, let's see if Jephthah can finally keep his mouth shut this time around. Let's see. And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord.

Jephthah is opening his mouth again. And he said, If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, then whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering.

Like Jephthah, at this point. Remember last week, all the times when Jephthah just opened his mouth, it's like his lips were just running, and nothing good came out of it.

Jephthah, again, living right up to his name. Did you know that Jephthah's name actually means something? It means he will open, or he opens. And Kenneth Way actually commented on this passage saying, although it probably referred to God opening the womb when the name was given at birth, the narrator likely employs the name as a pun for a man who frequently opens his mouth.

[8 : 38] He has what we call open mouth syndrome, OMS. I think some of us have OMS around here. But four times in this passage, in verse 11, we see this constantly through Jephthah's life.

He just can't keep his mouth shut. Just let the Lord empower you. Go to war with the enemy. Let the Lord conquer, and just get out of the way.

But you know, vows are good, right? We're good. But what was the intention of his vow? It comes out of nowhere, doesn't it, in this passage? We're like saddled up.

The narrative starts out like, all right, we're getting into some good battle. Anybody who likes good battle movies, like you're getting ready in this narrative, and then all of a sudden it talks about this vow. It's like an interruption.

It's like a little interlude in this passage, a little hiccup. What was he trying to do? What was the intention of this vow? Was he trying to possibly have the Lord respond, wow, Jephthah, what great faith you have, brother.

[9 : 48] Anything that comes to your door to welcome you, you're going to give to me as a burnt offering? Man, what if it was like your own child, maybe your only child? You're going to really do that?

Wow, what faith you have, Jephthah, faith of Abraham. Wow. You know that there's only, the only thing that's going to meet him at his door is going to be a human being.

This is why the passage today is very difficult. We always get in various ways, I think, when we get desperate for God to act on our behalf, don't we?

Sometimes it could be, I think a lot has to do with possibly health issues. Usually we're just like, God, please just help us in this time. My mother's sick and things like that.

And we almost get to the point where we bargain with God. We say, God, if you do this, then I'm going to do this. I'm going to be sold out. You know, I'm going to, I'm selling all my ACDC records.

[10 : 51] I'm throwing it all out. I'm burning it all. I'm changing everything. If you only do this, then I'm going to do this. Don't we get in that way almost sometimes when we get desperate for God to intervene?

This vow, this type of vow, when it comes out of our lips is feeble. It represents feeble faith in God. Creating your own terms and undermining God's control, His absolute control and sovereignty over even the sickest of our health issues.

Even the most direst financial issues and crises in our lives. By making that type of vow, it is feeble faith at best. Notice the absence of the Lord in this exchange.

There's no agreement. It's like, okay, the Lord's up to something. He's empowering Jephthah. We're going out to war. Things are on track. The Lord's silent.

There was no agreement. It's just a senseless vow. So the interruption of the narrative is over at this point, and we get back into the action at verse 32.

[12 : 03] It says, So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them, and the Lord gave them into His hand, and He struck them from Aurora to the neighborhood of Mineth. Twenty cities. Look at this battle, church.

This was huge. Absolutely huge. The Lord intervened at a time when He said that He was going to give them away.

He remembered them. Twenty cities with a great blow. So they were subdued. The enemy was subdued. This goes back to the covenant of driving out the enemy back in Deuteronomy 7.

They were fulfilling their initial duty to serve the Lord, to serve Yahweh, to get the enemy, to beat the enemy. What a great battle.

And we know one thing for certain. The victory against the Ammonites had the fingerprints of God all over it. So you had this battle. But we're the fingerprints of God over this vow.

[13 : 04] What is this vow? Where did it come from? Why are we doing this? This battle was the Lord's. 1 Samuel 12, 11 actually records this battle as an occurrence of being to the Lord.

It says, And the Lord sent Jeroboam and Barak and Jephthah and Samuel and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side and you lived in safety. This was the Lord's battle.

And He won it. So, someone may kind of make a nuance in this passage. They might conclude that since they won the battle and the vow was contingent upon that victory, then is the Lord condoning this vow?

So, is He approving what this vow could possibly lead to, which we're looking at possible human sacrifice? Is this being condoned by God in this manner?

Well, this is where I think it's important to look at the structure of the whole passage. Looking all the way back to our text yesterday in chapter 10 and looking all the way up to chapter 12 because it almost answers it for us with a resounding no.

[14 : 16] Every time man opened his lips in this whole passage of the account of Jephthah, it was almost an act of complete disregard for God, for reverence for God.

It was more concerned about man than anything. This vow was a result of their words. It was self-serving in this text. It's the theme of this whole, from chapter 10, it's another instance of Jephthah trying to manipulate God, creating his own terms.

If you do this, I'll do this. You know, the one thing that we should be concerned about, the covenants, the driving out the Canaanites, the enemy, the Ammonites in this passage who did not worship Yahweh, but the author doesn't even spend more than two verses on this great victory where he defeated 20 cities.

And it's almost like a side thought. You see what the author is trying to do here. It's not about the battle anymore. It's about man's sin. He's taking our attention to man's sin.

So all of our attention is on what? This vow at this point. So being in quite a bad mess, what do humans do best when we're backed into a corner with nowhere to go?

[15 : 36] We play the blame game. Don't we? Scene two is just that, the blame game. The passage continues in verse 34.

Read with me. It says, Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah, and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances.

She was his only child. Besides her, he had neither son nor daughter. And as soon as he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, Alas, my daughter, you have brought me very low and you have become the cause of great trouble to me.

For I have opened my mouth to the Lord and I cannot take back my vow. Jephthah opens up his mouth again to a senseless, to sticking to his senseless vow.

He blames his daughter. You have brought me low. You are a cause of my distress. Great trouble to me.

[16 : 53] This is your fault. You've come to meet me. Can you imagine this passage? Your daughter coming back from, coming back to greet you from victory with tambourines, with dancing.

She is so excited to meet you. And upon meeting at the door, you know what has to be done. He was looking at sacrificing his only daughter.

And was human sacrifice mentioned in Scripture? Is it mentioned in Scripture? Yes. Very much so.

But was it strongly forbidden in the Pentateuch? Yes. So what does that tell us? It tells us one thing clearly.

The Lord did not lead this initiative. The Lord had his hands removed from this silliness. This was a man-made initiative adopted by the Canaanite religion.

[18 : 10] You want to know why this nation of Israel was meant to drive out this enemy? Because this is what the enemy did. They made human sacrifices.

They indulged in sexual activities that are just vain and so corrupt. If they were given one minute to repent of their sin, they would not repent of it.

This is how wicked these people were. And Jephthah, being of the nation of Israel, you're seeing the corruption unfold within his own life.

The Israelites would be the last to ever offer a human sacrifice. So you know what that means. This is another symptom of the nation of Israel breaking their covenant with God and behaving and adopting Canaanite worship.

And unfortunately this is looking like human sacrifice in this passage. So we're going to continue in verse 36. And she said to him, upon hearing his words, My father, you have opened your mouth, at least she knows it too, to the Lord.

[19 : 21] Do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth now that the Lord has avenged you on your enemies, on the Ammonites.

So she said to her father, Let this thing be done for me. Leave me alone two months that I may go up and down the mountains and weep for my virginity, I and my companions.

So he said, Go. Then he sent her away for two months and she departed, she and her companions, and wept for virginity on the mountains. You know that the summer skies, church, when the storm is like on the horizon, you see that wall of cloud just rolling in and, you know.

I imagine that happening in this passage so clearly. Like looking on the horizon of this nation, at the spiritual state of this nation, the skies in this nation are getting very, very dark.

There is now the impending death, lingering for two months, of an innocent daughter of a man who can't keep his mouth shut. And notice the source of her lamenting.

[20 : 33] It's childbearing. And this is very important back in this culture, in this time period. It was the very important role for women in this culture to bear a child.

It was quite a legacy for a woman to partake in in these days. And now for this young lady, she's going to be left with a fruitless legacy because of man's loose lips and false worship.

And so the tragedy unfolds in verse 39 as this chapter comes to a close. And at the end of the two months, she returned to her father who did to her according to his vow that he had made.

She had never known a man and it became a custom in Israel. But the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadites.

Four days in the year. Jephthah, what have you done? this tragedy struck ripples throughout this nation.

[21 : 44] And it actually became a four-day national holiday to remember the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite. And it became a national holiday so all would remember the effect of opening his mouth and making this vow.

So they would remember so no one else would ever have to go through this again. So after the slaughter of one, thousands more await this nation.

Sin multiplies in this nation. What were the result of Jephthah's words at this point? Death. And we're going to see in scene three as civil war continues in this passage starting in chapter 12 verse 1.

We see civil war. It says, the men of Ephraim were called to arms. Remember church, Ephraim? Think of Gideon.

Remember Gideon's army? We're thinking of, you know, we're talking nations of Israel here. Then the men of Ephraim were called to arms and they crossed Zaphon and said to Jephthah, why did you cross over to fight against the Ammonites and did not call us to go with you?

[23 : 04] We will burn your house over you with fire. And Jephthah said to them, I and my people had a great dispute with the Ammonites and when I called you, you did not save me from their hand.

And when I saw that you would not save me, I took my life in my hand and crossed over against the Ammonites and the Lord gave them into my hand.

Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me? We see the second half of this book. Let's take a pause there for a minute. This book is going to increase in civil war.

Remember, it wasn't too many weeks ago when we learned about Gideon's great battle against Moab, Moabites. And now we see Israel, nation of Israel, versus nation of Israel.

it's more duplication of that sin, the effects of sin. It actually gets quite worse towards the last few chapters.

[24 : 07] I just advise at this point in Judges, just send the kids down because it gets interesting from this point forward. And this chapter begins with a similar dispute, almost like if you remember Abimelech against Shechem, the tower of Shechem, and Thebes.

You know, Abimelech was going to war against his own people that raised him up. And so we see the civil war continue, and it continues.

You see Gileadites versus the Ephraimites in verse 4 as we come to a close today. Then Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead and fought with Ephraim, and the men of Gilead struck Ephraim because they said, you are fugitives of Ephraim, you Gileadites, in the midst of Ephraim and Manasseh.

And the Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan against the Ephraimites. And when any of the fugitives of Ephraim said, let me go over, the men of Gilead said to him, are you an Ephraimite?

And he said, no. They said to him, say, Shibboleth. And he said, Sibboleth, for he could not pronounce it right. Then they seized him and slaughtered him at the fords of the Jordan.

[25 : 26] At that time, 42,000 of the Ephraimites fell. 42,000. And that'll conclude our reading today. What's going on in this passage?

We see fugitives of Ephraim. Basically, what's going on in this passage from verse 4 to verse 6 is that you have a group of Ephraimites, you know, the people of Gideon fleeing Gilead, getting out of there because they want to cross over the Jordan.

They want to retreat to their own land across the other side of the Jordan. And we see an interesting word here. It's a super spiritual word here, church. You want to remember this word.

It's called Shibboleth. Think about it. It's super spiritual. It really is. It means ear of grain. So spiritual. You know, some people overemphasize the wrong things in scripture.

This was just them of trying to say something that they would be able to tell if they were a Gileadite or an Ephraimite. The Ephraimite could not pronounce Shibboleth. They pronounced it with Sibboleth.

[26 : 34] So they had an accent, and it was a simple distinguishment between an Ephraimite and a Gileadite. There's no spiritual words. There's no hyper-spiritual meaning to that word.

It was just a way of figuring out who was who trying to escape. And in this matter of civil war, instead of the Gileadites just working things out with this nation, they slaughter 42,000.

I asked it last week very often, I'm going to ask it again, what is God's role in these stories? It started out pretty good. It was empowering Jephthah in this war.

Who was taking the lead role in this narrative? man is now on a mission. We see that in chapter 12 verse 3, it says, man is on a mission.

I took my life in my hand. They're on a mission now. It's almost like a reversing progression of what was laid out from Moses that was given to Joshua that was supposed to be passed on through the judges.

[27 : 44] You see a reverse progression and the book accounts for a reverse conquest, almost like a reverse exodus. We're seeing the unraveling of this nation. All these men of Gideon, 42,000, dead, slaughtered, based on this civil war.

This nation is caving in on itself. There's chaos, there's division, and it's increasing, but is there hope? What is the result of Jephthah's words in this civil war?

Again, death. And the story concludes, Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in his city in Gilead.

Notice something important. You know the cycle. Israel sins, judges raised, Israel is delivered through God empowering that judge, and then what happens usually next?

There's rest. I don't see that in this passage. Thank God Jephthah was only in charge for six years for the sake of this nation. Jephthah's life ends without leaving a legacy of rest to this nation and served duly as an agent of God, but there is more emphasis placed on him being an agent of atrocity.

[29 : 10] of his loose lips. So looking back over, stepping back a little bit, seeing these verses all laid out on a page of Jephthah's judgeship, thinking about last week with the nation of Israel who cried out to the Lord and said, we have sinned against you.

It faced value. It looks legitimate. It looks like this nation is finally waking up to the condition of their hearts, to the condition of sin, but what was it, church? It was superficial repentance.

There was no heart in those words because their actions spoke much more loudly than their words. And last week, we saw self-interest of the nation of Israel.

We see the bargaining with Jephthah to be their leader. Like, we'll make you head. You know, this is enticing. We'll give you a presidential suite. We'll give you all the amenities. Yeah, be our head, you mighty warrior, Jephthah.

And also last week, Jephthah's huge, remember that huge text that everyone fell asleep with last week? The huge dissertation to the Ammonite king? It was like, what, like 100 verses or something?

[30 : 16] Yeah, we did that last week. The erroneous dissertation and provoking of that Ammonite king. And today, seeing his words again with a senseless vow and civil war, church, what do we do with all this?

What do we do with that? We need to focus on Jephthah's words. What were the results of his words?

What were the results of Israel's words? Man's words has truly gotten this whole nation into the most trouble. So let's reverse engineer the problem then.

You know the verse, out of the heart, the mouth speaks. Now we're on to something. The real problem, church, because man's words were not aligned with God, is because there was a problem with the condition of their hearts.

In this narrative, there was a lot of talking, wasn't there? Israel needed to check their hearts before repenting. Repentance was required of the nation of Israel, crying out to the Lord, we have sinned against you, Lord, but with a humble, convicted heart.

[31 : 36] That wasn't there. Raising up leaders was common, but God would usually at this time institute, He would do all the work of raising up leaders. We raise up leaders all the time in churches today, but we have to do it with a heart seeking after God's will, not man's will.

Trying to make amends with your enemy is always desired, but only when your heart does not want to provoke. Your heart wants to actually work things out.

And vows are often good, you know, that is sometimes a way that we communicate our dedication, and making vows are good, they're promises, making covenants and things like that, but only when a heart is unified with God's will, there's a disconnect in this nation.

But the same stands true for us today, church. The condition of our hearts must be filled with a hunger for God's word, as revealed through scripture.

Changing our minds and setting our hearts upon the Lord. This has to happen. Jephthah had an extreme disregard for the Torah, and also through exercising human sacrifice, this led to a world of trouble.

[32 : 56] Jephthah's OMS, open mouth syndrome, led to death, it led to disaster, it led to division, it led to provoking. But church, if we ever have open mouth syndrome, this is a syndrome that should lead to life, because that which is in our hearts is something that people are longing for, proclaiming the gospel.

Jephthah couldn't get this. And an interesting thing about that vow in the first place, I don't even have it in my notes, but he could have actually got out of that vow. But he had disregard for the law of God.

If you read Leviticus 27, it actually details how you get out of those types of things. All you had to do was go see the high priests, and he could have gotten out of that. But he had no regard for the law of God, and it caused ignorance on his part, and sacrifice to his only daughter, an innocent woman.

Man. The word of God is the anchor of our that which is of light, and that is which of darkness. The word of God must actively be engaging our hearts to prepare and condition our words.

It has to be actively working at work in our lives. If only this were to be so for Jephthah. The knowledge of God revealed to us in his word is essential for life and for growth.

[34 : 22] Pastor Rick opened the service with it. I'm going to read it again. In Psalm 1, too, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Reading this passage, thinking about man's words and just the sinfulness that was coming out of Jephthah's mouth, which points to a heart condition, I couldn't help but think of 1 Timothy chapter 4, starting in verse 6, where Paul instructs Timothy, if you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.

Just to pause there, Timothy was called and commissioned by Paul to pay attention to his words, being trained in the words of the faith and of good doctrine that have followed.

And it continues in verse 7, have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather, train yourselves for godliness, for while bodily training is for some value, godliness is a value in every way as it holds the promise of the present life and also for the life to come.

[35 : 55] And then the passage actually concludes in verse 16, keep watch on yourself and on your teaching, on your words, Timothy, as Paul is instructing him, keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching.

Persist in this, for by doing so you will save both yourself and your hearers. Ignorance and abandonment of the word of God will lead to death and disaster.

We see that today. Sometimes I wonder what some churches are teaching when they kind of just use scripture to fulfill their own agendas, to support their own plans rather than allowing scripture to be in a driving seat.

The ministry of the word is absolutely vital for the life and the health of the church. And this is so that it can condition our hearts, so we can mind our words, so that our words can be fruitful when we leave this place, that our hearts will be in check.

How much trouble could have been avoided if Jephthah were devoted to the law of God in that way and allowed the word of God to govern his heart and in so doing, governing that mouth of his.

[37 : 07] Quite a different ending to the story. I tell you what, his daughter would probably be alive at this time. The same is true for you, church.

Just as 1 Timothy says in verse 20 of chapter 6, O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.

For by professing it, some have swerved from the faith. Things that we think we know outside of the word of God, things that we're feeling, sometimes our feelings, sometimes what other people are saying to us, if it doesn't match up with the word of God, it's irreverent babble.

Contradictions of what's falsely called knowledge. This is knowledge in this word, and if this knowledge is not imparted, it does not change our hearts, we better watch out for the words that we speak to one another, to saving and proclaiming the lost.

The same is true for you, church. Guard the deposit entrusted to you. Let us not swerve from the right or to the left, just as Joshua was instructed by the Lord. Do not swerve, do not turn from the left or to the right.

[38 : 19] Meditate on this. We have what we need to guide our lives. The word of God is sufficient for this task, and we need to uphold this. Let our hearts be rooted, hearts and words be rooted, because we can assume if our hearts are aligned with the word, our words will probably fall in line with that as well.

But I want to leave you with this thought. And it's going to be a little bit of a play on words, so focus with me real quickly. So if the gospel has been revealed through the word of God, special revelation of Jesus Christ in the flesh, if the gospel has been revealed in the word of God, and the word of God has the power to bring the dead to life, how great then we must steward that which we speak to one another.

Because if our hearts are supposed to have the word of God implanted in it, so that it would bloom to this world that so desires to have hope, that is struggling to find meaning, to find truth, finding it in all the wrong places, how much more should we strive to reveal this.

What we speak, church, is a direct product of the word within our hearts, and the quality of our words rests on the condition of our hearts. There is a very important, vital task that we must uphold, unless we lead people to death.

So let's take great care in the words that we speak. When we proclaim the gospel, when we're defending the gospel, when people come against us defending the gospel, in grace, counting other people in higher honor than us, in our prayers, the utterances that we have to God in our silent time with the Lord, let us be training ourselves to align our hearts with His, to align our minds with His, to align our words with His.

[40 : 29] When we're addressing the family of God, this side versus this side, if there's any disputes, that we count others greater than ourselves, when we're calling out sin, if we see someone, if you see Pastor Rick, wherever he's at, struggling with something and something's just not right, just approaching him with kind, gentle words, calling out sin and saying, hey, I saw this.

When we have disagreements, when we got Arminians on this side and Calvinists on this side, when we have disagreements on these things, coming together, paying attention to our words, and whatever else may come, might be caused from what might come out of our mouths, let it reveal the power of the gospel in our hearts, in all that we speak.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.