

Bristol Conference 1976-17 Studies in the Judges

by Bob Clark

The sermon explores the life of Jephthah in the Book of Judges, highlighting themes of idolatry, God's discipline, and the complexities of leadership and faith.

Duration: 43:03

Scripture: Judges 10:6

Topics: "Bible Conference", "Leadership", "Repentance"

Description

Bob Clark emphasizes the life of Jephthah in the Book of Judges, highlighting the spiritual significance of his story amidst Israel's decline. He contrasts Jephthah's leadership with that of previous judges, noting the people's choice of a flawed leader and the consequences of their idolatry. The sermon discusses the importance of genuine repentance and the dangers of rash vows, as seen in Jephthah's tragic promise to sacrifice whatever came out of his house. Clark illustrates how Jephthah's story serves as a warning about the weight of our words and the need for true spiritual maturity. Ultimately, he calls for a return to God and a deeper understanding of leadership rooted in humility and faithfulness.

Transcript

The Book of Judges, Chapter 10. Now, the very amount of space that's given to the life of Jephthah suggests that there must be some spiritual significance to this man's life, and not only the space that's given to it, but by contrast to the number of judges and the short number of verses and space that is given to them to come between Abimelech and Jephthah. In Chapter 10, we have a man named Polamention, and he receives two verses.

The emphasis is upon his family background and names of his family, and then the fact that he judged Israel for 23 years. Two verses. Then, three verses are given to Jeor, and he judged Israel 22 years.

He appears to have been a man of wealth, and he judged Israel and brought peace and prosperity in Gilead, which is going to be the object of our attention in just a few moments. So, it would appear that God has chosen to quickly pass over the 55 years of span of time, and then move over and give some consideration in detail, 59 verses, to this man Jephthah. See, the count actually begins in verse 6 of Chapter 10, and goes all the way through Chapter 12 and verse 7. It is divided into two sections, and that is the sorrowful declension and the strange deliverer.

In verse 6, we begin our reading. Verses 6 through 18 draw our attention to this very sad circumstance. We are passed over two judges, and the emphasis being on this man and we shall see early that he's being held in contradistinction to Abimelech, but at the same time noting that there are some curious things that are happening now concerning the judges that did not characterize the earlier judges.

So, there is a gradual decline being recorded for us, and quite obviously the character, the strength, the importance and the general stature of the deliverer himself is beginning to go down in each of these accounts. The children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Balaam and Asheroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zion, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord and served him not. There's a sevenfold account there, seven of the idolatrous practices, but interestingly enough, in verses 11 and 12 we see a sevenfold deliverance from a captivity.

The god's people had entered seven times into idolatry, and seven times they were disciplined, fell into an oppression, and seven times they were delivered. If nothing else, we see the importance that God is putting in the word of God, and in this particular era, that he will and must discipline waywardness amongst his people, and if it becomes our persistent character, and if we insist on malpractice or abuses after we have been delivered and experienced something of his power, it suggests to us that God is going to lengthen the discipline, intensify the discipline, not toward a punitive measure alone, but the thought would be that you and I might glean from it, and mature and grow spiritually. So, we have the affliction in verses 6 to 14, the actual condition, the awfulness of their idolatry from verses 6 to 8, and then the aim that God has in this, in this severe dealing with them.

We read here of an oppression that exceeds anything. The Ammonites were cruel people. Something of this is stated.

You might want to look at it in 1 Samuel 11, verses 1 and 2, they are a statement as to the wickedness, almost but completion, of vile, atrocious behavior on the part of these Ammonite people, characteristic of the cruelty of those that are not God's people, and they have fallen into their hands. Verse 8, that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel eighteen years. The word vexed is unusual.

Mr. Darby translates it crush. The first time it's been used in such a fashion regarding these oppressions, God's people are getting deeper and deeper into difficulty because of the perpetuation of their self-indulgence, their inability to learn from their historical dealings with God, and God then intensifies his discipline, not unlike a parental act. Verbal correction when they're small, a light tap on the hand, and increasing severity as the child goes on and practices until it realizes that it must be corrected and behave itself in some fashion, whatever the family problem is.

Well, God is doing the same nationally amongst his own, and in verse 10 we read, and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord. This is the beginning of their repentance. We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God and served Baal.

Now, God, through this experience, has drawn out of the people a clear-cut confession of their sin, and the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, and from the children of Ammon, and then listing each of the deliverances? Yet in verse 13 he comes back, Yet you have forsaken me, and served other gods. Wherefore, I will deliver you no more. A strong faith I have now given you up.

Go, and cry unto the gods which you have chosen. Let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. Reminding ourselves of something that Gideon's father said to the men of Baal.

Let God, or let your God, deliver him, and take care of my son if he's done wrong. And, they come back to the same reasoning here, but God is now going to be touched by the cry of the people with a sense of utility and a grief and a deep burden of heart. The children of Israel said unto the Lord, We have sinned.

Why did God press this conviction? In order that, hopefully, that they might ultimately draw around to the place and come to the end of themselves. Sometimes it is, in truth, not sufficient for the glib confession, for the so-called confession. Lord, forgive me.

It's like the man that walks through the house and steps on everybody's feet saying, I'm sorry to everyone, but he touches every single person all the way back, and on his way out he'll do the same thing. He's not any more sorry, he's just irritated that you're in his way. And, some of us have a very glib, casual way of saying, Lord forgive me my sins.

Now, that's not what confession is, and sometimes God needs to burden our soul and convict us that we will see our sin and literally say the same thing about our sin that God does. If God calls it anger, then please don't call it an impatient temperament. Admit to God that you're angry.

If you've had a doperous thought, don't ask the Lord to forgive you for your mind wandering. We've not fooled anybody but ourselves. If we say we have no sin, we're deceiving ourselves, and God wants us to have an open, honest confession, and these persons are really burdened.

We have sinned. Do thou unto us whatever sinneth could unto thee. Deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.

And then, on their own, without the initiative or provocation from God, they put away the strange God and serve the Lord. They've gone back to worshiping God with no guarantee of his deliverance, but they have genuinely, in their confession, meant business with God, and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. The New American Standard Bible says, he bear the misery of Israel no longer.

God could just not bear it any longer to see what his people were going through. They had gone through a severe chastening, but the problem stood before them. The children of Ammon gathered together in a camp in Gilead.

There they had the military encounter, and somehow, in their own initiative, they set up a form of defense in some fashion. They've gone out as far as Mizpah, and there they put an alignment. They assembled themselves together in a camp in Mizpah, and now they're ready for conflict, but they have no leader, they do not have the assurance of God's provision, and in a sense of futility, I imagine, in a sense of anxiety, the elders of Gilead get together and make a decision.

They need to choose a leader. This man that they choose is a strange man, indeed. He bears the mark of unusual power, the presence of the Spirit of God, and yet confusion, contradiction, ill-advisedness with his mouth, ill-tempered.

We could never, by any stretch of our imagination, suggest that he is truly a spiritual person, and yet he has spiritual power. And I am sure we don't have to go too far for illustration. Many of us have been heartbroken at the degree to which God can use an individual and then possibly he himself to mark with

such cruelty.

There is quite a distinguishable difference between the gift and the man. Quite a difference between what we do in our service, and in our activities, and what we are in ourselves. Our work, our service, and our truth that we bear in the sense of our service to God is one thing, and yet the truth that is conceived by the Spirit of God through abiding in Christ may well be lacking, and this is the type of thing that we see in Jethro.

And it's not uncommon to see this in the Reformers. Remember, we suggested to ourselves that it's possible that Abimelech might be a foretelling of the Roman oppression, and the potpourri system, and the four priesthood, and all the terror that came down through the Roman church. So, if that's so, it's not difficult to see in Jethro some of the contradiction that characterized the great Reformers and the Reformation movement.

It was division, it was contradiction, there was great strength of a man, great power, character, and yet, on the other side, almost unbelievable statement contradictory to basic Christian grace and love. And so, the Reformers are suggested, and we're coming toward, by Jethro's period of time, we're coming toward the end of the church's history, if this is indeed reasonable to say it's a prophetic picture. Now, let's look at Jethro himself.

We draw to our attention some things about the man. Verses 1-28 of chapter 11 bring to us the man himself. In Shakespeare, there's a phrase that comes out of Hamlet that says, there's a divinity that takes our ends, roughs you them as we will.

Somehow God overrules in very truth. We feel that we are forming our lives, and we do, and we respond, but God is overruling in these matters, and men are doing what they can, but God is still going to raise up and accomplish his end. Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, and he was the son of a harlot, and Gilead begat Jephthah.

Gilead's wife bear his sons, and his wife's son grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah and said unto him, thou shalt not inherit in our father's house, for thou art the son of a strange woman. And Jephthah fled from his brethren, and drove to the land of Pov, which is about 80 to 100 miles northeast. And there were gathered three men to Jephthah, and went out with him.

Apparently, he had some kind of a marauding party. He can't pass a judgment what he was doing. He may have been harassing other people's enemies of God, even as David did during his retreat.

We don't know what he was doing, but he was certainly disowned by God's people. He was rejected. There's no divine appointment.

There is no call by God. There is not the Lord raising up a judge, but rather, we see in verse 5 and verses 7 through 11, again and again, the phrase is the elders of Gilead, the elders of Gilead. Men have come to see that they need to choose their leader.

Prior to Abimelech, there was no choosing of a leader. God raised up the leader, and they were dependent upon God, and they cast themselves upon God. Now, with Abimelech's arrival, and his self-assertion, and God's crushing, humiliating death, and setting him aside, now the people seem to feel that the general spirit of a king or a ruler for some kind of a control is important to have, and we mustn't wait upon God.

We need to do it ourselves. So, they begin to select this man. He's a cast out, he's disapproved.

This is an unfair stigma put upon him because of his parents' sin, but nonetheless it stands against this man Jephthah. And it came to pass in the process of time in verse 4 that the children of Ammon made war against Israel, and it was so that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Ptah. Come, be our captives.

Remember the parable of the trees? Come, reign over us. Come, be our captives, that we may fight with the children of Ammon. And Jephthah said unto the elders, did not you hate me and expel me out of my father's house? Now, the very language suggests that his own brothers are now the elders of Gilead.

That's remarkable of a song, and if it's not exactly so, which I have no way of knowing, then it certainly is implied that the elders joined his brothers in evicting this young man from the household. Did you not hate me and expel me? Then why are you come down unto me? Why am I in distress? Why are you doing this? Why do you turn to me now? He's going to rub their noses a little bit in their problem. The elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, therefore we turn again to thee now that thou mayest go with us, fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over the inhabitants of Gilead.

If you bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head? Now, he's not insisting on it exactly like the bramble, but he is assuring himself that there is going to be a second reaffirmation that I am going to be your leader. I'm not coming back and being humiliated again. I'm not going to tolerate that kind of abuse.

Sometimes we can be unkind unnecessarily with our brothers, and that lingers in the back of the mind. It's so wounding, and it prevents real freedom in the service of God. The elder said, this will do.

Everything's fine. The Lord witnessed between us. Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head, captain over them, and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in this time.

Now, he has been officially accepted and enthroned, we might say, as their leader, their own choice. There are some qualities in this man, and we mustn't overlook them, and I think if anything else we can see the strangeness, the inequity, the lack of balance. In the earlier deliverers, there was a singularity and a commitment to God, and God did not take time to show us their weaknesses.

When we come to Gideon, his weakness and his failure is shown at the end of his life. Here, at the very outset, we can see that there is an erosion of goodness, of quality, of character. There is failure in this man, but he is a man of valor, he is a man of worth, he is a man that has a great comprehension of the nation of Israel and their history, and he is a man that does not want violence and warfare.

He is the first deliverer who's caught by sending out messengers in verse 12 to the enemy, the Ammonites, and between verses 12 and 28 he tries to negotiate a peace. Now, it's an unreasonable and almost impossible job to effect, but he tries to effect this end. He tries now, and he's working.

He sends out the messengers, he reasons with them, he tells them that others haven't done this, and he begins to deal with them, and you should really read that, because if nothing else, it tells us that this man, Jephthah, has a grasp of a nation's history. He has a dealings with God. It is no wonder, in reality, that God is able to go down deep into the inequity of his life and the lack of balance in his behavior, and record him in Hebrews chapter 11, verses 32 to 34.

He is listed amongst the great worries of David and Samson and Jephthah and Barak, but the important thing in his life, the thing that we would like to draw some lessons from and observe with a little bit of care, is what happens just prior to the battle. He assures these people that even though they have elected him as their leader and promised to do this, it will be the Lord that will deliver him and deliver the nation, and that's seen back in verses 8 and 9. The Lord, if I am your head, the Lord will deliver. Now he starts, and he is ready.

The king and the children of Ammon did not listen to the words of Jephthah, the efforts to negotiate a peace, some kind of a settlement without war, and then in verse 29, the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and in divine prerogative God has accepted this weaker vessel. Hardly God's choice, but the people leaning upon God have made their own choice, and God has accepted this vessel, and now God raises up the vessel, and he's going to make use of this man. The spirit of the Lord comes upon him.

Now, this has only been said twice before, Ophniel and Gideon, and now Jephthah. It shall come up again in a curious fashion in the life of Samson, which we shall see, Lord willing, tomorrow. The spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah.

He passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and over Mishpa against Gilead. From Mishpa of Gilead, he passed over into the children of Ammon. He's ready for conflict, but he is not secure in himself.

The enabling of the Holy Spirit of God does not make a man spiritual, it gives him the power, and there's difference between power, external power which we might say in our age we're familiar with, gifts, and real spirituality. He could not say that he's a spiritual man. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's.

I will offer it up for a burnt offering." The word burnt offering is an offering that ascends. He's going to offer whatever has come out of his home after the battle unto God. It's hard to imagine that he really thought an animal was going to come out.

As the story goes on, it's a sad revelation of an impatience and a rashness of his mouth. Let me read to you an excellent commentary by Micah in chapter 6. Micah 6 and verse 6, wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings of calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? Then the answer comes back, He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? God's standards have always been the same. The commitment of ourselves, the yieldedness of our disposition, the surrender of our will, whether it's in the old testament or in the new.

God wants your affection. He wants our intelligent affection. We study the words, and understand that we be knowledgeable, well-taught, and then yield our heart and affection to what God has designed for us.

But here, with impertinence, impatience, lack of faith, rashness of mouth, he makes a vow before the Lord. The book of Ecclesiastes says, Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hastened to vow. Many of us, at one time or another, have made vows.

We have pledged ourselves. We have committed ourselves before God. There were laws in the nation of Israel.

Numbers chapter 30 gives us a very important law. Here, the vow was made by Jephthah. He stood before God and vowed a vow, and pledged himself that he would give to God whatever came out of hell.

That was a very unwise thing to do, but there was no one there, nor could anyone stop him from that vow. Now, it might have been that he was thinking of Leviticus chapter 27, where you would make a vow to the Lord, and make a pledge, and be given a variety of things recorded in Leviticus 27 of different ways that you could pledge or give certain things to God, and God would receive those things. But, in the book of Numbers chapter 30, there is something that needs to be drawn to our attention that we can see the importance of our words.

We have been studying in the book of James the importance of our words, because words are the expressions of our inner person, and my mind must be my controlling factor. I must never allow my body or my soul to control my body and my person in my life. I must be.

If I'm going to pray, I pray with understanding. If I'm going to sing, I sing with spirit and understanding. And, if we make a vow, if we pledge ourselves and commit ourselves in some fashion, a man must be a man of his words.

The book of Numbers chapter 30 tells us that if a man makes a vow, he is irrevocably committed to that vow. There's no way out. Whatever he says, he is committed to.

However, God puts the umbrella of protection over the woman, and if she makes a vow, and her husband or father overhears her, he can negate the vow and ask her to take it back, and thus protect her. But, no boy has that protection. Why? Because God has given headship to the man.

God has given responsibility of leadership to a man, and we men need to be men of determinate, mature, wise character that our words convey our spirit, and therein shall be our strength. Your strength is not in the number of times you can press 150 pounds over your head. Your strength is not in your capacity to go through a grueling game of football and come out on the other end and tear down a goalpost.

That shall soon pass. Young men, your strength is in your inner character, where your spirit and your respect of God and your value of others around you cause you to be a person who seeks yes or no. A man good as his word.

If one of the elders of the church says we need to have the lawn mowed, then learn to say nothing if you have no intention to mow the lawn, or else say, I'll do it and I'll get it done by Saturday, and then do it no matter what happens. Let it be known that whenever you say anything, it is absolute true and going to be carried through of great importance. It shall become the securing, stabilizing factor when you're a young man in a married experience, and the woman is looking for security and strength and protection, and no matter how much money you bring in, she'll need to be able to have confidence in what you say and your tender protective care for her.

The importance of a vow is reiterated again in Deuteronomy 23, and here is a man that makes a brash statement. So important is this arena of thought that the whole battle toward which this whole story is supposedly directed constitutes two verses, and that's all we find of the battle. Verse 32 and verse 33.

The enemy was attacked, the enemy was destroyed. The battle techniques, the stratagems, the victory, the manner, all is set aside. Now we must quickly come back before our minds are lost.

God's people had an epiphany that pushed himself before them. Now they have made the bad choice themselves, and now we have to carry this thing through and see where real leadership rests. And Jephthah came to Mizpah and sat under his house, and behold his daughter came out to meet him with tindles and dance.

She was his only child. Beside her he had neither son nor daughter. No one to perpetuate his name, no one to inherit his estate, no one to sit back and enjoy the richness and the prestige of being ultimately restored as a leader amongst God's people.

The two-and-a-half tribes had made their choice. They stayed on the eastern side, and they're the ones that have gone into this oppression. They're the first ones that go into idolatry.

They're the first ones that are absorbed. God's people that drag their feet and don't want their spiritual inheritances enterral themselves. To be in fellowship with God's people and enjoying the fellowship of God's people is so important.

And here's Gilead now in a desperate condition, and Jephthah wants so much to have enjoyment, and he has chipped away at everything and heartbroken because now he must fulfill his vow. He is bound to it, and most remarkably as we read the story, we find that his only daughter, loving and enjoying, exhilarating in his return, there must have been a very charming and warm bond between that father and daughter because she accepted her father's vow without questioning, without arguing. There was something that would teach us that she was literally offered as a burnt offering, plain and consumed in fire.

Although this man has the potential for doing such things we see a little bit later, and is not without a quick temper, yet I really don't feel for myself that this is what the portion teaches. She was to become an offering, and she became an offering. She would then be committed to a celibate life.

She would live unmarried without the privileges or blessings of family, and perpetuating just his name, or inheriting his estate, and merely serving the Lord there in the temple and amongst God's people. This is a blow to her, and she has privilege to be released and bewail her virginity, and then came back and was committed to this life. Verse 39, and it came to pass at the end of two months that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed, and she knew no man, and it was a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

First the man, then the vow, and whether there's any connection or not, then the strife. This must have been a difficult experience, as we learn nothing else. Men, be careful what we commit ourselves to.

It's no wonder that the apostle Paul urges us to be our words be yea and nay. Be careful about taking vows and committing and pledging ourselves. Now, this does not mean if we are called into a court of law that we can bear a testimony and vow to tell the truth.

I don't believe that's the lesson for this course, but rather to commit ourselves and some pledge to God for something we shall do, we will be bound to it. But, ladies, although you seldom come into the benefit of it, think of what God has provided for his people. God has designed that the father or the husband should protect his family, and with that kind of love and care it is another testimonial to God's interest in the

woman, and his protection and care over her under his design.

Now, how markedly we men have failed as ever, but men we have a deeper commitment. You see how the weight of responsibility, what we think and what we say and what we do, we are answerable for, and so thus signifies your role of head chef, and thus the deeper need of a woman that can be a help meet for you. Remarkable how carefully integrated Holy Scripture is to bring across very simple, but important truths.

And Ephraim gathered themselves together. Ah yes, Ephraim. They had been blessed by Jacob, they harassed Joshua, they irritated Didion, and now they're back again.

They're petty little spirits. They gathered themselves together and went northward and said to Jephthah, and who are they? They're on the other side of the river. They're no problem.

They weren't involved. They had no need. The delivery was over.

Wherefore passest thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and did not call us with thee? We will burn thy house with fire. Ah, it's great to have brethren like this. They come in different forms, they say different things, but you understand.

You know the spirit right away. And Jephthah said unto them, the soft answer of Didion that they were expecting possibly. Oh no, there's no vacillation here.

I and my people were at a great strife with the children of Ammon, and when I called you, you delivered me not out of their hands. And when I saw that you delivered me not, I put my life in my hands and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the Lord delivered them into my hands. Wherefore then are you come up to me to say to fight against me? Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim.

The men of Gilead mowed Ephraim, because they said you Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites. Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before Ephraimites, and it was so that when the Ephraimites were escaped, they said, let me go over, that the men of Gilead said, art thou an Ephraimite? And he said, nay. Then he would say unto him, say Shibboleth.

And he said Shibboleth, for he could not train to pronounce it right. Then they took him and flew him at the passages of Jordan, and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousands. And Jephthah judged Israel six years." Six years! That's all.

Why all that bulk of material? To convey the importance of the temperament of leadership. He was a man that's not been called of God. The people have chosen him.

He is qualified. God, in grace, comes to send. He is impatient with a rash vow.

He brings dissension and hurt to his own, and now he's out with a sword and he'll slay 42,000 men. He's not the man for real leadership, but God will use a weaker vessel. The people have chosen him.

Now you have to deal with them. You pick them, you live with them. God picks them, and there's peace and rest among God's people.

God passed over the quiet, serene years of Polla and Jair. Why? That he might show us the tumult and confusion that comes when we begin to assert our will and become impatient with God. Jesus speaks with those to whom we look for leadership.

Man of character, truthfulness, maturity, godliness, yield ourselves to those that handle the word of God in such a way that our spirits are melted and fed and matured and grow. The confusion and strife and the things of the world are stripped away, and gradually we begin to mature and grow in our lives as leadership under the sweet balm that God has provided, the ministry of the Holy Spirit by the word of God. Godly, patient, tender example.

This is what God is still looking for. Many varied lessons, not the least of which we men must be careful how we commit ourselves before God. The strife and the confusion.

If a man couldn't say a word in the right way, cut him down. Pity the poor Gileadite that, just with a little tongue-slide, he got slaughtered, too. Can you imagine the civil war that we're at the threshold of? Kill the man.

The next man we find in the next few chapters, he starts burning down everything he can find. He gets grand help, wonderful deliverance, and more damage and destruction to God's people than he ever performed on the enemy. This is the confusion that comes when we fail to confess our sins.

Genuine repentance, and a humble request for God to work in our midst. I pray that God will graciously allow some of these very simple thoughts to bring blessing to our souls. Christ's like Carrick.

Do you remember our Lord? He was accused of being illegitimate. Do you remember our blessed Lord? He had a vow. His vow was to do his will.

Our blessed Lord never brought strife, but rather that quiet, serene, loving, attentive care for his own. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he healed and ministered and restored. And so, Jesus is quite a striking contrast to our blessed Savior, and you and I have been called not to be like Jesus, but to set our sights and our affections, and to begin to mirror some of the beauty and the grace and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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