

Jephthah's Vow: I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, I cannot go back.

Judges Chapter 11

It's interesting, about seven years ago, back in 2008, I preached a message on this text but not like this, this is a little bit different. But in Judges Chapter 11, we're going to talk about Jephthah's Vow and what he said. He said I have opened my mouth unto the Lord and I cannot go back. Judges Chapter 11:29. Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah and he passed over Gilead and Manassah and passed over Mizpah of Gilead and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, if thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine 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 and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. I'll skip down to verse 35. And it came to pass when he saw her that he rent his clothes and said, alas, my daughter! Thou hast brought me very low. Though are one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord and I cannot go back.

Father, Lord, we pray that you bless us now, help us understand this simple truth here today, this morning as we open up, Lord, and this is simple truth and if we open our mouth up to the Lord we cannot go back. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

You know it's interesting here that a lot of people debate what happened here. We'll talk a little bit about that; that's not really the purpose of the message. But I will tell you that these verses here cause a lot of controversy with people. Because there are some that have differences of opinion on this. But I honestly believe the reason why they have it is because it's very hard to accept some things in

Scripture. It is very hard to accept some things in Scripture when we see them. And I think sometimes, people, when they look at things like this or they look at something in the Bible they kind of buck up against it, maybe. And say, well that can't be it because of this or because of this or because of this, instead of taking the plain teaching of what the Bible says. The Bible is very clear on matters and especially on this I believe it's really clear. Now, this is one of those things that you can disagree on. I don't think there's a lot of place to be able to have a major disagreement about this. And the reason why is, I don't think there's a lot of evidence to the contrary, but we'll talk about that in just a minute.

First of all, let's cover what is a vow. What is a vow? And we'll show you that in the Scripture. We'll show you some Scripture on that. But it's a solemn promise made to God. Ok? A vow is a promise of something to be given or done hereafter. So Jephthah has vowed. He said he'd promised the Lord that whatever came forth out of his door as soon as he walked in, whatever he saw, that he would sacrifice as a burnt offering. Now, I do not believe that Jephthah has any idea that that would be his daughter that would come out that door. I'm sure he thought it'd be a chicken... or something... or a goat... or a dog maybe. I don't think he ever thought when he crossed that threshold that it would be anything else. I don't think it ever crossed his mind that it would be his daughter.

Another definition of that or going along those lines, a person is constituted as religious by taking one of three vows; chastity, poverty or obedience which some of the Roman Catholics used to do.

Among the Israelites, the vows of the children were not binding, unless ratified with the express consent of their father. Go back and listen to the sermon we cover on Numbers chapter 30, where we talk about the headship of the father and the husband in the home; how

your son or your daughter – they're not allowed to make vows and if you hear that vow you can disannul that vow as a father. If they make a vow unto the Lord and you hear that vow, you can disannul that vow and say no, you're not allowed to make that. Alright? That's what the Bible says. Why? Because women have a head that's why. Children have a head over them. The Bible says their father is over them the father is the head of the wife; the Bible says. So, she's not allowed to make promises for things to God, that her husband, if he hears it, can say no, that's not right you can't do that. That's how God set things up; that's how God made it. You can say, well that was in Israel. No, that's a principle of the family. It always has been a principle of the family, by the way, since God instituted it. That's the way God intended it to be.

Another definition of that word or going along those lines is to give, consecrate, or dedicate to God by solemn promise. You're to be careful what you promise or you vow. You're to be very careful.

Ecclesiastes 5:1 Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools:

How about that? Yeah, some times you can foolishly and vainly vow something, or promise something, that you have no business doing, or promising. Jephthah's vow was a foolish vow. He did not think that through very well.

Ecclesiastes 5 1) Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. 2) Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

Be careful what you promise God. Be careful what you call out to God and agree to! You be careful!

Ecclesiastes 5: 3) For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. 4) When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.

It's like you, when you promised God, when you dedicated your children to the Lord, and by the way, you don't need a service to do that, you should have already done that. I'm not against it, I don't think there's anything wrong with doing that before the church. I certainly don't believe there's anything wrong with that. I think it's a good thing. It shows the responsibility of the body as well, that we promise as well, what we will do. It's not necessary, you don't have to do that. There's nothing in the Scriptures that say you have to do that. However, what it means though, when you dedicate your children to the Lord you have made a vow before God and you'd better keep that vow before God because God will hold you to that vow. Because if you turn your back on God after you've promised that you are in for a lot of discouragement and a lot of troubles. When thou vowest a vow unto god, defer not to pay it for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay that which thou has vowed. Amen.

You and I had better decide in our lives that our lives are given to God. We yeild our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 12:1) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice; Amen. A living sacrifice. You present your bodies. What is that? That is a vow to God that is a promise to God, Lord I'm yours! Do with me as you will. That's a promise to God. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, that thou should vow and not pay it. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin. Well that's a good principle for us all, isn't it? In a lot of areas of our lives. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, neither say thou before the angel that it was an error. Wherefore should God be

angry at they voice and destroy the work of thy hands. You make a vow like Jephthah's vow, if you make a vow unto the Lord, or a promise unto the Lord, then you keep it!

Now, obviously, if you promise something that's contrary to the will of God, the Lord's going to show you that. Ok? God doesn't want the sacrifice of fools. I believe it was. It was a very vain promise. It was a sacrifice of fools. He was hasty in his words. He was hasty. Don't be too hard, we are too sometimes. We're hasty in our actions. I was this week on a matter; hasty in my actions so I'm not too hard on him, I understand how it can be; Amen. God humbles us, shows us where we're wrong. But when thou vowest a vow unto God defer not to pay it, for He hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou has vowed. You promised the Lord that you're going to raise your family for the Lord; that you're going to live for God, you'd better keep that promise. And you keep it by the grace of God. Don't turn back. I've opened my mouth unto the Lord; I cannot go back. Suffer not thy mouth to cause they flesh to sin. So, what we see is that a vow is a promise to God.

Now, the question may rise to some, did Jephthah keep his vow that he made unto God? Which isn't really the focus of this message, but I will tell you this: I believe he did. I believe he did. And nothing in this text indicates that God was happy or pleased with what Jephthah vowed. Nothing says that God approved it. Nothing says that God wanted it. Nothing. Do you really believe that this man offered his child as a burnt sacrifice? I don't have any evidence otherwise. I have no evidence that I can bring to you. But don't you dare pronounce evil on God for what a man does! Don't you blame God for what a man does!! God already said He doesn't accept the sacrifice of fools. Be not hasty. He vowed a vow unto the Lord that was not a Biblical vow. I've heard the theory that some say that, well, she was made a temple

servant or whatever, tabernacle servant or something. I don't know. That she would be a servant for the rest of her life and be a virgin for the rest of her life – not have any children. I've heard that theory before. Anything but what the text actually says. And I'm going to tell you why this is so hard, because there are many things in the Scriptures that do not make sense to you and I. But you're not allowed to erase those things because you're not comfortable with them! Do you understand that? You're not allowed to change the definition of what's clearly there just because you don't like it! I don't like it either. And I don't think God likes it either! And I have no proof to the otherwise.

Now, could it be that he offered and he didn't, or did something else? Could be. I don't know. But I can't tell you that from the text. I can't tell you from the information that I have here, that's listed about Jephthah. I can't tell you that. I've read commentaries, but that's not the Bible.

Verse 39 said that he what? The he kept the vow, that's what it says. And I'm going to tell you why I believe also, because the Bible says it, number one, Ok? Verse 39 says: 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

What was the vow? To offer a burnt sacrifice. He never should have kept that vow, it was a wrong vow to keep! It was a wrong vow to make! It was vain! It was wicked before God, but he did it anyway. And I'm going to tell you why he did it.

Jephthah made a hasty and foolish vow to the Lord his God. You say, well, God would not accept his sacrifice, and I agree with you, God wouldn't. And the Bible never says that God was pleased with his

sacrifice. It's hard to understand that.

We find in Hebrews 11:32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

Where are they? Well, they're in this Heroes of Faith chapter aren't they? You say, I don't like that. I don't like it either, but I'm not God, ok? It doesn't make sense, but I'll tell you one thing it shows, that God uses imperfect men. That's right. And God uses us besides who we are; Amen. One of the prevailing themes of this time period is Judges chapter 17 because I think you have the answer to why Jephthah kept his vow. I think Judges 17: 6 really tells the tale of the times in which they lived in and makes a lot of sense.

Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

You say, what do you mean preacher? Well, look at Sampson. Did Sampson follow the Lord his God wholly? No. No.

Did Barak? Well, no, not really. He wasn't really much of a man until he got forced into doing it, right? How about Gideon? I mean, I don't know... Gideon's ephod and everything else. These weren't perfect men, ok? That doesn't mean we follow their examples. We're to follow Christ and His example. But that verse there, Judges 17:6 really explains the times. That they did that which was right in their own eyes. It never says they followed the Lord their God wholly. It never says that. He says this in 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,

Judges 17:31 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, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.

That's what it says.

Judges 17:40 That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

That was a hard man. But think about this time period though. You had another man that gave his concubine to sodomites to be abused the same time period, right? And then what did he do? He cut her up into 12 pieces and delivered it all to the tribes of Israel (Judges 19). I don't really think that that was Scriptural; I don't think it was Biblical and I don't think God liked it very much! But it shows you the depravity of the times that every man did that which was right in his own eyes! Just like we're coming to! We're coming to a time where we want to ignore plain Scripture and follow all these other things. You can show people over and over again plainly what the Bible says and they'll sit and argue with you. And you just have to stop and walk away because there's nothing you can say to them. Brother Ryan and some of the guys – these guys were arguing with them, they're a bunch of time wasters. They just want to sit and argue because they're mad over their sin. They don't like their sin being preached against. And I told these guys, these young men, including Brother Ryan, I said, you know what? Turn around; See ya! Don't waste your time with them. Why? Because all they're doing is stopping you from talking to other people, that's what they're doing. You have to know when to pull the plug on something and walk away from it. We learned that, believe me. We learn it everyday, don't we? Because next week it'll be somebody else walking up to me or one of the other men and saying, come on, let's go. Just walk away from them. Because you get so far into it with people you're trying to help, but somebody else has got to come up and say, come on Brother, let's go. Got to snap you

out of it. Let's go. Get out of there. Quit wasting your time. They don't want to hear it, they just want to fight. We're not here to fight – we're here to PREACH! Amen.

Alright, well, anyway, let's move on here. I know that's an uncomfortable portion of Scripture, it's not very comfortable for me to preach on and I don't like it very much either, but it's what the Bible says, so we're not going to use the Word of God deceitfully. No. Can't do that.

Alright, next he said here, and this is the rest of the message here. I've opened my mouth unto the Lord is what Jephthah said. Let me ask you, have you? Have you become His disciple? Have you taken up your Cross? Not His Cross because you couldn't bear His. Have you opened your mouth unto the Lord? Have you promised the Lamb of God whithersoever Thou shalt go, I will follow? Where ever He leads, I'll go? How about that? Because if you've opened up your mouth unto the Lord and said that, God will hold you to that. And that is the Child of God's reasonable service.

Matthew 16: 24) Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

Everybody wants to live, but nobody wants to die first. He said "I die daily" (1Cor:15:31) didn't he, the Apostle Paul? He said "I die daily." Everyday. (Luke 14:26) If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

It's hard isn't it? That's right. If you've opened your mouth unto the Lord, have you taken up your Cross? Have you followed Him? Have you opened your mouth to Him? Have you vowed a vow? Have

you promised God? Have you said that you will follow him? By the Grace of God? Have you surrendered your life to him? By the way, I need to tell you something right now. Your life isn't worth anything if you don't. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT? It's really not worth a thing. VANITY! VANITY! ALL IS VANITY! Without Christ and submission to Him and surrender to Him, YOUR LIFE IS NOTHING BUT VANITY!

You know, we've done this as a church haven't we? Opened our mouth unto the Lord. I think of all the things that the Lord has brought us through in the last 4 or 5 years. Think about it. Preaching against sin and standing against sin and giving things up for the Lord that are sin and wrong in the eyes of God. And promising – opening our mouths unto the Lord and saying, you know what? We're done with this Lord! We see it as sin! We see it as wrong! And we're not going to do it any more. That's opening your mouth unto the Lord.

You know I think about that day we shot up all those movies. There was a lot there. I think about giving some of those things up and walking away. I cannot believe that people, after they've seen plain evidence and they're born-again believers, plain evidence against things like disney and other things. What is their reason to go back to? Especially when these people hate your God. They hate the God of the Bible. They hate everything He stands for. They war against Him and His Kingdom. They war against Him, that's what it's about! And you know what? We have opened our mouth unto the Lord! We're done with it! CCM music; rock music; and other things, we won't be a part of any of that. We know the truth about these things. We've opened our mouths unto the Lord! Lord, we cannot go back to that. I can't go back and listen to that! We've opened our mouth unto the Lord. Concerning consecration as a church and separation and a covenant that we've made together as a church and family to abstain

from all appearances of evil. To walk orderly in this world. It's a covenant. You know what? I see the people outside of this church, many of them do not understand that. And I'm going to tell you why they don't understand it. Because they spent 30 years of their life or more seeing a phony Christianity. A pseudo-Christianity that does not follow the book! A system rather than a Savior! You can have all the rules and everything you want if you don't have the heart, it isn't worth SPIT!! The rules are just a means to hide behind for most people today. Most churches hide behind their doctrinal statement and they don't follow anything in it. That's right. It reminds you of the pharisees' robe. That's what it is. It's nothing more than their robes. White as sepulchres, right? And there's saved people all over that, I'm not saying there's not saved people. Because there are. I know there are, and I know they love the Lord. I know many of them are back-slidden, maybe they aren't getting strong preaching. But we have promised our God to wage war against satan and his kingdom. And we've promised our God that we would fight the Good Fight of Faith and lay hold on eternal life! By the way, they hated him, they're going to hate you. We're seeing the great falling away today. I'm telling you it's so far in your face. Everyday, everywhere you go religious people, but that don't follow the Bible or the Word of God; that are not surrendered to God; that speak of His name with their mouth, but their heart is far from Him. But see, we understand.

Luke 12:48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

See, you and I, we've learned much of the evils of this world. We can't play dumb concerning things we've opened our mouths unto the Lord to. Do you understand that?

Some of you have made vows to the Lord or promises to God or surrendered your life to God, however you want to put it. God's in control; Amen. It's not your promise that holds it up, it's the Grace of God that does! It's not us! Some of you have opened your mouths unto the Lord and said you're going to live a holy, separated, God-fearing life before Him. You've promised the Lord Jesus Christ and the Father in Heaven that you'll obey His commands and you will follow Him. That you will raise your children for the Lord, but you will be tempted many times to turn from that vow, and to follow after the world. Even as your children get older, you'll be tempted by family and friends to compromise and to follow the world. You will be tempted by everybody around you not to follow the straight and narrow path. How many times in Pilgrim's Progress (Pilgrim's Progress: A Journey to Heaven, DVD 2008) did we see Christian was tempted to get off of the narrow way – to get away from the narrow way? How many times? Many times. I was just listening to an audio version, my family was, of his wife's journey, the second one (Pilgrim's Progress 2: Christiana's Story; John Bunyan – 2007), a lot of good things in that too. In listening to that, and her talking about how everything was trying to sway them from the narrow way; everything you could imagine; from religious people - Christian people so-to-speak – trying to get you to take the short cut. There are no short cuts to holiness!! do you understand that!? It is full surrender. Amen! Full surrender. That's what God wants.

Some people are too afraid to open up their mouth. That vow that you make to God, that surrendering, that giving your body in living sacrifice unto the Lord, that'll be a challenge, many times, over and over again, temptation will be thrown at you; not to obey that vow; not to follow it. But you know what? You've opened up your mouth unto the Lord, you cannot go back. You know, sadly, today, there are many pastors that will not open their mouths unto the Lord about things that

are going on; in their churches; in this country – sin! Why? Because they cannot go back then. You want to know why more preachers don't preach against hollywood; sports, idolatry; entertainment devices of this life? Because once you open your mouth unto the Lord you can't go back. Do you understand that? There's no cloak anymore for your sin. There's no covering for it! Once you preach against those things you preach yourself right on that narrow way. That's what happens.

You know I was looking at Brother Moonan's website (turnfromyouridols.com) or his youtube page (<https://www.youtube.com/user/moonanproductions>) and that sermon Hollywood's Satanic Roots, not to mention the other ones that are on youtube as well, I can't tell you how many emails and phone calls and messages that people have sent that God has used that. That doesn't make me anything special, we're just some profitable servants, serving a perfect God. But you know what it does say? It says that there's not enough pastors preaching on that! Because that should not be that big of a surprise or a shock. It should not be, but it is. And the reason it is is because they've not opened their mouths unto the Lord. Because it puts you into a corner then, right? Then you can't go watch those movies! You can't take a trip to disneyland, can you? But once you understand these things you can't go back. You can't! How do you betray your conscience? How do you betray the conscience of the Holy Ghost that He's placed inside of you? That's why people are so upset. That's why they can't accept this is the truth. There's 13 or 14 sermons on hollywood and 5 or 6 on disney, (sermonaudio.com) and you know something? Some of these people who will argue that and argue against plain facts and the reason why some of your family members are arguing against it is because if it's right, then I have to repent. And then I cannot go back. That's why. I can't go back then. I mean who are you fooling? You actually think you're fooling somebody? You know I've heard people who want to debate a lot of

things but I've never heard anyone want to debate hollywood. And I've never heard anybody, any Christian want to debate disney; the virtues of disney. They'll argue with you about it, but they sure don't want to talk about it that much. Why? Because it's not hard to see it's wicked as the devil. It's not hard to see that. When you know that something is sin and you repent of that and you turn to God, and you're not engaged in that sin any longer, you can't go back to it.

By the way, let me tell you something by the Grace of God we don't preach anything in phases around here. Oh, they'll lighten up and go back to watching movies pretty soon. We'll go back to accepting hollywood. Because that's what a lot of churches do, they'll preach on something very... I'll give you this example: the Black churches, the Black Pentecostal churches. G. Craig Lewis said that when he was in those churches he said that there would be homosexuals that would come to services regularly, like every week, they would play music, old gospel music. They call it gospel music, the old gospel music ministry that they had that they would travel in towns and... maybe some of you don't know about that. But anyway, they would travel in towns and go through there, and they would sing that music. It's not very good music. The point is, is that the homosexuals would show up there so the pastor would kind of announce what he was going to preach on for a few weeks and he'd preach on homosexuality and those open homosexuals wouldn't show up that week. And then they would come back two weeks later, and the rest of the year, and everything would be fine and nobody said a thing about it. Meanwhile they're recruiting and trafficking in those churches, but because of money, because they really don't want to open up their mouth unto the Lord and in the name of evangelism they kept them around. Oh, we want to reach them for Christ, we don't want them to go to hell. You know what? You can hit play, and you can listen out there! But you aren't coming in here! Can I turn my back now and say that these things aren't sin any longer? No.

I'm backed into a corner now. People around us know our stand. People around the world know our stand by them listening and we can't go back. How do we go back and change anything like that? You'd have to say that it's all lies; it's not true; or we'd have to say the truth - that we're disobedient servants; that we want to backslide and live for the world. That's what you'd have to say. But more importantly, no matter what, who else knows it, God knows!! That you have said that would have repented and turned from that and openly professed that it is sin. And you've opened your mouth unto the Lord and you cannot go back! We can't. Why do you think the bible always says press forward? Press on! Press toward the mark for the prize; the high calling of God in Christ Jesus! Because there's no time to turn back! Remember Lot's wife? You know there's been a lot of parents that have said, well, I'm saved. And they took for granted their children were saved, and their children get of age and they go out into the world; and all the compromises they made come back to them when their children get older. All the compromises; their children go to the world and go to hell, but they say, yeah, but I'm saved and I love the Lord. Yeah, but your children, maybe you are saved, I'm not going to doubt that. But you led your children astray, remember Lot's wife? Lot was saved too. My Bible doesn't say Lot's wife was. The bible doesn't say his daughter's were.

So you see, when we open our mouth unto the Lord, we cannot go back. We cannot turn back. We've done things like expose cults and CCM and other modern day heresies; can't go back.

By the way, I'm not saying that we're never going to mess up; we're never going to make mistakes; we're never going to sin. The difference in that is, there's a difference in the act of sin and the planning, plotting and playing in sin all day long, and practicing it. No one claims sinless perfection here. There's no cloak though is there?

Jesus said when He came and preached to the pharisees the thing that made Him upset the most was there was no cloak for their sin. There was no cloak!! Why? He ripped it off :) There's no covering. They couldn't hide it anymore. When you preach on sin, when you preach on specific sins; when you preach on wickedness; there's no cloak for it; there's no covering for it. That's right. You either live by it or you don't. Because there's no "Land of In-between." There's no gray area. This fictional gray area that comes up, right? That's this gray area that we can all just live in, well, that's a gray area. No. It's not.

Did you know the Bible says there's either holiness, there's either righteousness and holiness or there's wickedness. So who would want to preach a gray area? Where there could be a place for you to play in sin. That's what that means, when somebody tells you it's a gray area. What they're pretty much saying is that they want to play in sin. That's what they're telling you. They don't want to open their mouth unto the Lord. Because they know what happens when they do.

Do you know that's what keeps many people from surrendering to God? There are so many people out here, some that should be, Biblically speaking, should be in this church. Do you know why they're not? Because they know where this church stands on things. They know where we all stand, so they won't. Do you know why? Because they'd have to open their mouth unto the Lord and they can't go back. Because if that's the truth then I can't have my hollywood movies; I can't have my days at the beach in the middle of summer where everybody's naked. And I can't pretend like it's ok. Like I'm not going there for that... Right. It doesn't effect me. Listen, it's pretty scary if a man comes up to you and says that it doesn't effect him. Yeah, it effects everybody. SIN EFFECTS EVERYBODY! Why do you think

God said to guard your eyes? If all these things be true, that's why so many people don't want to be obedient to God. They don't want to follow after that narrow way. Why? Because that narrow way means they've opened their mouth unto the Lord and they CAN NOT TURN BACK. See, there isn't any turning back. We've seen people leave here before. Why? Because they didn't want to live that life. And you are a constant reminder, everyday that they see you, every time you're around them, you are a constant reminder of that narrow way. Do you know what that does? It digs. It digs. You know how I know? Because people in your family listen to my sermons and they hate me. Why do you listen if you hate it? Don't listen. Why do you listen to it them? Self torture? Why would you listen to something that you absolutely hated? Do you know why? Because you want something to be mad about. Because you know it's true! And you're not willing to surrender to God. You don't love God enough, but you love this world. And you know that if it was right, what was preached, that any of these men preach here, whether it's Brother Russ; Brother Nate; Brother Paul; Brother Lee; whoever it is; Brother Andrew; it doesn't matter who it is, whoever preaches. You know it's true and if it's true, then I have to follow it. If I acknowledge that it's true, then I have to follow it. It's called surrender. And you like living in the grey area. You don't want to surrender. You like pretending that your sins are forgiven while you still live in them; practice them; love them; engage in them; justify them. And you will surely die in them.

Listen, we know it's Biblical to preach in the streets, don't we? In the open air. We can't go back. How are we going to stop doing that? Oh, it gets discouraging. People are mean. Yeah! They are! Man, they're junkyard dog mean out there! Man, people are mean.

How about the truth of christmas and pagan religious holidays like that? See the truth of it. How are you going to go back?

Because the world hates you? All I know is that nobody really has a huge problem with that day in the world. So then I have to look back and think, well, all the world loves that. Why? Why? Why does the pope love it? Why does the people love it, but he hates me? And why does he love that? No, I haven't been emailed by the pope – that I know of :)

Do you know what? You and I, we know the truth, we can't go back. How can we? You know there's no armor for the back when you run away. You know, you start to look at some of these things in Scriptures about falling away or falling back, look at some of them sometime. Not good. Not good at all. It's like the slain-in-the-spirit guys, when you start to study that, oh that's bad. When you start to go through Scripture and you see the things that fall back, remember Jesus when he was in the garden and He said that "I am" and those people flew back? They weren't exactly friends of the Lord. Listen, you and I, we've opened our mouth unto the Lord, we cannot go back. We can't turn our back on what God has done. What God has brought us through and what He's showed us, and taught us. Remember that. That's right, He didn't go back, did He? He crawled up on that Cross for you and I. Nobody made Him, He crawled up there willingly. They had no authority over Him, He said it. That He did it because He loved us. You and I ought to have the same motivation when we vow a vow for the Lord, we promise it. Listen, Jephthah's vow, do I like it? No. Not at all. I don't believe the Lord did either. But the one thing I learned from that is when I open my mouth unto the Lord, I cannot go back. When I've opened my mouth unto the Lord, *I can't turn back. You have to keep pressing forward. Remember there's a prize in the end; Amen. It's to see Christ. That's the prize. So RUN! Amen.

Father, Lord, we thank You and pray, Lord, You bless this next hour and use it for Your honor and glory. I pray You bless this church and thank You for it; in Jesus name; Amen.

