**Right in Their Own Eyes:**

An Exposition of Judges

**Lesson Ten:** Open Mouth, Insert foot! Pt 1 [Judges 10-11:28]

**Opening Illustration:** A friend in need is a fried indeed. Do you have “that friend”? You know, the one who only seems to love you when they need something? That friend that ignores you or even insults you until their back is against the wall?

1. **Introduction/Review** 
   1. **What will we see tonight?**
      1. We will see tonight that our first love is often our last resort.
      2. We will see that ugly old vicious cycle come around again.
   2. **2 minor judges**
      1. We are not told much about Tola and Jair.
      2. Based on what we have seen, we probably are not told much about these two judges because times were relatively peaceful and Judges (the book) is more about war than about peace.
2. **Ok…so NOW you love me! [Judges 10:6-18]**
   1. **Israel rejected the Lord and began to serve other gods. (v. 6)**
      1. Here we go again!
      2. Notice that in serving the other gods, they had rejected the Lord
         1. They didn’t seem to think of it this way (syncretism).
         2. They seemed to think that they were honoring God while serving other gods.
         3. I think there is definitely a lesson here.
   2. **The Lord becomes angry with the people (vv. 7-9)**
      1. In His anger, the Lord “sold” the people into the hands of their enemies.
      2. One after another, the people fell victim to Philistines and the Ammonites for 18 years
   3. **When Israel is in danger, they call out to the Lord! (vv. 10-16a)**
      1. Notice the levels of repentance seen in this passage:
         1. We have sinned against you, rejected you and served other gods (v. 10)
         2. After God’s refusal to help, they actually began to change their behavior (v. 16a).
      2. Why don’t you go to the gods you have been serving? (vv. 11-15)
         1. Because they know that appealing to those gods would be pointless.
   4. **God is so gracious…scandalously gracious! 10:16b**
      1. He cannot bear to see His people oppressed!
      2. Behold the transcendent love of this God!
   5. **How do we do the same thing?**
      1. We can become very self-reliant in the good times.
      2. We can delight more in our sins than in He who saves us!
      3. We know deep inside that these things are not really there for us.
      4. When we need support, when we need help, we see that our false gods are also false friends!
   6. **How does God respond when we do?**
      1. God does the unthinkable: He abandons us (temporarily) to the gods we love.
      2. God does the unthinkable again: He brings us back to Him.
         1. See Hosea 2:5-20
3. **Jephthah: Ok, so NOW I am good enough for you?! [Judges 11:1-11]**
   1. **Jephthah was a valiant warrior (vv. 1-2)**
      1. In this culture (as with most cultures), being a valiant warrior put you on the fast track to leadership.
      2. The problem was that Jephthah was not a “legitimate” son of Gilead, being the son of prostitute.
      3. The “real” sons of Gilead drove Jephthah away. He was not good enough to be their brother.
   2. **Jephthah is called back, not to be their brother, but their leader! Vv. 3-11**
      1. Notice Jephthah’s response:
         1. Didn’t you hate me?
         2. Didn’t you drive me away?
      2. Notice Jephthah’s question:
         1. Why have you come to me now when you are in trouble? (v. 7)
         2. Will I really be your leader? (v. 9)
      3. Notice the rationale the elders of Gilead followed:
         1. You are a good warrior, so we need you back.
         2. Loose translation: now that we need you, we are willing to receive you.
      4. Notice the promise made by the elders of Gilead:
         1. The Lord is witness between us.
         2. Surely, we will do as you have said.
   3. **Conclusions**
      1. Does anybody like being used?
      2. Does being recognized as expedient cover the pain of being marginalized as expendable?
4. **What is the Actual Problem? [Judges 11:12-28]**
   1. **Jephthah takes the time to understand the problem.**
      1. How much better would our lives be if we actually thought before we reacted?
      2. How much better would our lives be if we clearly communicated our problems?
   2. **Jephthah takes the time to explain his perspective. vv. 14-27**
      1. The people of Israel asked for safe passage through these lands.
      2. The people of the land refused them safe passage.
      3. The people of Israel won the land through military conquest.
      4. It was 300 years ago!
   3. **Jephthah, you can’t win them all!**
      1. Notice that the Ammonites didn’t correct Jephthah, they disregarded Jephthah.
         1. It is a lot easier to disregard an opponent than it is to win an argument.
         2. We have to be very careful to represent Biblical Christianity in a way that is not easily relegated or ignored.
5. **Conclusions**
   1. **Why does God let us have good times?**
      1. When things are going well for us, we tend to forget about God.
      2. When things are going poorly for us, we are quick to rush to God for the help only He can provide.
      3. In light of this, why does God ever let us have good times?
   2. **Why does God show such mercy to us?**
      1. Could it be that God simply cannot endure our misery?
      2. If so, what does this tell us about God?
      3. If so, what does this tell us about ourselves?