"A Kingless Kingdom" Series **WEEK 11 – TAKE THE LEAD**

--We are studying the entire book of JUDGES!

TODAY: **WEEK 11 – TAKE THE LEAD**

Last week, we saw that the people of Israel cried out for God to rescue them; but God said NO… Why? Because they said "God we need you" but there was NO repentance - - - and when they FINALLY repented , there pain and condition GRIEVED God's heart…and now we come to a place in Judges 11 – where God raises up another judge – to bring them in to their RIGHTFUL position

WHY a rightful position? – to PROPERLY govern the earth under God's desires

Judges 10:17-18 (NLT)
17 At that time the armies of Ammon had gathered for war and were camped in Gilead, and the people of Israel assembled and camped at Mizpah. **18** The leaders of Gilead said to each other, "Whoever attacks the Ammonites first will become ruler over all the people of Gilead."

Israel gathers together in response to the Ammonite threat….

And the leaders say "WHO IS GONNA LEAD US"

God's pattern to do a great work among HIS people…find someone to lead under His authority..

He did it through Jesus – and now Jesus has commissioned us to go and do the same..

So the people are looking for someone to TAKE THE LEAD…

Judges 11:1-3 (NLT)
1 Now Jephthah of Gilead was a great warrior. He was the son of Gilead, but his mother was a prostitute. **2** Gilead's wife also had several sons, and when these half brothers grew up, they chased Jephthah off the land. "You will not get any of our father's inheritance," they said, "for you are the son of a prostitute." **3** So Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob. Soon he had a band of worthless rebels following him.

THERE ARE WAY TOO MANUY TIMES people reject the notiuon of someone able to lead because of their pedigree, condition, or history….

Jephthah was rejected because he was the son of a prostitute…

And often times we look at the CIRCUMSTANCES of someone's being..or even conception, and we try to measure whether or not they are WORTHY to lead…

Psalm 139:13-14 (TPT)
13 You formed my innermost being, shaping my delicate inside and my intricate outside, and wove them all together in my mother's womb. **14** I thank you, God, for making me so mysteriously complex! Everything you do is marvelously breathtaking. It simply amazes me to think about it! How thoroughly you know me, Lord!

2 Corinthians 5:17 (TPT)
17 Now, if anyone is enfolded into Christ, he has become an entirely new creation. All that is related to the old order has vanished. Behold, everything is fresh and new.

REGARDLESS of your circumstances – you need to remember something
- GOD TOOK THE TIME to FORM you, to KNIT you together
- HE KNOWS – EVERY part of you

AND when you became ADOPTED in to the kingdom of God – EVERYTHIGN about you became NEW – RESTORED to the ORIGINAL knit….and anything that TRIED to corrupt your purpose – LOST it's grip…

When HE knit you together – HE had a purpose in mind for you – and we NEED TO SEEK HIM so that we can begin to walk in that ORIGINAL intent for your life that HE FORMED you to operate successfully in..

JEPHTHAH – even though your daddy got together with a prostitute
I AM THE ONE that wove you together – I just used them to carry you and regardless if it was OUT OF MY TIME; Ill use it or my good…

BUT ALL his brothers could see - was SON OF SIN…you aint getting ANY inheritance, no favor, no land, LEAVE
So he left – but it says "a band of worthless rebels followed"

If you look at the language of this original manuscript – it isn't referring to bad people – it is referring to POOR people without property and without jobs…
And they needed SOMEONE to follow; so they followed the one nobody wanted – just like themselves…

John 1:10-12 (NLT)
10 He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize
him. 11 He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. 12 But to all who
believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

JESUS was rejected too – because of a PEDIGREE – his CIRCUMSTANCES
And the WORLD will reject him….
but he is look for a people who will humble themselves to be POOR in SPIRIT and they will inherit the KINGDOM (matthew 5)
and who will FOLLOW the one who was rejected….

Judges 11:4-8 (NLT)
4 At about this time, the Ammonites began their war against Israel. 5 When the
Ammonites attacked, the elders of Gilead sent for Jephthah in the land of Tob. 6 The
elders said, "Come and be our commander! Help us fight the Ammonites!" 7 But
Jephthah said to them, "Aren't you the ones who hated me and drove me from my
father's house? Why do you come to me now when you're in trouble?" 8 "Because
we need you," the elders replied. "If you lead us in battle against the Ammonites,
we will make you ruler over all the people of Gilead."

Now let me read verse 1 again…

Judges 11:1 (NLT)
1 Now Jephthah of Gilead was a great warrior. He was the son of Gilead, but his
mother was a prostitute.

JEPHTHAH was a GREAT warrior – and even though he was GREAT at something – they rejected him..
And people often REJECT things until they find themselves in a place of need

THEY WERE SO desperate; not only were they willing to ASK HIM TO COME BACK – they were willing to give him AUTHORITY as the HEAD over Gilead..

And so many times we TRY SO HARD to get authority through manipulation and showing our power and showing our strength,,
And HERE – he is offered position, honor, and authority after he simply left at their request….

I wonder…how many times we REJECT the leading of HOLY spirit..

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I WONDER how many times we REJECT God's leading…

And He is simply waiting for us to ASK HIM BACK..*to TAKE the lead…*

AND BECAUSE He never left…He is quick to respond…

See often times WE want to TAKE THE LEAD -

BUT FIRST – you need to make sure that YOU have sought out GOD and asked HIM to TAKE THE LEAD to position you for a place for you TO lead…

Judges 11:9-11 (NLT)

9 Jephthah said to the elders, "Let me get this straight. If I come with you and if the Lord gives me victory over the Ammonites, will you really make me ruler over all the people?" **10** "The Lord is our witness," the elders replied. "We promise to do whatever you say." **11** So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him their ruler and commander of the army. At Mizpah, in the presence of the Lord, Jephthah repeated what he had said to the elders.

Jephthah didn't want to be rejected again, so he brought them to MIZPAH – which means WATCH – so make the covenant BEFORE GOD

The idea of making covenants at MIZPAH was "if you go back on this promise, God will see it, and you will REAP what YOU SOW; you'll be punished"

I THINK many times we FORGET the WEIGHT of the covenant we enter in under the blood of Jesus….

We love to celebrate – that we are forgiven of sins and covered for eternity

BUT WHAT ABOUT OUR PART

HE knows the covenant – We are redeemed - NOW GO and make disciples – CHANGE THE WORLD – BRING LIGHT, BE SALT

GOD SAYS – I have BOUGHT you and BROUGHT you back in to RIGHTSTANDING with me SO that… YOU can… TAKE THE LEAD…

SO WHY ARENT YOU TAKING THE LEAD, why are you being led?????

AT SOME POINT – we got to take the covenant SERIOUSLY….

1 Peter 2:24 (NLT)

24 He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.

AND LIVE for what is RIGHT…. Are you ***TAKING THE LEAD*** in that?????

Judges 11:12-13 (NLT)
12 Then Jephthah sent messengers to the king of Ammon, asking, "Why have you come out to fight against my land?" **13** The king of Ammon answered Jephthah's messengers, "When the Israelites came out of Egypt, they stole my land from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River and all the way to the Jordan. Now then, give back the land peaceably."

THE ENEMY will always try to convince you that what is yours - isn't yours…

TAKE THE LEAD – don't let that lie live..
THE ENEMY doesn't own your kids, your money, your favor, NOTHING

Judges 11:14-28 (NLT)
14 Jephthah sent this message back to the Ammonite king: **15** "This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not steal any land from Moab or Ammon. **16** When the people of Israel arrived at Kadesh on their journey from Egypt after crossing the Red Sea, **17** they sent messengers to the king of Edom asking for permission to pass through his land. But their request was denied. Then they asked the king of Moab for similar permission, but he wouldn't let them pass through either. So the people of Israel stayed in Kadesh. **18** "Finally, they went around Edom and Moab through the wilderness. They traveled along Moab's eastern border and camped on the other side of the Arnon River. But they never once crossed the Arnon River into Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab. **19** "Then Israel sent messengers to King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled from Heshbon, asking for permission to cross through his land to get to their destination. **20** But King Sihon didn't trust Israel to pass through his land. Instead, he mobilized his army at Jahaz and attacked them. **21** But the Lord, the God of Israel, gave his people victory over King Sihon. So Israel took control of all the land of the Amorites, who lived in that region, **22** from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River, and from the eastern wilderness to the Jordan. **23** "So you see, it was the Lord, the God of Israel, who took away the land from the Amorites and gave it to Israel. Why, then, should we give it back to you? **24** You keep whatever your god Chemosh gives you, and we will keep whatever the Lord our God gives us. **25** Are you any better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he try to make a case against Israel for disputed land? Did he go to war against them? **26** "Israel has been living here for 300 years, inhabiting Heshbon and its surrounding settlements, all the way to Aroer and its settlements, and in all the towns along the Arnon River. Why have you made no effort to recover it before now? **27** Therefore, I have not sinned

against you. Rather, you have wronged me by attacking me. Let the Lord, who is judge, decide today which of us is right—Israel or Ammon." **28** But the king of Ammon paid no attention to Jephthah's message.

LOOK AT THE LEAD Jephthah took

God gave it – YOU CANT HAVE IT

Romans 8:31 (NLT)

31 What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?

And Jephtath says – OUR GOD has given us this land and we been here 300 yrs

IS YOUR GOD, CHEMOSH, is so awesome, why hadn't he given it to you?

>>>Why are you just now showing up to take it?

DO YOU NOTICE what he is doing--- he is calling out the true battle

This battle is NOT between 2 armies – it's between OUR GOD and a false god

FIRST – is spiritual, and THEN we take the lead in the NATURAL…

Ephesians 6:12 (NLT)

12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

WHEN you TAKE THE LEAD – your GREATEST victory will flow out of a POSTURE of understanding where the battle begins FIRST…..WATCH THIS….

Judges 11:29 (NLT)

29 At that time the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he went throughout the land of Gilead and Manasseh, including Mizpah in Gilead, and from there he led an army against the Ammonites.

WHEN HE recognized where the battle began FIRST and took the LEAD saying >>THIS IS LAND WAS GIVEN to us by God…*NOT: "we earned it" – "we received it"*

When he recognized that – THE SPIRIT of God came upon him and gave him the courage and authority and the ABILITY to GO..

And LEAD the army --- GOD allowed him to TAKE THE LEAD against the enemy… Stop trying to BEAT the devil by your hand…

START focusing on GIVING Him glory and credit and praise and OUT OF THAT spiritual progression – GOD will cause you and allow you and LEAD YOU…
TO TAKE THE LEAD….and advance in the battle already won…

Judges 11:30-31 (NLT)
30 And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord. He said, "If you give me victory over the Ammonites, **31** I will give to the Lord whatever comes out of my house to meet me when I return in triumph. I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering."

THIS SEEMS good – but it is pretty foolish…
GOD was already on his side and told him to go..

And here is he trying to manipulate God for victory and persuading God…

Ecclesiastes 5:2-3 (NLT)
2 Don't make rash promises, and don't be hasty in bringing matters before God. After all, God is in heaven, and you are here on earth. So let your words be few.
3 Too much activity gives you restless dreams; too many words make you a fool.

When God is on your side and you are being LED by Holy Spirit – JUST WALK
You don't have to manipulate or make deals or rash promises to God…

And it is a good reminder of this: THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDES – He doesn't control
And you can be LED by the SPIRIT and even in that leading, still do dumb things…

AND AS A PEOPLE OF GOD – we can either CRITICIZE and REJECT when holy spirit led people get it wrong – OR BRING THEM CLOSER….and not label them
Like Jephthah's brothers did….

Judges 11:32-33 (NLT)
32 So Jephthah led his army against the Ammonites, and the Lord gave him victory. **33** He crushed the Ammonites, devastating about twenty towns from Aroer to an area near Minnith and as far away as Abel-keramim. In this way Israel defeated the Ammonites.

DESPITE everyone rejecting Jephthat, he overcame his rejection , his bitterness, his hurt, he stepped up, served the people and TOOK THE LEAD under the direction of GOD – and ***GOD gave*** him victory – and because he got victory – ISRAEL got it

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BECAUSE WHEN YOU TAKE THE LEAD – you represent that which you are leading
And what YOU GET – the thing you represent gets it
SO WE HONOR it – we shouldn't get JEALOUS or ENVIOUS – it's yours too..

And I WANT TO POINT THIS OUT – for Jephthah – TAKING THE LEAD – was serving a NEED of an oppressed people…
TAKE THE LEAD – doesn't serve yourself…..you serve others and serve God

Judges 11:34-40 (NLT)
34 When Jephthah returned home to Mizpah, his daughter came out to meet him, playing on a tambourine and dancing for joy. She was his one and only child; he had no other sons or daughters. **35** When he saw her, he tore his clothes in anguish. "Oh, my daughter!" he cried out. "You have completely destroyed me! You've brought disaster on me! For I have made a vow to the Lord, and I cannot take it back."
36 And she said, "Father, if you have made a vow to the Lord, you must do to me what you have vowed, for the Lord has given you a great victory over your enemies, the Ammonites. **37** But first let me do this one thing: Let me go up and roam in the hills and weep with my friends for two months, because I will die a virgin." **38** "You may go," Jephthah said. And he sent her away for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because she would never have children. **39** When she returned home, her father kept the vow he had made, and she died a virgin. So it has become a custom in Israel **40** for young Israelite women to go away for four days each year to lament the fate of Jephthah's daughter.

There are SO many mixed ideas and feelings about this…..

HERE IS THE THINGS – He made a COVENANT with God…
And he FOLLOWED THROUGH with it…
NOW – GOD never asked or even OK'd it – so this was on HIM, not Gd…

BUT ONE THING TO POINT OUT…
He gave HIS WORD to God and didn't go back on it…
And there was something POWERFUL about seeing a man keep vows to God

And yet SO many of us make vows to GOD and we ALWAYS go back on them….
And PART of taking the LEAD is NOT going back to:

An old lifestyle, an old way, and old response… we have to TAKE THE LEAD in the response…and say – WE ARE NOT going back on our covenant with GOD…

Judges 12:1 (NLT)
1 Then the people of Ephraim mobilized an army and crossed over the Jordan River to Zaphon. They sent this message to Jephthah: "Why didn't you call for us to help you fight against the Ammonites? We are going to burn down your house with you in it!"

ISNT IT FUNNY when you TAKE THE LEAD when no one else will…there will always be someone mad about your victory….

AND A LOT of us want a VICTORY, but we don't want to DO the job for it…

YET – when we see others excel…we get JEALOUS…

JUST START TAKING THE LEAD!

Judges 12:2-3 (NLT)
2 Jephthah replied, "I summoned you at the beginning of the dispute, but you refused to come! You failed to help us in our struggle against Ammon. **3** So when I realized you weren't coming, I risked my life and went to battle without you, and the Lord gave me victory over the Ammonites. So why have you now come to fight me?"

They will let you fight alone; and then call you prideful and a hypocrite when you excel…THEY will call you a cheat and a liar….Cause THEY left….

Judges 12:4-6 (NLT)
4 The people of Ephraim responded, "You men of Gilead are nothing more than fugitives from Ephraim and Manasseh." So Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead and attacked the men of Ephraim and defeated them. **5** Jephthah captured the shallow crossings of the Jordan River, and whenever a fugitive from Ephraim tried to go back across, the men of Gilead would challenge him. "Are you a member of the tribe of Ephraim?" they would ask. If the man said, "No, I'm not," **6** they would tell him to say "Shibboleth." If he was from Ephraim, he would say "Sibboleth," because people from Ephraim cannot pronounce the word correctly. Then they would take him and kill him at the shallow crossings of the Jordan. In all, 42,000 Ephraimites were killed at that time.

You can see that the people of EPHRAIM were all talk, cause apparently they couldn't fight worth a lick – they were killed..
NOW – here is something interesting…

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THE WAY the men of GILEAD knew the people of EPHRAIM was
BY THE WAY THEY SAID: SHIBBOLETH

THEY WERE identified by the way they referred to a word….that they couldn't properly pronounce…

THEY EITHER represented the word CORRECTLY or INCORRECTLY by the way they said it..

AND when we TALK ABOUT and SAY the name of JESUS
PEOPLE and THE ENEMY – will know if you are truly a part of HIS tribe or not..

Acts 19:13-16 (NLT)
13 A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, "I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!" **14** Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were doing this.**15** But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, "I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?" **16** Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and battered.

TAKING THE LEAD….starts with a TRUE relationship with JESUS
So that EVERYONE and EVERYTHING around you knows IT IS GENUINE…

Judges 12:7 (NLT)
7 Jephthah judged Israel for six years. When he died, he was buried in one of the towns of Gilead.

What are the areas YOU need to TAKE THE LEAD IN?
WHERE is your RELATIONSHIP with God? Not Proclamation of faith…

START TAKING THE LEAD TODAY…and watch the VICTORY God gives you for the PURPOSE of HIS GLORY!

AMEN