

FROM A HOUSE OF SHAME TO THE HALL OF FAME

Hebrews 11:32-40

INTRODUCTION: Mention Hall of Fame—for sports, music, etc. If you have been to one, you might want to BRIEFLY share the experience. Ask, “Did you know that faith has a Hall of Fame?” Hebrews 11 tells us about God’s great champions: Noah, Abraham, Moses, David—readily recognizable names—then there is Jephthah. How many sermons have you heard about him? His story is found in Judges 11.

1. HIS PAST—The House of Shame (Judges 11:1-3). So many children enter this world unwanted and unloved. They may be abused and traumatized. This is the sad reality for far too many. That was the case for Jephthah.
 - a. The Shameful Start (v.1). He didn’t ask for this. Children may suffer for the sinfulness of their parents.
 - b. The Hateful Siblings (v.2). In the place where he should have found love, he found hate. The place where acceptance should have been offered, rejection was given. At last, he was driven out and homeless. This is too frequently repeated today.
 - c. The Sinful Substitutes (v.3). He finds a substitute family and sinful activity. We might liken this to kids who are spurned and join gangs. They will find a family—and it might be a bad one. What if the church provided a good one?
2. HIS POTENTIAL—The Hall of Fame (Judges 11:4-11, 29-33). The past does not have to cripple someone. A bad upbringing does not have to disqualify someone. The grace of God can lift us and the Spirit of God can equip us to reject defeat and experience victory.
 - a. The Call to Lead (v.4-11). Jephthah’s resume was not impressive, but God delights to reach into the dump and find an abused, discarded item, clean it and polish it to be used by Him for His glory. Ref. 1 Cor.1:26-29. God does not make trash! Every child is special with amazing potential (cf. Ps.139:13-16).
 - b. The Capacity to Lead (v.29). God’s Spirit is at work. He is the only source of making fallen men and women into fruitful servants. Jesus said that apart from Him we can do NOTHING (John 15:5), yet with Him we can do all things (Phil.4:13). Where is the Holy Spirit? He indwells His people. He is in the church and works through us when we are yielded to Him.
 - c. The Conquest in Leading (v.33). This man made a difference. Who knows that that rejected child might grow up to do? We can make a difference in them, so they can make a difference in the world.

ILLUSTRATION:

<https://www.onlythebible.com/Poems/the-Touch-of-the-Masters-Hand--Old-Violin.html>

CONCLUSION:

This calls for a personal decision. Honestly, your past may have been horrible. God offers hope and healing. You can decide to commit yourself to the Lord. Jesus loved you enough to give His blood for you. The worth of something is determined by what one is willing to pay.

This calls for a corporate response. We are the Body of Christ. He speaks through our lips. He works through our hands. We have a tremendous opportunity to reach out to the boys and girls who have been taken from their homes and help them reach their potential in Christ.

Closing words of Hebrews 11:

³⁹ All these were approved through their faith, but they did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better for us, so that they would not be made perfect without us. (CSB)

That means: It's your turn. The next chapter is to be written. This is your journey of faith. It's our time now!

Possible Commitment Song:

<https://youtu.be/Fouqn5Xg5-E>

Or: <https://youtu.be/OEhRucEVzH8>