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“Samson: Pointing to Christ”

Judges 13–16

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Samson was a man of great potential, empowered by the Spirit, and given a task from his mother's womb. But he lived a life of compromise. The small ways that Samson gave in to sin soon grew, leading to terrible consequences that culminated in his death. But even from this fallen man, we can see an imperfect type of Christ: a prophesied deliverer whose greatest victory over the enemy came through his death. We can also learn that despite how far a person drifts from the Lord, we serve a faithful and merciful God who still draws near to those who cry out to Him.

1. God's calling on Samson's life
  - a. God used Samson despite his sin but did not excuse his sin.
    - i. **Romans 6:1–2a** – *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!”*
  - b. God announced Samson's birth.
    - i. The five birth announcements of Scripture:
      1. Ishmael (**Genesis 16**)
        - a. Abraham slept with Hagar because he and his wife, Sarah, wanted to rush the promise of God.
        - b. Hagar became pregnant and despised Sarah, and Sarah was cruel to Hagar until she ran away.
        - c. God met Hagar in the wilderness and foretold the life of her son, Ishmael.
        - d. The Lord promised to bless Ishmael, even though he was not the promised child.
      2. Isaac (**Genesis 18**)
        - a. Isaac, the promised child, became one of the patriarchs.
        - b. The pre-incarnate Jesus came to Abraham and said that Sarah would give birth to a son within a year.
        - c. Sarah overheard Jesus' prophecy and laughed in her heart, so her son's name was Isaac, meaning “laughter.”
      3. Samson (**Judges 13**)
        - a. Samson's birth announcement is sandwiched between the first and last two announcements.
      4. John the Baptist (**Luke 1**)
        - a. An angel appeared to Zacharias, John's father, in the temple, telling him that he and his wife would have a son.
        - b. This son would be the one to pave the way for the Messiah.

- c. Zacharias doubted this news because of his old age, so the angel made him mute until John's birth.
  - 5. Jesus Christ (**Luke 1**)
    - a. The angel Gabriel came to Mary to tell her that she would bear the Son of God, Jesus the Christ.
  - c. God gave Samson strength.
    - i. Samson may not have looked strong, because the Philistines tried to figure out the "secret" of his strength (**Judges 16:9**).
  - d. God called Samson to deliver His people.
2. **Judges 13:1-5** – *"Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years. Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, 'Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.'"*
- a. God's task for Samson required him to be a Nazirite from his mother's womb.
    - i. The Nazirite vow was a way for a person to "consecrate," or separate, himself or herself to God for a chosen period of time.
    - ii. **Numbers 6** says the Nazirite vow includes the following requirements:
      - 1. No eating or drinking anything from the grapevine.
      - 2. No hair cutting.
      - 3. No contact with any dead body, even if a relative dies.
  - b. The Angel of the Lord visited Samson's parents.
    - i. The Angel of the Lord first came to Samson's mother, then to both his mother and father.
    - ii. Samson's father, Manoah, asked for the Angel's name, and the Angel said His name was too wonderful for them (**Judges 13:18; Isaiah 9:6**).
    - iii. Samson's parents offered the Angel food, and He declined and said they could offer a sacrifice instead.
    - iv. When Manoah and his wife sacrificed to the Lord, the Angel went up in the flames.
    - v. Manoah and his wife realized the Angel of the Lord—Jesus—was God.
    - vi. Manoah worried that they would die because they saw the Lord, but his wife reassured him that God would not kill them after accepting their sacrifice and giving them a task.

3. Samson: an imperfect type of Christ
  - a. Both births were foretold by angels (**Judges 13:3; Luke 1:31**).
  - b. Both were dedicated to God (**Judges 13:5; Luke 2:22**).
  - c. Both were foretold to bring deliverance (**Judges 13:5; Matthew 1:21**).
  - d. Both were blessed by God as they grew (**Judges 13:24; Luke 2:40**).
  - e. Both had the Holy Spirit upon them (**Judges 13:25; Luke 4:18**).
  - f. Both had parents who did not know God was working (**Judges 14:4; Luke 2:50**).
    - i. When Jesus was 12, Joseph and Mary lost Him and found Him teaching at the temple, already aware of His mission.
    - ii. **DISCUSS:** Do you begin your days by asking God to guide you? How do you keep God's calling for you in mind throughout the day?
  
4. Broken vows
  - a. Samson walked through a vineyard, ripped a lion to shreds, and found honey in the corpse.
    - i. Samson walked through a vineyard.
      1. As a Nazarite, Samson could not eat the fruit of the vine and should not have been near the vineyard.
    - ii. Samson took honey from the carcass of a lion.
      1. As a Nazarite, Samson was not supposed to have contact with dead bodies.
  - b. Samson broke two out of the three requirements of a Nazarite vow.
    - i. **DISCUSS:** How has God used you despite yourself? How much more has God used you when you submitted your life to Him?
  
5. Killing the Philistines
  - a. Samson wanted to marry a Philistine woman.
    - i. Samson told his parents to get the Philistine woman for him as a wife.
      1. **Judges 14:1-3** – *“Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, ‘I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife.’ Then his father and mother said to him, ‘Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?’ And Samson said to his father, ‘Get her for me, for she pleases me well.’”*
  - b. Samson gave a riddle to his 30 companions.
    - i. In the wedding, Samson told a riddle to his 30 companions.

1. Samson promised each companion a garment if they could solve his riddle.
2. Samson said the companions would give him 30 garments if they could not solve his riddle.
- ii. The companions cheated to find the answer to the riddle.
  1. The companions could not solve the riddle, so they threatened Samson's wife and her family with death if she did not tell them the answer.
  2. Samson's wife pressured Samson to tell her the answer to the riddle, and he eventually gave in.
  3. Samson's wife told the companions the answer to the riddle, and the companions told Samson.
    - a. **Judges 14:18** – *"So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down: 'What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?' And he said to them: 'If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle!'"*
  4. Samson killed 30 Philistines to fulfill his vow to his 30 companions.
    - a. **Judges 14:19** – *"Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house."*
- c. Samson's revenge
  - i. **Judges 14:20 – 15:2** – *"And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man. After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, 'Let me go in to my wife, into her room.' But her father would not permit him to go in. Her father said, 'I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead.'"*
    1. Samson took 300 foxes, tied their tails, and lit them on fire.
    2. The foxes lit up the Philistine fields.
  - ii. The Philistines burned the house of Samson's former fiancée and her father, blaming them for Samson's wrath against them.
  - iii. In response to the house burning, Samson killed 1,000 Philistines, then demanded God give him water to quench his thirst.

1. **Judges 15:18** – *“You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?”*
2. Samson’s request of God was more like a demand than a prayer.
3. **DISCUSS**: Do you come to God in humility? How do we avoid the kind of prayer posture that Samson had toward God?
4. God in His mercy gave Samson water (**Judges 15:19**).

## 6. Compromises and consequences

- a. Samson went into a prostitute.
- b. Samson loved a Philistine woman named Delilah, who betrayed him.
  - i. The Philistines paid Delilah silver to betray the secret of Samson’s strength.
    1. Delilah pestered Samson to tell her the secret of his strength.
    2. Samson made up false explanations about the source of his strength multiple times.
    3. Eventually, Delilah wore Samson down until he told her the true secret of his strength.
    4. Delilah cut Samson’s hair, leading to Samson breaking the last of the three requirements for the Nazarite vow.
    5. Delilah alerted the Philistines to attack now that he was weak.
  - ii. The Lord left Samson, and Samson did not notice.
    1. **Judges 16:20** – *“And she said, ‘The Philistines are upon you, Samson!’ So he awoke from his sleep, and said, ‘I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!’ But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.”*
  - iii. Samson was captured, blinded, bound, and enslaved.
    1. Sin captures, blinds, binds, and enslaves.
    2. **James 1:15** – *“Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”* (ESV)
    3. **DISCUSS**: How does sin capture, blind, bind, and enslave? How have you seen these different results of sin play out?

## 7. Samson’s death

- a. **Judges 16:23–24** – *“Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice. And they said: ‘Our god has delivered into our hands Samson our enemy!’ When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said: ‘Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, The destroyer of our land, And the one who multiplied our dead.’”*
- b. Samson was a type of Christ in death.

- i. Both Samson and Jesus were betrayed for pieces of silver.
  1. The Philistines paid Delilah to betray Samson (**Judges 16:5**).
  2. The Pharisees paid Judas to betray Jesus (**Matthew 26:15**).
- ii. Both Samson and Jesus were blinded.
  1. The Philistines gouged out Samson's eyes (**Judges 16:21**).
  2. The Romans blindfolded Jesus (**Luke 22:64**).
- iii. Both Samson and Jesus were mocked.
  1. Samson was made to entertain the Philistines.
    - a. **Judges 16:25** – *“So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, ‘Call for Samson, that he may perform for us.’ So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars.”*
    - b. In the context, “merry” means “drunk.”
  2. Scorners mocked Jesus during His humiliation on the cross (**Matthew 27:41**).
- iv. Both Samson and Jesus were forsaken for a moment.
  1. God forsook Samson (**Judges 16:20**).
  2. God turned his face away from Jesus on the cross (**Matthew 27:46**).
    - a. **Matthew 27:46** – Jesus cried out, *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”*
    - b. Jesus' cry was a reference to a Messianic psalm (**Psalms 22:1**).
    - c. **DISCUSS**: How does knowing that the Lord willingly suffered rejection so we could be accepted in Him (**Ephesians 1:6**) influence how you live?
- v. Both Samson and Jesus prayed to the Father in their time of need.
  1. **Judges 16:26–28** – *“Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, ‘Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them.’ Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there—about three thousand men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed. Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, ‘O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!’”*
  2. Jesus prayed on the cross (**Luke 23:34**).
- vi. Both Samson and Jesus died with outstretched arms.

1. **Judges 16:29** – “And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left.”
2. Jesus was killed with outstretched arms (**Luke 23:33**).
- vii. Both Samson and Jesus defeated the enemy most at death.
  1. **Judges 16:30** – “Then Samson said, ‘Let me die with the Philistines!’ And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.”
    - a. Samson killed 3,000 Philistines in his death.
  2. Jesus disarmed the powers of the Enemy
    - a. **Colossians 2:15** – “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he [Jesus] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” (NIV)
    - b. **1 Corinthians 15:26** – “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.”
    - c. **DISCUSS**: How are you living with Christ’s victory in mind?

## 8. Lessons from Samson

- a. Samson was a man of faith.
  - i. The “*Spirit of the LORD*” is mentioned four times in **Judges 13–15**—but zero times in chapter 16.
    1. **Judges 16:20b** – “The LORD had left him.” (NLT)
  - ii. Samson prayed to the Lord for the first time at the end of his life (**Judges 16:28**) and received mercy from the Lord.
    1. **DISCUSS**: Who or what do you look to for help during “rock bottom” events?
    2. Samson is listed in the hall of faith (**Hebrews 11:32**).
    3. Samson was dancing for the enemy, humiliated, and finally repented and cried out to God, “Remember me” (**Judges 16:28**)
    4. **DISCUSS**: What can we learn about the heart of our Father from His willingness to respond to Samson’s cry? How does that impact you?
- b. Small compromises can lead to big consequences.
- c. Samson drifted from God until Samson did not realize the Lord had left him.
  - i. **Hebrews 2** warns against drifting away.
- d. The Lord is near.
  - i. No matter how far we drift, the Lord is always a prayer away.
    1. **Psalms 34:18** – “The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.” (NLT)

2. **Psalm 145:18** – “*The LORD is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth.*” (NLT)
  3. **James 4:8a** – “*Come close to God, and God will come close to you.*” (NLT)
- ii. **DISCUSS:** How has the Lord drawn you back to Himself? What verses have ministered to you?

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)