

Deliverer Needed Series

“Samson: Reasons for Failure”

Judges 13-16

Introduction – read chapter 16:4-end

- **the other night I was rightly ridiculed by my wife**
 - I had been here at the church for about 12 hours that day, had done some work around the house, and I was tired
 - And it was about 11pm and Christy was heading for bed, but then she noticed I was lagging behind – she walked out into the living to find me, trying to keep eye open, but still glued to the TV
- **What are you doing? – Just as you left, the History channel started the history of junk food, and it so interesting**
 - She said to me, do you know how nerdy it sounds that you are not going to come to bed as tired as you are because you want to learn about the history of junk food
 - It sounds nerdy but I love to discover how things come about – how do they get that creamy filling into a twinkie, or ding dong – how do they make jelly bellies taste like butter popcorn with neither butter nor popcorn in them – I want to know
- **In fact that is my fascination with most of the shows on those type of channels – why did Presidents do the things they did 100 years ago – why did generals in WWII make the decisions they made that shaped our destiny – I love to discover what lead to certain events or why things are the way they are – even if it means staying up late to learn about Twinkies**
 - And that is what I want to accomplish this morning with Samson

We have all heard the story of Samson – we all understand Samson as a big failure – He starts out with one of the great potentials of all time

- **God prophesies about him before His birth**
 - God approaches his parents and tells them he is to be a Nasserite, someone dedicated to God
 - He is born into a critical time in Israel's history – where the Philistines are exercising dominion over the nation of Israel
 - And it is like Israel doesn't care – we will see on Wednesday Night when Samson tries to cause trouble with the Philistines, the tribe of Judah tells him to stop it – what are they doing?
 - He is born into the perfect time, with the perfect skill set to be the greatest deliverer in Israel's history
- **But instead he is the biggest dud in Israel's history, not stud, I know some of you ladies are hoping I found a picture of Samson**

You know we put up a picture of Jabba the Hut the other week for King Eglon, that very fat man from Judges Chapter 3, I mean we knew it was Jabba the Hut, but we were trying to be funny, maybe we will do that for Samson – maybe we will get to see Ryan Gosling in church

- **So ladies - Not stud – he is the biggest dud in Israel's history - But why?**
 - Why did he end up that way

Well again on Wednesday night we are going to look at the story in its entirety

- **and it is a great story – full of love and violence, I really surprised Hollywood hasn't developed a movie on this in recent years, it has every thing they love**
 - But we know the story – this morning we want to understand why – why did Samson end up the way he did???
 - We want to apply that to our lives

Samson – Reasons for Failure – Judges 13-16

#1 – He had Dedication without Devotion

- He was a man who from the day he was born was dedicated to the Lord
 - He was a Nazirite, that phrase means “dedicated to God”
 - It had 3 outward actions that set you apart from the world around you

“Nazirite” – “Dedicated to God”

#1 – No razor was to touch the hair

#2 – Stay away from the fruit of the vine

#3 – Do not touch dead things

- No razor was to touch his head
 - He was to be the original hippy
 - The long hair, not common at all in Israel at the time for men was an outward sign, I am different
- Stay away from the fruit of the vine
 - A Nazirite was to stay away from strong drink, any alcohol of any kind, no wine
 - And really the fruit of the vine in any form – no grapes or grape juice or raisins
- Stay away from dead things
 - You could not touch a dead body of a human or an animal - Just stay away from dead things

This was the rule for anyone who would take a Nazirite vow

- usually this would last for a month and it was just to say, Lord you have been so good to me, I want to be totally dedicated for you
 - but Samson’s vow was not for a month, it was for his entire life
- for you that want to win at Bible trivia there were three people in Bible history who were Nazirites for life

Nazirites for Life

#1 – Samson

#2 – John the Baptist

#3 – The prophet Samuel

- you know the first one, Samson
- the second was John the Baptist – played by Dominic Baily in the New Son of God movie – not really but if you saw that movie and the scene flashed on Jesus being baptized, I swear that was Dominic Baily, anyway - and good old Samuel who will we meet in a few weeks when we get to the book of I Samuel

Samson was dedicated to God from the day of the his birth

- But here is the problem, even though there was dedication, there was no devotion
 - As we go through the story of Samson on Wednesday Night – there will be no sacrifices offered by Samson
 - No altar built like Abraham did and Isaac did, even Gideon did and David will do
 - No times of worship in His life
- And his only two prayers, he only prays twice in 20 years
 - The first time, we will see it in chapter 15 – He prays to God – give me a drink, I’m thirsty
 - I need something God – give it to me
- And then his second in final prayer in chapter 16 – give me my strength one last time so I can avenge myself on my enemies – He prays to kill people
 - Now that is a really shallow prayer life
 - Give me drink – let me kill people
- If that is the extent of your prayer life then maybe you have the same problem as Samson – dedication with no devotion

He was a man who was dedicated to serve, but with no devotional life – no prayer was ascending, no praise was being lifted up

- And this is our first indicator of why the things that went wrong with Samson happened

- Dedication without devotion produces a dead religion, not a real vibrant relationship with God
- And that is always the way it is

You see you can have a ton of motion, a ton of activity going on that looks like life, but it can be absolutely dead

- One of the hardest thing about living in Texas for my wife were the cockroaches –here in California, its only places that are dirty that have those things – but there because of the humidity they are everywhere and to make matters worse, they refuse to die – I remember coming home and Christy would say, I threw a book on top of a cockroach, can you finish killing it – if you crushed it with a book – I think its dead – but I would lift up the book and its head was crushed, but its legs were still moving – I think those things would survive a nuclear holocaust – but even without a head, its leg were squirming around – now it was dead, but there was still lots of movement
 - now there was lots of motion – but that guy was dead – no life – it was motion without life – and so we can be in Christianity
 - we can have tons of motion, we are going to church – we say things like “praise the Lord brother”, lots of religious motion, but without any devotion, it’s dead

Friends understand this, we can appear to be dedicated, do Christian things

- But dedication without devotion will always end up fruitless as it was for Samson

We need to check our own hearts

- we need to remember from Jesus’ letter to the church of Ephesus, we can not confuse lots of motion for devotion
 - It is not just that Jesus wants us busy
 - He wants us to love Him – for prayers to be ascending, for worship to be going up, for there to be devotion in our hearts
- Is there? – or is it just dedication without devotion
 - We need to figure out what went wrong with Samson
 - Samson had dedication, but no devotion, secondly

Samson – Reasons for Failure – Judges 13-16

#1 – He had Dedication without Devotion

#2 – He had Authority without Accountability

- Samson was the judge, the leader
 - But even leaders need someone they answer to, someone that will be honest with them
 - Samson did not have this
- There was no accountability to God
 - What do I mean??? – He was a Nasserite, yet in chapter 14, we see him walking through a vineyard, what are you doing there Samson? If you are not supposed to be around products of the vine, maybe you should not go there
- then he kills a lion, leaves its carcass, and after some time, goes back to see it, because that is a guy thing – oh look at the road kill, my girls hide there eyes, my son says turn the car around – I must see dead animal
 - anyway Samson goes back and checks it out and finds that bees have made a hive out of the bone structure and Samson, typical man decides there is nothing wrong with eating honey out of a dead animal

Now as any girl can tell you there is always something wrong with eating with a dead animal as your bowl

- but for Samson, there is something especially wrong because he is not supposed to touch dead things – He is a Nazirite
 - He is a Nazirite, yet he is in the vineyard, he is touching dead bodies, he will cut his hair

- No accountability to God – no taking what He says serious to his life from His word - none

Samson has no accountability to his parents

- now we live in a culture where this is sadly becoming the norm, but in Samson's day the way he talks to his mom and dad is unthinkable
 - His first words recorded in the bible are as follows

“I have seen a woman of the Philistines, get her for me for she pleases me well.” – Samson (Judges 14:2-3)

- You almost have to say it with a cave man accent because it is so ridiculous
 - And when his parents say – no, she is not a Jew, you need to marry someone from Israel, God's people
- Samson's response sounds normal to our ears today, but it would have been unthinkable in Samson's day
 - He has no accountability to God's Word for his life
 - No accountability to his parents and their wisdom in his life

Accountability is so important because we need people who can speak into your life truth that you will pray in and keep in your heart

- That is why we emphasize being a part of a small group, men's group, women's group, home fellowship

Sunday Morning and Wednesday Night, we are glad you are here, but you can hide a little bit in this sanctuary – you don't have to be real, because no one is asking you questions about how you are doing?

- but we need that in our lives
 - we need people we can be real with
 - and that will be real with us

We need to see our selves as under some authority

- we live in a world where I am my own man, captain of my own ship
 - but if you really live that way – your ship is heading toward disaster
- We need to see ourselves as accountable to God and what He says my life should look like
 - How He says I should parent
 - What He says my priorities should be
 - I need to be accountable to God, His Word and yes – it helps to have flesh and blood, humans you can see and touch that you see as a spiritual authority in your life
- Not because any of us are better than you or have it more together than you
 - But even Jesus talked about how He was under authority

“The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.” – John 14:10

- Jesus says I have authority because I am the authority of God
 - And you and I can have authority when we speak, authority when we parent and authority when we make decisions, only if we too are under the authority of God and His Word and some people who know Him and us

Samson – Reasons for Failure – Judges 13-16

#1 – He had Dedication without Devotion

#2 – He had Authority without Accountability

#3 – He had Power but no Purity

- Samson was a man of great strength
 - Now full disclosure – that is not universally accepted – some people like Christy Duff – believe Samson was a little guy
- I mean why would the Philistines ask Delilah to find out the secret of His strength if he looked like Arnold Schwarzenegger circa 1980

- Now there is a reason for this and if you want to find out why – well you need to be here on Wednesday Night

But even though there are those who believe Samson was a little guy

- I believe he was an amazing physical specimen
 - I would put up a picture on the screen because you know I can find a picture of any Bible character - but I just don't want anybody stumbled – I care about you ladies and your spiritual well being
 - (I have one for Wednesday though)

Anyway I believe Samson was an amazing physical specimen but at the same time his life is a huge enigma

- He was a He-man with a She weakness
 - he was a man who easily conquered the Philistines around him
 - but could not conquer the desires within him
- he was a man with amazing potential
 - could have easily been the greatest judge Israel ever had

For with each of the other judges when God picked them they said, “who me” – you got to have the wrong guy Lord

- but Samson was an obvious leader, the big man on campus
 - a man who could have done great things – but didn't
- Great potential, born into a godly family, given so many wonderful gifts of leadership and strengths
 - A man of tremendous power and potential
 - Yet we find him, blind, bound and grinding away
 - Why – He had power but no purity – and precious saints, listen to me, that will not last
 - Do you understand the importance of purity in your life?

So often we talk about the fact that we are going to heaven because of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross – and that is true

- We talk about the fact you don't have to earn God's favor because you already have it – that is true

We talk about the fact that God just loves you, it is not that He loves you more when you are doing things that are right, and loves you less when you are doing things that are wrong – He's not Santa Claus (He doesn't have naughty or nice list) – He just loves you

- When you understand that, when you really get it, for some the next thought is, then why walk in purity, it is not going to make God love me anymore, it's not going to get me into heaven, so why do it

Paul when he was writing the book of Romans he anticipates the same thought

- In the first 5 chapter of the book of Romans Paul is saying God just loves you – He has saved you

Your sins are gone

- but then anticipating a wrong response to grace he says in chapter 6 of Romans

“Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!” – Romans 6:1-2

- The wrong response to the grace of God is to sin more
 - The right response is to realize, Lord you love me so much, you have been so kind to me
 - I want to live for you

That is the right response because it is true Grace is amazing, but purity is powerful

- In Revelation chapter 14:1-5 – the Bible speaks of a special group of people - 144,000 – who are sealed by the Lord and they are powerful evangelists, powerful ministers of the Love of God in a horrible time in world history
 - But the Bible makes it clear when describing these men

- They were devoted – these are singing a new song to God
 - they are just letting praise come from their lives, making there be an altar in their hearts
- They are under authority
 - for they follow Jesus wherever he tells them to go
 - they weren't doing their own thing or going their own way, doing what was best in their eyes – no – they were under authority
- And finally they were pure – they were undefiled – pure in their hearts
 - They were men of integrity, speaking truth and not lies – pure in their speech
 - They were pure physically for these young men were virgins – nothing impure with marital intimacy – but these young men were pure

And as the story unfolds about these servants of the Lord in the darkness time in human history

- they are protected from the schemes of the enemy
 - they are not affected by the sin of this world
 - they turn this world right side up with power, a power that flows from purity

Why – because purity pays, purity is powerful

- And Samson had it backwards – he had power, but no purity
 - And listen to me those of you who are gifted, without purity, the power won't last.
 - But with purity there is no limit to how powerful of a weapon you will be in the hands of the Lord

Robert Murray M'Cheyne who was a powerful Scottish preacher was talking to his friend who was going to serve the Lord in Germany. His friend was so concerned with perfecting the German language and M'Cheyne said this to him...

“I know you will apply hard to German, but do not forget the culture of the inward man, I mean of the heart. How diligently the Calvary officer keeps his saber clean and sharp, every stain he rubs off with the greatest care. Remember you are God's sword, God's instrument. In great measure according to the purity and perfection of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy servant is a powerful weapon in the hands of the Lord.”

- so true
 - maybe you look at those 144,000 and say I am being affected by the schemes of the enemy, he seems to have my number
 - I am affected by sin of this world
 - And I don't feel very powerful or effective at all

Maybe with you, there is much gifting, much potential, but you have never realized it, because it is always marred by sin

- now the enemy says that's right and its over – you have wasted your life
 - you have wasted your opportunity to be used by Almighty

But I would say to you this morning – that just as the enemy has lied to you to get you to think – you can dedicate without devotion, you can have authority with no accountability, and you can be powerful without purity

- that same liar is lying to you again, saying all is lost
 - Friends all is never lost with our deliverer
- I want to remind you that Samson is mentioned in the Hall of faith, Hebrews 11 – oh man what grace
 - But remember he is there because at the very end of his life Samson decided to head into a different direction – He cries out to God and God does more with that final moment, then all of his life up to that point
 - that same thing can be true of you

You may have wasted years, you may have had a tough season recently

- the enemy says, your chance is past
 - God is not concerned with what happened yesterday as He is about what you are going to do with the choice today
 - Are you are going to serve Him
- Are you going to realize the it's not enough to be dedicated – there needs to be real devotion, a real love relationship with Him
 - Are you going to realize that you have authority, but you need accountability
 - To put yourself under God's word and others

Are you ready to see that you might have many strengths in the world's eyes?

- but if there is no purity, that strength will not last and it will not endure into eternity
 - we have seen what led to Samson's downfall
 - but we also must see how Samson did more with his final season of life than the rest of the his life combined
- He turned to the Lord – He cried out to Him
 - He realized His need for devotion
 - His need for accountability to God
 - His need for purity
- And God saw that – and God used Samson greatly and wrote his name in the Hall of Faith next to David and Abraham and the greats of the Kingdom of God

What will your story be?

- maybe everything is great – awesome
 - don't forget devotion – like the church of Ephesus
 - Don't forget accountability – put yourself under the Word of God
 - Don't forget about purity – go to Him, repent to Him

Maybe your story has been one of defeat

- don't think all is lost
 - maybe you have been blinded by sin, bound and ground into the dirt by its consequences
 - cry out – repent - turn to God
 - and let Him do more with this next season in your life than He has ever been able to do before

If the Lord has been speaking to you, I want to encourage you to respond

- I know you are dedicated, but let there be devotion
 - Lord change my heart

I encourage you to go in another direction - Get away this week, for a day, for an hour, for 15 minutes

- I know you have authority, you are a parent, a boss, people look up to you, but are you accountable??
 - Confess it to Him, "Lord I haven't been listening to you, your Word or willing to hear from others, open my heart"
 - I encourage you to let others have some input

I know you are powerful, great potential but is there purity???

- Would you make a prayer to the Lord, help me change that
 - He wants to cleanse you with the work of the cross
 - And He wants to say to you like the woman caught in adultery
 - Neither do I condemn you – go and sin no more
 - God – Be devoted, be accountable, be pure
 - And watch what God will do with that kind of instrument in His hand!