

Judges 13-16

“The Life of Samson”

Introduction

- Tonight we continue in the book of Judges and we have come to chapters 13-16 and that means we have come to the most famous of all the Judges – Good old Samson.
 - And His life, which had so much potential, is really the story of a stud, who turns a dud and ends up with his life in the mud.
 - I like that – we can use that Pastor Rob – instead of he ends up blind and bound and grinding away.
 - We can use from a stud to a dud to lost in the mud – amen!
- And last Sunday we saw how he got there and what to guard against in our own lives.
 - But tonight it is time to see the whole story.
 - And we are going to see it in three parts tonight if you are taking notes.

The Life of Samson – Judges 13-16

His Parents – Judges Chapter 13

His Problem – Judges Chapters 14-15

His Pain – Judges Chapter 16

- Lets consider those one at a time.

The Life of Samson – Judges 13-16

His Parents – Judges Chapter 13

- Samson’s parents were godly people.
 - They loved the Lord and wanted what He wanted for their lives.
 - The only problem is they were barren, which was seen as a curse in the ancient world.

Now the Angel of the Lord is going to come to this couple and let them know their prayers have been heard – they are going to have a baby.

- And they are going to raise him the right way – we will look at that in just a moment.
 - But I also think it is important for us to realize that even though Samson’s parents did everything they were suppose to do. Samson still rebelled against them and the Lord.

We need to be good parents – we need to follow the Lord and the lessons in this first chapter.

- But we also have to realize that each of us, including your kids, have a free will and they may use it to turn away from the Lord.
 - Samson certainly did – He comes back to the Lord in the very end, but his life is one of tragedy.
- And I just say that not to discourage you from listening to the lessons of chapter 13, just to encourage you if you kids are in a season of rebellion.
 - The enemy will be right there in your ear to blame you for it all.
 - And there may be something you can learn from mistakes you made and pass on those lessons to others - But we also have to remember that this godly couple that raised Samson exactly as God commanded, still had a kid that rebelled.
- In fact when you think about it – all of us have a heavenly father who is perfect and raises us the perfect way in Him, but we still make poor mistakes.
 - So don’t be too tough on yourself as a parent.
 - But at the same time, especially for you younger parents – learn the lessons of Samson’s parents – what lessons?

Well the Lord comes to this godly couple and says you are going to have a baby.

- And Samson’s father Monoah’s says in verse 12 – how do you want this child raised – what is his manner of life suppose to be? What do you want him to do God?

- Now this is first lesson to note from Samson's parents.

Lessons from Samson's parents.

#1 – How does God want your child raised?

- They ask the Lord – why?
 - Because they understand and something that we must understand– that the child God gives to you and me – they are His kids – we have them on loan for a season, but they are God's kids – and He has a plan for their lives.
- That is important to understand because so often we come into parenting with our own ideas.
 - Well this is what I think about child rearing – my parents did this and I disagree with it – well okay, but have you inquired of the Lord – have you studied His Word about what He has to say about raising kids.
 - Have you asked the Lord in prayer – what do you want to do with this little one – and it's a constant prayer as they grow and you figure out this child has gifts and callings from God in music, or this one is a real athlete or this one has a mind for computers – God can use all of those things.
- But it is so important and Proverbs 22:6 tells us...

“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.” – Proverbs 22:6

- Notice in the way he should go – not only in the things of the Lord – but the direction the Lord wants him or her to go in.

So Samson's parents ask the Lord and He tells them, your child shall be a Nazirite from birth.

- Now the word “Nazirite” means dedicated to God.
 - It does not mean from Nazareth – like Jesus of Nazareth – no, different word altogether.

A Nazirite would normally take a vow lasting from one month to sometimes even a year and in that time frame they were avoid three things.

“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 was not common at all in Israel at that time for men and it 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.

Now again this vow would normally last for a month to a year but in Samson's case it was to be for his entire life.

- And in that, he joins two other Bible characters as Nazirite for life.

Nazirites for Life

#1 – Samson

#2 – John the Baptist

#3 – The prophet Samuel

So Samson's mom and dad ask the Lord how God wants him to be raised and then God tells Samson's mom – she needs to live that way to.

- For her that lasted as long as Samson was in her womb.
 - But it teaches us another great lesson in parenting.

Lessons from Samson's parents.

#1 – How does God want your child raised?

#2 – You need to model Christianity for your kids.

- You see not only do we need to ask God how do you want to raise this child? – What does your Word say?
 - I have these opinions – I learned this from my parents.
 - But what does your Word say about discipline? About priorities? About how they spend their time? – Important questions maybe you haven't really thought through yet or discovered.
- But then after that – we need to model what it is to walk with God for our kids and in front of our kids.

You know the old saying – do as I say not as I do, is a horrible way to parent.

- You need to show your kids what worship looks like, what a devotional life looks like.
 - What praying through decisions in your home looks like.
- Well Pastor Jason, if I am going to do that, that means I need to worship, I need to pray, and I need to have devotions.
 - Bingo – so you are listening – awesome.
 - Yes that is exactly what that means.

But Pastor Jason – I am not perfect, I fail, I get angry when I shouldn't, and I sin and get in the flesh.

- I know – me too – and listen, so will your kids.

So they need someone to model for them what it looks like to repent, because they are going to have to learn to repent too.

- Do you hear me on this church family?
 - We are not modeling some fake religiosity for our kids – that will definitely lead to them walking away from God.
 - We need to model for them what a real walk with God looks like.
- I want to worship, I want to pray through things, I want to get up and hear from His Word and when I fail and I do, then I want to show them how to ask for forgiveness of God and those I have wronged and then start walking with God again.

If you do these things is it a guarantee your kids will never walk away from the Lord? Sadly no.

- But talk about giving them a fighting chance.
 - I can say – if you don't do those two things you are giving the enemy an upper hand at tearing at their hearts.
 - So let's learn from Samson's parents.

Samson's parents hear from the Lord – ask him some great questions and then God tells them to model it for Samson.

- But Manoah still thinks this is some prophet he is talking to, so he offers the messenger a meal.
 - And Jesus has fire come out of the rock and consume the meal – the light comes on for Manoah.

We have seen the Lord – God is going to kill us!

- So thankful for the wives that God gives us – just what we need.
 - Samson's mom speaks up – God is going to kill us – He just told us we are going to have a baby, why would he kill us.

I just picture the light coming on for Manoah.

- Oh yeah – well how about we keep that between us honey, okay sweet heart.
 - And then it is written down in the Bible, the best selling book of all time.
 - I love it – love these parents of Samson.
 - But lets move on into chapter 14.

The Life of Samson – Judges 13-16

His Parents – Judges Chapter 13

His Problem – Judges Chapters 14-15

- In these chapters we see a man again with so much potential, I mean just think about the way his life started the physical gifts this man had.
 - He could have been the great deliverer in Jewish history.
 - But we see this stud is kind of a dud.
 - And the reason is because of compromises in his life.

The first one is a problem with the ladies.

- It has been said that Samson was a He-man with a She weakness and that is totally true.
 - His first words recorded in the scripture are, “I have seen a woman, go get her for me, for she pleases me well.”
 - I mean you just have to say it with a cave man accent because it is something a cave man would say.
- I have seen woman – get her for me – she pleases me well.
 - What do you mean she pleases you well – does this ungodly girl challenge you in your walk with Lord? Does her quiet submission make you pray more? – No way that is not what He means.
 - He means she looks good, and my lust is pleased.

His parents try to speak some sense into his life, but Samson won't hear it and that is when verse 4 of chapter 14 says..

“But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord—that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.” – Judges 14:4

- Now this has lead to some confusion.
 - Was Samson's life really his fault?
 - Was he just being used of the Lord – you know God made him with these lustful desires that he had no control over and God did that because God had a plan to go to war with the Philistines.
- Some people teach that about God, that that is exactly how he works and this is one of their proof texts.
 - But understand church family that is not what is happening at all.

First of all understand that unlike any other foreign power that we have seen so far in the book of Judges, each foreign power the Bible says – they oppressed the nation of Israel.

- You think of the Midianites from Gideon's day – they would come in, steal all the crops they could carry away and then burn what they couldn't.
 - It was just oppressive.

But it says of the Philistines in verse 4 of chapter 14 that the Philistines weren't oppressing Israel; they simply had dominion over Israel.

- And that is why chapter 13 verse one says it had been 40 years and Israel had never cried out to God.
 - It was kind of like having the opposing party in office.
- You complain about it – maybe call in a talk radio program – vote for the Non Philistine candidate, but it is really not that bad – the others guys are just in power.

So no one is crying out – No one wants to repent.

- And so God uses the life of Samson and the choices he made of his own free will in order

to start stirring things up against the Philistines.

- Now Samson could have chosen to follow the Lord – the Lord could have used him to rally Israel to overthrow those having dominion over them in their own land.
- God could have used Samson that way.
- But instead Samson chooses to walk away from the Lord, Samson chooses to entangle himself in the lives of the Philistines and Samson will pay a heavy price by the end of this story.
 - But God will use our failures to bring about His plan – the only problem is we suffer because of it.
 - So don't misunderstand what is happening here.
- Samson struggles with lust, and as we read it caused great problems in his life.

The other glaring compromise in Samson's life besides lust was that he did not take his vow to the Lord very seriously.

- For we see him in chapter 14 walking in a vineyard.
 - Do you remember what Samson was supposed to avoid in his Nazirite vow – anything from the vine, so should he have been in a vineyard? – No way.
- And when he encounters the lion and kills the lion, pretty awesome, he goes back to see the carcass and when he notices some bees have made a hive out of the insides of this lion – he reaches inside and takes a bite.
 - What was the other part of the vow – don't touch dead things – Samson what are you doing? – Not taking his vow very seriously.

And because of these compromises he finds himself at a wedding, proposes a riddle about the lion and the honey to the 30 groomsmen they have provided for him and another problem develops.

- They don't want to provide 30 changes of clothing for him.
 - So they press his wife to be to get the answer from Samson.
 - So she starts in – don't you love me – why won't you tell me?
- He says – I haven't even told my parents, why would I tell you?
 - And when he gives in and does tell her and she tells the 30 companions – He says and I quote – “if you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle.”

Anybody think that maybe Samson is not ready to get married.

- I mean – why would I tell you my wife, I haven't even told my mom.
 - Is that something you want to hear ladies?
 - Or do you think it's a good idea to call your bride to be a cow – that doesn't translate well into any culture.
 - It was just cultural – no – He called his bride a cow – that's dumb at all times in every language.

So the thirty companions come back and say – “what is stronger than a lion and what is sweeter than honey?”

- Which is answering a question with a question and this is when Jeopardy was first invented – you didn't know Samson was responsible for that – but he was.
 - So Samson is mad – he kills 30 Philistines.
 - He goes back home pouting – which leads the girls' dad to give her to another man.

Which leads to Samson getting even more upset, catching 300 foxes, tying their tails around a torch and setting the torch on fire and the field of the Philistines on fire.

- Which makes the Philistines say, who did this – it was Samson because his wife was given to another man.
 - So they go and burn Samson's wife and her Dad.

- Everywhere this guy goes he leaves a wake of destruction in his path.
- Because he is not doing things God's way – He is doing things His own way.

He is suffering, people around him are suffering, but God is still doing a work.

- Samson could have done it another way.
 - But his way causes him great pain and that leads us to our final chapter, chapter 16.

The Life of Samson – Judges 13-16

His Parents – Judges Chapter 13

His Problem – Judges Chapters 14-15

His Pain – Judges Chapter 16

- Even though God used Samson and used his faults to begin a great victory there was still consequences to Samson's life, there was still pain that he personally had to face.

The chapter starts with him going to Gaza, a Philistine city, and he sees a prostitute and goes into her.

- This guy has not met a Philistine girl he doesn't find attractive.
 - Hey I have a suggestion – maybe he should stop going into Philistine cities.
- I shouldn't even have to say this, but more of us are like Samson than we care to admit – but if you struggle with alcohol, maybe you shouldn't do your devotions at a bar – just a suggestion.

If you struggle with lust maybe you shouldn't have all those channels on your TV?

- Maybe we should actually do what Jesus said to do and deal radically with our sin.
 - If you hand causes you to sin – cut it off – now, not literally because you can still sin with your other hand.
 - Jesus' point is to deal radically with what triggers sin in your life – don't tolerate it, don't go to it, get rid of it and run frequently to Jesus and His word.
- Again – that should be elementary – but maybe there is a Samson or Shelia in the house tonight and you need to hear that from the Lord – stop going to sinful territory, stop making it so easy for you to fall.

But Samson doesn't learn and in verse 4 he falls in love with another Philistine girl from another Philistine city.

- This girl's name is Delilah and she is bad news, she will be the end of Samson.
 - And by the way – you too understand that don't you – your sin will eventually destroy you – you can say – well this time it worked out okay and this time it worked out okay.
 - Okay – but it will eventually destroy you as long as you know that – run.

The Lords of the Philistines approach Delilah and they ask her to find the secret of his strength.

- Now this has led some people to believe Samson, against popular opinion was not a muscle bound guy.
 - My wife is of this opinion.
 - If he looked like Arnold Schwarzenegger in the 80's no one would wonder.
- So she doesn't think he looked like this – **Samson – with muscles** - she thinks he looks like this – **Samson – no muscles**.

Now on the surface that makes sense – why would they want to know the secret of his strength if he looked Arnold in the 80's.

- Well think about the story – he rips apart a lion like one would rip apart a goat.
 - He kills 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey.
 - He pulls city gates out of the ground and drags them for miles.
 - He catches 300 foxes and ties their tails together.
- I don't care how many muscles you have, that is crazy strength, so that is why they asked.
 - I'm sure Samson was a fit guy – probably didn't look like Arnold in the 80's

because he didn't have Gold's gym and steroids – but I'm sure Samson was muscular and fit and did not look like Napoleon Dynamite – (you ever take your bike off any sweets jumps) – I don't think Samson ever said that.

So they want to find out the secret of his great strength.

- And so Delilah starts to pester him, please tell me with what you can be afflicted? – No stop right there – what kind of question is that? – If you date is asking you – how can I afflict you – red flag kids, red flag.
 - So Samson says tie me up with seven fresh bowstrings.
 - And he wakes up tied up with bowstrings.
- Of course that was not the secret, so he busts out of those and whoops up the Philistines, but Delilah comes back again.

How can you say you love me, when every time I tie you up to hurt you, I find out you have lied to me? – Yeah why would I question your love?

But Samson keep getting closer and closer to the truth until he tells her, it's my hair.

- Which is what Samson and I have in common, our strength comes from our hair.
 - Samson must be thinking that he has violated 2/3 of his Nazirite vow and this won't be any different.
 - The rules don't apply to me – but yes they do Samson.

The real secret to your strength was the Spirit of God, not your vow.

- And he did not know the Spirit had left him.
 - Our sin gets us to think God must not care about my sin because He keeps anointing me.
 - But that is the problem with sin - Sin - self-inflicted nonsense - sin blinds, binds and grinds.
- And it will always deal with us the same way.
 - That is why the ruthlessness of sin requires us to deal ruthlessly with it.
 - We need to indentify the root of the problem and cut it out.
- Oh but its too late.
 - It's never too late.

Samson turns to God in the final moments of his life and God does more with those final moments than he did with everything else in Samson's life.

- Maybe you have wasted some serious moments in your life.
 - Maybe you down to the last few moments of your life.
 - The enemy then wants you to think what's the point?

The point is Samson is in the hall of faith in Hebrews chapter 11 – because God in His grace can do more with the moments you give him than a lifetime of rebellion.

That doesn't mean it is good idea to give into sin until the final moments.

- You will end up like Samson – blind and miserable.
 - But God isn't so concerned with what has happened in the past, as He is about what are you going to do with the future.
 - Turn to Him – let God turn a dud of a life, into one that is Hall of fame worthy!!!!