

The Final Word

Judges 16:4-31

September 20, 2009

Intro

We are studying the life of Samson and as we mentioned last week, he is famous for his amazing victory and for his amazing defeat. He is famous for his amazing strength, but also for his amazing weakness.

Last week, as we were studying Samson's life we were learning from his failure. We saw that he had no accountability with his authority. And we also saw that though he took a lifelong vow of dedication to the Lord, he only kept the outward symbols of that vow, and that there was no inward spiritual reality.

The Nazirite vow is found in Numbers chapter 6. It is a special vow of dedication to the Lord. And when a man or woman takes this vow they are to separate themselves unto the Lord. During the time of their dedication, they are to abstain from wine, strong drink, and anything to do with grapes. They must keep themselves separate from anything that is dead, and they must not cut their hair. However, what we see in Samson's life was that, rather than being dedicated to the Lord, he was dedicated to himself. He blew through every stop sign imaginable.

The stories of Samson's strength are famous, but the greatest lessons in his life come from his failure. In chapter 16, beginning with verse 4, Samson's recklessness catches up with him and he becomes a classic example of the consequences of sin.

But the story does not end there. His failure is not the final word in this life. The final word is grace; for one of the great lessons out of Samson's life is the story of restoration.

Lets gain spiritual understanding and insight both from learning from his failure as well as from God's grace in his life.

I. Sin Makes Life Very Hard

- 1 Verse four tells us that Samson loved a woman in the valley of Sorek. The name "Sorek" means, "A choice vine." In other words, it's in the center of wine country where a Nazirite has no business going. And there he meets Delilah. He can defeat 1,000 men with the jawbone of a donkey, but is defeated by one woman from Sorek.
- 2 Samson had a weakness for wandering into the camp of the enemy. He seemed to enjoy flirting with danger.
- 3 The lesson for a believer is that there are some places that a Christian should not go. For in the camp of the enemy are people who will discourage your faith, and encourage your flesh.
- 4 Simpson's defeat is a classic example of the consequences of sin.

A. Sin will blind you

- 5 What we will see before this story is over is that Samson's sin cost him dearly. Ultimately, when he was defeated, they put out his eyes -- he was blind.

- 6 But I submit that he was already blind. And in fact, I am convinced that he saw more after he lost his eyes than when he could see.
- 7 In verse six, Delilah entices him and asks him, "Tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound." Now I may not be a rocket scientist, but it occurs to me that this could be a tipoff that something's wrong in this relationship.
- 8 It's clear from Samson's response that he is spiritually blind. He thinks he's in control of the whole situation, but he's weaker than he thinks he is.
- 9 Sin has a way of clouding the thinking; of making a man stupid. We know this, because later, they ask themselves that very question. "How could I have been so stupid?"

Illus - in Luke 15, the prodigal son demanded his inheritance early so that he could spend it on worldly living. But then, when he came to the end of his money, and had to take a job feeding pigs -- he came to his senses.

Luke 15:17, "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger.'"

- 10 Proverbs chapter 7 is given to us to open the eyes of our heart.

Proverbs 7:21-23, With her many persuasions she entices him; with her flattering lips she seduces him. Suddenly he follows her as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool... he does not know that it will cost him his life.

- 11 So clearly, there are many warning signs for Samson, but he blows through them all.
- 12 Three times she tries to bind him so she can hurt him, and even on the third time he's starting to wear down. You can see that he is getting close, because he's telling her about his hair.

Proverbs 6:27-28, Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Or can a man walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched?

- 1 Finally, she pulled out the, "You don't love me" card. "How can I believe you when you say, 'I love you,' when every time I try to tie you up to hurt you, you lie. Do you know how much that hurts?"
- 2 The Scripture tells us that she pressed him daily with her words so that his soul was annoyed to death.

App –There's an old saying, "It's not the mountains ahead that wear you down, it's the pebble in your shoe."

- 1 Delilah is using deception to defeat him. That's a great picture of sin. It lies; and lies will wear you down. You cannot conquer any mountains until you get rid of the pebble in your shoe; the lies about you that Satan wants you to believe.

John 8:31-32, So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word...then you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

B. Sin will bind you

- 1 Finally, when Delilah wore Samson down, he told her his heart, so she put him to sleep and had the locks of his hair cut off. Immediately, they bound him with bronze chains and put his eyes out.
- 2 So then, not only was Samson blinded by sin, he was also enslaved by it.
- 3 Sampson refused to be under the accountability of anyone, and he most certainly was not under the authority of God. He thought he was free because he was accountable to no one, but in reality, sin was already master over him.
- 4 This seems to be what Paul was referring to in Romans six.

Romans 6:16-18 We are slaves of the one whom we obey...

- 5 Paul wrote to the church in Corinth a statement that is very powerful, "I will not be mastered by anything."

1 Corinthians 6:12-13, All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything... the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.

Illus – I remember talking with a young man who was struggling with authority. I was trying to help him see the root of the problem, "Your own pride and anger is defeating you," I said.

- 6 Sin binds and becomes the master when you can't stop, though you want to. It keeps pulling, and pulling, and pulling, and you can't say no.
- 7 This is what Jesus meant when he said in Luke chapter 4...

Luke 4:18, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed.”

C. Sin will make life a grind

- 8 After the Philistines bound Samson with bronze chains and put out his eyes, they took him to the city of Gaza where they made him a grinder in the prison.
- 9 It’s no secret that at first, sin is quite pleasant. After all, as the Scripture says, stolen water is sweet.

Proverbs 9:17-18, “Stolen water is sweet; and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.” But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

- 1 God doesn’t need make a law that says, "Thou shalt not hit thy thumb with a hammer," because the immediate pain of it is warning enough. But he does need to tell us about the consequences of sin because at first it seems so pleasant, and then life gets harder.

Proverbs 13:15, Good understanding produces favor, but the way of the transgressor is hard.

- 2 But then God uses that difficulty that sin brings in our lives to get our heart to wake up.

Psalms 119:67, 71, 75 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word... It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes... I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.

II. His Mercies are New Every Morning

- 1 Verse 22 gives us a hint of what is to come, it says, "The hair of his head began to grow again after it was shaved off."
- 2 The hair is only an outward symbol and for all his life up to that point, that’s all that ever was, something outward.
- 3 But what we see in the following verses is that something inward begins to stir in Samson.

A. God loves the broken and contrite heart

- 1 One of the wonderful things that we see in scripture is that God is the God of the second chance. His mercies truly are new every morning.

2 But the essential question which remains is this; is the brokenness genuine?

Psalm 51:16-17, For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

3 We need to understand the difference between forgiveness and restoration. When we come to God in genuine repentance and confess our sin before him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Forgiveness then happens immediately.

4 But restoration is a process of healing.

Illus – If you did something stupid, crash your skateboard, wake up in the hospital, and then call out to God to forgive you, forgiveness will be yours immediately. But the process of healing will take time.

5 For Samson, it would be the unlearning of all that he once learned that got him into trouble. And it would be the transformation of his heart to come back to God.

Illus – In verse 28, Samson called out to the Lord in genuine prayer. And then in this one verse he uses three different names for God; Adonai, Yahweh, and Elohim. He asks that God would give him strength one last time.

B. Failure is not the final word

6 As we began the study we understood that Samson was famous for his strength, but he was perhaps most famous for his weakness -- his failure.

7 But perhaps the greatest part of the story is that failure is not the final word. The final word is grace, the final word is restoration, the final word is healing of his heart.

8 But the final word was also written in that chapter which speaks of the great men and women of faith -- Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11:32, And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets...