

Remember the Great Works of God – The word “Give Up” does not exist in God’s vocabulary!
Judges 16

Intro:

In our day and age, lustful temptations are everywhere. In the Bible, there is a prominent example of that. This person called Samson was blessed by God and could be a blessing to God and others. God gave Samson super strength to fight off Israel’s enemy but Samson wasted his talents on lustful pursuits. He did whatever seemed right in his own eyes.

There is no difference today. When people do whatever seemed right in their own eyes, people are not far from falling into the trap of sin.

From the example of Samson, we can learn what is a life that is pleasing to God and building up others.

Context – Chap. 15

- Excuse #1 – Samson’s wife was given away (Judges 15:1-2)
- Revenge #1 – 300 Foxes attack (v. 3-4)

- Excuse #2 – Samson’s wife and her father were burned to death (v. 6)
- Revenge #2 – Attacked and slaughtered many Philistines (v.7-8)

- No Friends – Samson’s own people handed Samson over to the Philistines (v.13)

- Philistines Attack #1 (v.14)

- **God’s Work** – The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him and gave Samson mighty strength (v. 14)
- More fighting – Samson stuck down 1,000 Philistines with a fresh jawbone of a donkey (v.15-17)

- **God’s Grace** – God gave Samson water after Samson called on God (v. 18-19)

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- **God’s Work** – Samson led Israel for 20 years in the days of the Philistines (v.20)

Secret – the word that links together Chap. 16.

1. The secret of Samson’s power (v. 1-3)

- Samson fell for woman #2 (Judges 16:1)

- Samson’s revenge #3

- Philistines' plan to attack Samson failed – the Philistines surrounded the place and waited for dawn to attack. Samson woke up in the middle of the night to flex his muscles. He carried the city gate, two posts, bar, and all to the top of the hill. (v. 2-3)

Think for a moment:

1. Have you ever wondered why would God used someone like Samson who sins against God time after time?

2. Have you ever wondered why God didn't take away Samson's power once Samson sinned?

- We tend to look at sin different than God. We saw sin in categories: big and small. In God's eyes, we are all sinners.
- If God's servant does not repent, yes, God can still, use his servant, but his servant would not grow closer to God.
- Remember in Matthew 23, "Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ² "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. ³ So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach."
- When a person does not listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God can still use the person, but this person's life is far from God.
- Pastor or spiritual leaders oftentimes face temptations.
- People can have a false assumption that one is used by God must be spiritually mature or else, they won't be this popular or many being people come to God through them.
- Don't forget God can make a donkey talk and taught a prophet.
- He can also make stones to shout praises to Him.
- Of course, God can use someone who is not faithful to Him to accomplish his will.
- Unfortunately, those who serve God can also be so far from God spiritually and relationally. What a pity!

2. The Secret of Samson's strength is revealed. (v. 4-22)

- Samson fell for woman #3 – Delilah (v. 4)
- Delilah agreed to sell Samson out for 1,100 shekels of silver to the Philistines. (v. 5)
- 10 shekels of silver is a one-year salary at that time. It's 110 times.
- Remember: Judges 14:15, Samson's first woman agreed to see Samson out too by coaxing Samson to tell her the answer of the riddle.
- 3 times, Delilah asked Samson about the secret of his strength, he lied to her and gave her false information: (Judges 16: 6-14)
 - 1st time, if anyone ties me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried
 - Philistines Attack failed
 - 2nd time, if anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used

- Philistines Attack failed
 - 3rd time, if you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on the loom and tighten it with the pin.
 - Philistines Attack failed
- Samson gave in to Delilah's prodding (v.15-19)
 - Philistines Attack succeeded – Samson's eyes were gouged out and Samson was in captivity (v. 20-22)
 - Remember Samson gave in to his first woman's prodding (Judges 14:16-17)

Think for a moment:

1. We may wonder why Samson did not protect himself? If you think about it, when one really deep in sin, it really affects their judgment. Another way to put it is that Samson cannot remove himself from the relationship. Therefore, Delilah took advantage of the situation and said, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me?" (v15)
2. Think about this, this is a powerful way a wife can get her way. I can imagine any husband would find it difficult not to surrender if any of their wives say a powerful phrase like that – "How you can say, 'I love you,' when you...?"
3. What's the truth of Samson's strength?

Samson's hair is a symbol of his close relationship with the LORD. When Samson lost his strength, the problem is not on his hair. The real problem is Samson's heart. God left him while Samson was still unaware. Don't think that God must be with you when He uses you and God gave you giftings to build up others. For example, if one served God their whole life and one thought that God was with his/her and one thought that they are doing God's work but they never face the sin and evil in their heart and do what's right in their eyes, and even at last discover God was not in their heart, how tragic and sad was that? Samson landed where he was because he did things that were only right in his eyes, so God left him.

3. The reappearance of Samson's secret strength.

- Samson's final revenge
- **God's Grace** – God gave Samson strength after Samson called on God (v. 28-30)

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- **God's Work** – Samson led Israel for 20 years in the days of the Philistines (v.31)

Think for a moment:

1. This time, Samson's strength comes from his dependency on God.
 2. What is dependence on God look like? Luke 18:9-14
- Jesus told his disciples a parable one time. Jesus said that there were two people who entered the temple. One is a Pharisee who has lots of Bible knowledge with a high moral standard. This Pharisee bragged about his ability to firmly meet the laws and precepts of the Bible and consider himself better than the person behind him who is a tax collector. Another one is a tax collector who was considered a country traitor and hated by many according to that day and age. He also came to the temple to pray but he prayed that God has mercy on him a sinner.

3. Take a guess, which one of the two would be God be pleased? God would be pleased by the one who is humble with a remorseful heart. Samson fell deep in sin but God still heard his prayer.

4. Although we are not as bad as Samson, we still have many areas in our lives that are not pleasing to God. For example, we didn't follow God's direction when the Holy Spirit moved us to follow his lead and as a result, we walked away from God.

Final Thoughts:

1. There are many temptations in the world and many of them go after our carnal needs and desires.
2. We are reminded to do be careful to do what is right in our own eyes.
3. We need to draw close to God and surrender to God. Allow Him to use us to build up others.
4. When we are prideful, rejected the Holy Spirit's guidance, we not only hurt ourselves, but we may also bring trouble to the people around us.
5. How powerful the temptations from our carnal needs? What would you do with those prevailing temptations?
6. If today, you know that you are away from God, does the story of Samson help you to turn back to God?
7. What are you struggling with today? Ask God to give you the strength to live out his desires for you and share your struggles with those Christians, you trust and allow them to pray for you.

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