

“The Gospel According to Samson: Redeemed from Our Appetites” (Judges 16:16-31)

(Pray) – *written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come... I see my own sin here, have mercy on me!*

Opening Illustration: I have to admit Samson was one of my favorite biblical characters; he was UFC way before there was UFC (he would crush UFC fighters today)

- When I was a kid I wondered what would ever happen if Samson fought Goliath – sort of a first Wrestlemania
- **Preacher that several years ago at Christmas... with Jesus as the best-seller** – one of the problems posed to this manufacturer was what if children are pitting Jesus against lets say a Spiderman figure in a fight? Boys will do that you know... with the makes saying we hope parents will step in and keep Jesus in a safe place!
 - o **RDM says of this** “*The blood-drenched world emperor of Revelation chapter 19, the sovereign of all of the universe has to be protected by parents from left over He-man action figures in a child’s playroom*”
 - o **And isn’t this how we view biblical characters sometimes, even Jesus himself?** Like vegetables? Cartoon characters? And I am afraid it can at times move us away from the reality of what is going on in a true story like Samson...

We live in a world of enemies:

- **Internal – Lust, greed, etc** – enemies that begin at the level of self and that we cultivate as our sinful appetites grow (**2 Pastors???** – *way that seems right to a man that lead to destruction*)
- **External – tsunamis, cancer, etc** – that have come upon the World through the fall...
 - o **And I am afraid that viewing biblical story lines through the lens of cartoon can help us miss that we have real enemies and a real hero who can defeat them – those that we cannot help and those that we can.**

In the Scriptures we see real warfare, real struggle and a real warrior who defeats enemies on behalf of his people!

Main Idea: God provides a champion who delivers us from our enemies and our own sinful appetites

Here is the Judges Context – The Cycle: *The Israelites do not realize they need a hero to deliver them – they did what was right in their own eyes, but evil in the eyes of the Lord*

- **The Refrain is continual** “*In those days there was no King in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes!*” (17:6) – this is to show them they need a true leader, not a temporary judge, but a King who will deliver them! And the text is setting the stage to say this King is needed, and He is coming!

The Cycle (VERSE 13:1 says, *the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, so the Lord gave them into the hand of the Philistines*) FALL INTO SIN... TURN TO PAGAN RITUALS... GOD ALLOWS ENEMY TO OPPRESS THEM... CRY OUT/REPENT... RAISES UP A JUDGE... CYCLE REPEATS

- **So although they dwell in the land (THE CONQUEST IS DONE), their disobedience prevents enjoyment of the promises as they should...** but the Lord is faithful to his covenant with them and he continues **to bring up leaders filled with the Spirit to deliver them**
- **This is the theme of the book of Judges – Israel trusts their own eyes/appetites instead of God (set themselves up as God)**

- Main problem is they want physical deliverance; don't realize their lack of Spiritual deliverance is what continues to lead to their physical bondage!
 - o **Problem behind the problem** – their appetites are leading to their physical destruction – IS THE SAME TRUE OF US?

And this time they don't even cry out, THEY HAVE BECOME comfortable with enemy oppression

In the midst of this rebellion is a Miraculous Birth (Chapter 13): The Spirit zeroes in on a barren couple and God's grace is made evident in the miraculous pronouncement of a hero who is to save his people! A champion named Samson who is to be a Nazarite that never cuts his hair

- **His uncut hair** is a sign of his power given by God so he can deliver his people from the Philistines v. 13:5 tells us!
- **And the text pictures him just like Samuel and Jesus as beginning to grow in stature and the Spirit beginning to stir him (13:25)**

We misunderstand the Spirit

- Christian joy sprinkling pixie dust?
- Christian mascot?
- Or that you are ready for a healing ministry on TBN
- **In the OT when Spirit shows up someone is about to get hurt** – The Spirit is a sign of warfare (*and it is in your life as well*)

And Samson, as the Spirit empowered Judge, fights to rescue his people in miraculous ways:

- **Killing a lion** with his bare hands, as one tears a young goat – HOW IS THAT FOR IMAGERY (PUT THAT ON A FLANNEL GRAPH – **why isn't that mural getting painted in children's rooms**) (14:5-6)
- **Killing of 30 philistines** (14:19-20 – **defeating the enemies of God**)
- **Burning of fields with the foxes (15:4-8)**
- **Killing a thousand with a donkey's jawbone (15:12-15) TELL THE NARRATIVE!**
 - o **Judah turns on him here (14:11** – *do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us?)* – **The people that should have understood Genesis 3:15** are so far gone, and so comfortable with enemy oppression and their own sin that they turn their back on the anointed one.
 - o **They don't even realize they need a champion/hero and most of the times neither do we** – *this is a foretaste of being separated from God when we are comfortable with the principalities having power in our lives, especially when it causes to think we don't need a mediator, we don't need a hero to rescue us!*

Braveheart – who knows the line, “every man dies, but not every man truly lives?” – Great movie – but just like here, his countrymen are comfortable with being slaves and so they turn on him!

- **Here they want to turn over the one who has been brought up to deliver them...** betrayal like this will be seen again!
- **He also tears off the city gates (16:3)**

He is being the Spirit-Empowered deliverer needed for the people... **defeating the enemies of God that would cut off the line** – **God is protecting the line of woman so that Genesis 3:15 will come to pass!**

- He promised in the garden to send someone to crush the dragon's head and **Revelation 12 tells us that ever since the dragon has sought to cut off the seed of the woman** – and here is he using the Philistines to attempt it
 - o But God continues to bring up heroes to deliver the people!

- That is point one, but what is odd... in this story, Samson is both the hero that delivers, and the one who needs to be delivered!

I. (Read 16:16-18) We need a champion who will deliver us, we must not/cannot be self-reliant

Samson had been the hero of the story – mighty feats, he is saving the people, as I have stated...

But now the text is clear that the hero is slipping. Evidence that he is not this promised one of Genesis 3:15.

- Samson displays the egregious sin of self-reliance – **he almost thinks he is god** by breaking his nazarite vow.
- He did not see Delilah as a threat, though he should have – **3 TIMES she tries to deceive him!**
 - Bind with 7 fresh bowstrings that have not been dried
 - Bind me with new ropes that have not been used
 - Weave seven locks on my head with a web and fasten them tight with a pin

He finally tells her his source of strength probably because he had begun to believe that his strength lies with him instead of from God

- **His hair was not magical; it signaled that his power came from above** (the Underdog in these stories is not David, etc... God is not the underdog)
- **But I think he believed even with the cutting of his hair he would succeed** – v. 20 *“I will go out as at other times and shake myself free”*
- **Samson displays an anti-gospel – self-reliance is the height of arrogance:** Telling our Maker I am fine on my own, I don’t need you!
 - **It is Anti-Gospel because it is basically the attitude that I do not need a mediator, I can stand before God as my own savior, on my own merits – and I don’t need Jesus! And for that we will be judged**

Illustration – most popular non-religious song: Frank Sinatra’s “I did it my way” **hear the rebellion in that...**

- You see there is something deep in human hearts that wants to say this, and Satan tempts us in that way.... *Has God said?*
- **He wants us to say “my will” not thy will...**

And the text is showing us the Israelites, nor Samson can do it on their own – They need a king to rescue and rule them (ONE WHO DOES WHAT IS RIGHT IN THE LORD’S EYES AND NOT HIS OWN)

II. (16:19-21) Sinful appetites destroy – retell narrative. You see sin always starts small. It crouches at the door.

The enemies (Satan) notices in your life what catches your eye or causes your heart to flutter – And in the fullness of time they will offer it to you.

- **They will give you that which you crave for... and that is what happens with Samson here – he had already been displaying his struggle with Philistine women before**

Samson, as my brother says, should have heard the Jaws music:

- He took a Nazarite vow:

- He wont drink
- He wont touch dead things (he did in 14:8-9, the lion he killed, bees had swarmed there and scooped the honey out)
- He wont marry pagans

- **He has already violated all of these... and each small step along the road his appetites are leading to destruction, *because there is a way that seems right to a man...***

His appetite for women and his self-reliance – end up crushing him. It started small with marrying a pagan, but it has brought him to his knees

- **Twice it says of this pagan woman, she is right in MY eyes...** he is like all of Israel! (v. 3 & 7)
 - Even though the text shows, that God will even use his sin to accomplish his purposes (**Rom. 8:28**)

He did what was right in his eyes... his appetites controlled him... and they do us as well

- **This sin grows in 16:1 as he goes into a prostitute...**
 - And the Philistines know his weakness and **ask Delilah to seduce him (16:4) and they will give her silver for her betrayal of Samson**
 - **And he is now humiliated, eyes gouged out and taken captive by a foreign army and the enemy of God's people! Once again made a slave to grind at the mill for the enemies of God! His appetites destroy him and put the whole nation in jeopardy!**

Application: How does Sin begin to creep in? In Samson's and our life? It begins by neglecting the Word of God and the people of God (the church).

This is a War – do we minimize sin? Do we see the fight with our enemies as war?

- Do we see sin as something outside of us? Or something that we are?
- **It will start small but leads to destruction...** love is pointing this out for a brother or
- **This is an Ancient problem that goes back to the garden itself – Adam was meant to rule and have dominion and instead he disobeyed and did what was right and appealing in his own eyes...**
 - **But this also not so ancient – we are all like Adam in the garden doing what is right in our own eyes – PACKER!**
 - And because of this, there are enemies that would seek to destroy us! Some we bring on ourselves, others are a part of the first sin from Adam!

APPLICATION: Ask yourself the question, right now where you sit, what small sin is starting to creep into my life? What is getting easier for me to excuse? What appetite is the enemy beginning to feed you on to fatten you up for the day of destruction?

- Lust?
- Lying?
- Greed?
- Image?
- Acceptance?

This is how it starts:

- **Pornography** – I will just look this once and then erase the history and no one will ever know... and then you do it again

- **Lust for another** – I’ll just flirt a little, what is the harm...
 - o **Ill just wonder this once what it would be like to hold Edward’s hand** – by the way if that movie had the reverse effect, and older men were swooning over teenage stars we would want to put them on a **sex offenders list**
- **Parenting** – I’ll just excuse this one behavior in my child...

WHAT IDOLS IS HE SIZING YOU UP FOR NOW? WHAT CAUSES YOUR HEART TO RACE?

Application: The answer to fight this – **we need a deliverer who will rescue us from our destructive appetites, who can himself stare down these appetites and say NO!**

- *A Deliverer that we love and value so much that our love for Him is stronger than our lust for our appetites*

CS Lewis: Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

- **And this King gives us the Spirit** just like Samson early in the story and the church to **MAKE WAR ON OUR FLESH** together and replace our weak affections with Greater Ones!

III. (16:21-30) God fights on behalf of his people and delivers victory through one man (A Champion)

So the result of Samson’s sin, God departs from him and he doesn’t even know it. His strength is gone, but God’s grace appears “*His Hair Began to Grow*” (16:22)

(Read 23-25) The hero is now humiliated and the false god is worshipped – IT’S A PAGAN WORSHIP SERVICE

- *Samson is humiliated, beaten, blinded, mocked, and brought out to be made a spectacle of... and yet he is placed between the two pillars*

(Read 26-30) The Faith of Samson – a demonstration of Gospel faith!

- **I need to dispel one thought:** *Was this guy regenerate?* Lets be careful not to raise his level of sinfulness above others in the text, but lets remember that **Hebrews 11** certainly says he is in the hall of faith and a TYPE OF CHRIST.
- **We are called to emulate this faith – this is ultimately what saves us from our enemies – trust that God has provided a one man – champion, a greater Samson to defeat our enemies for us!**
- **He cries out to God that he would remember him** (SOUND FAMILIAR) And Samson cries and God hears him and delivers him and the Pillars come down and the roof crashes on the heads of the Philistines, **causing more to be killed by Samson in his death than in his life.** (SOUND FAMILIAR) ROUGH END TO A WORSHIP SERVICE!

ABUNDANT MERCY – NO ONE IS TOO FAR GONE: God demonstrates his loving-kindness and that his mercy is abounding by continuing to use a man who continually fails

You may ask how do we apply this story to our lives?

- **Is it that Samson was strong and tough so we should be too?**
- **Or is that when we are ticked off and done wrong to we take up the donkey's jawbone and take people out?**
 - o **NO, it is that we identify with the Israelites** and we look for a hero to fight for us, even when we don't think we need one. DEEP DOWN WE KNOW WE DO!
 - o **We win the victory by having faith in another – It is actually to realize that you cannot face your enemies on your own.** It means understanding you are in real warfare and you do not seek justice on your own or defense on your own.

Christocentric Conclusion: Samson is not our hero, he himself needs deliverance, but he is pointing forward to the Hero we need.

- **Why is he not?** Because the only one that can ascend the hill of the Lord is the man **with clean hands and a pure heart... the wages of sin is death and Samson falls short**
- **My brother says, "In spite of the failures in Samson's life he does point us forward to the Great Deliverer."**
 - o **He gives us just a glimpse of a king that is to come that can defeat God's people's enemies... both external and internal!**

There will be another:

- **One man champion – Whose birth was miraculously foretold by an Angel**
- **Another who is Spirit-anointed to take on the enemies of God and His people**
- **Another man betrayed by his own people and given over to pagan oppressors** because His countrymen were so at ease with the foreign culture.
 - o **Even the brothers of Judah would turn on Him**
- **Another betrayed by a kiss for silver**
- **Another man arrested, not blinded, but blindfolded and mocked and humiliated by a foreign army**
- **Another who seems to be forsaken by God...**
- **Another who's victory would crush the heads of his enemies**
- **Another would gain greater victory in His death than life...**
- **One who would also pray remember me and God** would hear and pull his champion out of death, defeating all his enemies and then delivering his people...

But there is part of this story that Samson does not appropriate – This one is no rebel, This one does not give in to his appetites

- And this one's death, unlike Samson's who's death killed God's enemies, this one's death will actually rescue and save God's enemies (INCLUDING US)
- This is Jesus of Nazareth...

And how could he be our delivering champion? RESURRECTION (V. 31) – lie with their fathers: You see throughout the Old Testament they have been looking for this promised one that could defeat the serpent. And everyone they think it might be dies. Adam fails and dies... then Seth... **then Samson (v. 31) BURIED WITH THEIR FATHERS... King DAVID... And all the kings that follow him have a line written of them as they die, it says they died and were buried with their fathers.**

- **But in the first century... Another King is buried and rests with his father, BUT THIS TIME FOR ONLY 3 DAYS**
 - o **Why?** Because the only one that can ascend the Hill... on that Sunday morning there was only one champion, one man that could fit that bill

- **A King who had been tempted by his appetites** and turned to the snake-god and said, **man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God!**
- **A King who said, not my will, but thy will...**

One who was in every way like we are, yet without sin... doing what is right in the eyes of His Father!

HOW HE GAINED VICTORY: *And Jesus Christ is the deliverer you need, who showed the power to kill our enemies by triumphing over them in the cross, by **bearing in His body all of the evil of the World** (both internal and external) and bearing in our place the punishment our sins and all this evil deserves, and then showing His victory over it and then walking out of a hole in the ground 3 days later! **THIS IS GOOD NEWS!***

WANT VICTORY/DELIVERANCE? HERE HE IS – PLEASE TURN TO CHRIST

- **Believer** – you need to turn and see this King as **more precious than your appetites and more powerful than anything that come against you**, even when the doctor says, “its cancer”
 - **Turn from those weak appetites to the one who died so you could be forgiven of them and crush them!**
- **Unbeliever** – you need to realize that this Jesus is the only one that can rescue you – **stop doing life that is right in your own eyes and turn to Him.**
 - **Confess that you cannot save yourself and plead for Christ too...** He will give you rest!

Final Application: **WE say we trust him to take us to heaven when we die, and yet we often don't trust him for everyday life!** We let jobs, friendships, setbacks, finances, and even tough things like cancer cause us to live in such despair

- Samson's power is puny compared to His...

Consider his power – Piper quote: *He is supreme in every admirable way over everything: over galaxies and endless reaches of space; over the earth from the top of Mount Everest 29,000 feet up, to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean 36,000 feet down into the Mariana Trench; He is supreme over all plants and animals, from the peaceful Blue Whale to the microscopic killer viruses; over all weather and movements of the earth: hurricanes, tornadoes, monsoons, earthquakes, avalanches, floods, snow, rain, sleet; over all chemical processes that heal and destroy: cancer, AIDS, malaria, flu, and all the workings of antibiotics and a thousand healing medicines. He is supreme over all countries and all governments and all armies; over Al Qaeda and all terrorists and kidnappings and suicide bombings and ... He is supreme over all politics and elections...and over all business and finance and industry and manufacturing and transportation...As Abraham Kuyper used to say, “there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, ‘Mine!’”*

Do we see this power? Or do we let the accuser convince us that Christ is weak to deliver?

- **Do we really believe there is no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus? That it is finished?**
- Is he really more precious to us than our appetites? More powerful than them?
- **Do we really believe that all authority on heaven and earth has been given to him?**
- **Or are we playing with Jesus action figures... only He can deliver all of us in here from that road that seems right to us, but leads to destruction!**