

LESSON'S FROM THE LIFE OF SAMSON

Associate Minister's Class

3-29-14

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INTRODUCTION: A solid, consistent, straight, and vertical line – always displaying an upward direction - does not typify the life and ministry of God's servants. Nor is our life and ministry represented by a solid, consistent, and straight horizontal line – unwavering and constant.

A “wavy” line that reflects a mixture of successes and failures – advances and retreats – victories and losses most accurately represents the life and ministry of God's servants.

Personal and spiritual heights and depths are inevitable in the life of a minister. However, as we grow in Christ, we want the “line of our life” to have fewer, and less frequent waves.

Today, we will spend our time together seeking to learn lessons on how to keep the upward direction of our walk, steadily moving higher. We will use as our example, God's servant, Samson.

We are going to survey Judges 13-16, which chronicle the birth, life, and death of this great Old Testament figure.

1. Who would like to begin our class by asking, who would like to tell us what you know about Samson?
2. The story of Samson begins in Judges 13 (please turn). Judges records the history of Israel after Moses, and after Joshua. There was no single leader/King among the people. They were led by Judges, who seemed to have been raised up, during times of national crisis, or threat by enemies. In Judges 13 the Jews had been turned over into the hands of the Philistines, due to their disobedience.
3. Someone please read Judges 13:1-5. I would like us to focus on the part in verse 5 that states, “for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb.” What was the significance of the designation “Nazarite,” as it is used in this verse?
4. A “Nazarite” was one that vowed to consecrate himself to God and His service. Let us examine this vow in Numbers 6:1-7.
5. Samson' commitment to the ways of a Nazarite was not voluntary on his part, rather, it was a calling given to him from birth. How long was Samson to live under the elements of a Nazarite?
6. One of the things that it is important for you and I to remember as Ministers of the Gospel, is that our calling is life-long – it is not temporary, or for “a season.”

7. This is important for us to remember as we move through life and ministry. If God called us, then we are expected to *continue* in the ministry – in spite of hardships, trials, challenges, or even MISSTEPS along the way! Samson is going to demonstrate this fact to us.
8. Someone please read Judges 13:24-25
9. Let us now move to chapter 14. Someone please read verses 1-2.
10. There may be may be multiple things in this verse, for which we might find fault in Samson; however, what is the primary mistake that Samson made? (He desired one of the women *of the Philistines*)
11. What is the problem with Samson's desire for this woman?
12. The amazing thing about these two verses is that they set the stage for everything else that we see happen in Samson's life!
13. What are some of the spiritual flaws that we immediately see in Samson, that are potential problems?
 - a. a willingness to be in close fellowship with the enemies of God, and the enemies of God's people (God had raised Samson up for the very purpose of delivering God's people from their oppressors – the Philistines).
 - b. a weakness for women.
 - c. a callous, reckless and even contemptuous view of the anointing on his life (much like Esau's view of his birthright).
14. Like Samson, we as Ministers of the Gospel, are not subject to a multitude of vices, and carnalities. Instead, if we will examine our lives carefully, we will find that most of our problems stem from *repeat offenses*. Like Samson, we continue to fight the same devils, all our lives!
15. The question is how do we keep these weaknesses from hindering our walk; and destroying our ministry? (II Corinthians 10:3-4)
16. Ministers must be involved in the same spiritual disciplines that we preach to others (fasting, prayer, worship, Bible study).
17. Someone read verses 4-5.
18. How does Samson's parents feel about his request?

19. What is God's plan regarding this relationship?
20. This is an astonishing revelation by the writer of Judges! There is no indication that Samson was, at this point in his life, anything but self-centered and carnal. It is highly unlikely that Samson sought this woman for God's purposes. Yet, God's willingness to use this unholy relationship reveals something to us about Him. What is it? (Our failures and sins cannot frustrate the plan of God – I Corinthians 9:27)
21. Someone read verses 5-6
22. These verses introduce us to the power of Samson, and the gift that God has given him. Who would like to tell us what happens, in your own words?
23. We are also introduced to another occasion of Samson's disregard for his calling and anointing as a Nazarite. Who can tell us what it is? (Samson should not have been in a vineyard)
24. Again, we see Samson's disregard for his calling!
25. Samson's life is a warning for all of us. We too will fall, if we take our calling and anointing. *Gifting* does not give us permission to disobey God.
26. Someone read verses 7-9.
27. What is it that Samson does, that is against his covenant with God, as a Nazarite? (He eats from the dead body of a lion)
28. Why does Samson do this? (It is another example of the fact that his fleshly appetites, rather than the Holy Spirit control him)
29. Now let us move to chapter 15. Someone read verses 14-15.
30. Here, we have the famous account of Samson's slaying of 1000 Philistines, with a donkeys jawbone. How was Samson able to accomplish such an amazing feat? (The Spirit of the Lord came on him)
31. With what we have come to know about Samson, what lesson can we draw from this incident? (God will sometimes use us mightily, even when we He is not pleased with us personally. However, *God's patience* with us, does not necessarily equate to *God's pleasure* with us.

32. Someone read verse 18-19.
33. Who can describe for us the remarkable attributes of both Samson and God in these two verses?
- Samson is thoroughly self-centered, and unthankful.
 - God is loving, kind, patient; and condescends to meet the need of His ungrateful servant.
34. How many of you would respond to an ungrateful child in this manner? (God is better than we are!)
35. Let us move into Chapter 16. Someone read verse 4.
36. Judges introduces us to a woman named Delilah. Who knows of what group Delilah belonged? (Philistines) What is different about Samson's connection with this woman? (He loved her)
37. We see a progression – a noticeable move toward Samson's fall. His connection with these women moves from casual, to covenant (he married one earlier), to full emotional embrace.
38. This is the pattern common in the fall of every servant of God. We begin "dabbling" in that which is outside of God's will. Before you know it, we are *fully* taken away in the sin!
39. Someone read verse 5.
40. Samson is completely blind to his backslidden condition. Yet, who is fully aware? (The Philistines)
41. When we are blind to the fact that we are on the wrong track, our earthly enemies (people), and our spiritual enemy (the devil), are not. What is the plan of the Philistines?
42. We are not trapped by the things do not love/enjoy/embrace. The opposite is always true!
43. Someone read verse 6-7.
44. What does Delilah ask him? What is his response?

45. We again see a “progression” beginning. Samson, even so far from God’s will, yet has enough light to put up some resistance to his enemy.
46. Someone read verse 8-9.
47. After this incidence, why do you think Samson did not “wise up” and cut ties with Delilah?
48. The answer lay in the same reason we do not “run for the hills” when the Holy Spirit screams to us that we are in the wrong place.
- we think we are strong enough to “manage” disobedience.
 - God’s grace in bringing us through the consequences, gives us a false sense of security.
 - we foolishly believe our anointing makes us invincible – even in disobedience.
 - we foolishly believe that as His minister, we are indispensable.
49. Someone read verse 10-12.
50. Again, a similar scene is repeated; and Samson is still none the wiser!
51. Someone read verses 13-15.
52. Do you notice anything about Samson’s reply in this exchange that is reason for greater alarm? (He is allowing her closer to his source of strength)
53. Someone read verses 16-19.
54. How does the text describe Samson telling Delilah the true source of his strength? (He told her all that was in his heart) The downward progression has come to its natural end!
55. Before we move further, I would like us to take note of something significant in each of Samson’s replies to Delilah (verses 7, 11, 17). What do these verses tell you about the source of Samson’s power? (Without the anointing, Samson would be just “like any other man!”)
56. Someone read verse 20.
57. This is one of the saddest verses in all of scripture. God’s anointing had left Samson, and he did not know it! (*discuss*)

58. Someone read verse 21.
59. Who would like to describe the pitiful condition of God's servant, found in this verse?
60. This is what it looks like when we fall!
61. Someone read verse 22.
62. Within the same chapter, we find one the saddest verses in the Bible, along with one of the most magnificent! Samson's hair began to grow back!
63. What does this tell us about God's connection with His people?
- a. God chastens us, but He never leaves us.
 - b. what other's think is the end of us, is not *necessarily* the end.
 - c. God's grace and mercy and restore us.
64. Someone read verse 23-27.
65. The enemies of God, and the enemies of Samson, rejoice over his miserable state.
66. Someone read verse 28.
67. What do we observe Samson doing here, that we have never seen him do before? (He called on God, that His ultimate purpose would be done)
68. Someone read verses 29-30.
69. How does the writer describe Samson's destruction of the Philistines?
70. When God's power, is used for the purposes of God's plan, we will accomplish great things!