

Samson Pt. 2

Judges 15:9 - 16:31

Sunday, 29th September 2024

Judges 15: 9-13

⁹ The Philistines went up and camped in Judah, spreading out near Lehi. ¹⁰ The people of Judah asked, "Why have you come to fight us?"

"We have come to take Samson prisoner," they answered, "to do to him as he did to us."

¹¹ Then three thousand men from Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, "Don't you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? What have you done to us?"

He answered, "I merely did to them what they did to me."

¹² They said to him, "We've come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines."

Samson said, "Swear to me that you won't kill me yourselves."

¹³ "Agreed," they answered. "We will only tie you up and hand you over to them. We will not kill you." So they bound him with two new ropes and led him up from the rock.

- 1. The Israelites didn't want to get involved in Samson's dispute with the Philistines, who God had 'put them in the hands of' (Judges 13:1). Should they have become involved and helped Samson to deliver their freedom? Why do you think they remained neutral given that there were 3,000 of them?**
 - 2. Is our tendency to remain neutral, to not rock the boat, when we should be speaking out:**
 - **When things are said, that are not right;**
 - **When things are done, that are not right;**
 - **When injustices are committed that are not right.**
- This can be locally, in our community, in our country, in the world.

Judges 15: 14-17

¹⁴As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands. ¹⁵Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men.

*¹⁶Then Samson said,
“With a donkey’s jawbone
I have made donkeys of them.
With a donkey’s jawbone
I have killed a thousand men.”*

¹⁷When he finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone; and the place was called Ramath Lehi.

- 3. Lots of people like murder mysteries, which are often committed with a variety of different objects. Samson killed a thousand men with a donkey’s jawbone. If you were planning to kill the officer, how would you do it and what weapon would you use?**

Judges 15: 18-20

¹⁸Because he was very thirsty, he cried out to the Lord, “You have given your servant this great victory. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?” ¹⁹Then God opened up the hollow place in Lehi, and water came out of it. When Samson drank, his strength returned and he revived. So the spring was called En Hakkore, and it is still there in Lehi.

²⁰Samson led^[d] Israel for twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

- 4. Having killed a 1,000 men, Samson thought he would ‘die of thirst’. God gives us the strength to do great things, things out of our comfort zone. However, after we can feel very isolated, vulnerable, weak – another example would be Elijah 1 Kings 18 & 19. Samson cried out to the Lord for water, which he supplied. Can you think of time when you called out and the Lord provided for your need? Share with the group.**
- 5. Having won the battle, Samson ‘led Israel for twenty years’ – the only reference to his leadership. Do you think he had changed from his**

colourful youth and became a good Judge? What outrageous things did you do in our past and how have they moulded you into the person you are today?

Judges 16: 4-20

Samson and Delilah

⁴ Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. ⁵ The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver."

⁶ So Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued."

⁷ Samson answered her, "If anyone ties me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man."

⁸ Then the rulers of the Philistines brought her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and she tied him with them. ⁹ With men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the bowstrings as easily as a piece of string snaps when it comes close to a flame. So the secret of his strength was not discovered.

¹⁰ Then Delilah said to Samson, "You have made a fool of me; you lied to me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied."

¹¹ He said, "If anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used, I'll become as weak as any other man."

¹² So Delilah took new ropes and tied him with them. Then, with men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the ropes off his arms as if they were threads.

¹³ Delilah then said to Samson, "All this time you have been making a fool of me and lying to me. Tell me how you can be tied."

He replied, "If you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on the loom and tighten it with the pin, I'll become as weak as any other man." So while he was sleeping, Delilah took the seven braids of his head, wove them into the fabric ¹⁴ and tightened it with the pin.

Again she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and pulled up the pin and the loom, with the fabric.

¹⁵ Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me

the secret of your great strength.”¹⁶ With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to death of it.

¹⁷ So he told her everything. “No razor has ever been used on my head,” he said, “because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother’s womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man.”

¹⁸ When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, “Come back once more; he has told me everything.” So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. ¹⁹ After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him.

²⁰ Then she called, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” He awoke from his sleep and thought, “I’ll go out as before and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had left him.

6. Chapters 14, 15 & 16 all start with Samson courting women, and all end in disaster and/or chaos. He doesn’t seem to have learnt from his mistakes and has a weakness in this area. We might not have the same weakness as Samson, but the likelihood is that we all have a weakness of one kind or another. This is called a ‘besetting sin’ and can be defined as: ‘a unique area of weakness in which we are particularly susceptible to give in when tempted’. If you feel comfortable share with the group what your ‘besetting sin’ is and how you avoid being tempted.

7. How many times did Delilah tempt Samson to tell her the secret of his strength? Read what Paul and Peter write:

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

I Peter 5

⁸ *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* ⁹ *Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.*

Do we have any excuse for succumbing to temptation?

- 8. Should we view our besetting sin as 'living with' and/or describe ourselves as recovering chocoholics, shopaholics,aholics?**

Judges 16: 21-22

²¹ *Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding grain in the prison.* ²² *But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.*

- 9. They say that pride comes before a fall. Should we have any sympathy with Samson, or did he bring it on himself? In the past what has caused you to fall? What did you learn from your mistakes?**

Judges 16: 23-31 The Death of Samson

²³ *Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands."*

²⁴ *When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, "Our god has delivered our enemy into our hands, the one who laid waste our land and multiplied our slain."*

²⁵ While they were in high spirits, they shouted, “Bring out Samson to entertain us.” So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them.

When they stood him among the pillars, ²⁶ Samson said to the servant who held his hand, “Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them.” ²⁷ Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. ²⁸ Then Samson prayed to the Lord, “Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.” ²⁹ Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, ³⁰ Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

³¹ Then his brothers and his father’s whole family went down to get him. They brought him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had led^[d] Israel twenty years.

- 10. It would seem that Samson, in his fallen state, had realised the error of his ways and turned back to God. What did Samson do when they took him to the Philistine temple? He had learnt not to rely on his own strength, but God’s. Have we learnt the same lesson in our lives? How?**

- 11. If you could leave a legacy, what would it be and why?**

- 12. Part of Samson’s prayer was: ‘Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please God, strengthen me.’ As we come to the end of our sharing, is there anything that we need to ask God’s strength for? If comfortable, share with the group for their support and encouragement.**

- 13. How much of the A-Z of Samson can you remember – have ago at reciting together.**