

Study of Samson - Part 5

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth Stewart

[0 : 00] Seeking the Lord's blessing, we'll turn to the part of his word which we read, the book of the Judges, and chapter 16.

And verse 20, Judges chapter 16, at verse 20.

And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep and said, I will go out as at other times before and shake myself.

And he knew not that the Lord was departed from. Especially these words, that he knew not that the Lord was departed from.

Over the past few weeks, we've seen how God raised up a deliverer in this man, Samson.

[1 : 12] And he was raised to free Israel from the yoke of the Philistines. And we saw how he led a consecrated life for the first 30 years or so of his life.

He was a Nazarite dedicated to God, marked out by his seven locks of hair. And we also saw how he took the gospel to the Philistines in the form of a riddle.

And how the Philistines rejected the gospel. They played with it and mocked it and rejected. And because of that, God unleashed judgments upon the Philistines through Samson.

And that reminds us that if we do not embrace the gospel through the Lord Jesus Christ, then he himself shall become our judge. And having rejected Samson, Samson therefore becomes the means of God's judgment being poured out upon themselves.

And we saw how Samson visited them in judgment. And that judgment culminated in the battle of Leahy, which we looked at last week. When Samson, with the moist, fresh, hard jawbone of Anas, slew himself 1,000 men.

[2 : 29] And that was after having been betrayed himself by the royal tribe of Judah. And that in itself foretold the Lord's own suffering and conquest.

For he was betrayed. And he was betrayed by his own. But still, at the height of his weakness, he turned and defeated his enemies. And we saw how Samson thirsted after his conquest.

And how the Lord lifted him up. And we saw how the same thing was through regarding Christ on the cross. After his conquest, he thirsted. But God raised his head before he passed into the life to come.

Now, although the men of Judah didn't fight with Samson, still, after the battle of Leahy, they appeared to have acknowledged him at last as God's Messiah for them.

Or as God's judge and leader. And we're told right at the end of chapter 15 that he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines 20 years.

[3 : 34] And that was from approximately 1075 BC to 1055 BC when Samson was accepted as a judge in Israel.

Now, that whole period of 20 years is passed over in silence. And that shouldn't make us forget what he did in that time.

He was a judge. He ruled. He taught. He taught the people in the word. He judged their cases. He was ruler in Israel for that length of time.

In other words, when you add these 20 years onto his 30 years of consecration, you'll find that for 50 years, Samson lived, in many respects, a model life of holiness.

And he was a judge over Israel. But then, sadly, in the last year of his life, we come across a different Samson. In the very last year, we find two incidents which indicate a man that has fallen away from the Lord and has backslidden into sin.

[4 : 41] Now, that's a sad thing to look at. And it's a sad thing for a man to experience or for anyone to hear about. But it is here. And it is written. And it is written by the Spirit of God for our learning, for our instruction, for our warning, and even looking at the end of it, for our comfort.

And so I want, with the Lord's blessing, to look with you at the last year of Samson's life, as we have it brought before us here. Now, you'll notice, just before I go into that, that the very last verse of chapter 15 says this, that he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines 20 years.

And then, the very last verse of chapter 16 says exactly the same thing. Or the very last sentence in that verse, we're told that he judged Israel 20 years.

Now, there you have, as I indicated last week, two brackets. And they mark off the last year of his life from the previous near 50 years. These brackets take within themselves this period in Samson's life, the last year, which was a year of declension, in which he fell into sin.

And if anyone thinks he stands, let him take heed, lest he fall. Now, I want us tonight, God willing, to look at his fall into sin, and the consequences which that brought into his own life.

[6 : 12] And God willing, next Sabbath evening, we'll look at the restoration of Samson, and his conquest in the temple. But tonight, we'll look at his fall into sin, and the consequences which that brought into his life.

Now, you'll notice that there were two incidents in chapter 16, distinct incidents. The first involves a woman in Gaza, and the second incident involves a woman in the Valley of Sorek, by the name of Delilah.

Now, both these episodes are connected. And one, I think, marks out the beginning of Samson's declension. And the other marks out the end.

And there are certain things true in Gaza, which, if you look at them and mark them, are bound to end up in the situation which you find with Delilah in the Valley of Sorek.

And backsliding is like that. Sin is like that. Backsliding is like that. It is a slide. It is a downward progression, or a downward regression, from one thing to another.

[7 : 24] And because certain things are not dealt with, then this is where it ends. And in that respect, Samson's life becomes a lesson for us all. Now, I want to look, first of all, very briefly, at the incident in Gaza, but then look more fully at what happened with Delilah.

Now, first of all, in Gaza, we're told right at the beginning of chapter 16, that Samson went to Gaza and saw there an harlot and went in unto her.

Now, Gaza was one of the leading Philistine cities. They had five major cities. And Gaza was the southernmost city. And Samson went there. We don't know why.

We are not told. The whole purpose of his mission is not revealed. But when he was there, he saw a harlot. He didn't seek one out, but he saw one.

And Samson was drawn aside by the power of his old nature. And he went in unto this harlot. And he finds himself off his guard.

[8 : 30] Or we find Samson off his guard. And he's caught in this net. Now, the word goes round quickly in Gaza that Samson is in the city. And when Samson is around, you cannot mistake him.

He has a distinctive appearance. There are the seven locks of hair which have marked him out from his youth as a man consecrated to God. Samson, the mighty warrior, is in the town.

But the word goes out where he is. The Philistines get ready. They don't ambush the house. They live in fear of him. What they do is they gather around the gates of the city. And they wait there until the break of day.

And there they are ready to ambush him. But somehow, mysteriously, Samson understands what is happening. Perhaps I'll come back to that later on tonight. He understands what is happening.

And at midnight, he gets up. And he goes out to the gates of the city when the men are sleeping and resting. When they're not expecting any activity to take place. He takes the gates.

[9 : 30] He pulls them off their hinges, bar and all. Puts them on his back. And goes up the hill that faces towards Hebron with them. Again, a mark of power. And a mark of strength.

He has done that as the mighty man of God. As God's warrior. And as God's deliverer. He took the gates of the city of sin and iniquity. On his back and out on top of the hill.

And to all intents and purposes, that looks like another triumph. Another triumph on the part of Samson. The mighty man of God. But I'll tell you this. There is something wrong with this incident. And there is something different here. In comparison with what we had before. And what's wrong is simply this. That Samson is in sin. He is in sin.

He saw a harlot. And he went into her. He was unprepared. And like David. He was caught. And he was ensnared.

[10:29] Now what I want you to notice. And in many ways. The only thing I want you to notice about this incident here is this. There is no reference. Here. To the leading. And to the guidance. Of the spirit of God. And that is different. To what we find before in Samson's life. It was the spirit. Who sent him down to Timnah. It was the spirit. That came upon him. When he met the lion. Roaring against him. And when he tore that lion apart. With his bare hands. In the strength of God the Lord. It was the spirit. That came upon him. It was the spirit. That came upon him at Leahy. When he snapped the ropes. With which he had been tied. And he slew the Philistines. With the job on Ahanas. But there is no mention.

Of the spirit of God. On him here at all. It is not the spirit. Who took him to Gaza. And neither are we told. That it was the spirit. Who made him take the gates.

[11:24] And put him on his back. And go up on top of the hill. No. You would say. Well. That must have been the spirit of God. Well indeed it must. But it is significant.

That we are not told it. There is a literary device here. Perhaps you could call it that. It is removed from the narrative. As though Samson is moving. Or he is beginning to move. In his own strength. In his own power. And in his own wisdom. And you will notice this too. Although he takes the gates. He does nothing about it. He doesn't go in to conquer. He doesn't try and rally. Anyone else. To try and conquer. He just takes the gates off. And he leaves it there. As though it is a show of strength. And a show of power. It is just an exploit. Which he does. And he leaves it at that. There seems to be no reason for it. It is just. In many respects. A show of strength.

[12:20] And then again. Notice this. There is no word. Of repentance. No word of change. No word of sorrow. Or of turning away.

He has gone in. To the harlot. And to all intents and purposes. That is that. Whoever he felt about it. There is no word of remorse. Or of repentance. It is just left there. And that gives us the impression. That Samson just never dealt with it. And my friends. If something like this comes in. And it is not dealt with. It is bound to grow. And it is bound to resurface. In one way or another. And so it does. It resurfaces. In the same. Last year. Of his life. And it resurfaces. In the valley of Sorek.

With this woman. Delilah. And it is this particular incident. That I want to look at. With you here. As the Lord enables us. Now. A few months after this.

[13:18] The Philistines hear news. That is good news for them. And that is that. The mighty Samson. Is involved. In an immoral relationship. With a woman.

In the valley of Sorek. By the name. Of Delilah. Now it is often said. That this woman was a harlot. But we are not told that. That is not said. In the scriptures at all. It is interesting. That the Philistines feel. That they can have some lever. On this woman. They feel that. That is why the lords. Of the Philistines. Go up to her. And they make their proposition. To her. But we are not told. That she was a harlot. At all. But the Philistines. Are encouraged to hear. That he is involved in this. Because they well remember. How his own wife. Was able to get the upper hand. Over him originally. They can remember that. How she pressed him. To the point. Where she got the riddle. Out of him. And so they believe. That if he is in this situation.

[14:17] She can press him. To the point. Where she can reveal. The secret of his strength. And to the Philistines. It is just magic. They wish to know the power. The source of it.

So they can weaken him. And torment. And afflict him. And so the five lords. Of the Philistines. Pay a visit. To Delilah. No the five lords. Are just the five rulers. Of the five major cities. They had their own structure. Of government. And over each city. Was one overlord. And the five lords. Of the Philistines. Pay a visit. To Delilah's home. And they have a proposition. To make. And that is this. That if she. Discovers. The secret. Of his strength. They will each give her. One thousand. One hundred. Pieces of silver. In other words. Five thousand. Five hundred. Pieces of silver. All together. And Delilah.

[15:13] Is persuaded. By the proposition. And she. Lays it. In her heart. And she. Purposes. To betray. The Messiah. Or to betray. The deliverer.

Of Israel. For five thousand. Five hundred. Pieces. Of silver. Now who is this woman? Well. Very often. We're told. She's a Philistine.

But again. I wish to draw attention. To this. That we're not told. That she is a Philistine. She lived in the valley. Of Sorek. Which was within. The boundary. Of the tribe.

Of Judah. And it is quite. Possible. That this woman. Is an Israelite. Quite possible. That she's an Israelite. But a woman. Perhaps of. Notorious. Morals.

And maybe that's. What persuades. These people. To try. And get one up on her. Now notice. The reason I incline. Towards her being. An Israelite. Is this. That one theme.

[16:08] Running through. Samson's life. Is that of betrayal. And betrayal. Is always from the inside. It is not from the outside. A betrayer. Comes from within.

He is first. Betrayed. By his own wife. He is secondly. Betrayed. By the men. Of Judah. Who should have helped him. And third. He is betrayed.

By this woman. Delilah. And I often wonder. Was she an Israelite woman. Either of the tribe. Of Judah. Or even. Of his own. Tribe. Dan. Which also.

Bordered. On the valley. Of Sorek. And I think. Another thing. That inclines us. Towards that. Is this. The sheer size.

Of the sum. Of the money. Which the Philistines. Are offering to her. Now. Perhaps if I put it. Into a modern. Context. That will help us. To understand it. When it talks here.

[17:02] Of 5,500. Pieces of silver. We are talking about. Approximately. 150. Pounds. In weight. Of silver.

Now we are talking about. A government. Of a country. Giving 150 pounds. In weight. 65 kilos. Of silver. To this woman. Thousands.

Upon thousands. Hundreds of thousands. Of pounds. Worth. To this woman. To betray. The deliverer. Into. Their hand. Was she a harlot?

Well. I don't know. But I want you to notice this. That Samson. Loved. This woman. Now I think that is important. He loved.

The woman. We are told. In verse 4. That it came to pass. Afterward. That he loved. A woman. In the valley of Sorek. Whose name was Delilah.

[17:59] And again. We are told. The same thing. In a roundabout way. In verse 15. When Delilah. Says this to him. How can you say. I love thee.

When thine heart. Is not with me. Now that tells us. That Samson. Had a love. For the woman. And had that kind of commitment.

Towards her. Where he evidently. Trusted her. And he thought. That she. Trusted him. That how wrong he is. Although she might be.

Of his own people. She is bought. And she is bought. With money. And that 150 pound. Weight of silver. Is enough. For her.

To take. The man of God. And to betray him. Into the hands. Of the Philistines. Now my friends. Samson. Is at fault. And he is in sin. But so is she.

[18:54] At fault. And so is she. In sin. And what's more. She knows who he is. And she knows. How God has used him. And she knows. Of his life. And his consecration.

And his power. Her. But even that. Was not sufficient. To stop her. And it was one thing. As it were. To be entangled with him. For which they are both. To blame. But it was another thing.

Even deeper. And worse. For her. To take him. Who he was. And to yield him over. Into the hands of those. Who would kill him. For that is doubtlessly. What they would do. They would destroy him. But for money. She did it. She is bought. There was a famous quotation. That every man. Has his price. No. Not every man. Has his price. But most men.

Have a price. And most women. Have a price. And she is bought. And she is bought. For filthy lucre. For thirty pieces. Of silver. Judas Iscariot.

[19:48] The one disciple. From the royal tribe. He betrays. The son of man. What is that thirty pieces worth. When he discovers. What he has done. When the awful blackness.

Of it comes home to him. He casts away. The thirty pieces. Of silver from him. He has gained the whole world. But he has lost his soul. And that is what Delilah has done. She has gained the world. But she has lost her soul. She has trifled herself. With holy things. And she has sold them. Into the hands. Of the Philistines. How many people. Are bought.

Bought from the way of truth. And bought. From the way of righteousness. So the minute Delilah discovers. The plan. She has to devise herself. And she does.

She has to think up. How to bring this secret. Out of Samson. Now I'll apply this in a moment. But. There are some aspects of this story. Which I think. Are important for us to understand.

[20 : 45] And if we don't understand them. We lose it all. I think we have to understand it in this way. That Delilah. Comes up with a kind of game. A kind of amusement.

And in this game. Or amusement. She's going to gradually. Prize the secret. Out of Samson. And the game is this. She comes from. And of course Samson.

Pretends to give the reason. And she carries it out. And then she says. The Philistines are upon you. And that is a kind of game. The Philistines are upon you.

And the minute he hears that. He shakes himself. He shakes himself loose. And his strength is revealed again. Now it's important to understand.

That the Philistines are not appearing at this point. She is just shouting it. Some other signal must be given. Before the Philistines actually come out. Samson is not aware.

[21 : 43] That there are Philistines in a chamber. Nearby. He's just not aware of that. To him it is just a game. The Philistines are upon you. So up he comes. And he casts off his rope.

Or he does whatever. Three times this works. First of all. He says. If you bind me. With the intestines of animals. That is really what the expression means. Probably cat gut. Or something to that effect.

If you bind me. He says with that. Then he says. I shall be as weak. As any other man. And she does it. She binds him. With the animal intestines. But when she shouts. The Philistines are upon you.

Samson. He snaps. The gut like that. And his strength is showed. He does it a second time. He says. If you take new ropes. Ropes. He says. That have never been used.

And he sounds so serious. And he sounds so persuasive. But he's playing the game. Bind me. He says. With new ropes. And I'll become as weak. As any man. And she does it. She binds him.

[22 : 38] With the ropes. The Philistines are upon you. Samson. He snaps the ropes. As though they had been consumed. By fire. The third time. She begins to press him.

Tell me. The real secret. Of your strength. And notice. He's moving towards his ear. He says. You take the seven locks. Of my head. And weave them.

Into the loom. And fasten. That loom is his. To the wall. And I shall become weak. Like any other man. And she weaves. The seven distinct.

Long locks. Of his head. Weaves them. Into the loom. And she fastens. The whole thing. To the wall. And then she shouts. The Philistines are upon you.

And Samson. Takes the whole thing. Out of the wall. And he shakes himself loose. By the strength. Of the Lord. Now for him. It's just a game. For him.

[23 : 32] It's just a game. But it's not a game. For her. Why? Because she has put the Philistines. Inside. The chamber. They're waiting. In the house.

They're not appearing. So Samson. At no point. Is suspicious. He doesn't know. What's going on. He doesn't recognize. That a snare. Is being laid for him. By the world.

A snare. Is being laid for him. There. By someone. Caught. In sin. And if he had been. More upright. He'd have recognized it himself. But he's gone. He's lost his eyes.

Spiritually. He doesn't detect. What's going on. You'll notice. Each time. Samson. Shakes himself loose. He doesn't encounter. Any Philistines. We're told that.

The first time. That he got up. And break the wills. As when it touches fire. He doesn't meet. Any Philistines. The same happens. When he takes his hair.

[24 : 27] Out from the loom. He doesn't meet. Any Philistines. Simply because. The prearranged signal. Has not been given. There is a kind of. Word between.

Delilah. And the Philistines. Which goes like this. That unless she gets. A clear signal. Unless they get. A clear signal. From her. Then. He still has.

His strength. And after three times. The Philistines. Are disillusioned. And when Samson. Is away. They come to her. And they say. That they're going home. And they return.

To their home. Now that makes this woman. More determined. Than ever before. And next time. Samson comes back. We're told. That she vexed him. With all the power. Of the temptress.

And with the subtlety. Of Satan. She comes. And she presses him. We're told. Daily with his words. And urged him. So that his soul. Was vexed to death. And she's saying. Why? You tell me.
[25 : 20] And you tell me. That you love me. And you're supposed to have told me. The truth. And you're just mocking me. She says. I really want to know. Yes. It's been a game. And it's been amusing. But I want to know.

The secret of your strength. And at last. Samson relinquishes. And he tells. And says. Since I've been a child. No razor has touched. The hair of my head.
But. He says. If I be shaven. My strength will go from me. And I shall become weak. Weak. Like any other man. And immediately. Delilah knows.

That this time. It's the truth. She knows that. And she sends a message down. To the lords of the Philistines. Come up. She says. Once more. He has told me.

Everything. In his heart. And sure enough. She lulls him. To sleep. And she has it arranged. For a man. To come through. Quietly. And to cut his hair.

[26 : 15] As he lies asleep. And she was. He was lulled. To sleep. On her lap. On her knees. She left him there. His hair is cut. But she checks it. She goes to him first.

Herself. And we're told. That she began. To afflict him. In other words. She began the game again. She tried. As it were. To deal with him. In a sporting kind of way. And she recognized.

Immediately. That Samson's strength. Was not the same. There was something. In this man. That was different now. He was not the same. As he was. His strength.

Had left him. And she allows him. To go back to sleep. Notice how often. The word sleep. Is appearing. I'll come back to that. She leaves him. To go back to sleep. And then she rouses him. With these words. The Philistines. Are upon you. Samson. But this time. It is no joke. In the meantime. She has gone through. To the chamber. And she said. When I give the call.

[27 : 08] Come. And make yourself known. The Philistines. Are upon you. Samson gets up. And they enter the room. But Samson says. I'll get up. He says. As I have always done.

I'll get up in my strength. And I'll shake myself. And the word means. I'll roar. As a lion roars. And was that not what he always was? Was he not the lion of God?

I'll roar. He says. As I roared before. But he knew not. That the Lord. Had departed from him. And he had become weak. Like any other man.

And the Philistines. Empowered him. They took him to Gaza. They put out his eyes. And they put him in a prison cell. And there. He grinded out. The corn.

Now. Friends. There are several things. I want to bring before you here. There is every indication in this chapter. Of a backslidden man.

[28 : 07] And a man who has fallen away from the Lord. And slid into a path of sin. All the symptoms of that spiritual disease. Are inside this story.

And I think. That relates to what I said a moment ago. He is constantly asleep. He is constantly falling asleep. Even when Delilah afflicts him there. Still he falls back into his sleep.

He is in sloth. He is in spiritual sloth. And he has fallen into that. Now. Let's see some of the marks of that. In this narrative.

First of all. There is pride. And I have no doubt that pride. Comes through. In this whole narrative. Pride in what? Well. Pride in his own strength.

Or I should say. And that's what makes it more sad. Pride in his God given strength. He became proud. Of what God had made him.

[29 : 04] As though he had made himself that. Now it's a remarkable thing. To be proud of something. That doesn't really belong to you. But it can happen. It can happen to the Lord's people.

Many of the Corinthians. In the early Corinthian church. Had gifts. Some of them had the gift. Of speaking in foreign languages. But we're told. That many of them. Began to exercise that gift. For sure. God had given it to them. But they stood up. And paraded their gift. The gift. Of being able to speak. In other languages. Which God had bestowed upon them.

We're told also. That Hezekiah. Had his heart. Lifted up. But why? Well this is mysterious too. Because of an answer to prayer. That God had given him.

God had given him a great sign. And extended his life. By 15 years. And Hezekiah. Suddenly became the talk of the town. And Hezekiah's heart.

[30 : 02] Became lifted up. To the point. Where God had to humble him. And bring him low. So that he would rediscover. What he was. And who he was. God had to bring him low.

To teach him that. His heart became. Lifted up. With pride. Lifted up. With pride. And here. Samson is beginning.

To glory. In what he has. And I think there's a trace of that. Even in Gaza. When he takes the gates. And carries the mirtle on his back. It is almost like an exploit. It is almost like a show.

And the way he does everything here. He is playing with his strength. You notice that. He is making a game of his strength. Obviously. He is glorying in it.

And he is not using it for the Lord. As he should. He is rather using it. For himself. Now my friends. We have to beware. Pride. You have your gift. And I have mine.

[30 : 59] The Lord has bestowed some on you. Some on me. Some on all his people. Whatever they be. And it's amazing what you can begin to glory in. Isn't it? All of the Lord's people know that.

How easy it is for you to lapse into glorying in something. That God has done in you. Or God has done through you. However small it may be. It can be even as little as getting particular liberty in prayer.

Or something like that in a meeting. And off you go. And you glory in it. As though it was yourself. As though it was off you. How easy it is. To become proud. And Samson became proud.

Of his own strength. After all. He was the object of attention. And that gradually told on him. You notice along with that. That there is this.

That he has a light view. Of sin. He is beginning to play around with it. To the point where he is entering into it. And going further and further.

[31 : 59] Now I'm sure he begins on the periphery. Like everybody else. After all. What's he doing in Gaza anyway? We're not told that the spirit took him there. As we're told that the spirit took him everywhere else.

He saw a harlot. Yes. But why did he see a harlot? I suppose you have to go back of the thing. And ask. Well how or why? Was he where he should not have been? Was he somewhere where it was too easy.

For his eye to be ensnared. And for his heart to be attracted. He saw her. And went into her. He didn't purpose to go to one. But he saw her. And went into her.

Now things like that friends. Don't just happen. There is something usually going on. In the heart. That prepares a person for that. It's the same with David.

Yes. He was on the upper room. He was on the rooftop. And he saw the woman bathing. But there's something lying back of that. What was it? That David was where he shouldn't have been in the first place.

[32 : 56] We're told at the beginning of the chapter. That it was the time when kings went out to war. And he's at home. In the middle of the day. Not doing his duty. And when you're out of your duty.

Well that is where Satan roams. That is where the lion roars. And the lion devours. And that's what happens here. He is wandering down to Gaza. And he sees a harlot.

And in he goes. He is moving on the periphery of sin. He's not careful where he's going. What he's doing. And he is ensnared. And you'll notice.

That everything. To him. In connection with this sin. Becomes a game. But sin. Doesn't play games. He's playing with sin. Sin's not playing with him. That's the tragedy of the thing. Sin doesn't know how to play. It only knows how to fight. Never plays games. It only fights battles.

[33 : 54] And it can sometimes seduce you. As though it's your friend. As though it will do you good. Come with me. And I'll do you good. But sin is only seeking an opportunity. To slay.

And to devour you. And to destroy you. And that is exactly what is happening here. Samson feels himself in control of sin. And he plays around with it.

But all the time. Sin is in control of himself. And you'll notice how he's going deeper. And deeper into it. He feels as though he's in control.

But he's not. It is rather gaining control over him. So he's playing around with sin. And along with that. There is something else.

And we'll put the three together in a moment. There is presumption. Samson has. And I think this is an awful thing. When it comes into us all. He has a feeling. That he is somehow.

[34 : 49] Spiritually indestructible. He has a feeling that it doesn't seem to matter. What he does. That God will be with him. And God will be for him. As though he's always going to be bailed out.

And he's never going to suffer the consequences of sin. Even perhaps as others have suffered the consequences of sin. And that doesn't come through anywhere. As clearly as it does in verse 20. When he wakes up. And he sees suddenly the Philistines around him. And he gets up and he says. I will shake myself. As I did before. Wrong. He will not shake himself.

As he did before. And why will he not do that? Because God will not be mocked. That is why. God will not be mocked.

Now it's interesting that. Even in Gaza. God gave him the strength. To put his gates on his back. And to go out. But it's significant.

[35 : 50] That sometimes you can misuse a thing like that. You know. God might not visit you. Right now. With the chastisement. Which your sin deserves. But it's very important.

That you still take stock of what your sin is. Because if you don't take stock of it. You're liable to misinterpret. God's easy dealing with you.

As though it's a signal that you can just go on. During the path that you're going. Well it's not so. It is not so. Samson misused. The long suffering of God here.

But God will not be mocked. I'll visit their faults with rods. And their sins with chastisements.

Chastisements. God will come. Because God has his own honor to vindicate.

He has a world to convince of the truth of the gospel. And he's not going to allow his own cause. To be brought down by open and flagrant sin. On the part of any child of his own.

[36 : 48] And I have to remember that. And so do you. He will not be mocked in that respect. And he will come. And he will visit with chastisements. Oh you say yes. But Samson was saved in the end.

Oh yes he was saved in the end. But don't despise the chastisement of God. And let myself.

Whenever I am contemplated. Whenever I am confronted with a temptation.

Let me never think. That God's chastisement upon me. Will be an easy thing. Ask the Corinthians. Who were dying in Corinth. Because of how lightly they viewed the Lord's table.

Ask them. Whether the chastisement of the Lord. Within the covenant. Is a light or easy thing. Ask Samson. Blind. No eyes.

In the prison cell. Grinding a massive stone. Round and round. A job done by a donkey. Ask him.

When he's doing that day and night. If the chastisement of the Lord. Is a light and easy thing.

[37 : 46] And yet sometimes. We can play. With sin. As though we are inviting. Or courting the judgment of God. And when it doesn't come. You conclude it will never come.

How strange that the Christian. Can lapse almost. Into the kind of thought. Of an unbeliever. And all the time. Samson presumes he's in control. Now remember.

I just said a little bit there earlier on. Notice how he's getting closer to the secret. At length. When she keeps pressing him. He goes to his hair. Now he still thinks he's in control.

He says I can even talk about this. And I can even dance around it. He says. About this whole idea. But still not give the game away. I am in control.

Of what is going on. But he is not. He is not in control. And the same thing can happen with yourself. And I'm conscious that we're living in a world.

[38 : 41] Where the professing people of God. Are pushing the boundaries. More and more. With respect to where you can go. And what you can do. And that just seems to be a symptom.

Of the day. And generation. In which we live. Pushing the boundaries. Are you sure. That you're in control. When you're going.

Where you're going. Look there are some places. In this world. And let's be real about this. There are some places. Where when you walk in the door. What meets you. It's nothing to do with God.

It's nothing even to do with purity. Or righteousness. Or anything like that. It is just quite simply. The lust of the flesh. The lust of the eye. And the pride of life. You don't have to look for it. It's there.

It is written all over it. Welcome here. The lust of the flesh. The lust of the eye. And the pride of life. But remarkably. Some people seem to enter these things. And these places.

[39 : 37] And feel that you can guard yourself. From what's going on in there. Well my friends. The simple rule to me is. If you play with fire. You get burned.

It is like that. If you play with fire. You will get burned. Take care my friend. Where you go. Take care. Christian man.

Especially Christian young man. And Christian young woman. Take care. Where you go. What you go to see. You think you're in control. Samson thought he was in control.

He had no control. And before it was finished. Sin had him down there. Under its foot. Grinding him away. In a prison cell.

It can look so alluring. So friendly. But at the end of the day. It is just the charm. And the attractiveness of the serpent. That will one day destroy you.

[40 : 32] And it's interesting. But I think God. On a couple of occasions. Is as it were. Arresting Samson. For example. When he gets up at midnight. I often wonder. Why he got up at midnight.

In Gaza. How did he know. What was going on. Was it God who told him. Was it perhaps. Even at that stage. His conscience. That was troubling him. As to what he had done. That he had gone into this woman.

His conscience was troubling. But he gets up at midnight. And God gives him grace. To go on. And he's got the gates. Upon his back. And even here. When Delilah's pressing him. You would think. That his mind would work like this. Well I remember. What happened. When my wife pressed me. For the riddle. She got it out of me. But it doesn't seem to move on. Because Samson.

Is. Asleep. Samson. Is. Asleep. And he is just going on. And let me warn you. And warn myself too. And the warning is this.

[41 : 28] If you're driving a car. And if you cut the engine. And you've got the clutch down. That car is going to go on. For some time. But it's going to come to a stop. And that's the way it can be.

Sometimes with Christian people. God doesn't withdraw himself. Immediately from them. They just go on. Cruising. But they stop. Because one day.

God is going to come down. And to visit them. That. He's just not going to let. His own people go on like that. And certainly. When it comes out into the open. He has to come.

For the sake. Of his own name. For the sake of his own name. Let me apply that too. To the world. To those of you. Who may still be. Outside of Christ.

Let me tell you this. Sin too. Is courting you. And sin too. Is playing with you. Although I shouldn't say that. You're playing with it.

[42 : 25] But it is fighting with you. It seeks to keep you in its grip. And to keep you in its power. And you are governed. By the lust of the eye. The lust of the flesh. And the pride of life. But the Lord Jesus Christ.

Him says. That if your eye offends you. He says. Pluck it out. It is far better for you. To enter into life. Maimed. Than to enter. With all your members. Into hell. Or if your right hand.

Offends you. If it is constantly. Causing you to sin. Then he says. Cut it off. Because it is better for you. To enter into life again. Maimed. Than it is having all your members.

To enter into a lost eternity. Where the worm dieth not. And the fire is not quenched. He says. And the same is true. Of God's people here. Samson's eye.

Is persistently. Getting him into trouble. God is taking it out. And God does take it out. And he takes it out. In mercy. So that Samson himself.

[43 : 20] Might be saved. What is the result here? Samson loses his power. She tests him. She plays with him. His strength is gone.

The Philistines are upon you. He tries to shake himself. But his strength. Has disappeared. He knew not. That the Lord. Was. Departed. From him.

Isn't that a solemn. God. Just as he is going in there. So the Lord. Is pulling back. And the Lord. Is removing himself. To the point. Where Samson.

Is in such a stupor. That he doesn't detect. That he's become as weak. As he really is. He's in a kind of. Fool's paradise. Where he thinks. That he's just.

What he always was. And the stark fact is. That he just is not. And it's obvious. To others. But it's only obvious. To himself. When he's overcome.

[44 : 14] And when he's overpowered. You know. Spiritual declension. Is a sad thing. You know yourselves. How people die in the cold. When you're dying in the cold.

You become progressively numb. To the point. Where you sleep. And you are just not conscious. Of how cold you really are. That is so spiritually.

The worst thing. To be spiritually. Is insensible. And insensitive. With respect. To your own condition. And to your own situation. That's how he was.

He was carrying on. And God was giving him. Enough strength. To snap the ropes. And so on. But it came to the point. Where God said. Samson. Enough. Is enough.

And it is time for you. To learn. And to learn the hard way. What happens. While the Philistines take him. And they bored out his eyes.

[45 : 07] Literally. That's what it means in the Hebrew. To gouge out the eyes. Whether that was done. With the fingers. Or as some say. With a hot iron. The eyes. Were gouged out.

It was an old form. Of cruel punishment. And it was done. To this man of God. He sinned by them. And no. He lost them. And what else did they do?

They take him to Gaza. To their own stronghold. And they bind him. With strong chains. And they put him. Inside a cell. And there. He grinds.

Now there was some. Grinding that was done. By a woman. And it was done. By hand. But there was another kind of grinding. That was done. With a donkey millstone. And the donkey used to carry.

That millstone. Or used to turn. Or rotate that millstone. I have an inclination. To think that that. Is how Samson would be used here. That the remnant of his strength. Would be used in this way.

[46 : 03] That he would give him the job. Of a donkey. Pulling this millstone. Because is that not. What he had become to them. He was now their sport. And he was now their laughing stock.

And here's the remarkable contrast. When Samson was strong. He burnt their harvest. When Samson was strong. He sent the foxes in to burn it.

Because he was God's instrument. Of righteous judgment. Amongst the Philistines. He was doing the work of God. No. He's producing their harvest. He's grinding corn for the Philistines.

And what can be more degrading. Than that. And that really to Samson. Was a picture. And I have no doubt. That it stood to him as a picture. Of what he had become in his life.

Well he says. For 50 years. I ground out corn. For God's people. For 50 years. He says. I did the work of the Lord.

[46 : 58] And I destroyed. And burnt the harvest. Of the Philistines. But then. What have I done with my life. Well. I've brought shame. Upon the Lord's cause. I've brought shame.

Upon myself. And I am grinding out corn. For the Philistines. And isn't it a fearful thought. That sometimes. I can do a work. That is furthering the devil's kingdom.

Rather than God's. I know. That in the last analysis. All will work to God's good. To our good. To God's glory. I know that. But it doesn't take away from this.

That in the short term. My life. My witness. And conduct. Can be doing more harm than good. Is that true of yourself? Is it true of me? Is it not right for us sometimes. To take stock.

And to look at ourselves. And say. What effect. Is my life having. And my witness. If Samson had stopped. To ask these questions earlier. He wouldn't have found himself.

[47 : 52] In this situation. But here he is. He is God's champion. But he is in captivity. And he has brought shame. And dishonor upon himself. And upon the Lord's cause. Oh my friends.

You did not be a prayer. Close to our heart always. Keep me oh Lord. Guard my steps. Keep my feet. Lest I slide.

Away. From the path of righteousness. And the path of truth. Samson learned. These things. Samson lost his eyes. And Samson is grinding.

For the Philistines. In a prison cell. Yes my friend. It is sad. But here is the wonder. Of the thing. At the end of the day. God.

Has control. And this is God's man. And God. Will bring him back. Why? Yet. Yet. He says. I'll not take.

[48 : 49] My love. From him. Nor false. My promise. Make. And these are beautiful words. These are the words. Of God. Speaking to his own.

Covenant people. In spite. Of their disobedience. And their waywardness. God says. This. To them. In Psalm 89.

If his children. Shall forsake my laws. And go astray. And in my judgments. Shall not walk. But wander from my way. If they my laws.

Break. And do not keep. My commandments. I'll visit then. Their faults with rods. Their sins with chastisements. Yet. I'll not take. My love. From him. Nor false.

My promise. Make. My covenant. I'll not break. Nor change. What with my mouth. I speak. These are marvelous words. God.

[49 : 42] Will be glorified still. In bringing this man back. It was great. To make him what he was. But it is great too. To bring him back. When he has gone.

My friends. Sometimes. We are prone to give up on people. And say. Oh well. Look at that man. Or look at that woman. The Lord was never in that person's life. Oh well.

You might be very wrong. You might be very wrong. In that thought. Maybe the Lord is working through chastisements. To bring such a person back to himself. And he has glory in that.

Hezekiah discovered his own evil heart. When he was brought low. So did Samson. And so will you. And so will I. And that is why we have these remarkable words. In verse 22.

How be it. We are told. The hair. Of his head. Began to grow again. After. He was shaven. That tells us. That God.

[50 : 38] Was not inactive. For a short time. He grinds out corn. For the Philistines. But this is about to change. Into Samson's. Finest hour.

And. That's how God. Uses these things. His greatest hour. Was the hour of his death. When God came back to him. And made him strong. May the Lord.

Bless these thoughts. And his word. Let us pray. Lord. Our God. We pray.

That thou would keep us. From the sin. Which so easily. Besets us. And help us. Even when we are not dealt with. As we deserve.

May we still not count. Or presume. Upon thy long suffering. Towards us. Teach us. That if we persist. In a downward course. Then we must indeed.

[51 : 35] Meet. With thy chastisement. We pray. O Lord. For any. In this house tonight. Who are caught in sin. We pray. For those.

Who have no knowledge of Christ. Who are ensnared. Altogether by it. We pray. That thou would deliver them. By thine own. Mighty hand. If any are backslidden.

Or. Are on the path of it. We pray. That thou wouldst restore them. Speak to us. O Lord. In word and providence. Before we fall. Keep us.

O Lord. And pardon us. For Christ's sake. Amen.