

Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God - Judges 15:1-20
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

The Samson story is just a bat crazy one. Feels very strange to have a person who is so flawed and emotionally unstable as the hero for Israel. He is presented as the strongest, most “super-hero” like of all the Judges, yet he never actually overthrows the enemy and when we read his accomplishments they really pale compared to the earlier Judges and their conquests. He only works alone, never gathers an army with him, and for the most part his harassment of the Philistines is made up of a series of testosterone driven moments of rage that tick the Philistines off. Yet, God has chosen to use Samson, even setting him apart before birth for the task. But to understand Samson, we need to notice a couple things.

First, he embodies the story of Israel. The story is told in such a way that we should see this Israel was chosen by God, rescued for His purpose, and made holy. Yet they have rejected their special place, ignored God’s Laws, integrated among the nations embracing their idols and becoming entrenched in their sinful practices, and rejecting God as their King. Samson’s story is exactly this. A miraculous birth, set apart at birth, made strong, and given purpose. Yet he too rejected the rules God had given him, and succumbs to a series of Philistine women who become his downfall. The Samson story is a parable retelling the whole story of Judges. Second, the reader needs to notice something else taking place in the story. The Israelites are no longer discontent in their slavery and integration into Philistine culture. They have not cried out to God in their oppression, rather, what we see is that they have moved into Philistine cities and the Philistines now inhabit the cities that were once the territories given to them by Jehovah. They are integrated and comfortable. Samson again personifies this, moving freely among the Philistines, taking on a wife from their people, and even having 30 Philistine dudes show up at his wedding. We are reminded of a significant truth. The greatest danger for the people of God is never persecution and hardship. God will rescue them from these things. The greatest danger is assimilation, and in this case they are less than a generation from being completely absorbed into another ancient people. Jews, God’s people would have disappeared from the planet as a distinct people.

Therefore, the work of God through Samson is not about overthrowing the Philistines. Rather, its all about agitating them and angering the Philistines to the point that they again reject and persecute the Israelites. This act alone will create the separation between Jew and Philistine. Samson is God’s sovereign agent of agitation driving this wedge so that God’s people would again long for Him as King, and eventually seek a human King who would fight the Philistines for them (think David and Goliath, who is a Philistine). It will take a flawed yet powerful guy like Samson to do this.

Throughout the story there are two forces at work. The first is the sovereign purpose of God shown in how He uses and even orchestrates the jacked up trajectory of Samson’s life. We will hit this more in the next sermon. We also have the sad downward story of Samson. He starts with so much promise, but throw in a cute Philistine girl, the promise of good sex, and the overcharged drive of Samson and it doesn’t take long for the story to turn. In fact, we can trace the movement of the entire story back to Samson’s desire for his first wife. The Hebrew reader would know right away that the marriage to this woman was strictly forbidden by the Law of God and reiterated in multiple divine warnings. Foreign women who have foreign gods will turn the heart of God’s people away from Him. But this woman was “right in Samson’s eyes.” And this is exactly what happens for Samson, ultimately leading to his downfall and being blinded.

Sex is a powerful force yet also a gift given by God. We live in a sexually charged and culture. Holding a Christian sex ethic often puts us in conflict with the larger culture. To be honest, for a long time Christianity has held a place of favor in our culture, yet, the question of sexual ethics and identity actually are working like Samson, in some ways driving a wedge between the people of God and the larger culture, In many ways we have lost the pace of

comfort and privilege. And that is hard (as we will see, the Israelites were actually frustrated with Samson because he was driving a wedge). The question before us at this time is whether we will hold to the Biblical commands about sex and marriage while doing so with the compassion and mercy of Jesus. Some who call themselves believers have just embraced the sexual idolatry in our culture. Others are going angry, despising the world for being, well, the world. Yet, the greatest apologetic and witness of our time might be faithful followers of Jesus who refuse to find their identity and idolatry in their sexuality, offering themselves wholly to Jesus for His purpose. This means we will see marriage as a good thing, and for many we will pursue covenant marriage. Those who are married understand that the real purpose and path to greatest joy in sex is found in giving oneself fully to the joy and pleasure of their spouse (rather than seeing his or her spouse as the object of their own pleasure). Finally, those who are single will see their singleness in the context of God's love and purpose, and wholly give themselves to Jesus. In doing this those who are single become an incredible gift to the church and witness to the world as they proclaim that Jesus is better, even than sex.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Jonah 1	Jonah 2	Jonah 3	Jonah 4	Micah 1	Micah 2	Micah 3

Reading from this past week's sermon: Judges 15:1-20

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Galatians 4:4-7

Family Worship

Song - *Who You Say I Am*

https://youtu.be/lcC1Bp13n_4?si=cTFwP0prYt5HEeie

Gospel Project

Unit: Jesus' Ministry Began

Story: John's Baptized Jesus

Big Picture Question: Is Jesus God or human?

Answer: Jesus is fully God and fully human.

Scripture: Mark 1

New City Catechism

Question 14: Did God create us unable to keep his law?

Answer: No, but because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve we are all born in sin and guilt, unable to keep God's law.

Verse: Romans 5:12

Judges 15:1-20

- In what ways is Samson's story a small mirror image of the story of Israel?
- How does Samson reveal that he has immersed himself in and embraced the Philistine culture and understanding of sex?
- What are the values we find in our culture regarding sex, sexuality, and sexual ethics? How are those values in conflict with the purpose for and commands about marriage and sex found in Scripture?
- How can our marriages, singleness, and sexuality become a proclamation of our love for Jesus and the truth of the Gospel?

Prayer

*Pray that God would lead us to honor Jesus in our singleness and marriages.

*Pray for our Security Team as they seek to keep us safe.