

The Devastating Cost of Sin - Judges 16:1-31
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

The story of Samson and Delilah is one of the Bible narratives that has also caught the social imagination. Just mention their names and even non-church going people know the gist of the story, about a powerful man with a secret power who is seduced by a woman for riches. But the “love” is so strong that he can’t walk away, eventually telling her the source of his might leading to the most expensive haircut in history. And as a result the humiliated man has lost his strength, blinded by his oppressors, and then made to mill grain as the Philistines mock him and use him as their court jester. Yet, in the end he cries out for strength and gets his revenge against those who have done this to him, yet the last act of war also costs Samson his life.

Whether or not you know the story, the question we should be asking while reading this is, “How did we get here?” Samson was supposed to be God’s divine agent, coming into the world with a miracle birth as the judge who would overthrow the Philistines. Instead, the trajectory of his life has him becoming buddies with the very enemies of God’s people while also desiring women from these people. This is where our Bible knowledge helps us, because from the very beginning of the Biblical story God’s people were given a plan for sex and marriage. In this are several clear commands to marry only Hebrew women who know the LORD, with the warning that intermarriage will do way more than give them mixed families. Rather it would result in the Hebrew people losing their faith, and eventually losing their entire identity as God’s people. Samson stands in the Bible as the key representative of a sinful descent that includes both a very broken sexual addiction coupled with rage and anger that destroys everything in his path. He has completely ignored any and all commands God had given him, despising his Nazerite vow all along the way (which was his call to be distinct and holy to the LORD) while consistently giving himself over to women who use him for cash. We see it, Samson doesn’t, and that is the tragedy.

Sadly, the Samson story is not a one off. Rather, it is a story repeated throughout the grand narrative of the Bible. The sins and broken commandments are different, but the path is the same. Sin begins with a subtle enticement calling out to a person who rationalizes and deflects guilt while giving in to temptation believing he or she can manage their sin. But sin is a powerful enemy sent by our ultimate enemy to completely destroy us. We should see this, but we don’t. Puritan John Owen wrote, “Be killing sin, or it will be killing you.” And we believe this, for other people. Just not our sin, because, you know, “It’s not that bad.” “I am being authentic, the real me.” “Why are you being so judgmental?” “I can control this.” The inspired human author of Judges is brilliant in the way he writes, as he invites us to see Samson’s story is the story of the whole nation. Idolatry and sin have so deeply entrenched themselves that the outcome will be their own destruction. Yet, if we read it honestly and as intended, Samson’s story always has the potential to be my story.

Sin is a powerful enemy. Samson’s path begins with a bad marriage, leads to a prostitute, and finds the climax with another greedy but apparently very hot woman named Delilah (who was also probably a prostitute). And the story that began with so much promised seems to have found its end on the lap of this deceitful yet so transparent woman. This is the way sin works, it always seduces, always overpowers, always binds, and eventually always humiliates (these words come right out of verses 5-6). And there is always an enemy more than willing to pay or do anything to destroy our faith and witness while wrecking the lives of God’s people. Listen, our sin is serious business! It’s always serious business, and until we begin to see the utter sinfulness of our sin through the loving eyes of our Father and Redeemer we will never see that the sexy eyes and seductive voice of Delilah are actually a problem and trap.

Yet, this is not where the story ends for Samson, for Israel, or for us. Samson is humiliated, but his hair starts to grow back. This (verse 22) is brilliant storytelling, and a reminder that it was God who said Samson would be a Nazerite from his birth until his death (Judges 13:7). God was not done with Samson. And while the consequences of his sin seem to

be final (hint, they are not, Samson will rise again), God uses his final act of strength as one of the greatest acts of deliverance of Israel from their enemies. Samson dies because of his own sin, yet God is redemptive through it accomplishing all that He promised to do through Samson. But as we read this and understand what's happening, we should not miss the subtle but clear pointer. While Samson's death did bring God's victory, it was temporary and still wrapped in his own sin. But we know there was another hero, this one was without sin. Yet He became sin for us, taking on our guilt and shame. He too was mocked, bound, nailed to a cross, ridiculed. He did not die for his own sin, he died because of my sin, your sin. The cross shows us the seriousness of our sin, what Samson, you, and I deserve. Yet, the cross is also the ultimate answer to all of our sin. Forgiveness, cleansing, deliverance, and sanctification are available. Yet, the Bible is also clear, that to drink deeply from the depths of grace we have to be honest about our sin, confess it, repent of it, despise it, forsake it. Be killing sin or it will be killing you.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Leviticus 8	Leviticus 9	Leviticus 10	Leviticus 11	Leviticus 12	Leviticus 13	Leviticus 14

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

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Judges 17:1-18:31

Family Worship

Song - *God the Uncreated One*

<https://youtu.be/rswH9CSyWHk?si=0bG9mMr3Z7xh0xx2>

Gospel Project

Unit: Jesus' Ministry Continues

Story: Jesus' First Miracle

Big Picture Question: Did Jesus ever sin?

Answer: No, Jesus never sinned.

Scripture: John 2

New City Catechism

Question 17: What is idolatry?

Answer: Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator.

Verse: Romans 1:21, 25

Judges 16:1-31

- What are the areas of sin that show up in Samson's life? How do we know from the story that he does not believe his sin is a big deal?
- What is sin and why is it a problem? Do you believe Christianity makes too big a deal of sin or not a big enough deal of it?
- What is always the trajectory of sin in our lives if we don't pursue repentance and grace? (Note, see Mike's outline or verse 5 for hints).
- How do we see grace at the end of the Samson story? How is Samson's death a pointer to the ultimate grace and mercy available?
- What sins tend to wrap its tentacles around you? What do you need to do to see sin as God does and begin to deal with it with seriousness?

Prayer

*Confess your sin, repent, and ask God to give you deliverance and forgiveness from the areas of sin in your life.

*Pray that God would give us a passion for corporate prayer and move us away from complacency.

*NOTE - Make sure you download and read the C. H. Spurgeon sermon on corporate prayer during our May Prayer Month.