

Samson: Strength Without Surrender

Judges 13–16 (NIV)

Opening Prayer:

Father God, we come before You in the name of Jesus. We thank You for Your Word, which is truth. As we open Judges 13 through 16, we ask that Your Holy Spirit would teach us. Guard us from pride. Expose compromise. Lead us into surrender. And most of all, exalt Jesus Christ in our hearts. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Introduction: A Tragic Hero

In this message we come to one of the most dramatic lives in all the Bible.

Samson.

A man of supernatural strength.

A man chosen before birth.

A man empowered by the Spirit.

A man who defeated armies.

And yet...a man defeated by himself.

Samson's life shows what Paul warned in

1 Corinthians 10:12 (NIV) ¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

And also

1 Corinthians 9:27 (NIV) ²⁷ No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Samson had calling....but lacked discipline.
He had power....but lacked surrender.
He began in promise...but ended in ruin.

Let's walk through his life as we study these verses.

I. A Supernatural Calling (Judges 13)

Israel had been under Philistine oppression for forty years.

Yet in Judges 13, Israel does not even cry out.

However, God moves anyway.

👉 Grace precedes repentance.

An angel appears to Manoah's 👉 **muh-NOH-uh (muh-go-uh)** barren wife and promises a son who would “begin the deliverance of Israel”.

Judges 13:5 NIV⁵ You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines.”

He would be a Nazirite from birth.

According to Numbers 6:

- . No wine.
- . No contact with dead bodies.
- . No cutting of hair.

The hair symbolized consecration...a visible separation unto the Lord.

Notice Manoah's 👉 muh-NOH-uh (muh-go-uh) prayer in **Judges 13:8 NIV⁸ Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: "Pardon your servant, Lord. I beg you to let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born."**

What a father. He wanted instruction, not success.

Samson had:

- Godly parents.
- Spiritual heritage.
- Clear calling.
- The stirring of the Spirit

Judges 13:25 NIV ²⁵ and the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh 🖱️ mah-huh-NEH(ma-huh-say) **Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.** 🖱️ esh-TAY-ohl(mesh-Day-bowl)

But stirring is not the same as surrender.

- **Listen**, you can grow up in a Christian home.
- You can sit under good teaching.
- You can feel spiritual stirring.

But if you do not personally surrender, heritage alone will not save you.

II. A Downward Direction (Judges 14)

Judges 14:1 NIV Samson went down to Timnah 🖱️ TIM-nuh **and saw there a young Philistine woman.**

That phrase “went down” is both geographical and spiritual.

He saw a Philistine woman and said:

“Get her for me. She is the right one for me.”

Judges 14:3 NIV³ His father and mother replied, “Isn’t there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?”

But Samson said to his father, “Get her for me. She’s the right one for me.”

Literally: “She is right in my eyes.”

That should sound familiar. Judges ends with:

“Everyone did as they saw fit.”

Judges 21:25 NIV ²⁵ In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

Samson lived by appetite, not by obedience.

God had commanded Israel not to intermarry with pagan nations.

Deuteronomy 7:3-4 NIV ³ Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.

Why?.... Because **compromise** would corrupt them and drive them to other gods.

- Samson ignored Scripture.
- He dismissed counsel.
- He followed desire.

Decline begins the moment we allow our feelings to have more authority than God's Word.

When you find yourself defending what Scripture clearly forbids, you are already drifting.

III. Sweetness in a Carcass (Judges 14:5–20)

A lion attacked Samson.

Judges 14:6 NIV⁶ The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done.

“The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him...”

God still empowered him...even as he drifted.

Later he found honey inside the lion’s carcass.

- A Nazirite was forbidden from touching dead bodies.

But Samson scooped out the honey and ate it from the dead lion’s body.

👉 Sin often presents sweetness wrapped in death.

Modern Example:

A believer watches something questionable
“just once.”

A relationship that begins “innocently”
crosses boundaries.

A habit forms.

It seems sweet.

It seems harmless.

But it violates separation.

He even shared the honey with his
parents.....sin spreads.

IV. Power Without Intimacy (Judges 15)

Samson burns fields.

Defeats enemies.

Kills a thousand men with a jawbone.

But notice his prayer life.

Judges 15:18 NIV¹⁸ Because 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?”

This is crisis prayer....not communion prayer.

Compare this to Samuel’s prayer who also involves the Philistines....

1 Samuel 7:9–10 NIV⁹ Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and sacrificed it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on Israel’s behalf, and the LORD answered him.

¹⁰ While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites.

With a different “attitude of the heart” ...
Samuel’s single prayer to God defeated the
Philistines and saved Israel from being
slaughtered in war.

Samson relied on strength.

Samuel relied on prayer.

👉 Gifted believers can slowly drift from
relationship with God when outward
success hides the quiet weakness growing
in their hearts.

V. Playing with Sin (Judges 16)

In **Judges 16**, Samson’s long pattern of
compromise finally brings him face to face
with the consequences of a life drifting from
God.... After escaping danger in Gaza by
tearing loose the city gates and carrying
them uphill Yes, this happened... **Judges**
16:1–3 NIV One day Samson went to
Gaza, where he saw a prostitute. He

went in to spend the night with her. ² The people of Gaza were told, “Samson is here!” So they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the city gate. They made no move during the night, saying, “At dawn we’ll kill him.”

³ But Samson lay there only until the middle of the night. Then he got up and took hold of the doors of the city gate, together with the two posts, and tore them loose, bar and all. He lifted them to his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.

Samson enters a relationship with Delilah in the Valley of Sorek. The Philistine rulers bribe Delilah to discover the secret of Samson’s strength.

- Three times she asks.
- Three times he lies.
- Three times the Philistines attack.

Each was a warning.

👉 Sin dulls discernment.

Proverbs 7 describes this pattern...a man seduced gradually into destruction.

Finally Samson reveals the truth and she cuts his hair while Samson was sleeping.

Judges 16:20 NIV 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.

Look at this...

“But he did not know that the Lord had left him.”

That is one of the most frightening statements in Scripture.

- He assumed God would always empower him.
- He assumed that because God had blessed him before, God would continue to protect him no matter how he lived.

Judges 16:21 NIV 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.

Samson lost his:

- . Dedication.
- . Strength.
- . Sight.

- . Freedom.
- . Usefulness.

This is what sin does to us:

Sin blinds us.

Sin binds us.

Sin grinds us.

Just like Samson...

Grace in the Ruins:

Judges 16:22 NIV²² But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

Grace!!!

Broken, blind, humiliated....Samson finally prays in humility:

Judges 16:28 NIV²⁸ 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.”

Samson seems much more humble in his spirit...

“Sovereign Lord, remember me...”

God answers.

Judges 16:29-30 NIV²⁹ 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.

Samson dies defeating more Philistines than in his life.

Hebrews 11:32 lists Samson among the faithful....not because of perfection, but because of final faith.

Deeper Christ-Centered Typology:

Samson is a flawed type of Christ.

1. Supernatural Birth

Samson's birth was announced by an angel.

Jesus' birth was announced by Gabriel
(Luke 1:31NIV³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.)

2. Spirit Empowered

The Spirit came upon Samson.

Jesus was anointed by the Spirit **(Luke 4:18 NIV¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,**

because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,).

3. Deliverer of Israel

Samson began deliverance.

Jesus completed deliverance **(John 19:30 NIV³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.).**

4. Betrayed for Silver

Delilah was bribed.

Judas betrayed Jesus for silver ***(Matthew 26:15 NIV¹⁵ and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver.)***

5. Arms Stretched in Death

Samson stretched his arms between pillars.
Jesus stretched His arms on the cross.

But here is the difference:

Samson died in judgment.
Jesus died in substitution.

Samson destroyed enemies.
Jesus saved enemies.

Samson's death ended his ministry.
Jesus' death began ours.

Where Samson failed morally, Jesus succeeded perfectly.

Application: Conquer Yourself

Samson could conquer lions....but not lust.
He could break ropes....but not habits.
He could defeat armies...but not pride.

The greatest battle is not external....it is internal.

Galatians 5:16 (NIV) ¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Victory is not willpower.
It is surrender.

Invitation to Receive Christ

Maybe today you see yourself in Samson.

Strong outwardly.
Struggling inwardly.

The good news is this:

👉 Jesus is a better Deliverer.

Romans 5:8 (NIV) ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

If you have never surrendered your life to Jesus, you can do that now.

Prayer:

“Lord Jesus, I confess I am a sinner. I believe You died for me and rose again. Forgive me. Cleanse me. Be my Lord and Savior. I surrender my life to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

If you prayed that sincerely, you are born again.

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You for the warning in Samson's life and the hope in Christ's perfection. Keep us surrendered. Keep us humble. Strengthen us by Your Spirit. And help us finish well.

In Jesus' name, Amen.