

The Biggest Loser

Judges 16:15-22

Introduction:

1. When it comes to losing weight – being the biggest loser is a good thing
 - a. But when it comes to serving God, you don't want to be a failure
 - b. Samson is an example of a believer whose association with the world caused him to lose all
2. Samson is one of the greatest puzzles of the entire Bible
 - a. He was richly endowed by God
 - b. Yet he was one of the worst failures in the Bible
3. He was born at a time of great need – 13:1-3

1 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. **2** And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was* Manoah; and his wife *was* barren, and bare not. **3** And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou *art* barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

4. He was the product of a special birth
 - a. His mother had been barren
 - b. An angel appeared and told her that she would conceive
 - c. The angel returned and talked to her husband Manoah
5. He was blessed by the Lord
 - a. From birth he was separated unto God
 - b. He had a special task to accomplish
 - c. God granted Samson special strength for the task
6. In spite of this illustrious start, he never fully mastered his carnal appetites – his life ended in captivity and tragedy

I. Samson Lost His Separation

A. He Was to Be a Nazarite His Whole Life – 13:5

5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

1. Nazarites were not to drink or touch wine / grape juice / grapes
2. Nazarites were not to cut their hair for the length of their vows
 - a) *Long hair is a dishonor to a man*
 - b) *The Nazarite vow was a visible sign of separation and willingness to bear reproach for the Lord's sake*
3. Nazarites were not to touch a dead body

B. Samson's Favor

1. Samson enjoyed God's blessings as long as he maintained his separation required as a Nazarite
2. The requirements that he was to follow were to be a restraining influence in his life
3. But Samson was contaminated by the world
4. Then he capitulated with the world
5. Finally there was captivity by the world
6. When Samson lost his separation, then he could no longer serve God and fulfill the mission God had given him

C. We are Told to Be Separated

Ro 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

1Jo 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

2Co 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,

1. No fellowship with unholy practices
2. No fellowship with unholy pleasures
3. No fellowship with unholy prophets
4. No fellowship with unholy people
5. No fellowship with unholy places

II. Samson Lost His Strength

A. Samson's Tremendous Power

1. 14:6 – He killed a lion
2. 14:19 – He killed 30 men
3. 15:14 – Killed 1000 men with a donkey jawbone
4. 16:3 – Carried away the city gate

B. The Secret of Samson's Strength

1. His power was from the indwelling Spirit
 - a) 13:25 – Spirit began to move him
 - b) 14:6 – Spirit's power killed the lion
 - c) 14:19 – Killed 30 men by the Spirit's power
 - d) 15:14 – Spirit came upon him and he killed 1000 men
 - e) 16:20 – Spirit left him and he was powerless
2. Samson's strength was not in his hair
 - a) His hair symbolized his vow to God - His strength came from God
3. Samson had said that if a razor came on his hair his strength would be gone and this is what happened

C. Christians Have the Holy Spirit

1. The power that we have as Christians comes from the Holy Spirit
2. The more control that we give Him, the more power we will have
3. Sin always saps our strength
 - a) *Ro 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*
 - b) *Samson shows us how quickly sin can debilitate a person – it makes one weak*

III. Samson Lost God's Presence in His Life – vs 20

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 wist not that the LORD was departed from him.

1. God's departure is the worst curse that can come on a believer
 - a) *We can stand loss of health, wealth, family, job*
 - b) *To lose the favor and presence of God is terrible*
2. The world does not value the presence of God
3. They would rather have anything but the presence of God
4. They do all they can to crowd God out anyway
5. The world does not pay attention to God, but in eternity they will want God to pay attention to them, but He won't

IV. Samson Lost His Discernment – vs 20 – “knew not”

1. Up till now the Philistines did not know the source of his strength, now Samson does not realize the source of his weakness
2. It is bad enough that God left Samson, what is worse is that Samson did not even realize it
3. This lack of discernment is a sin problem, not an intelligence problem
4. Some Christians have little discernment and dismiss it as an education problem when it is really a sin problem
5. Many Christians have so little discernment that they would not know if a message was good or bad, sound or unsound, true or false, Biblical or non-biblical.

V. Samson Lost His Honor

21 But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

1. The Philistines made him grind grain
2. Samson had flaunted his strength, now they flaunt his weakness
3. Samson had embarrassed them in Gaza when he ripped off the gates, now they embarrass him

4. See how sin humbles
 - a) *Keil says that grinding a hand mill was the lowest and most difficult kind of slave labor*
 - b) *The arrogant sinner will someday be brought low*
5. Righteousness is the way to lasting honor
6. Today the world scorns righteousness and spiritual things, eternity will change that.
7. Samson suffers greatly in prison, doing humiliating work of grinding
8. **Pr 13:15 Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.**
9. People often think that the straight and narrow is too difficult and uncomfortable, but the broad road of destruction is the most difficult of all
10. Any discomfort we suffer as Christians is nothing compared to the discomfort of the ungodly

VI. Samson Lost His Sight – 16:21

21 But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

A. How Sad the Scene – 16:16

16 And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death;

1. Samson was asleep in the lap of Delilah
2. She awakened him and he did the usual things
3. He didn't know that the Spirit had left him
4. He was captured by the Philistines and blinded
 1. The Philistines put his eyes out
 2. This had to be an excruciating experience
 3. Apparently this is what Samson lamented most since he prayed in vs 28 to be avenged of his eyes
 4. If Samson had been more careful about the use of his eyes, he would not have lost his sight
 5. Allowing his eyes to dwell on defiled women caused most of his problems

B. How Sad to See Christians Asleep Today

1. They have laid down with the world
2. They have lost their power
3. They are blinded by the world

VII. Samson Lost His Freedom – vs 21

21 But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

1. The one who could break free from any situation is fettered and helpless
2. In freedom he went where he shouldn't, now he is bound
 - a) *He went to Timnah and saw a woman*
 - b) *He went into vineyards*
 - c) *He went to Gaza with a harlot*
 - d) *He went to Delilah*
3. Freedom brings responsibilities and misusing freedom causes one to lose it

VIII. Samson Lost His Service

A. God Had a Purpose for His Life 13:5

5b ...and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

1. He would be begin to lead Israel
2. Now we see him grinding in the enemy camp
3. He sure fell a long way

B. Sin and Compromise Hurt Christians

1. How many preachers are grinding in the enemy's camp
2. How many Christians were active in church and are now with the enemy
3. How many Christians are in prison and mental hospitals because of sin
4. In the old days some of the pills for children were coated with a sugar coating. Once the sugar coating had dissolved then the medicine was terribly bitter. Sin's pleasures are like that – sweet to the taste and then the remorse and pain set in.

IX. Samson Lost His Life – 16:29-30

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. **30** And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life.

A. The Death of Samson

1. 16:22 – His hair began to grow back picturing the repentance of Samson and his return to the Lord
2. 16:28 - The evidence of his separation began to reappear and his prayer life came alive again
3. Praise God that there is cleansing and restoration for the repentant one – 1Jn 1:9
 - a) *David*
 - b. *Peter*
 - c. *John Mark*
 - d. *Jonah*
4. How comforting to know that there is no situation that God cannot redeem if there is repentance on our part
5. In ancient history, Julius Caesar had a friend to whom he gave a very generous present. When he offered the gift, the friends said, “This is too much for me to receive.” The Roman emperor said, “But it is not too much for me to give.” After all our sinfulness and rebellion, God’s gift of pardon through Christ is almost too much for sinners to receive; but the riches of divine mercy are not too much for him to give.

B. Persistent, Willful Sin can Lead to Death – 1Jn 5:16-17

Conclusion:

1. Samson’s life is both an indictment and an encouragement to those of us who are called to live by faith
2. Aesop tells a fable about a farmer who went out to his barn during the winter and found a snake that was so cold and so frozen that it was a stiff as a stick. The farmer had compassion on the creature and took it and nestled it in his coat and inside his shirt; and the creature was revived by the warmth and resumed its natural instincts and bit the farmer with his deadly and poisonous fangs, and the man died in anguish and agony. Some of us may think we can tame the temptation and play around with the serpent, but temptation, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin gives birth to death.