

SERMON NOTES:

A Journey Through Judges and the Cost of Compromise
Part 10: Strong Enough to Win...Too Weak to Surrender

BIG Idea: God's greatest gifts always come with God-given responsibilities. The tragedy of Samson is not that he failed his calling, but that he spent his life trying to escape it.

Application: Stop resisting God's calling and begin embracing the life He has set apart for you.

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God's greatest gifts always come with God-given responsibilities. The tragedy of Samson is not that he failed his calling, but that he spent his life trying to escape it.

1. Rejecting God's calling always makes compromise feel normal.

Judges 16:1-3 (NLT) Samson Carries Away Gaza's Gates

¹ One day Samson went to the Philistine town of Gaza and spent the night with a prostitute. ² Word soon spread that Samson was there, so the men of Gaza gathered together and waited all night at the town gates. They kept quiet during the night, saying to themselves, "When the light of morning comes, we will kill him."

³ But Samson stayed in bed only until midnight. Then he got up, took hold of the doors of the town gate, including the two posts, and lifted them up, bar and all. He put them on his shoulders and carried them all the way to the top of the hill across from Hebron.

1 Peter 2:9b (NLT)

⁹ ...for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession...

John 17:16-17 (NLT)

¹⁶ They do not belong to this world any more than I do. ¹⁷ Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.

God never calls us to be different simply to make life harder.

He calls us to be different because we belong to Him.

Compromise always feels normal once you've stopped embracing your calling.

Where have I become comfortable with something God never intended to become normal?

2. Eventually our hearts reveal what we've been loving all along.

Judges 16:4-21 (ESV) Samson and Delilah

⁴After this he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. ⁵And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Seduce him, and see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to humble him. And we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver." ⁶So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength lies, and how you might be bound, that one could subdue you."

⁷Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, then I shall become weak and be like any other man." ⁸Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and she bound him with them. ⁹Now she had men lying in ambush in an inner chamber. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he snapped the bowstrings, as a thread of flax snaps when it touches the fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

¹⁰Then Delilah said to Samson, "Behold, you have mocked me and told me lies. Please tell me how you might be bound." ¹¹And he said to her, "If they bind me with new ropes that have not been used, then I shall become weak and be like any other man." ¹²So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And the men lying in ambush were in an inner chamber. But he snapped the ropes off his arms like a thread.

¹³Then Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me how you might be bound." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web and fasten it tight with the pin, then I shall become weak and be like any other man." ¹⁴So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his head and wove them into the web. And she made them tight with the pin and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep and pulled away the pin, the loom, and the web.

¹⁵And she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and you have not told me where your great strength lies." ¹⁶And when she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death. ¹⁷And he told her all his heart, and said to her, "A razor has never come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man."

¹⁸When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up again, for he has told me all his heart." Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands. ¹⁹She made him sleep on her knees. And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. ²⁰And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free." But he did not know that the Lord had left him. ²¹And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles. And he ground at the mill in the prison. ²²But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

The NIV, ¹⁷So he told her everything.

Proverbs 4:23 (NLT)

²³ Guard your heart above all else,
for it determines the course of your life.

Luke 6:45 (NLT)

⁴⁵ A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.

You don't suddenly become someone you've never been. Eventually your heart simply reveals who you've been becoming.

Deliah didn't create Samson's problem. She exposed it.

Verse 20 says, But he did not know that the Lord had left him.

God never stopped claiming Samson. Samson slowly stopped living like he belonged to God.

3. God's grace is greater than our resistance.

Judges 16:22-31 (NLT)

²² But before long, his hair began to grow back.

Samson's Final Victory

²³ The Philistine rulers held a great festival, offering sacrifices and praising their god, Dagon. They said, "Our god has given us victory over our enemy Samson!"

²⁴ When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, "Our god has delivered our enemy to us! The one who killed so many of us is now in our power!"

²⁵ Half drunk by now, the people demanded, "Bring out Samson so he can amuse us!" So he was brought from the prison to amuse them, and they had him stand between the pillars supporting the roof.

²⁶ Samson said to the young servant who was leading him by the hand, "Place my hands against the pillars that hold up the temple. I want to rest against them." ²⁷ Now the temple was completely filled with people. All the Philistine rulers were there, and there were about 3,000 men and women on the roof who were watching as Samson amused them.

²⁸ Then Samson prayed to the Lord, "Sovereign Lord, remember me again. O God, please strengthen me just one more time. With one blow let me pay back the Philistines for the loss of my two eyes." ²⁹ Then Samson put his hands on the two center pillars that held up the temple. Pushing against them with both hands, ³⁰ he prayed, "Let me die with the Philistines." And the temple crashed down on the Philistine rulers and all the people. So he killed more people when he died than he had during his entire lifetime.

³¹ Later his brothers and other relatives went down to get his body. They took him back home and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, where his father, Manoah, was buried. Samson had judged Israel for twenty years.

God's grace has the final word.