

How the Mighty Fall – Judges 16:4-22

INTRO

1. Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them.
2. We're looking at a colossal failure today; the Story of Samson's Fall.
3. Some of us will take heed to it and **be waved off** the path he took.
4. Others won't make the connection between Samson and themselves and will **take** that path.
5. Which are you?

Set Scene

1. God made it clear to Samson's parents **before he was born** he'd deliver Israel from Philistine oppression.
2. But from the time he was a young man, Samson had a thing for the Philistine ladies.
 - a. Time & again, he's traipsing thru their territory, hooking up with them.
 - b. He was a **he-man** with a **she-weakness**.

3. So, after an aborted marriage to one, and a disastrous dalliance with a Philistines harlot,

⁴Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name *was* Delilah.

1. Sorek was in Philistine territory & Delilah is bad news.
 - a. If he'd not been wandering round Sorek, he'd not have met her.
 - b. If he'd not met her, he'd never end up crushed in the ruin of a pagan temple.
2. Therein lies our first lesson in avoiding sin. Avoid temptation.
 - a. Jesus told us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation."
 - b. Because we can find our way there all by ourselves.
 - c. Seriously; If you're weak in an area, don't put yourself in a place where you'll be tempted.
 - 1) On a diet? Stay out of the donut shop.
 - 2) Struggle with anger? Turn off the news.
 - 3) Convicted about gossip? Stay out of the gaggle circle at work.
 - 4) Is lust your struggle; might want to avoid thumbing thru **that 1 issue** of Sports Illustrated.
3. That was Samson's weakness = **Lust**.
 - a. He ought to have **avoided** Sorek because the Philistines were exceedingly immoral.
 - b. The women were immodest. They attired themselves to **attract** attention & incite lust.
 - c. Their MeToo movement was the opposite of ours. It was **LOOK** at Me-Too!

Nazarite

1. We need to back up for a second because there's an important part of the story that's missing.
2. Samson was called by God to be a Nazirite, someone specially consecrated to God.
 - a. That calling was marked by 3 prohibitions all aimed at reminding him he was different.
 - b. He belonged uniquely to God. He was to wait on Him for daily instructions.
 - c. The 1st prohibition he was to observe was to drink no wine nor touch anything of the vine.
 - 1) Wine & grapes were staples of the ancient Middle-Eastern diet,
 - 2) This reminded Samson he was to be careful about what he allowed **INTO** his life.
 - 3) Because what we allow **IN** has direct impact on what we give **OUT**.
 - d. The 2nd prohibition was against touching any dead body because it made him ritually unclean.
 - 1) Because God might call on him at any moment, he needed to be ready at all times.
 - 2) So he had to exercise great care not to defile himself and so render himself unfit to be used.
 - e. 3rd – He wasn't to cut his hair That **identified** him to all as consecrated to God.
3. So far in his story, Samson's **blown thru** the 1st 2 prohibitions with zeal!
 - a. He could care less about God's call to deliver Israel.
 - b. All he cares about is sating his desires.
4. Here's Samson, 2 strikes as he steps to the plate in Sorek.
5. And pitching in relief is a Phillie named Delilah.

Her name means "To bring low." A harbinger of what's coming.
6. Picture Samson strolling into Sorek.
 - a. There's Delilah standing in line at Moonbucks, waiting to order a double-espresso.
 - b. He gets in line behind her & checks her out. He says, "Hey good-lookin', what's your name?"

- c. She bats here long black lashes, “My name’s “Your ruin. What’s yours?”
- d. Anyone with a lick of sense is out of there. But Samson thinks he’s invincible.
- e. Every time he’s been in danger before, God’s always rescued him.
- f. He figures what has been is what will be.
- g. The rules that apply to others don’t apply to him.

⁵ And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “Entice him, and find out where his great strength *lies*, and by what *means* we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred *pieces* of silver.”

- 1. Samson had been a thorn in the Philistines’ side 20 yrs.
- 2. They’d tried to kill him several times, but every time their plans backfired – BADLY!
- 3. They realized there was more to Samson’s strength than physical brawn.
- 4. He was divinely protected. They wanted to know the secret of his strength.
- 5. They promise to reward Delilah if she can wheedle it out of him.

⁶ So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength *lies*, and with what you may be bound to afflict you.”

- 1. She’s not even subtle. “Tell me how to defeat you.”
- 2. If Samson’s thinking clearly, what **ought** he have done at this point?
 - a. He should have said, “I’m out of here!” And never gone back.
 - b. **Question:** Is Samson a fool? Out of our own mouths we condemn ourselves!
 - c. Because we do ***precisely the same thing*** as Samson!
 - 1) All temptation rests on a plan to destroy us.
 - 2) But when we’re BEING tempted, we lose sight of that.
 - 3) Worse, we ***choose to ignore*** it.
 - d. Just as Samson did.
 - 1) We can be sure Delilah dolled herself up in her most alluring outfit from *Vitruvian Secret*.
 - 2) She painted on her most suggestive lips & eyes.
 - 3) She sprayed herself with some *Celsius Klein*.
 - 4) Lit candles, waited till just the right moment, then said in a deep, sultry & suggestive voice, **“Please tell me where your great strength *lies*, and with what you may be bound to afflict you.”**
 - 5) Her ***tone*** promises a special reward if he’ll give what she wants.
 - 6) But it’s an empty promise because her ***real goal*** is his demise.
- 3. The Deviliah doesn’t want to bless or bring you good. He wants to ***end*** you.
 - a. Never forget behind every temptation is a plan to ruin you.
 - b. The good temptation offers is just bait hiding a hook.

⁷ And Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.”

- 1. Ha! I wonder how long Sammy took to offer this up. It’s a joke. He’s bluffing.
- 2. Oh, but it sound plausible because they believed numbers carried special power and 7 was potent.
- 3. He’s totally bluffing. But they don’t know that. So ...

⁸ So the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them.

- 1. How did she do this? Did he stand there while she tied him up?
- 2. As we read on we see Samson was asleep when she applied the answer he gave her.
- 3. It doesn’t take a genius to figure out how she got him to fall asleep.
 - She gave him what he wanted. Afterward, he fell asleep.
- 4. This is the danger of sin.
 - a. There is a ***moment*** of pleasure. The Bible admits that in Heb. 11:25.
 - b. But the pleasure ***always*** turns into pain & sorrow.
 - c. The great deceit in sin is the ***pause*** between pleasure & pain.
 - 1) There ***IS*** a brief pay-off of pleasure.
 - 2) While the lingering consequences may take a while to manifest.
 - e. That ***delay*** deceives billions.

- f. Any fisherman will tell you the fish who takes the bait **runs with it**.
 - a. The sport of fishing is knowing how to **play** the fish; to get it to take the bait, then reel it in.
 - b. The fisherman **loves** the time **between** the bite & the net.
 - c. The fish lives with the delusion it can get away with the bait.
 - d. But the fishermen knows what's coming – Fish & chips!
5. The sin you think you've gotten away with, you haven't.
6. The devil doesn't practice catch & release.

⁹ Now *men were* lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!” But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

¹⁰ Then Delilah said to Samson, “Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now, please tell me what you may be bound with.” ¹¹ So he said to her, “If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.” ¹² Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!” And *men were* lying in wait, staying in the room. But he broke them off his arms like a thread.

¹³ Delilah said to Samson, “Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with.” And he said to her, “If you weave the 7 locks of my head into the web of the loom” —

1. Hold on now, Sammy! You're talking about your hair.
2. This is the only part of his vow he's not broken, but now he's beginning to fudge.
3. Samson had braided his now quite long hair into 7 dreads.
4. If these were attached to a loom, he claimed, he'd lose his strength.

¹⁴ So she wove *it* tightly with the batten of the loom, and said to him, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!” But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.

1. What is Samson DOING? Why's he STILL THERE?
2. Three times now she's proven she's trying to destroy him.
3. She must have been one super-hot mama to keep him around, willing to risk everything.

¹⁵ Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart *is* not with me? You have mocked me these 3 times, and have not told me where your great strength *lies*.”

1. “You don't love me! If you did then you'd tell me **HOW TO KILL YOU!**”
2. His reply: “You're right! Sorry honey. Here's the real secret.”

¹⁶ And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, *so* that his soul was vexed to death, ¹⁷ that he told her all his heart, and said to her, “No razor has ever come upon my head, for I *have been* a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.”

1. Yielding to temptation makes it easier to give in again, then again, & again.
 - a. We build up the inertia to keep going.
 - b. Eventually we get to the place where we can't see straight.
 - c. We lose our moral sense & believe every lie the enemy tells us.
2. Delilah knew by the way Samson answered **this** was the real secret.
3. He's been broken by her unrelenting assault on his moral weakness.

¹⁸ When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart.” So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hand. ¹⁹ Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the 7 locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. ²⁰ And she said, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!”

1. And now, some of the most tragic words ever penned . . .

So he awoke from his sleep, and said, “I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!” But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

2. In ch14 when Samson broke the prohibition against the vine, nothing happened.

God was with him & he slew a lion.

3. Later when he broke the prohibition against touching a dead body, nothing happened.
God was **still** with him & he slew a pile of Philistines.
4. He thought he could get away with it again.
5. Samson is so far from God, he doesn't realize God's gone from him.
6. If you're running from God, please listen . . .
 - a. God loves you & will keep coming after you persuading you to surrender.
 - b. But there comes a point at which He'll stop.
 - c. It's foolish to resist God, & He'll try for a season to overwhelm foolishness with grace.
 - d. But God gave you a precious gift called CHOICE.
 - e. If you resist long enough, God backs off and lets your choice stand.
 - f. Then, your fate is sealed. There is no longer any hope.
 - g. If you will not come to Him while He pursues, you certainly WON'T when He stops.
7. There may be some here who right now God's pursuing; you feel it.
 - a. But the call to Christ is **weaker** than it used to be.
 - b. You've learned how to deflect.
 - c. You feel the tug on your heart to surrender to God, but know the routine;
 - d. "A few more minutes, service ends & I'm out of here. Just hold on and it'll soon be over."
 - e. If you KEEP resisting, who's to say today isn't your last chance?
 - f. I'm not being dramatic; I'm being **realistic**.
8. The now buzz-cut Samson awoke, **EXPECTING** God's grace because it's what he'd always known.
9. It's dangerous to **EXPECT** grace because grace by its very nature is **undeserved**.
10. In a moment, we're going to give you an opportunity to respond to God's gracious offer of forgiveness.
 - a. If you feel God's Spirit drawing you, **rejoice** His grace still beckons.
 - b. Don't let this moment be one more to **delay**. Respond today!

²¹ Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison.

1. They blinded Samson & stuck him in prison, where he performed an animal's task.
2. That's what sin does; it blinds & reduces turns us into brute beasts.
3. This was the end Samson was headed for the moment he took his 1st step in the Valley of Sorek in v4.
4. If he'd not taken that 1st step, he'd not have taken the last.

CONCLUSION

1. As sorry as Samson's story is, it's not the end.
- ²² However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.
2. It wasn't until Samson was blind that he began to **really see**.
3. His physical eyes had gotten him in trouble. His lust was his weakness.
4. So he lost his eyes & in his blindness began to really see.
5. As his inner sight grew, so did his hair, and the awareness of his calling by God was renewed.

Steps

1. Maybe like Samson, you've come far down the path of temptation & sin.
2. It's way past the **first steps** & you're now **deep** in the Valley of Sorek.
3. Maybe you're living in Delilah's house, asleep in her bed with your hair woven into her loom.
4. None of that matters if you will right now turn to God and ask Him to save you.
5. Now, I mean this, not just for those who need to come to Christ **the first time**.
6. I mean this for those who've **fallen away** and need to come back. Samson was a backslider!
7. You may be someone who's known by those around you as a mature Christian.
 - a. Like Samson, you may be counted as a leader among the people of God.
 - b. But there's some hidden little Delilah you've been visiting, some secret sin you've been pursuing.
 - c. Get up & get out of her house.