

Unlikely Heroes: Samson

April 23rd, 2017

Pastor Brian Coles

Please turn with me to Judges chapter 13.

Introduce New Message series “Unlikely Hero’s”

Over the next few weeks we are going to study a few characters from the bible...Sarah, Peter, Mary and Martha

the purpose of the series is to remind you that even the greatest characters in the bible, the ones whose lives are surrounded by the miraculous. They were just people, they were flawed, their families had problems, they had a past they were embarrassed of, and in essence they were a lot like you and me. Our hope is that you will not be trapped by the lie that you have to be perfect or have it all together to be used by God, or even just loved by God.

Complex phrase: God Loves you even when your messy!

Let me be serious, it’s my hope that most of you have had a relationship with a family member, a friend, or a spouse. That you have had to confess a sin, reveal a flaw, or admit a wrong. And in the vulnerability of that moment they have looked at you and said I forgive you, because I love you even if your messy. I hope you’ve had that type of relationship on a human level because they are beautiful relationships. If you haven’t I’d like you to know today that God loves, you even when your messy.

There is probably no question that of all of the characters that we are going to study that Samson is the Messiest!! Samson

Describe Samson:

Describe the nation:

So let’s read the story together in Judges 13 verse 1

The Birth of Samson

13 And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

²There was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. And his wife was barren and had no children. ³And the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall

conceive and bear a son. ⁴ Therefore be careful and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, ⁵ for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines.”

The term Nazirite means consecrated" or "separated". the vow consisted of not drink alcohol, not touching a dead body, and never cutting your hair for the length of the vow. Samson’s vow was to be for life.

⁶ Then the woman came and told her husband, “A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome. I did not ask him where he was from, and he did not tell me his name, ⁷ but he said to me, ‘Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. So then drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.’”

⁸ Then Manoah prayed to the LORD and said, “O Lord, please let the man of God whom you sent come again to us and teach us what we are to do with the child who will be born.” ⁹ And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman as she sat in the field. But Manoah her husband was not with her. ¹⁰ So the woman ran quickly and told her husband, “Behold, the man who came to me the other day has appeared to me.”

¹¹ And Manoah arose and went after his wife and came to the man and said to him, “Are you the man who spoke to this woman?” And he said, “I am.” ¹² And Manoah said, “Now when your words come true, what is to be the child’s manner of life, and what is his mission?”

¹³ And the angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. ¹⁴ She may not eat of anything that comes from the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, or eat any unclean thing. All that I commanded her let her observe.”

I love how the angle simple dose not answer his question. We will get to that in a moment.

If we can just stop here for a moment because I think sometime we read the bible to fast. I wat to talk for a moment about Samson’s mother and the absolute life altering conversation she is having. To be barren in ancient culture was a really big deal. It was shameful, and besides that it’s just really hard. I have cried with many couples over the years struggling to conceive and battle infertility or miscarriage.

I want to be sensitive to those who are experiencing this journey right now and at the same time I’d like to honor scripture that says not just to mourn with those who mourne but also rejoice with those who rejoice. She is going to have a Baby!!

1. God brings life from a place where previously there was none

The story begin with a conversation between the angle of the and Samson’s mother The angle said to her “Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.

God has a funny way of doing that. Bring life from places where previously there was none. Making something out of nothing.

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

David was a shepherd boy but God said he was to be king

Simon we impulsive and cowardly but God said you are peter and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not overcome it.

Saul was a murderer and a blasphemer an enemy of the church but God said you are Paul my chosen instrument to reach the gentiles with the gospel.

When God speaks things happen, When God speaks things change

He has the authority to speak life into a place where there has previously been no life!

Where is that place for you this morning?

We stand at the first several sentences of this account and already we are face to face with a God of infinite possibilities. Who makes somebodies out of nobodies. Who takes a broken past and creates a fixed future, the lame walk the deaf hear the blind see, the numb feel,

And God bring life from a place where previously there was no life. Where is that place for you this morning?

Secondly we can find in this first part of Samson's life what might be a parenting flaw that may have shaped some of Samson's identity.

¹² And Manoah said, "Now when your words come true, what is to be the child's manner of life, and what is his mission?" ¹³ And the angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. ¹⁴ She may not eat of anything that comes from the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, or eat any unclean thing. All that I commanded her let her observe."

2. What we do for Christ, comes out of who we are in Christ

This father wanted to know what his son was going to do but the angle was instructing him on how he should be.

To be a Nazirite, means to be consecrated" or "separated". set apart or separate, is something that all of us are called to be.

So often we can get caught up in what we are to “do” that we forget who we “are”

Andy Stanley preaches on the topic of dating that Singles, in an effort to find the right person fail to become the right person. That was deep, if you single and ready to mingle you should write this down. and if you see someone feverishly writing you know their available. We fall victim to the right person myth that if I can simply find the right person everything will be okay. Pastor Stanley says instead we should become the right person. he sums this thought up in this phrase. “Are you who, the person you’re looking for is looking for.”

John 15:5-6 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Proverbs 3:5-6 5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Paul cries out in Philippians 3:10 ¹⁰I want to know Christ, just simply to know him. To be like him not to know of him but to know him, not to act like him but to be like him.

Might I add an encouragement to our parents that Samson’s mom is an incredible example to us. in that she does not simply impose rule upon her son she first walks in them herself

At the end of Chapter 13 Samson is born and the text seems to fast forward to chapter 14 to a grown Samson of marrying age

Samson's Marriage

14 Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines. ²Then he came up and told his father and mother, “I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah. Now get her for me as my wife.” ³ But his father and mother said to him, “Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?” But Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes.”

⁴ His father and mother did not know that it was from the LORD, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines ruled over Israel.

This is where things really start taking off in the life of Samson.

Samson would a few days later find a bee hive with honey in the carcass of the lion

When Samson arrives at the wedding feast they give him 30 companions. he possess a riddle to the them with a wager of 30 garments. One for each of them or 30 for him.

Long story short, they can't figure out the riddle so they make his wife get the answer from him. Chapter 14:9 the spirit of the Lord comes upon him he goes to a neighboring city kills 30 men and gives the clothes of the dead men to these companions.

Samson is enraged, 23 miles away, then walks back.

Samson is mad, so he goes to his father's house and while he's gone they give his wife to his best man.

Judges 15

15 After some days, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson went to visit his wife with a young goat. And he said, "I will go in to my wife in the chamber." But her father would not allow him to go in. ² And her father said, "I really thought that you utterly hated her, so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister more beautiful than she? Please take her instead." ³ And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be innocent in regard to the Philistines, when I do them harm." ⁴ So Samson went and caught 300 foxes and took torches. And he turned them tail to tail and put a torch between each pair of tails. ⁵ And when he had set fire to the torches, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines and set fire to the stacked grain and the standing grain, as well as the olive orchards. ⁶ Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they said, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." And the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire. ⁷ And Samson said to them, "If this is what you do, I swear I will be avenged on you, and after that I will quit." ⁸ And he struck them hip and thigh with a great blow, and he went down and stayed in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

The Philistine respond by sending a small army of at least 1,000 men to come and capture him. ¹⁵ And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men.

And at the close of chapter 15 ²⁰ And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

We don't know much about Samson during those twenty years but we do know how his life ends. Chapter 16 we are to assume that this we many years later near the end of his life.

Few stories are more famous then Samson and Delilah: Tell story

Judges 16:20 but he did not know the Lord had left him.

Satan has come to rob steal and destroy, sin will only rob you of your strength deflate your passion, remove your joy. No matter what lie sin offers you don't buy it.

When I was a kid we would go bike riding...But I did not know my siblings had left me.

Judges 16:22 says something that is so profound it is so necessary, that even in the midst of Samson's total failure, the bible says "but the hair of his head began to grow"

What an awesome foreshadowing of God mercy, that his anger does not last forever, that his mercy is new every morning. According to Number the Nazirite if they break their vow even if it's on accident, they can

Samson is humbled

3. In Samson, we do not find a strong man, we find a very weak man

Samson broke every part of his vow as a Nazirite, the vow that identified him as someone who was set apart for Gods purpose, in a lot of ways he represents Israel at the time, and in many ways he represents us.

Judges 16:23

Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to rejoice, and they said, "Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hand." ²⁴ And when the people saw him, they praised their god. For they said, "Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country, who has killed many of us."^[b] ²⁵ And when their hearts were merry, they said, "Call Samson, that he may entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he entertained them. They made him stand between the pillars. ²⁶ And Samson said to the young man who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them." ²⁷ Now the house was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there, and on the roof there were about 3,000 men and women, who looked on while Samson entertained.

²⁸ Then Samson called to the LORD and said, "O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once, O God, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes." ²⁹ And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. ³⁰ And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." Then he bowed with all his strength, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life. ³¹ Then his brothers and all his family came down and took him and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had judged Israel twenty years.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

In the end I think Samson finally figured it out. In fact I know he did in Hebrews 11 as the writer of Hebrews is listing the great Hero's of our faith right there in verse 32 we see Samson. In verse 34 the writer writes "were made strong out of weakness

in the end we are left so unimpressed with Samson, are actually able to see that all of his heroics and success was really not about him at all. That the story was not about Samson delivering God's people but the story is about God delivering God's People.

just in case you would be tempted to look at Samson's life and conclude that there is no need to avoid sin or vice, that holiness is not high on God's priority. I would suggest that the Bible is replete with scriptures that contradict that idea. and that Samson's life is not one to be envied.

Even with great ability without Godly character Samson forfeited some of the most important parts of life. He never built a family, he never held political, religious or military rank, he didn't pave the way for a successor, or lead a generation in righteousness. he never got to help out in VBS, he left no legacy based on who his character or this faith, no model on how to live or contribute or to love God or others. his whole life was only to tear things down. I would say his disobedience cost him very severely. in fact,...

My family and I were able to see Samson at Sight and sound thanks to some of our Petra family providing tickets for us. On our way out of the theater my son Brian said. look at my muscles, I'm Samson, and I said No you're not!! let's be like somebody else in the Bible... how about Jesus. Closing I'd like to ask you to commit to the next 4 weeks to be here and hear what God is saying in his word and to the church, through this message series.

Mayleah running to me all muddy. God takes messy hugs!

2 Corinthians 12:7 7 So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.



Discussion Questions:

April 23th 2017

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Message by Pastor Brian Coles

ICE BREAKERS:

- What is the greatest challenge you are facing?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Is there something Pastor Brian shared on Sunday that really stood out to you, or that you want to discuss further?

2. What's the difference between physical weakness and spiritual weakness?

- What limitations do we put on ourselves as a result of our physical weaknesses?
- Does the Bible give us indications of things that disqualify someone from being used by God?
- Are there ways that we tend to disqualify ourselves that God never said disqualify us?
- Are there ways we tend to qualify ourselves that God doesn't use to qualify us?

3. **Read Judges 14:1-20**

- Can you pinpoint each of the mistakes Samson makes in this episode of his life?
- What are the consequences of these mistakes?
- What do you think Samson should have done differently?
- What can we learn about our own strengths and weaknesses from Samson's life?
- Samson seems to have been very strong physically, and very weak spiritually. We all tend to be aware of our strengths, those areas we accelerate in, and our weaknesses, those areas we struggle through.
 - Is there something you need to be doing right now to use your strength to position yourself for maximum contribution?
 - Is there something you need to be doing right now to guard yourself against disaster or against your weaknesses?

MINISTRY TIME:

Positive Bombardment: Take some time as a group to affirm the strengths you see in one another.

One member is selected to be the recipient of positive feedback from the rest of the group. Encourage that person by sharing a strength of character you see in them, or a natural ability you've seen in them, or a time when you watched them handle a situation in a certain way that impressed you.

Once everyone has had a chance to give that member the "gift" of feedback, another person is chosen and the process is repeated.

You could also do this exercise by writing positive attributes on pieces of paper and putting them in an envelope with the person's name on it.