

## Worst Hair Day Ever

*3-Year Bible Reading Plan*

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**Bible Text:** Judges 13-16  
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This morning I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the book of Judges. Now specifically we're gonna be in chapters 13 through 16 but I want to invite each and every one of you but particularly those of you who may be guests or visitors with us to join us on a journey. We as a family of faith, we are walking through the Scriptures, typically it's about a chapter a day, some of you may have noticed in the book of Judges it was two chapters a day, and the way that this journey is laid out is that we will cover the entirety of the entire contents of the Bible in a time period of about three years. This week as you've walked through the book of Judges, you probably have discovered what many of us have discovered, there's a lot of people whose names we can't pronounce and places we've never heard of, there are battles and there are experiences that may be completely foreign to us but we discover all throughout the book of Judges and well placed on the very last verse of the book of Judges, in that day the Israelites had no king and they did that which was convenient and sufficient in their own eyes. You see, the story of Judges is what happens in our lives when we decide not to yield ourselves to the Lord. Where do we find ourselves, what do we have to walk through, what are the consequences we face when we decide we know best how to live this life rather than the Lord.

There's no figure better known or well deserving of this subject matter than a man by the name of Samson. As you're turning to the book of Judges, his story actually takes place in chapters 14 through 16, we're gonna back it up just a little bit in chapter 13 and see about not only his conception but his birth. Probably one of the most well-know figures in all of the Bible. Here's a man by Samson who was known for his great strength, he was known as a mighty warrior, but what we're gonna see today is this, that there was so much in his life that was never attained, never accomplished and never experienced because rather than looking at what the Lord had done for him and wanted to do through him, he decided to do his own way. You see, Samson is a great character study today, it helps us, in fact, what he does for us today is he allows us to learn the mistakes of his life. Are not mistakes less costly when we learn them from other people's lives than our own? We discover that Samson is somewhat of a metaphor for us. He gives us a picture of what it's like as a believer in Jesus Christ, what we've been called to and as we'll see in just a moment, how we can slide out of.

I want to begin the story back in chapter 13. The Lord comes to a man by the name of Manoah and his wife and says they're gonna have a child. Now this child is going to be unique. He's going to be what the Bible calls a Nazirite. Now not Nazareth as in the town that Jesus Christ was raised in and he was called Jesus the Nazarene, a Nazirite is actually found in the book of Numbers 6. It was a special calling. It was a special vow that someone could place upon their life. Now Numbers 6 says that a man could do this or a woman could do this, and at one point in their life they would dedicate themselves to the Lord in a very uncanny fashion. There would be three very distinct qualities about them. They would vow not to consume anything of an alcoholic nature, in fact, the Bible says in Numbers 6 they would not eat anything even of the leaves or the roots of the vine, they would not eat anything that came from a dead animal carcass, and they would not shave the hair upon their head.

Now this was a vow that somebody could take and at some point in the future they could pull out of it if they so chose. There was a ceremony that they had to walk through in order to do so. Samson is unique because it's not a vow he took as an 18 year old, it's not a vow that he took as a 13 year old or a 43 year old. It's a vow that was placed on his life by God himself in the womb, and when you get to chapter 13 of the book of Judges, verse 7, it says,

7 But he said unto me [that's the angel of the Lord], Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

Now as we look at the person and the character of Samson, what we discover is this, that he had a life of separation. He had a life of distinctness. He had a life that had a special calling on him. In fact, all throughout the Bible we see that as believers in Jesus Christ, we should have a life of like separation, in fact, the Bible says in 1 Peter 1:15-16, it says, "Be holy because the Lord your God is holy." 1 Peter says that we are called to be peculiar people. And the book of 1 Corinthians 6:17, it says separate yourselves from them. The Bible gives us as a calling, as a believer in Jesus Christ, that our lives should look and be distinct.

Now as we look at the life of Samson, that which he said, the places he went, the things he consumed, the life he lived in its entirety was different than everybody else. Allow me to give you a little bit of a warning. If you're a believer in Jesus Christ and your words don't sound different than the rest of the world, you may be living a lukewarm life if your actions, if the places you go, if the things you endorse, the things you promote, advocate and celebrate. What did Samson do? He lived a life that looked completely different. I would venture to say that when he sat down with someone and had a conversation, a lot of the questions begin with the word "why." Why do you not? Why do you? Because everything about him was so distinct, it was so different. He was called to a life of separation and so you and I have a like calling on our life. We're called to be holy. We've been called to be peculiar. We've been called to live a life that is separate and distinct. But then we discover that his, shall we say, separateness possessed great strength.

We pick up his story beginning in chapter 14 and we discover there are certain events that took place in his life that were unmatched to any other person, and I'm gonna walk through these somewhat quickly for the sake of time, but in verse 6 of chapter 14 it says that he took the life of a lion with his bare hands. Now those of us who are lifelong residents of the South, we know a hunter when we see him because we walk in their house and we see the mounts, correct, and everybody says, "Well, how did you get and where did you get?" I've never been in a place where somebody said, "Yup, I got that buck with my own bare hands. Yup, that eight point, just pulled it down, didn't even need both hands, just took my right hand and just pulled him straight down." But he takes a lion with his bare hands.

If you fast forward to chapter 15, verse 4, it says,

4 And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails.

You may be thinking to yourself, "What on earth is happening here?" Well, Samson gets married to a woman, she was a Philistine woman, and he goes off on a journey of escapades, so to speak. When he returns, his father-in-law was so worried that he was dead that he pledged his wife to another man, so when he comes back he finds himself in a very precarious situation and so then because these were the enemies of the Lord, the Philistines, he goes out, he gets 300 foxes, he ties them tail to tail, lights them on fire and lets them go. Now my boys and I were talking about this the other evening. How do you catch a fox to begin with, much less two at one time, tie them together without them getting....? I mean, this is a man of incredible strength.

Oh, but it gets better, fast forward to verse 15, one of my favorite stories in all of the Bible because these men did not like the foxes that had ravaged their community, so 3,000 of them decide, "We're gonna take old Samson." Eventually it gets down to a thousand but in verse 15 it says,

15 ... he found a new jawbone of a donkey, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men.

Now I don't know about where you come from but if you can kill a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey, you're a man's man. Now y'all have heard this before so I apologize for repeating myself, but it just bears saying again. I mean, can you imagine 999 dead guys and the last guy says, "Yup, I can take him."

So he kills a lion with his bare hands, he takes 300 foxes, ties them together, lights them on fire and lets them go, a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey. But he's not done yet, chapter 16, verse 30 it says,

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.

We'll find ourselves toward the end of his life in a moment, but basically he is in a very large house. It's a temple to the false gods. He's got one arm tied to a pillar. He's got another arm tied to a pillar. His eyes have been put out. The Bible says they were making sport with him, there's a lot of connotations that could be implied there. But basically on these pillars, he takes his arms, he pulls them with all of his might and the entire building collapses. I would dare say that in the Bible you're not gonna find another man of greater physical strength than Samson.

What's interesting to me is how he possessed this strength because in chapter 16, there's a woman by the name of Delilah. We'll talk about her in just a moment. But she comes to him and she says, "Oh Samson, how are you so strong?" And he says, "Well, if you'll just tie my hands with this, I'll be able to be like any other man." And there's a long dialog there of such. Here's the thing I find interesting: Delilah didn't know why he was strong, the Philistines didn't know he was strong, nobody knew why. You see, if we look at cartoons of Samson, they look like Arnold Schwarzenegger times three. I mean, they put muscles in his earlobes, they make him huge and massive. I am convinced that he probably wasn't but the average height of the average man of his day. He was probably the average build because we hear about Goliath and nobody wanted to fight him, we hear about Saul who was a head taller than everybody else and nobody wanted to mess with him, have you noticed everybody wants to mess with Samson? I mean, everybody. His father-in-law says, "Ah, it's no big deal. I'll just go ahead and cheat him out of his wife." The Philistines say, "Oh, surely we can get him," and a thousand guys later they're dead. They tie him to the pillars thinking there's no way he's gonna get out. The Bible says that Samson's strength was not the fact that he had a vow against drinking alcohol, it wasn't the fact that he had a vow against eating that which was from a dead animal, it says his strength was in his hair.

Now I've consulted the experts in what we might call follicle education. Did you know that the human hair if left to its own devices can get about seven feet in length? According to chapter 16, he had it in seven very specific locks. This was the original dreadlocks, guys, right here. This is Samson. Can we just all agree it was nappy looking? I mean, how did he wear that stuff? I'm really serious here. We don't have a picture of it and we don't know, but if you've got seven feet of hair and you're the average height of a man back then, that means you're dragging it on the ground. I mean, do you wrap it up top? Do you pull it around your waist? I don't know what you do with it, but can you imagine here's a guy of average height, average stature, with some really strange looking hair and nobody can understand how does he do what he does.

Well, the Bible says his strength was in the fact that he never shaved his hair. You know, the same can be said for us as believers. When you walk through a situation of life, when you go through the valley of the shadow of death, when you have news that comes to you that would crumble most people and you stand bold in your faith, how many times do we hear somebody say, "How do they do it?" It's not because of that which we possess

physically, it's not that which we possess with our education, our experience, or even our network of friends, what does the Bible say in 1 John 4:4? "Greater is he that is within you than he that is in the world." You see, the Bible says as a believer in Jesus Christ, we now have the benefit of the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. Our strength does not lie in our degrees or the size of our biceps, our strength if you read Ephesians 6, is based on the Holy Spirit that resides within us and fights on behalf of us. You see, the story of Samson is really no different than us. We've been called to live a life of distinction. We've been called to live a life that is separate and our strength is in that which cannot be observed with the outward eye or with the ear.

The problem with Samson is that it doesn't end as well as it could have. In fact, I want to encourage you to go back to chapter 14 and I want to talk about the slide of Samson. This is what can happen in all of our lives lest we yield to the Lord in our lives. I'm gonna begin in verse 1 of chapter 14. It says,

1 And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. 3 Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well 4 But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. [Pay attention to verse 5] 5 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. 6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done. 7 And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. 8 And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. 9 And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion. 10 So his father went down.

When I talk about the slide of Samson, I want you to know how it begins. We always begin the slide contrary to or against the things of God. It always begins with ignorance. What does he do? He goes walking through a vineyard. I know what some of you are thinking, "Well, the first vow was not to consume anything that was alcoholic." That is correct but can we all agree he's playing with fire there, is he not? He's walking into an environment that could lead to his destruction but what does he say. "Ah, it's not that big a deal." You know that sin always starts that way, right? It always begins by us saying, "It won't hurt me. It's not that big of a deal."

But quickly we move from ignorance to what I want to call isolation. Notice it says that he went down and the Lord provided a great victory over the lion but he did not tell his father and his mother. He then goes and he consumes the honey from the carcass of the lion and we all must agree that this is a violation of his second vow, is it not? I mean, the Bible is very clear, "Do not eat that which is from a dead animal." Yet he does, so he's violating the particular laws of God on his life and he's doing it alone.

You know, when we remove accountability out of our lives and we think, "I got this," woo, it's just a moment of time before we fall into the same place that Samson did. How many times do we want to justify our sin and justify our behavior by saying, "It's my life. I can do anything I want to." I've got news for you: no man is an island and whatever you decide to do that is sin in your life will affect somebody else. What happened here? His mother and father, they ate of it too because they didn't know what had taken place. How many times do I deal with someone who is struggling in sin or maybe has an addiction of some type and they say, "It's not that big a deal. It's only hurting me." You do know that's a lie from the pit of hell, right? How many times has one struggling with sin led to the break-up of a family? How many times has one's struggle with sin led to the financial demise of his family and friends? And I'm gonna go ahead and go there just because I can, I've about heard the last declaration of someone who says, "It's my body. I can do with it what I want." You might want to consult the baby in your womb on that.

You see we say, "Aw, it's just me." You see, that's what Samson did. He said, "I got this. It's not that big a deal. I'm not gonna let anybody know. It's just me." What did it do? It affected his mother. It affected his father. It affected his testimony. It affected an incredible amount. And do you know what happens? Once we get into that isolation mode, we begin to think we're invincible. He walked through the vineyard, took care of the lion, not a big deal. He actually broke the vow of the food and still was victorious over the Philistines. He began to think, "It's not that big a deal."

Well, then we get to chapter 16 of the story. I'm not gonna read the entirety of the story but we're gonna pick it up toward the end. Delilah, who by the way the Bible says was a harlot, and he entered into a relationship. Beginning in verse 16 of chapter 16 it says,

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; 17 That he told her all his heart, and said unto her. There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.

Push pause there for just a moment. You don't believe he was invincible? The last three nights she asked, "What can I do?" He told her something that was false and she did it. So he actually is giving her the answer to the question believing that's no big deal, "Even if you cut my hair off, I'll be fine."

Verse 18,

18 And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. 19 And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. 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. 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. 22 Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.

So it begins in the vineyard of ignorance, it moves on to the lion and a sense of isolation, but when you begin to think that you never will face the consequences of your sin, you fall into the trap of thinking you're invincible and here is Samson saying, "It doesn't matter what happens or what takes place, I got this." I do believe one of the saddest statements in all of the Bible is at the end of verse 20, it says, "I will go out," these are the words of Samson, "as other times before and shake myself. He did not know that the LORD had departed from him." The saddest place that a believer in Jesus Christ can find themselves in is not realizing that the power of God is no longer upon their life. Can I just tell a personal thing? I'm not so much concerned about the hand of God being on me, I'm nervous it ever comes off of me, and what do we see in Samson's life? It had come off of him.

Then we see the effects in verse 21, it says "the Philistines took him, they put out his eyes, they brought him down to Gaza, they bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house." Let me give you something that those of you who are note takers, go ahead and write it down, those of you who are not, put it in your memory, you're gonna need it. Here it is. Let me tell you what sin will do to you. The first thing it'll do, it'll blind you. You'll become blind to what's really happening in life. They put out his eyes. The next thing it'll do, it'll bind you. Now he was wearing fetters of brass but when we get trapped in a life of sin, it keeps us from being what we should be and puts us in a place we should have never been. It binds us. It blinds us, it binds us, and you know what it does? It grinds us. It says he was grinding at the mill every single day. He woke up and he had to walk through the processes of the consequences of his sin.

So what do we believe? We think, "Oh, sin will give me the freedom I've always wanted." You think that's a good idea? You might want to talk to Adam and Eve. What does it do? Blinds us to reality. It binds us. It traps us. And eventually it grinds us. That's the slide and none of us are immune to it. As soon as ignorance goes into isolation and to being invincible, next thing you know we're blind, we're bound, and we're grinding and we're going, "What happened?"

I'd be remiss if we didn't end the message on a positive note. I want to talk about the "salvation" of Samson. Now I put that word in quotes for a reason. I'm not talking salvation in our context here of understanding that one is a sinner in need of saving and believe that Jesus Christ and his atonement on the cross and his resurrection three days later is the only means for our salvation. I use it in quotes to say the Lord came and delivered him. The Lord came and provided for him. Notice verse 22, "Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven." Do you know what that is? Mercy. Do you know what mercy is? Mercy is not getting what you deserve. Samson deserved to be bald as a cue ball until the day he died. Where was his strength? In his hair and it says that the Lord began to grow his hair again. Do you know what Samson is? He's the picture of a second chance. Today some of you have walked into this place and you're a lot like Samson, when it comes to sin you've been blinded, you're bound and you're grinding at the mill of life. But we've been in this place for about an hour and I can promise you what the Lord is starting to do right now, he's starting to grow that proverbial hair in your life. He's saying, "I want to give you a second chance. I want to give you an opportunity when you walk out of this place, you don't have to go back to what it was, doing what you were doing the means and the ways that you were doing it."

That's called mercy but let me show you what grace is. Grace is, mercy is not getting what we deserve, grace is getting that which we never could earn. I want you to look at verse 28, it says,

28 And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

You know, this is the only place we have in the life of Samson where he actually prays. Allow me to close with this incredible illustration. God did more with a half inch of hair than Samson ever did with seven feet of it. I want you to think about that for just a moment. Samson had the natural giftedness of God, he had the calling of God, he had an incredible resume of strength, but his greatest feat and his greatest moment is when he had a buzz cut or a crew cut, depending on what generation you come from. He called out to God and God did more with half an inch of hair than Samson did with seven feet of it.

Can I implore you this morning, whatever the struggle, whatever the battle is in your life, no matter how educated, how networked, how skillful or how physically strong you find yourself, God can do more with a little than you could ever do with a lot, and if you're ever gonna see victory out of that battle, if you're ever gonna see light out of that darkness, you need to follow the path of Samson in chapter 16, much like the prodigal son in Luke 15, you come to the end of your senses and say, "I don't have near what I should have but I'm gonna call unto the Lord and he can do more with my little than I could ever do with my lot." You see, Samson was the victim of the worst haircut ever but he called out to God and God is a God of second chances if we do it his way.

Sunday Morning Services 10/13/2019

Judges 14-16

*The Worst Haircut Ever*

His separation

His strength

His “slippery slope”

His “salvation”