

Judges 13: 1-25; “The Faith of Sampson’s Mother”, A Sermon for Mother’s Day
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 14th, 2023,
in the Morning Worship Service.

The mercy of God upon the nation of Israel was very great in this time period of their history, even though He had to bring His judgments upon them. Verse 1 says that, “Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years”. I say, God’s mercy was great; because even though they were evil, it was during this same period of time that the Lord would raise up Sampson to begin to deliver them from the Philistines. God was the One who delivered them into the hands of the Philistines, and He was also the One who would deliver them from the Philistines when He thought the time was right.

Sampson was certainly one of the greatest of the Judges. Even though he had many sinful problems, he is still listed among the number of those whose faith we ought to consider, it says in Hebrews 11. I do not want to focus our attention on him at this time, but rather I want to open up this passage to us in relation to the faith of his mother.

And so, let me make mention of 4 aspects of this woman’s faith which I believe will be helpful, for not only the mothers among us here today, but all of us. I want to show you that faith is both a grace and a duty. It is something which we are granted by God in saving grace. And it is something which we exercise and work at, in living our Christian life. It is not only important that women and mothers have faith and exercise it in all the situations of life, but it is important for all Christian men to do the same as well.

We will learn this in relation to Manoah. For it appears that his wife’s faith was stronger and greater than his was. May the Lord help us to receive these truths as that which will strengthen our faith in the living risen Christ. If we do so, it will enable us to better minister to our family members, and even to people around us as well.

1st of all – Sampson’s mother wanted to receive the message of the Angel of the Lord.

Verse 2 says – “Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children.” “And the Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, ‘Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.’” “Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and to eat anything unclean.” “For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son.” “And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.”

Interestingly, even though Sampson’s father’s name is given to us here, his mother’s name is not. One wonders why this was. Well God no doubt thought that it was good not to mention her name, so that we might focus our attention more upon her faith as something which all mothers ought to meditate upon and emulate. Now, in relation to what was said to this woman, we must think about how much God knows about us personally. This “Man” knew everything about Manoah’s wife. He knew that she was barren and that she didn’t have any children.

He also knew what He would do for her in giving her a child. She who was barren would conceive a son. But she did not know yet that He was anything but an angel, yet. I want you to see that she really did have strong faith, even from the beginning of this encounter. She was not afraid, and she did not question anything that the Angel of the Lord told her. It was because she already had faith that she wanted to receive His message. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Each of us must ask ourselves if we are like this woman was, in her hearing of the word of God. Ask yourself, do I have saving faith? Do I want to receive God’s word in every situation? Do I want to receive it from the Bible, the written word of God, when a minister of the word is bringing it to me? Do I perceive God’s word for what it is, the very word of God? It is a very good indication of whether you know God or not, if you receive His word in all of its specifics. This woman received the word of this Angel in just this way.

She was told that the son that she would bear would be a Nazarite from his birth; indeed a Nazarite all of his life. The law of taking the voluntary vow of being a Nazarite for a time is found in Numbers chapter 6. It was a vow of consecration and separation. The man or woman taking the vow was declaring that they would be totally separated and devoted to God's service in relation to what God had called them to do. They would separate themselves from sinfully defiling and polluting things such as wine, or dead bodies. And they would not cut their hair or round the edges of their beard, for a certain specific period of time, usually no less than a month.

The apostle Paul, in New Testament times, as a Hebrew man, in order to show forth the fact that he walked orderly and kept the ceremonial law, he came into the temple with those men who had taken a Nazarite vow, it says in Acts 21: 24. But Sampson was one of three men in the Bible whom we read of, who for their whole life, were devoted to the Lord as Nazarites. That is – Samuel and John the Baptist were also life-long Nazirites. We see here in our text that Sampson's mother herself had to be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean.

Because of the Nazarite who was in her womb, she herself had to be separate herself and be ceremonially clean to insure his cleanliness. It was not as though any of these men was sinless as our Lord Jesus was, but they had to be blameless in their separation. If they sinned or were defiled by close proximity to a dead body, they were supposed to shave their head and start over again after 8 days of purification. They would bring a sin offering and a burnt offering to the priest and the priest would make atonement for him, because he had sinned in regard being too close to a corpse, it says in Numbers 6: 11.

In terms of Sampson's being a Nazarite from the womb, and being designated this way by God Himself, in relation to all of his life, in this regard he was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ Himself was not strictly a Nazarite, but He was a Nazarene. And yet, as John Gill says – "He answered to the Nazarites in His being set apart in divine predestination by His Father to the office of Mediator; in the sanctification of Himself, and devoting of Himself, His time and service, to His Father's glory; and in His being holy and harmless in His life and walk." Christ was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners.

Sampson's mother received these specific instructions, and in this regard, she acts very much the part of a true believer. Even so, even though we are not under the ceremonial law, yet we are to think of all that the Bible says, in relation to our consecrating ourselves to His service. Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2 – "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable will of God."

I am trying to show you that God's word was designed by Him to speak to your mind and heart just as really and powerfully as this woman heard it from the Angel of the Lord, so that in your spirit you will hold communion with the Son of God, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. The Bible gives you explicit instructions on how to live your life to God. There is a real need for us to consecrate ourselves to the Lord's service. God would do great things for us and make us glad, but we must want to receive His word to make progress in righteousness and holiness.

2nd – Sampson's mother wanted to be of one faith with her husband in regard to the Angel of the Lord. (verses 6-14)

So the woman came, it says, and told her husband about the Man of God who came to her, and about the instructions he gave her. She told Manoah that His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome. But she did not get His name or where He was from. She told Manoah that He had told her that she was barren, and that she would conceive a son. And so Manoah did the right thing. He did not say – Why were you talking with a strange man? He immediately prayed to God to send the Man of God again to them to teach them what they should do for the child who would be born. Once again, we find here in Manoah, a person of faith. If anyone lacks wisdom, let him pray to God, and God will give it. (James 1: 5)

It says that God listened to the voice of Manoah and the angel of God came again. You will notice that He came again to the woman when she was alone. And you will notice, even further, that Manoah's wife immediately ran in haste to her husband, and he followed her to where the Man was. She wanted her husband to be included in everything that was going to be spoken to her, and be able to rejoice in everything that would come about for her, from God. She wanted her husband to speak to the Man himself, and know in his own heart and mind, that all of these things that were going to come to pass were from God. I think that all of this was very good on her part.

It shows right and Biblical submission to her husband. She wanted to be of one faith with him. She wanted to be of one mind and one heart with him in these important matters. Especially the part about her child being appointed by God to be a Nazarite. She wanted him to be able hear about the instructions that had been given to her by the Angel. And she wanted him to also know what that would mean for them both. Let us rejoice together this morning, my brothers, that we have many women among us who want to be good wives and good mothers. Our wife or our husband wants to be one with us in our faith! They want to include us and talk over with us many things regarding childbirth, and the raising of our children together. Let us bless the Lord for them!

So when Manoah came to the Man, he asked him – Are you the Man who spoke this woman? And He said – I am. And Manoah said – “Now let Your words come to pass!” “What will be the boy’s rule of life, and his work?” And the Angel explained all that He had commanded of her, to him. And Manoah knew that this child was going to be a very great and unusual man. I want you to see on this Mother’s Day that it is God who alone chooses what He wants to do with our lives in order to fulfill His own purposes. But it is also good when parents pray and ask the Lord to teach them what they should do for that child. The answer will always be – Be careful to observe all that I have commanded you. For us, this will not be observing the ceremonial law of God, but it will always involve teaching your children the moral law of God, their being careful to observe that.

3rd – Sampson’s mother wanted to be of one mind with her husband in their worship of the Angel of the Lord. (verses 15-20)

“Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, ‘Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You.’ “And the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, ‘Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food.’ “But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord.” (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the Lord.) “Then Manoah said the Angel of the Lord, ‘What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?’ “And the Angel of the Lord said to him, ‘Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?’ “So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the Lord.” “And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on – it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar – the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar!” “When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground.”

It is truly amazing that Manoah’s faith and his wife’s faith went hand in hand together in their desire to learn together who this Man was that they were speaking with, and what they should do in response to His words. Once they understood his words and the implications of them for their future life, they wanted to worship God with Him over the good news. They knew Him to be a Man of God, speaking God’s very words to them, but they did not quite yet understand that He was the Son of God Himself. Manoah’s wife, seeing the reality and strength of her husband’s faith, thus far, in his questions and the answers given to him, was content with his response. She was content to follow his lead. This is how it is when a man and his wife come to know the Lord. They want to worship together. The woman is content to let her man lead spiritually speaking. The apostle Paul says in 1st Corinthians 11: 3 – “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”

Manoah wanted to initiate a time of worship and thanksgiving, in the presence of this Man-Angel. He and his wife wanted to do this; to give thanks to God, and to offer their sacrifice in concert with this Angel, for this child that God would give them. The same should be true of every married couple

here in this place. If you are married, you and your wife should want Christ right in the center of Your worship. You should see Him as your Mediator and Your Advocate with the Father. In initiating this act of worship, Manoah very much wanted to learn more about the Man whom they were speaking with. So he said to Him – What is your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?

And He said – Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful? Let us see that the Pre-Incarnate Christ was revealing Himself to them in this profound way. He is the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9: 6) For this Wonderful Man, Manoah would offer through Him, a sacrifice to God. This Man did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on – As the flame burning the sacrifice went up toward heaven from the altar – the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And when Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground. For they knew that He was God!

Christ is wonderful in His Person. He is wonderful in relation to His sacrifice in which He laid down His life. And He is wonderful in His resurrection and His ascension to the right hand of the Father where He ever lives to make intercession for us. Manoah and his wife were of one mind in their worship of the Angel of the Lord. And so it should be for every married couple among us here today. Since we are united in marriage, and know the Lord, we should together seek to know Him better; the meaning of His names, the meaning of His sacrifice, the meaning of His love, and the power of His grace. Let it be the united desire of our hearts.

4th – Sampson's mother wanted to strengthen her husband's faith by means of righteous reasoning. (verses 21-25)

When the Angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the Lord.” “And Manoah said to his wife, ‘We shall surely die, because we have seen God!’” “But his wife said to him, ‘If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He has told us such things as these at this time.’” I think that it is good for us to see that sometimes, even in marriage, the faith of one can be stronger than the other. Or at least stronger in different senses.

In Manoah's case, he certainly had faith. It was strong faith when he first came into this situation. He did not question the word of the Lord to His wife. He investigated it, and prayed to the Lord about it, and he asked his own good questions of the Angel, to verify who He was, and to ask him, how they should raise Sampson. But when he fully came to realize who it was that had been speaking to him, his faith faltered and he believed that they would surely die. He thought that they would die because Manoah knew that God was a God of Justice. Perhaps they were looking into things which they were not worthy to receive, and God would strike them dead for daring to desire to learn more.

But I want you to see how calm and assured Manoah's wife was in this situation. She was strong in faith, and she reasoned it through in the right way. She gave her husband a wise and discerning answer. Had God desired to kill them, would He have accepted our burnt offering? Would He have shown us all these things? Would He have told us all these things just to kill us? No, it is because He thinks well of us for our faith in God, and our faith in Him, that He has revealed all of these things to us.

Let us see that faith is not only not opposed to reason, but faith enlists reason in her aid to strengthen the faith of others, in all that has been revealed to you. May you have a calm heart and a steady faith as this woman's was, so that you might be able to help your husband or your wife to have better views of God. This does not mean that you will ignore His Justice or His just judgments, but you will see that with Christ, and because of Christ, God's Justice is satisfied. The tyranny and bondage of sin has been vanquished when you believe in Him. Faith in Christ means the end of fear. You know that God is for you, and not against you. Life and immortality have now been brought to light, through the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord. Let your faith rest upon that.

