

Judges 16:18-31 – A Weak Leader Still Accomplishes Good

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Based on the life Samson lived, it is not surprising that his life came to a tragic end. You live by the sword, you die by the sword. You live in a pipe you get choked by the slop (粪便). If you take fire in your lap, you're going to get burned. But Samson's life was not useless – weak as he was. There were times in Samson's life when he realized what his duties were and he fulfilled them. You will see an example of this today.

Our headings are:

Delilah's Deception

Philistines Jubilation (欢庆)

Samson's Contrition (痛悔)

Our goals are: That you will see the need for constant repentance so that you will be more effective in God's work for your life, especially as a leader.

Delilah's Deception

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.

1. With the secret about her husband's strength in hand, Delilah called the Philistine leaders. Her loyalty was first to her herself. She collected the money from the leaders FIRST. Her second loyalty was to her Philistines friends.

19 Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him.

2. Delilah actively deceived and destroyed her husband; she wasn't neutral. She lulled him to sleep while his head was on her lap. That should have been a place of safety and comfort. Then she called a man to help her to shave Samson's head. After which she tormented him. She proved to the Philistines that his strength left him. How awful. Samson's heart became weaker than his body! Samson did not know that his wife would have acted on it. How foolish. She sold him for silver. He should have known that a child of the Devil would act like a child of the Devil. What else could he expect? If she weren't worse, then that would have been a surprise.

20 And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" 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.

3. When Samson thought he would flex his muscle and great strength would be there, he realized that his strength was gone. What arrogance. But wicked women do enslave the heart. Hosea 4:11. Just this week, Billy Graham's grandson, pastor of a large PCA church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, left the ministry because of adultery. Sins catch us with us.

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

4. The Philistines then captured a weakened Samson and blinded his eyes, literally digging them out. Why? This was their wickedness. But it was God's judgment as well. Samson had trouble with his eyes. He lusted (好色). They had to be removed to save him.

Matthew 5:29 "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

They then took him to Gaza where they bound him in chains and made him a slave to grind grain.

Why fetters? Samson joked about ropes when Delilah was questioning him. Now he was facing it for real.

Why a grinder? They made him grind grain, maybe as punishment for all the grain he had destroyed with the foxes and fire.

There were things lost that he never regained: Eyes, freedom, and opportunity to work for his people.

5. Lessons:

a. A woman's loyalty must be first to her husband – to preserve his dignity (尊荣) and to cover his weaknesses. You must not deny his weaknesses, but don't expose him so that he is shamed. Do not betray his trust. You should be the safest place he has in this world. What would life be for a man whose most intimate asset betrays him?

b. Isn't it always safer to marry one of your own... one who has the same Lord and Savior? Won't you trust him or her more?

c. Let wisdom fill the heart of a man so that he does not unite with that which will corrupt him. Don't think you are able to fight against wickedness by yourself. If you are not in God's protection you are tasty prey (美味的掠物)

to the wicked one! Henry: If we sleep in the lap of our lusts, we shall certainly wake in the hands of the Philistines.
d. Consider the shame a wicked leader brings to the name of Christ. Think of elders and ministers who have fallen into sin!

The Philistines Jubilation

22 However, **the hair of his head began to grow again** after it had been shaven. 23 Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to **Dagon their god**, and to rejoice. And they said: "**Our god has delivered into our hands Samson our enemy!**" 24 When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said: "Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, The destroyer of our land, And the one who multiplied our dead."

1. Samson was a slave and became more than a slave! He was used as part of the Philistines' worship of Dagon—a Dunghill (粪堆) Deity – a picture of filthiness (污秽) . (Part man, part fish.) They wanted to show that their god was greater than Samson's God—Jehovah. They mocked him—and ultimately, mocked his God - Jehovah. They praised their god.

2. But Samson's hair started to grow back like it was before – like a Nazirite's hair. There was no power in his hair, but his **hair was his badge of consecration** (分别为圣) . His hair was a **symbol of God's authority**. When he had it cut it **meant that he was rejecting God**. So he came to his senses and **did not cut his hair again**. God would not work in a special way with those who did not have the special symbol of authority on their head. (If a woman's husband died in war and she was marrying another, she had to shave her head as a symbol of her authority changing.) So it is here.

25 So it happened, when their **hearts were merry**, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may **perform for us**." So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars. 26 Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them."

3. On one occasion they were having a great worship festival at which they were heavily drinking. So they asked, as drunks often do, for sport – to watch Samson perform for them. **Being asked to perform (some sort of comedy) between two pillars, Samson asked for a young boy to help him find the main pillars.** The Philistines might have thought that Samson was going to do some kind of trick for them when he went between those two pillars.

27 Now the temple was full of men and women. **All the lords** of the Philistines were there—about **three thousand men and women on the roof** watching while Samson performed.

4. The temple had many men and women, about 3000 on the roof alone. They too rejoiced that their god had captured Samson. They didn't know their world was about to collapse. **It wasn't a comedy anymore; it became a tragedy!**

5. Lessons:

a. The world may be happy now...but their happiness will not last. Their judgment is coming.

b. Take heed how quickly you can fall – even as a Christian. Sin never keeps its promises.

1Corinthians 10:7 And do not become idolaters (拜偶像者) as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."

You can go from a father, or elder, or leader to nothing...with just one compromise! So be on your guard!

c. What a blessing it is to be Christian and not to be a pagan(异教徒). Look how the Devil often uses pagan religions to allow men to indulge themselves in drunkenness and debauchery (放荡, 沉溺酒色) . When the Corinthians drank a little too much in church, they were promptly threatened with DEATH. **Your Savior wants you to be pure,** not like a pagan! Their gods don't care because their gods are demons. They seek their people's death.

Samson's Contrition

28 Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, "**O Lord GOD**, remember me, I pray! **Strengthen me**, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!"

1. Samson then prayed a stirring prayer –a fruit of his repentance (悔改) . **Notice how his prayer had direction.** He was praying the Lord, Jehovah. **He was praying for strength** – more for spiritual strength, because he knew he was stronger. But he knew he was going to die.

Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me *by Your* generous Spirit.

He asked for Divine justice 公义 now for **their torturing of him**. So there is a weakened repentance. He should have sought justice for what the Philistines did to Israel.

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left.

2. Then he braced against the two main pillars of the temple– the temple of the Dunhill Deity –the temple where people were worshipping false gods, the temple where the people entertained themselves at the expense of God’s covenant child. And the people would have laughed as he did this.

30 Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that **he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.**

3. After pushing with all his might – might that came from the Almighty – not from his muscles – the whole temple fell and he killed more Philistines there than he had killed all his life. (It appears to be like an implosion...pushing the main pillars and causing a collapse. And surely this was more consequential than it appears. About 6000-7000 died.
a. The main leaders of the Philistines were there. So order among the Philistines was about to collapse.
b. Seeing their god destroyed, then they would have thought that their god was not as strong as the God of Israel. Their faith system would have collapsed.
This was a blown opportunity for Israel. They were not organized to use this opportunity to control the Philistines.

4. Was Samson wrong to do this, knowing he would die? A mother who recently died because she refused treatment knowing it would kill her baby in the womb, was she wrong? Surely not. A soldier who jumps on a grenade (手雷) to save his comrades, is he wrong to kill himself to save others? Surely not. Even if there were no noble motive, suicide is not an unpardonable (不可饶恕的) sin. And Samson was a man of faith. The Bible says so. He had holy zeal for the church of Jesus Christ. And both would die, but one would have the hope of heaven.

31 And his brothers and all his father’s household came down and took him, and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had judged Israel twenty years.

5. His brothers came and carried his body away back to the Promised Land (应许之地). He had the hope of heaven in his bosom when he died.

6. Lessons:

a. Regardless how far you stray from the Lord, he is near enough to hear your prayers. Use this gift.

b. Praying for Divine justice on the enemies of God’s people (not your own enemies, as you may have caused that yourself) is proper and expected. Don’t let the wimpy (无用的) water-soaked (掺水的) Christianity tell you otherwise. Read the Psalms. Sing the Psalms. This is one of the reasons the Psalms are in such disuse.

c. Jesus was mocked, but he endured it to free you. He destroyed all the hosts of the Devil!

Matthew 27:31 And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His *own* clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

Hebrews 2:14 ...that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Conclusion:

Delilah deceived her husband, the one she was joined to. This was the worst kind of deception in the world. But it is understandable. She was a child of her father – The Deceiver (说谎者, 指魔鬼). The Philistines were jubilant when they captured a covenant child of Jehovah. They thought that their god was stronger than Jehovah. They were children of King Liar. Samson was contrite because he knew he had sinned. He asked God to forgive him and to restore him to his rightful work of destroying the enemies of God’s people. He was a child of his Father – bought with the blood of the coming Savior.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Don’t leave God for anything else. Nothing else is better. And if you are a leader, the consequences of leaving God are greater, as you not only harm yourself, but you also harm those under you. Stay close to God for help.

2. If you do stray, don’t stay there. Repent. Take the consequences. Move on with the work God has called you. Maybe you have not done the best job as a son or daughter, or as a parent. You can’t undo the past, but you can move forward with the grace of Jesus and do better.

3. Don’t come back to your family, church, or national duties because of the fact that you might lose your good name.

You come back because you belong to Jesus who gave his life for you and you want to honor him...you want to build up his kingdom. It was he who had his arms stretched out on the cross “as if to give the Devil’s kingdom a final shake.” (Henry) It was he who destroyed the Devil’s kingdom. So serve him.

Finally, if you are not a Christian and inwardly or outwardly laughed at what we believe and do, **God will stop you.** Your mouth will be left open! But then your end will come. But you have room to escape. You can escape by holding on to the one who gave his life for your freedom from sin, Jesus. If you want to get to know him better, grab hold of a Christian and ask.