

Samson (Part 2)

Judges 16 - 21

PPT Title

Samson (Part 2)

Main Point: God is full of mercy, rescuing those who do not deserve it.

PPT Verse

Key Verse: *Have mercy on me, O God, because of **Your** unfailing love. Because of **Your** great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins.* - Psalm 51:1 NLT

Props: Strips of leather, new rope, loosely woven cloth, scissors

BACKGROUND/REVIEW

Say: Last week we started to learn about a very unique man named Samson.

Ask: Who can tell me something about Samson? *He was very strong, He killed a lion*

Say: Let's do a quick review. Before Samson was born, an angel of the Lord came to tell Samson's parents that they would have a son. This boy was to be set apart for the Lord. He would be raised as a Nazirite. This meant he could never eat or drink anything from the grapevine, he had to stay away from graves, and he could never cut his hair. This will be an important thing to remember this week. As Samson grew up, the Spirit of God came upon him. Samson was very strong. God planned to use Samson to deliver the Israelites from the power of the Philistines.

Last week we learned about his marriage that did not go very well. Samson was determined to marry a certain Philistine woman. A foolish bet with her people turned into several battles in which Samson killed many Philistines. Samson's life was full of pride, anger, and violence.

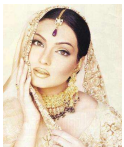
DELILAH (Judges 16:4-21)

Say: Samson was a leader of the Israelites, even though the Philistines still ruled over them. Samson had a reputation as an extremely strong and fierce enemy of the Philistines. The Philistines continually looked for a way to trap him (Judges 16:2).

Samson fell in love with another Philistine woman. Her name was Delilah.

The rulers of the Philistines went to her. They said, "See if you can get him to tell you the secret of why he's so strong. Find out how we can overpower him. Then we can tie him up. We can bring him under our control. Each of us will give you 28 pounds of silver." - Judges 16:5

So Delilah asked Samson to tell her the secret of his great strength. This would seem like a great opportunity to give God the praise for the strength that God had given to Samson. But instead, Samson lied to Delilah. He told her that if someone tied him up with seven leather straps that were not completely dry, then he would become as weak as any other man. So, the Philistine rulers gave Delilah the seven leather straps. **Hold up your leather strips.** Then the men hid in the room while Delilah tied up Samson. We are not told if Samson was asleep, or if he allowed Delilah to tie him up, the way a father might allow his young child to tie him up, knowing he could easily escape. After ₁



Samson was tied up, Delilah shouted to him.

She said, "Samson! The Philistines are attacking you!" But he snapped the leather straps easily. (Drop your leather strips.) They were like pieces of string that had come too close to a flame. So the secret of why he was so strong wasn't discovered. - Judges 16:9b



Delilah told Samson that he made her look foolish by lying to her. Again, she pleaded for Samson to tell her how he could be tied up. Samson must have thought it was all a joke. This time he told her that if he were tied up with ropes that had never been used, he would become as weak as any other man. **Hold up your ropes.** So Delilah got some new ropes and tied Samson up with them. Just as before, men were hiding in the room. Again Delilah shouted that the Philistines were attacking. Samson snapped through the ropes as if they were threads. **Drop your ropes.**



Once again, Delilah told Samson he was making her look foolish. Again, she begged for an answer to her question of how to tie him up. Remember that Samson's hair had never been cut. He wore his hair in seven braids. This time, Samson told her that if she were to weave the braids of his hair into the cloth that was on her weaving loom, he would become weak. **Hold up your cloth.** Delilah waited until Samson was asleep, then she took the seven braids of his hair and wove them into the cloth on her loom. Once more, Delilah shouted that the Philistines were attacking. Samson woke up and broke free with no problem. **Drop your cloth.**

Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you'? You won't even share your secret with me. This is the third time you have made me look foolish. And you still haven't told me the secret of why you are so strong." She continued to pester him day after day. She nagged him until he was sick and tired of it. - Judges 16:15-16

Finally, Delilah wore Samson down with her nagging. Nagging is complaining over and over and over and over. Samson was so annoyed by her repeated words, he couldn't take it anymore.

So he told her everything. "I've never used a razor on my head," he said. "I've never cut my hair. That's because I've been a Nazirite since the day I was born. A Nazirite is set apart to God. If you shave my head, I won't be strong anymore. I'll become as weak as any other man." - Judges 16:17



Delilah sent word to the Philistine rulers to come back one more time. They came, and brought the silver with them. Delilah lulled Samson to sleep. She called for a man to come and cut off the braids of his hair. **Hold up your scissors and make the cutting motion.** His strength left him. Then, one final time, Delilah shouted to Samson that the Philistines were attacking. As Samson woke up, he thought he would break free as he always had before. Listen to what the Bible says next: "But he didn't know that the Lord had left him." (Judges 16:20) The Philistines grabbed him and poked his eyes out. They took him to Gaza, put chains on him, and put him in prison. Then Samson, once the strongest warrior in the land, spent his days grinding grain in prison.



Application: We see that Samson did not inquire of God which woman he should pursue. We should always go to God first, and ask for His wisdom (Psalm 73:24, James 1:5). Samson did not take his parent's advice on this matter, either. The Bible tells us to ask the advice of godly people when we make decisions (Proverbs 15:22). We can read God's plan for choosing a wife in His word. The Bible has wonderful guidelines for what type of woman makes a good wife. For instance, it tells us that the most important thing is not her beauty, which will fade away, but that she loves the Lord (Proverbs 31:30). God's word also says not to marry a woman who nags or argues (Proverbs

19:13). Other qualities to look for are a woman who works hard and helps those in need (Proverbs 31:17, 20). None of these qualities fit the women that Samson chose. Samson would have done well to seek godly wisdom about whom he spent his time with. We should also seek God's wisdom about the people we spend time with. We should choose our close friends using the Bible as our guide. For example, the Bible says not to spend time with people who get angry easily or those who gossip (Proverbs 22:24, Proverbs 16:28). Use God's wisdom to choose your close friends, because they are who you spend the most time with, and who will influence you. Also, listen to your parent's advice about who to have for a close friend. The Bible *promises* that things will go well for you if you honor parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). Your parents can help you choose the type of person you should or should not have for a close friend. Now, we are not supposed to just ignore the other people in the world. They need to see our example. They need the Lord (Acts 1:8). Spend some time with them, but keep in mind that they are people that you are trying to help. Look for ways to tell them about God and His word. Do not allow them to influence you.

Also, notice Delilah's final plea to Samson. She said, "If you love me, you will tell me your secret." This is never a good sign! This is manipulation. That means, she was tricking him with her words. This situation had nothing to do with love! Delilah wanted the information so she would get paid with 28 pounds of silver. She wanted to make Samson feel bad so that she could get what she wanted. Be very cautious of anyone who has similar words to you. If someone says, "If you are my friend, you will do this," or, "I won't be your friend unless you do this," watch out! (Proverbs 12:26) They are not trying to do what is best for you. They simply want something from you and they are trying to trick you. There should be no "conditions" on friendship (Matthew 22:39).

SAMSON'S DEATH (Judges 16:22-31)

Say: While Samson was in prison, his hair began to grow again. One day the rulers of the Philistines held a big celebration. They were going to offer a sacrifice to their false god. They believed their god had delivered Samson into their hands. Of course, this was not true. The Philistines were only able to capture Samson because the one true God left Samson when he treated the gifts God gave him so carelessly. During their celebration, the crowd called for Samson to be brought out. They thought it was funny to see Samson blind and weak. They wanted him to put on a show for them.

Samson asked the servant who was holding his hand to take him near the great pillars that held up the temple so he could lean on them. The Bible tells us that the temple was packed full of people. There were 3000 Philistine men and women on the roof of the temple in addition to all the Philistine leaders.

Then (Samson) prayed to the Lord. He said, "Lord and King, show me that you still have concern for me. God, please make me strong just one more time. Let me pay the Philistines back for what they did to my two eyes. Let me do it with only one blow."



Then Samson reached toward the two pillars that were in the middle of the temple. They held the temple up. He put his right hand on one of them. He put his left hand on the other. He leaned hard against them.

Samson said, "Let me die together with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might. The temple came down on the rulers. It fell on all of the people who were in it. So Samson killed many more Philistines when he died than he did while he lived. - Judges 16:28-30

Notice that Samson prayed for strength to get revenge for his own eyes. He didn't ask for strength so he could give God glory, or even to set his fellow Israelites free from

the Philistines. Even in his final hour, Samson was thinking only of himself. Samson died in the temple that day. Then Samson's brothers and relatives got his body and buried him.

Application: Samson's story is really a tragic one. We cannot hold Samson up as a godly hero that we should try to be like. Many times in the Bible, we see that God can accomplish His plans, even through the sins of men.

Teacher note: In Genesis, Joseph's jealous brothers sold him into slavery, but God used it to save an entire nation from starvation. With godly vision, Joseph told his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people." (Genesis 50:20 NLT) But by far, the greatest example is that of the crucifixion of our Lord. In Matthew 16:21-23, Jesus explained to His disciples the necessity of the suffering He would do at the hands of the religious leaders. He foretold His death and resurrection on the third day. When Peter protested, Jesus rebuked him emphatically. Jesus said, "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's" (Matthew 16:23b NLT) Other examples of God accomplishing His goals through the evil deeds of men are found in Exodus 10:1-2 and Acts 8:4.

PPT Verse

Psalm 33:11 says, "The plans of the Lord stand firm forever. What He wants to do will last for all time." God even used the self-centeredness, pride, and rage of Samson to accomplish His goal of rescuing His people from the Philistines. But because of all of his shortcomings, Samson lived a troubled life and died a violent death. With all the gifts God had given him, we wonder what Samson's life would have been like if he had lived according to God's laws.

In the story of Samson, we must focus on the heart of God. Once again, God had heard His people cry out for His help. Even though they had turned away from Him over and over again, God heard them and wanted to help them (Judges 10:16). The story of Samson is the story of God rescuing His unfaithful people from the cruel hand of their enemy. It is a story of God's mercy. The dictionary says mercy is, "The power of a judge to pardon someone from their punishment." Mercy is taking away punishment that is deserved. The Israelites deserved to be under the power of the Philistines because they turned their backs on the One who protected them. But, in His abundant mercy, God came to their rescue. That is the God that we serve - a God full of mercy. A God like that deserves our praise!

Samson can be seen as a symbol of the Israelite people. Just like Samson, the Israelites had been chosen by God to be set apart, to be used by Him (Deuteronomy 7:6). Just like Samson, the Israelites did nothing to deserve their blessings from God (Deuteronomy 7:7). And just like Samson, the Israelites squandered, or wasted, the gifts God had given them. They did not use their blessings to glorify God. Instead, both Samson and the Israelites did what was right in their own eyes, not in God's eyes (Judges 17:6).

CONCLUSION (Judges 17 - 21)

After the story of Samson, the book of Judges continues to tell of more failures of the Israelites. We learn of more idol worship (Judges 17:3-5). We learn of Levite priests who were not performing the duties that God had given them to do. Instead they chose to sin (Judges 17:7-12, ch. 19). And we even learn of Israelite tribes going to war with other Israelite tribes (Judges 20). The people in the book of Judges had fallen a long way from the book of Joshua when the Israelites worked together and obeyed God.

There is a phrase that is repeated several times in the book of Judges (Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25):

In those days Israel didn't have a king. The people did anything they thought was right. - Judges 17:6

Let's look at the phrase, "They did anything they thought was right." The Israelites did whatever felt right to them. They did not do what God said was right. The Bible calls this, "Being wise in your own eyes." Proverbs 3:7 says, "Don't be wise in your own eyes. Have respect for the Lord and avoid evil." And Proverbs 26:12 says that someone who is wise in his own eyes is worse off than a fool. The Israelites were completely foolish to turn their backs on God and do things their way.

Think of it this way. God knows everything. Did you know that God does not have a birthday? That's because God was never born. He simply has always existed. That is hard for us to understand, but it is true. Psalm 90:2 says, "From the beginning to the end, You are God." The Bible also says God is in control of everything (Job 37:15-16, Daniel 5:21b). He knows everything that will ever happen. We, on the other hand, do NOT know everything. We only know what we have seen or what we have been taught. Why wouldn't those who do NOT know everything listen to the One who DOES know everything?



Imagine a little ant. An ant is tiny to us. Things that are very small to us, like blades of grass, leaves, or rocks, are huge to him. That ant climbing up a blade of grass would be like us climbing up Stone Mountain. The ant can only see what is right around him. But we can stand up above the ant. From our point of view, we can see far more than the ant can. We can see across the whole yard, and beyond. If we really cared about the ant, and we could talk to him, we could help direct him. We could tell him the shortest way to get where he was going. We could tell him where food was, and we could warn him when there was danger ahead. **Ask:** Would the ant be wise to listen to us? Yes! Now imagine if the ant said, "Those people don't know anything. I know what is best. I won't listen to them." We would say he was "wise in his own eyes." We would also say he was a fool.



Be certain, God cares about us immensely! Since He knows everything, and He only wants the very best for us, aren't we foolish not to follow His direction? We should pray to Him and study His word. The more we obey, the better our lives will be.



Now let's look at the other phrase, "In those days Israel did not have a king." It seems the only time the Israelites did anything right was when they had a strong leader, like Moses and Joshua. In Judges, the only time the Israelites had peace was when they were under the leadership of one of the judges, or deliverers. As soon as the judge died, they fell back into sin, idol worship, and captivity. Indeed, it seemed that Israel needed a king. Soon the Israelites would cry out for a king. But an earthly king would not be the answer for them. They needed a king who would rule perfectly - a king who would never die. In time, God, who is rich in mercy, who rescues those who do not deserve it, would send His Son to be the perfect King. Jesus was sent *first* to the Israelites, to be their king (Matthew 1:17, Mark 15:2). He was no ordinary king. He was fully God and fully man. Jesus laid down His life as a sin offering, to take away the sins of the world. On the third day, God raised Him from the dead.



Soon, God made it clear that Jesus died to take away the sins of **all** men and women, boys and girls (Acts 10:28). Anyone who puts their trust in Him will be forgiven of their sin, and rescued from eternal punishment (John 11:25-26, Acts 16:31). The Bible says that Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14). He will never die. He will return to earth and He will reign forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Luke 1:32-33). Each of us is called to take the free gift of eternal life that our merciful God has offered us. We are called to live our lives following the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ.

God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it. God made us. He created us to belong to Christ Jesus. Now we can do good things. - Ephesians 2:8-10a

PPT Main Point

Main Point: God is full of mercy, rescuing those who do not deserve it.