

**Theme:** God’s servants are sinful and flawed. But not even our sin can thwart God’s plans and purposes. He has called a people for his own possession and he answers their cries for deliverance.

**Background:** Samson judged Israel 20 years – then comes the story of his death.

**Introduction:** Recent *Time* magazine “special edition” was dedicated to the opioid epidemic in the US and what happens when you fall under its control. Samson’s addictions begin to take control of his life.

## **I. Samson’s Spiritual Blindness**

NOTE: Judges 16:1-3 tie Samson’s past – to what is about to unfold.

### A. His “addictions”

1. Women – a Philistine prostitute
2. Danger?
  - Gaza – Philistine territory

### B. His arrogance

1. “His” strength
  - Presumption
  - Seen not as a gift – but as an entitlement!
2. Assuming success is assured
  - Regardless of his actions
  - Regardless of his Nazirite vow

### C. His actions

1. Serving God’s purposes
  - “Seeking an occasion” against the Philistines
  - Picturing God’s power to save
  - His moral and spiritual weakness, reflecting Israel’s weakness

NOTE: God’s power and plans superintend our plans and actions. God takes our weakness, failings, sin – and uses it to fulfill his ends and purposes. Consider Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 37-50.

2. Serving his own ends
  - Takes God’s gifts (sexual love, his gift of strength) and abuses them

APPLICATION: In *grace* God uses our weaknesses and failures for his glory and our good. In *sin* we take God’s blessing and provision and seek to turn them to our own ends.

## **II. The Path to Physical Bondage**

### A. Delicious, delightful Delilah (4-9)

1. Her motivation (5)
  - Greed!
2. Her strategy
  - Subtlety is not her strong suit! (6)
3. Samson in her power (10)
  - The game gets more desperate
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> time? Getting closer (13)

### B. Soporific Samson

1. Misplaced “love”
2. Losing his senses
  - She wins – he sins
  - Shows his weakness

### C. Crossing the line

1. He never learns! (Proverbs 26:11)
2. Despising God's blessing and calling  
Application: How many times must the Lord rescue us from the same situations?
3. The Lord's patience ends (20)
  - a. Shattered assumptions
    - Obedience doesn't matter? Shattered.
    - Strength was his to use as he pleased? Wrong.
  - b. Why now?
    - Can't know
    - Not one mark of the vow is left uncorrupted
  - c. The consequences of sin
    - Blindness, bondage, shame
    - They fall on us all

## III. Restoring Spiritual Sight

### A. Philistine blindness

1. Letting his hair grow?
  - Their god won. Game over! (24)
2. Their "entertainment" (25)
3. Between the pillars
  - To mock, humiliate
  - Poor choice of staging

### B. An Israelite's prayer – The climax of the story!

1. Samson's hope
  - a. Two prayers
    - First prayer – to live (The 1<sup>st</sup> climax)
    - Last Prayer – to die, with honor in the Lord's service
  - b. A "mustard Seed" of Faith
    - Finally exercises the faith that we had hoped to see
2. Israel's hope as well
  - a. Samson as a reflection of Israel
    - Chosen, blessed, receiving God's favor, forsaking their first love, blind to their danger, assuming God will always bless

NOTE: This may well describe many "churches" today. 2 Timothy 3:5
  - b. Samson as a *Reminder* to Israel
    - They can still cry out to God

## IV. The Lessons of Samson

### A. The vessels God uses

- Jars of clay (2 Corinthians 4:7)
- Vessels he can shape, strengthen, equip, fill  
(Romans 8:29; Ephesians 3:16; Hebrews 13:21; Romans 15:13)

### B. It is not the *form* of godliness we seek – but the *power!*

### C. God is patient – but sin will bear its fruit

### D. Anticipation Without Disappointment

- Our anticipation regarding Samson is entertaining – but disappointing!
- Our anticipation regarding Christ the Lord will be outstripped by his fulfillment