

“UNTO US A SUN IS BORN”:
THE CHURCH’S SPIRIT-EMPOWERED WARRIOR
PART 2
JUDGES 14:10-15:8
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Summary of Sermon/ Theme of Worship Service: Samson is God’s set apart consecrated man, yet gives into temptation and sin too easily. In our story today, we will see Samson’s further slipping down or “yasad-ing” into sin (just as Israel has declined spiritually as a people; 14:1a, 14:5a; cf. 13:1a).

Although Samson will reap the consequences of his sins against God, God in His Sovereignty is allowing this because God is seeking an opportunity against the Philistines to begin to destroy them (14:4). Remember that when God or His people go to battle that this is ultimately a *spiritual conflict* (3:2; Eph. 6:10ff).

Although Samson has set his sights on women, and lost his sight of God and the vision of his calling, God still keeps his eyes on Samson and Israel because of His covenant promises to those who believe.

God is revealed as the true Divine Savior-Warrior-Judge who wars against His and Israel’s enemies.

We learned in our last sermon that Samson experiences the power and grace of the Spirit of God to know and realize his identity as one consecrated to God for powerful service as a Warrior-Judge-Deliverer (see Judges 13 and last sermon). We as the Church also experience God’s empowerment so that we too might resist sin, the world, the flesh and the devil, as we should.

Samson was called to be a “holy man”; Israel was called to be a “holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). Samson desired to live life like the nations in doing what was right in his own eyes; Israel desired to live life like the nations in doing what was right in her own eyes. Samson desired foreign women; Israel desired foreign gods. The Samson story mirrors the covenantal story of Israel (adapted from Barry Webb’s book on *Judges*).

ESV Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

ESV Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

ESV Judges 14:3 But his father and mother said to him, "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the

uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes."

The Church struggles too with being empowered by God's Spirit and compromised by sin. Samson like the Church at this time in redemptive-history struggles with his identity of being God's chosen man, and so does what is right in his own eyes.

Although Samson will reap the consequences of his sins against God, God in His Sovereignty is allowing this because God is seeking an opportunity against the Philistines to begin to destroy them:

The key verse to consider with regard to the remainder of the Samson story is 14:4:

ESV Judges 14:4 His father and mother did not know that it was from the LORD, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines ruled over Israel.

As I said last week, this revelation of God's power and grace should cause us to be obedient and thankful to God. This revelation of God's power even through our sinning is NOT to teach us to keep on sinning so that grace might increase (Romans 6:1-4).

Although Samson or Israel will not obediently drive out the Philistines as they have been commanded to do by Moses and Joshua (see Deuteronomy 7), God will begin to drive them out to make way for His Messianic King who will rule and reign over Israel and lead them into peace-shalom into the land. Remember the last verse of Judges, 21:25:

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

As we read Judges from this point on, we should be anticipating not only one greater than Moses, but a king to rule over God's people. Israel needs unity, Israel needs strength, Israel needs salvation-deliverance from her enemies, Israel needs a king to lead them into righteousness, and God would send that king eventually.

In our passage this morning (14:10-15:8), God will begin to deliver the Israelites through Samson. Samson's motives and his ways are questionable and outright sinful at times. BUT in God's sovereignty, it is God who is seeking an opportunity regardless of his servant-judge in order to destroy his and Israel's enemies.

God's salvation-mercy to his servant will be manifested to show God's amazing grace and never-ending love for his people. God's fiery wrath of destruction against His enemies will be revealed through Samson in our passage.

- I. **Samson's Weakness**- Samson's riddle (14:10-18)
- II. **God's Power**- Samson's first victory by God's Spirit (14:19-20)
- III. **Samson's Weakness and God's Power**- Samson's second victory by God's Spirit (15:1-8)

Samson's folly and riddle (14:10-18)

Samson is slipping sinfully and “going down” or “yaraing” as we considered in our last sermon. Lack of sobriety before God with regard to how we live our lives leads to careless foolishness- -NOT WISDOM!

Now remember that Samson has touched the carcass of the lion, eaten honey and broken his Nazarite vow. In the process, he has also caused his mother and father to become unclean as well by giving to them the honey that was touched by a dead animal (14:5-9).

Notice how Samson knew what he had done was wrong because he did not tell his parents, but nevertheless he wants to taunt his family with a riddle (14:9). Samson desires to tell what he did sinfully to his parents and new family, but desires to play a guessing game in order for the truth to be revealed.

Samson is guilty of particularly breaking the 5th commandment in honoring his mother and father (14:3) and the 9th commandment because he is being deceitful (14:9), but he is breaking these two commandments because he is ultimately breaking the 1st commandment and placing himself and what seems best in his own eyes, before his obedience to the will of God.

Now I mentioned last week how bees making honey in the lion's carcass are the opposite of what should be in a dead lion (14:8). Ordinarily, maggots and flies would be in the lion's carcass. But God has granted Samson another sign of His great grace and power. There are bees, a community, working in unity to produce fruit, as Israel was called and set apart to do in the Promised Land.

Samson was to recognize from the display of strength in killing the lion, and the extraordinary sight of the bees making honey in the lion's carcass the very power and grace of God manifested. As David after him, Samson was to understand that this display of God's grace and strength would make him capable to defeat the Philistines and resist his own sins:

And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." -1 Samuel 17:37

But sadly, Samson does not see; he has become nearsighted and blind to the things of God, and he has set his eyes on what matters most to him (14:3, 7). Remember how the Apostle Peter taught the Church to be self-controlled in light of God's grace? Remember how Christians are taught to seek to grow in the grace and knowledge of the LORD and His salvation so that God's people would be effective and fruitful in their knowledge of God's salvation?

ESV 2 Peter 1:6-9: and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities¹ are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus

Christ. ⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

The setting of this irresponsible secret or guessing game that Samson plays with his family is important; look at 14:10. Samson is going to the feast for his new Philistine bride from Timnah; the scene takes place at a *mishteh* [Heb: מִשְׁתֵּה] or “drinking party”. This is not merely a feast, but a *drinking feast*. This was a drinking party at the home of the bride’s parents that would last seven days (imagine the Alka-Seltzer that must have been used!).

You could say that a *mishteh* was like a long ancient Near Eastern bachelor’s party. It was to celebrate a man’s wedding in sinful luxury and drunkenness.

What is a Nazarite doing at a “drinking party” if he is forbidden from wine and strong drink (13:4)? What we might ask was Samson doing even at the vineyards of Timnah where the lion rushed out and tried to kill him (14:5)? What, indeed.

Now one might argue that Samson didn’t partake of either the wine or the strong drink that would accompany a *mishteh*, but I think the implication here is that he has broken almost all three of his Nazarite vows by now attending a drinking feast.

Samson has now attended a drinking feast, he has touched the carcass of the lion, and he has done what every Israelite was NOT to do and that was to intermarry with Philistines (if all of Israel was forbidden to do this *how much more* one who is set apart for special purpose to deliver and save Israel from her enemies!).

It is not wholly beyond belief that Samson is perhaps “under the influence” when he comes up with the great idea to “riddle the Philistines”. It’s sad how Samson’s sin becomes the focus and content of a riddle. Sin against God and man is never funny business; there should be no games with sin.

The opposite of riddles and games would be *sobriety*; soberness before God and man; a soberness about the reality and power of indwelling sin that neither Samson or Israel possessed at this time in redemptive history.

Regardless of whether Samson really and truly drank, or whether he was drunk here, what is clear is that Samson was not sober-minded with regard to sin. We are reminded by the Apostle Peter in his first letter to the Church:

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. – 1 Peter 5:8-9

We don’t know whether Samson was intoxicated or not, but he did indeed know how to enliven the party with riddle games. We don’t know if Samson imbibed, but we do know

that his sinful lusts have led him to be careless in his walk before God. Just showing up to a *mishteh* as a Nazirite was foolish.

Do you play with sin? Is it something funny to you? Something to be played with, thinking that hard consequences would never happen to you? Instead of realizing that you have been delivered from sin, and that you have risen with Christ, do you still dabble with lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness as the Apostle Paul says in Romans 6:18ff?

Samson wants to make a riddle bet so that if the new family guesses his riddle, then he will provide them 30 pairs of new designer underwear and 30 new suits for their next idolatrous festival day. If the Philistines guess correctly the answer to Samson's riddle they would be "dressed for success" as they went wearing their new clothes.

If they cannot guess the answer to the riddle, then Samson will have a dresser drawer full of new undergarments, and 30 of some fine suits (14:12-13).

It is not that a riddle at a feast is necessarily wrong; it is that this riddle is about Samson's sin against God and it is made a fun game rather than an opportunity for repentance and sorrow.

In fact, what is truly wrong about the riddle is that it reveals a lot about God's power and grace yet Samson does not mediate upon God's revelation as he should (14:14):

"Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong came something sweet."

This revelation of life out of death should have caused Samson to ponder the LORD's grace and power- -to be enabled by that same grace and power to wholeheartedly serve Him!

Samson is showing that he really is an immature man spiritually, although he might be excessively strong outwardly and physically. **Although he has a strong arm, his heart is very weak. Rather than reflecting on the LORD's power and grace, and responding in obedience, he is set on fulfilling his own will and mission.**

Perhaps you are old enough to recall the commercials on television for Samsonite luggage back in the 70s and 80s. I always thought it interesting that a luggage was named after a biblical character! Well, Samson the man was a lot like Samsonite luggage: he was strong on the outside and in appearance, but hollow in many ways on the inside.

When our will and our desires crowd out the will and desire to serve God and do what is right in God's eyes, we lose sight of our identity and vision that God has granted to us as his people, and we are tempted to lose our first love and to love the world; but we must always remember:

ESV 1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world- the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions- is not from the Father but is from the world.

The Philistines through the help of Samson's new wife find out the answer to his riddle.

Samson's family could not solve his riddle; they could not win at his childish game (14:12-14), so the family sought Samson's wife (the unnamed woman of Timnah) to help through deception.

Now here is where a woman's tendency to sin is truly revealed. Men have certain ways of expressing their indwelling sinfulness, but here we have a classic case of the "cryin's" where a woman uses deception and manipulation to get her way with her husband. I might say that with most men are like Samson in the revelation of their particular sinfulness; whereas the women are most revealed here in the way that they can sinfully manipulate.

Through lust of men or the manipulation of women (lots of women manipulating in the Bible), God is still sovereign and works his purposes according to his will.

In her manipulation she cried: "*You only hate me; you do not love me.*" Women, how many times have you cried that way in order to get your way?

Another strength of a woman that is used against her because of indwelling sin is a persistence that leads to manipulative "getting her way". If she cannot just ask her husband for the answer to the riddle, then she will make him feel sorry for her through manipulation, and then continue to nag him until he gives up (ok, the text uses "pressed him hard" in verse 17 rather than nag- -but the point is the same)!

I wonder if the old saying is right: "Treat your wife like a beautiful and strong mare, lest she end up like a nag."

The woman manipulated *and nagged*: "She wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted, and on the seventh day he told her, ***because she pressed him hard***" (14:17).

We must stop here just to be reminded that both men and women have been given gifts by God to bring glory to God. Samson and his wife had strengths as well as weaknesses; however, the indwelling sin caused their strengths to become ***prideful hindrances, and their weaknesses to become traps to ruin their lives.***

We should ask ourselves that if a marriage is supposed to show forth the marriage between Christ and His Church as we are taught more clearly in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:21-33), what does Samson's marriage communicate about the Church at this time in redemptive-history? How does Samson's dysfunctional marriage reveal Israel's dysfunctional and idolatrous relationship with God?

Samson was unequally yoked with a pagan (officially even though his father-in-law gives his wife to his best man), and now he's married neither are seeking to bring glory to God—only to deceive and manipulate each other.

Samson's wife gets her way (14:17). Samson's strength again is not very useful with his woman. It would seem that Samson being Spirit-filled, being strong enough physically to tear a lion from limb to limb, would have the strength spiritually also to lead his wife and household as God had called him to. Regardless of how he got into this relation with the woman from Timnah, she was now his wife.

If Samson couldn't control his wife and keep his household, how in the world would Samson be able to rule Israel which is the Household of Faith (1 Tim. 3:7-15)??

Because of this reality, the author wants us to guess at the Philistines' answer to Samson's riddle:

"What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?"

And what's the answer to the Philistine riddle put to Samson as an answer to Samson's riddle?: *"What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?"* (v. 18). We know the answer, and there is irony and tragedy rather than comedy in the answer.

What is sweeter to Samson than honey? A woman of his own choosing, one who is "right in his own eyes" (14:3, 7).

What is stronger than a lion? Samson, but not strong enough to resist sin as he ought.

Samson has a taste for "sweet-talkin'" and sweet looking women- -and he cannot resist them as he ought. Samson would deny his entire identity as one who is set apart and consecrated to God to break his vows to God that were made by his mother before he was born; and implicitly made by him some time during his young life.

It may not be women, but lots of things are sweeter to us than doing what is right in God's eyes. As sinful people, even those who are set apart and identified with Christ in their baptism, still have issues of identity. We cannot see how doing God's commandments are sweet. We continue to find sweetness many times in the flesh and the things of this world. As Bono says it: "Every sweet tooth just needs a little hit" (*I'll Go Crazy If I Don't Go Crazy Tonight*, "No Line on the Horizon").

Yet when we do what is right in our own eyes, we do what is evil in God's eyes and we deny the power of the Holy Spirit which he has given to us.

Think about it, before lust for a woman is manifested there must first be a rejection of God (it may happen in a millisecond), but it is a rejection. The lust or desire for the woman (or whatever is sweet to us more than God's commandments) have become already more important than God himself at that moment even before we commit a lust or real adultery.

Getting our own way, doing our own thing are idolatrous attitudes before God!

Idolatry precedes adultery and the breaking of all the other commandments. We love and worship someone or something more than we love God. Samson, like Israel, and like we have a problem with loving idols too much. We determine too often what we think is “sweet” by the standard of what seems right in our own eyes, not what we think God has said.

We should remember how Moses warned the people about how lusts for foreign women would lead full blown and outward idolatry because the lust for foreign women was already a breach (a breaking!) of God’s covenant with his people:

ESV Exodus 34:10-17: And he said, "Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. ¹¹ "Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ¹² Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. ¹³ You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim ¹⁴ (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), ¹⁵ lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, ¹⁶ and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods. ¹⁷ "You shall not make for yourself any gods of cast metal.

Samson is one who possessed saving faith (Heb. 11:32-34), was empowered by God’s Spirit, and was set apart as a chosen vessel of God’s saving power from before his birth or conception, yet he liked sin too much. He gave in too easily to being a person he was not in reality by God’s grace.

Lots of sinful circumstances so far in Samson’s story, but God is revealed as greater than our sin!! God allowed this sinful mess in order to defeat His enemies!

And God defeats His enemies despite Samson- Samson’s first victory by God’s Spirit (14:19-20)

Although Samson is being less than sober and downright foolish, God still takes the deliverance and salvation of his people seriously. We are told that the Spirit of the LORD “rushed” upon Samson and he “struck down” 30 Philistines. Not many Philistines we might say, but perhaps nevertheless it points to God’s anger and wrath against his enemies and God’s ability to begin to defeat the Philistines (14:19-20).

Samson might lose it and burn with hot anger (14:19) that is not necessarily the passion of holy wrath, yet God uses the man he has called to bring about his purpose and end.

And God again defeats His enemies despite Samson- Samson's second victory by God's Spirit (15:1-8)

In fact, our next scene is a few days later when Samson takes some ancient Near Eastern "flowers" or "box of chocolates" to his new wife (remember in some ancient Near Eastern marriage arrangements, the father would give his daughter to a man and the man wouldn't necessarily live with her, but come and visit when he desired). His flowers or offering to her was a young goat (15:1).

When he arrives to "go into his new wife" her father prevented him from doing so (15:1-2), and he tries to convince Samson's ****eyes**** of his daughter's beauty.

Samson now is determined (as he might get) to do harm to the Philistines (15:3). Samson in a way vows that "*the Philistines will get what is comin' to them!*" (cf. 15:11).

What does Samson do as Judge-Warrior-Deliverer of God's people? He takes 300 foxes and turns them tail to tail to hold a torch. Then the foxes went into the grain for eating presently, as well as that grain stored up for the future in order to burn it and destroy the enemies' food supply (15:4-5). Samson is striking at the Philistine economy of grain and wine on the surface.

Now this is an inspired theological comment here that we do not want to miss. The author particularly teaches us that Samson sent the foxes to destroy the grain of the Philistines.

Dagon was a Canaanite deity, accepted by the Philistines, and worshipped because he was an agricultural deity. Dagon provided grain for the people, it was believed; Dagon was the god of grain.

What is happening here is that God is not only striking His enemies food supply, but this is a revelation of God's power against Dagon himself. Dagon is being defeated; Dagon is being overpowered. God is defeating the gods of the Philistines (and the Canaanites) as he did before in Egypt.

God is destroying (what was believed to be) the work of Dagon's hands: the agricultural blessing of grain. We will see more of the true spiritual battle between God and Dagon himself as we proceed in our story (chapter 16).

Right now, let us take note that this is the outworking of God's placing enmity between the Seed of the Woman and the seed of the serpent in Genesis 3:15. God's real fight and battle was against the devil behind all the false gods.

As we read later in redemptive history when God struck Dagon after the Philistines had captured the Ark of the Covenant (1 Samuel 5:7):

And when the men of Ashdod saw how things were, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for his hand is hard against us and against Dagon our god."

This is a revelation of the true spiritual battle that is being fought despite how insincere and unmotivated both Samson and Israel have been in fighting the good fight!

God took aim at the idols for they were the point of access to commit all kinds of evil and abominations against the LORD. Although they were the access point for worshipping and serving the devil (cf. John 8:31ff; Revelation 12), it was Satan the Accuser, the Ancient Dragon-Serpent whom God was defeating.

God is battling the powerful and ancient serpent (Rev. 12). Yet God will be victorious, and God will be glorified in showing the great display of his wrath and power!

We must remember here that it is God seeking an opportunity against the Philistines even through his sinful servant. Samson is not necessarily doing these things against the Philistines *for God*- there is a lot of self involved (see 15:3, 7, 11). That should be a great display of God's love and care for his people.

Israel is loving other gods; Israel is apathetic and "fat and happy" living among the Philistines; Israel is in many ways fully Canaanized (even Samson's name is a derived form of the Hebrew *shemesh* which was the name for the sun; his name can be translated "mighty one" but it is a Hebrew term that is derived from the Name of the Sun!).

Yet God is going to destroy His and Israel's enemies. God is going to keep his covenant promises to his believing people, even if his people do not keep covenant with him. Even though God's people's eyes are set on everything and everyone ***BUT GOD, nevertheless, God's eyes are still set on delivering them!***

You could say that in much of what we observe in Samson's life, we see that what some men mean for evil, God in His sovereignty and power mean for good:

^{ESV} Genesis 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people¹ should be kept alive, as they are today.

As nearsighted and blind as Samson had become, it is hard to see that he would ever commit himself to his consecrated calling and mission. If it were not for God working despite Samson, Samson would have worried about himself and continued to do what is right in his own eyes (just as Israel would do).

What grace! Think of your service in the Church. It would be hard to find an instance where you did all that you did for someone or for God without mixed motives of righteousness and sins.

Surprised? Don't be! You are a sinful person and when you serve, God accepts your service for the sake of Jesus Christ. Our best righteous acts are as filthy rags.

We must repent of our best works before God. We must seek to do our best for the LORD, but knowing humbly that the works are mixed with impure motives and unrighteousness.

Yet the good news, the gospel hope is that God still accomplishes his purposes; God makes known his grace and power through weak vessels like we who are much like Samson. Ironically, by the free exercise of Samson's free (immoral) will, Samson serves as an agent of the LORD's sovereign decree (see Block, pg. 472).

"Glory be to God!" "Soli Deo Gloria!" Should be our cry!

We should ask: "Was Samson righteously angry here in this passage?" Or was he just "getting even? (cf. 15:7)? Looks like it could be both. Maybe Samson is realizing the damage of his sin of intermarrying the Philistines and doing what was right in his own eyes. We can't be sure yet because the author doesn't tell us (and the author's inspired lack of commentary is often for us as God's people to ponder carefully from our own hearts before God).

What we can be sure of is that God is working to bring about his purposes and sovereign will. We should worship and cry out:

ESV Romans 11:33-36: Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

In the fullness of the times when Jesus Christ would come, Jesus would permanently and lovingly fix his eyes on His God and Father. Jesus would know from where His help comes from, and he would by the Spirit have many victories against God's enemies.

Jesus with the power of the Holy Spirit would overcome in the wilderness against Satan's temptations (Matt. 4). Jesus would overcome and destroy the works of the evil one who is behind the thinking, actions and religion of those like the Philistines.

Jesus would burn with holy passion and anger against God's enemies in the temple because his zeal was hot for God's truth and purity.

Throughout Jesus' life, his motives and his service to God were without any taint of sin or impure motive; unlike Samson.

Jesus would burn with a desire to do the will of God from his heart; to serve God wholehearted with all his heart, soul, mind and will and to love his neighbor as himself.

Jesus would fully deliver his people from their sins so that they might live righteous lives as children and not as slaves!

Samson would not be the Seed of the Woman to crush the head of the serpent; Samson would not be the prophet greater than Moses; Samson would not deliver Israel fully from the Philistines; Samson would not be the king to rule and reign over Israel so that she might be kept from doing what is right in her own eyes.

Jesus would be however all these things- -and more!

Although we as a church are surrounded by this age and the ways of our culture, we should never forget how the LORD has healed our blindness to our sins and has shed the light of his truth in our hearts; we have passed from the Kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light, in the Son whom YHWH loves.

As the Apostle Paul teaches to the church at Corinth, the god of this age has blinded those who disbelieve (2 Cor. 4:4). We must always be aware of our covenantal identity, while remembering God's faithfulness to us in Christ, the one who made both physical and spiritual eyes to see.

A consecrated people must understand our Lord's great power and grace to help us overcome and war against our indwelling sin. We are called upon as The Church Militant to stand confidently in the completed work of Christ and in the full armor of God that he has supplied for us.

The Church must battle against the temptations of the world, flesh and the devil knowing that in Christ we are more than overcomers through Him who loved us and died for us!

In reliance upon God's grace, we must be sober-minded and resist the devil; we dare not to play with sin. In reliance upon God's grace, we must know as men and women what particular temptations and struggles we should fight against and be aware of these in our relationships and especially our marriages.

Part of the work of the devil who prowls around like a roaring lion to devour us is to break up marriages through the male and female inclinations of doing what is right in our own eyes, rather than loving and living as servants in light of God's grace to us.

In reliance upon God's grace, let us ask God to show us how sweet his commandments are as David did (although he was a sinner saved by grace):

ESV Psalm 119:101-103: I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word. ¹⁰² I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me. ¹⁰³ How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Sin should not be sweet to us- -it is our worst enemy. In reliance upon God's grace, let us think and so live in this way NOT forgetting our true identity as God's set apart, consecrated, holy people, united to Jesus Christ by faith.

And let us rejoice that even in our sins, although they are displeasing to God, God will accomplish his sovereign purposes. God's will be done!

Although there are great consequences to our sins, and although we are not to sin so that we may live joyfully before God's face for His glory, nevertheless, what we mean for evil, and our best works mixed with impure and insincere motives, we can be confident that God means for good!

It is true that all things work for the good of those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

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