

“Samson’s Strength”  
Judges 14-16  
(Preached at Trinity, July 19, 2015)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapter 13** we read the account of the revelation of the Angel of the Lord to Manoah and his barren wife of the birth of a son—a son consecrated from the womb. As **Chapter 14** opened we find Samson as a young adult enamored by a Philistine woman. In **Verses 5-6** we read of the first indication of Samson’s strength and the source of his strength.  
**Judges 14:5-6 NAU** - "Then Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came as far as the vineyards of Timnah; and behold, a young lion *came* roaring toward him. <sup>6</sup> The Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, so that he tore him as one tears a young goat though he had nothing in his hand"
2. The clear source of his strength was God.  
**Judges 14:19 NAU** - "Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of them and took their spoil and gave the changes of *clothes* to those who told the riddle."  
**Judges 15:14-15 NAU** - "When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him. And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily so that the ropes that were on his arms were as flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds dropped from his hands. <sup>15</sup> He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, so he reached out and took it and killed a thousand men with it."
3. It was God who enabled him to tear apart lions or overcome the Philistines. This is true of God’s people.  
**Romans 8:31 KJV** - "If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?"  
**Isaiah 54:17 NAU** - "No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me," declares the LORD."
4. Samson was one set part and consecrated from his mother’s womb.  
Consecration means to be set apart. It means to be dedicated to God. It means to be holy.
  - A. As God’s New Covenant people we are set apart for His service. We are a kingdom of priests.  
**1 Peter 2:9-11 NAS** - "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup> for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul."

1. God has set his people apart for His own possession  
 God has set them apart for His own use – consecrated  
 God has set them apart from the defilement of the pagan nations
  2. Most of all, God has set His people apart that they might worship Him  
 God's repeated words to Pharaoh were:  
 " Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me."
- B. Such consecration must never be taken for granted. It must be preserved and protected. Samson's problem was he did not treasure it. His great strength was an outward mark of his consecration and he ultimately lost it.
5. Tonight I want to set remind you of the greatness of your own consecration which must be preserved.
- I. The strength of our consecration
- A. Samson's great strength was not his own
1. In all likelihood he looked like any other man. He probably was not known for his large muscles. His power wasn't in his muscles.
    - a. The Philistines wanted to know the "secret" of his strength
    - b. When He lost his strength his arms didn't suddenly become smaller.
    - c. If he was merely a body-builder type his strength would be credited to the size of his muscles.
  2. But Samson's strength rested in the power of God. His long hair was merely a sign of his Nazarite vow. It was a sign of his consecration. As long as he remained consecrated he remained strong
  3. When Samson's hair was cut he lost his consecration. He became like other men who were not set apart to God.
- B. A Christian is one who has been set apart in service to God.  
 Those who have been set apart and dedicated to God have unlimited power.
1. Listen to the words of Christ to His disciples  
**Acts 1:8 NAS** - "but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."
  2. Paul often stressed this power. We've seen it often as we've gone through Ephesians on Sunday morning.  
**Ephesians 1:18-19 NAS** - "*I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might"  
**Ephesians 3:14-16 NAS** - "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, <sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man;"

**Ephesians 3:20-4:1 NAS** - "Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, <sup>21</sup> to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

4. Listen to King David:

**Psalms 18:1-3 NAS** - "I Love Thee, O LORD, my strength." <sup>2</sup> The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. <sup>3</sup> I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies."

**Psalms 62:5-8 NAS** - "My soul, wait in silence for God only, For my hope is from Him. <sup>6</sup> He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken. <sup>7</sup> On God my salvation and my glory rest; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. <sup>8</sup> Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us."

C. We've all heard stories of how God's consecrated people have withstood the greatest threats, even unto death

1. At the Diet of Worms Martin Luther was commanded to recant his writings.

"Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen."

2. William Tyndale was martyred by strangulation and then his body burned for his bold work in translating the Bible into English. His final words, "Lord! Open the King of England's eyes." Less than 100 years later the KJV was produced – 83% percent of which contained Tyndale's translation.

3. These are just two of the thousands of God's consecrated people who lived by faith and lived as the soldiers of Christ. There are some in this very room tonight. We continue in a long line of God's people who have lived lives consecrated to Him.

4. We are continually enticed to turn away and yet we stand firm repeating the words of Paul:

**Acts 20:24 KJV** - " But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

D. But surely this must be speaking of extraordinary people; those with a high calling. Yes! But I'm not talking about just pastors. No! I'm talking about a Christian calling. These are God's consecrated extraordinary people.

1. Like Samson, as long as we remain consecrated unto God we have great strength. Our strength is not in our ability but in Christ.  
**2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NAU** - "And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."
2. God's people must be holy, consecrated, set apart!  
 Consecrated business men. Consecrated lawyers, engineers, teachers, politicians, mechanics, electricians, plumbers, janitors, roofers, cashiers
3. Consecrated husbands, wives, parents  
 All of these are empowered by God to live the Christian life.
4. We need consecrated church members – those set apart in service to Christ. Those committed to build His church. We must forever have upon our lips, "I am yours, O Lord. Use me however you are pleased."

## II. We are always in great danger

### A. Samson did not realize this

1. He was careless with his consecration. He continually entertained himself with riddles and words of deceit. It was all so common to him. After killing 1000 men with the jawbone of a donkey he boasted:  
**Judges 15:16** - "With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of a donkey I have killed a thousand men."
2. God's people must be sober, vigilant—but Samson was not.  
 He thought little of his relationships with the pagan women. We aren't told much of Samson's 20 year tenure as judge of Israel. **Verse 16:1** gives us a hint.  
**Judges 16:1 NAU** - " Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her."  
**Judges 16:4-5 NAU** - "After this it came about that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. <sup>5</sup> The lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Entice him, and see where his great strength *lies* and how we may overpower him that we may bind him to afflict him. Then we will each give you eleven hundred *pieces* of silver."  
**Judges 16:19 NAU** - "She made him sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair. Then she began to afflict him, and his strength left him."

### B. Samson's sins led to his ruin

1. The sin of pride
  - a. Samson toyed with his consecration leaping up in assumption that he would always be able to overpower his enemies.  
**Judges 16:20 NAU** - "And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free."
  - b. One of the tragic verses in the Bible is the end of **Verse 20**  
 "But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him."

- c. This was Israel's problem  
**Hosea 7:9-10 NAU** - "Strangers devour his strength, Yet he does not know *it*; Gray hairs also are sprinkled on him, Yet he does not know *it*.<sup>10</sup> Though the pride of Israel testifies against him, Yet they have not returned to the LORD their God, Nor have they sought Him, for all this."
  - d. How arrogant we are to think we can stand without Christ; that we can live carnal lives and still maintain the strength of holiness.
  - e. Pastors have to be on guard lest they prepare and preach sermons depending on their own strength
2. The sin of living only for self – this is the sin of lost humanity
- a. This is the sin that pervaded Israel during the Judges  
**Judges 21:25-1:1 NAU** - "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." – In truth, the only thing that matters is what is right in God's eyes.
  - b. Samson's entire adult life was testimony to his pursuit of satisfying himself.
  - c. When he saw a woman he liked he wanted he had to have her. His parents plead with him but his reply:  
**Judges 14:3** - "Get her for me, for she looks good to me."
  - d. When he was offended he took vengeance
  - e. His selfish pursuits led to his ruin
  - f. When our purpose begins to shift to the satisfaction of self we are in great danger!
3. Samson failed to understand just how weak he was without God  
**Judges 16:21 NAU** - "Then the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains"
- a. Awareness of our weakness is essential as followers of Christ. The failure to understand our weakness has led to the fall of many.  
**1 Corinthians 10:12 NAU** - "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall."
  - b. Remember, this was Peter's great downfall  
**Matthew 26:31-35 NAS** - "Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.'<sup>32</sup> "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."<sup>33</sup> But Peter answered and said to Him, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away."<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a cock crows, you shall deny Me three times."<sup>35</sup> Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." All the disciples said the same thing too."
4. Samson forever stands as a warning to those who would forsake their consecration. There is always a danger of being drawn to our lusts that will enslave us and blind us. Sin always has consequences.

Conclusion:

1. We must not carelessly wander from our dependence upon Christ.
2. We must not vainly pretend that our strength is our own. Oh the terror of grieving the Holy Spirit and having Him leave us to the vanity of our own heart. Oh the terror of having our eyes put out so that we long for the light of His countenance.  
*LBC 5:5* – “The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends.”
3. Praise God that He will never ultimately leave His dear child but will strengthen us with His grace and return us to continue in the war.  
*LBC 13:3* – “In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, pressing after an heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in His Word hath prescribed them.”
4. When we falter He will hear us when we cry out, even as we cry from Dagon’s own temple. Look to Him, the source of your strength. What we can say about Samson is in the end he returned to the war looking to the God of his strength.
5. Spurgeon – “Look up to the Holy Spirit, after you have looked to your consecration; and beg of him to give you daily grace; far as day by day the manna fell, so must you receive daily food from on high. And, remember, it is not by any grace you have in you, but by the grace that is in Christ, and that must be given to you hour by hour.”