

“Samson and Us”
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Judges 13:1-5 ...the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb...

It's always a beautiful time when I see parents bring their children before the Lord to have them prayed over that He might watch them and have His hand on their life all of their days. When I became a Christian, my mom told me that when I was a baby, she brought me to the altar to have me prayed over. Though I don't know what was said, all my life I've had an inkling to find the Lord real and true on a personal level. When my brother was born, she took him to another place to have him prayed over, and she said it had become much less spiritual. Where was the touching of the throne of God? Why had it become so much more about money?

To be a Nazarite unto God means to be separated and consecrated for God. There were three types of Nazarites in Jewish custom: temporary, permanent, and the type like Samson. They were to follow certain laws of sacrificial living, and in return, they would receive extraordinary gifts: Samson received strength, Samuel was a prophet in the Old Testament, and, of course, we know about the Nazarenes, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ.

Judges 13:24-25 ...And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times...

This, many of us could relate to: As we come to the Lord and give ourselves to Him, He begins to use us, and, on occasion, whether in worship, or study, or fellowship, or sharing of His Word, we feel the Spirit move in our lives and we bear witness of His awesomeness.

No doubt, people began to notice this strong man of God. What they noticed first, though, wasn't that he was strong, but that the Spirit of God began to move him.

Judges 14:1-4 ...he sought an occasion against the Philistines...

Yes, it's true that Samson, the mighty man before the Lord, sought for an occasion against the Philistines—but the question has to be, why that one? Zeal is a great thing, but it has to be tempered with motive and guided by knowledge. Why not an occasion against their gods, so that he could prove the power of Him that liveth forever and ever? Or why not against their law, so that he could show that law of the Lord of Hosts was more righteous than any other that the world had to offer? Sometimes even we, as Christians, in our zeal to do something for God, don't submit completely to God and find ourselves in trouble that we could have avoided.

Judges 16:4-5, 15-20 ...he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek...

One day he woke up, and the Bible says that he knew not that the Spirit of God had departed from him. Honest confession is good for the soul: There is another reason

why this story is so personal to me—I, more than once, have spiritually woken up, and found myself wanting in God.

There was a brother in the ministry named John, who was Samson to me. He shared how it was a process: God would tell him to pray and he'd take a nap, or share with someone and he'd go get a soda, or read his Bible, and he'd turn on the television. He woke up one day and found himself completely unenthused about God.

Maybe this isn't you this morning, and maybe, as of yet, this has never been you, but, if we are not careful—if we don't do due diligence—we will find ourselves in a predicament like this one. I believe any one of us can imagine what Samson was thinking: Maybe "I'm so strong that nothing can stop me," or, "God's blessing and blessing; I don't have time to thank Him right now—I'll just enjoy the fruits of my labor." Why not enjoy the blessings that God bestows **and** turn up my eyes toward Heaven and thank the Most High?

God had given Samson hair, and in one place the Bible says that hair is given for a covering. Let's just call Samson's hair a covering for his knowledge, wisdom, and instruction; not to be touched, modified, or cut up. His hair must have gotten pretty long, probably looked crazy to the rest of the world, much like God's covering over our lives of love, longsuffering, and righteousness.

Some might say, you know, Brother Parrish, my prayer life used to be so strong, my praises, my study time... as God grew Samson's hair back for his covering, allow God to grow back your covering which is His Spirit, His anointing, His grace.

Now, maybe some are here today saying, "I've never been like a Samson in anything in my life, and, after all, Brother Parrish, there was only one Samson in Israel." There's a reason why there was only one Samson: If there had been a bunch of Samsons running around, who would have needed to seek God? Besides, **look what the Lord did with just one!** Maybe you've said that you've never been great and you are now all you will ever be... Repeat after me, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" one more time...

Judges 16:18-24 ...he wist not that the Lord was departed from him...

We have to ask ourselves, what is our Delilah? I'm going to take a little liberty and say that there are many Delilahs in the world today: Some female **and some male**. Some Delilahs are rectangular and come in sizes 32", 46", or 55" and are either flat screen or plasma and they scream for your time until they sap all your strength. Some are much smaller rectangles and fit in your wallet and want you to spend all your time (or just spend, period) until you're in such trouble that you can't see straight. Samson had no business going down to Sorek, it was the stronghold of the enemy, and Christians need to recognize the Delilahs and the Soreks trying to steal our love and leave them alone!

I'm here to tell you today that the Lord Jesus has called us to be mightier than Samson. Samson carried away the gates of the city to the top of the hill, but the Lord has said that if we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, we could say to the mountain, be removed, and cast into the sea, and it would obey us. Samson took a jawbone and slew a thousand of his enemies, but in Christ Jesus we have the promise that no weapon formed against us would prosper, and that in all these things we are more than conquerors. Say after me: "I'm a conqueror in Christ Jesus."