



“Called of God... Smelled of the World”
 Judges 13-16

Idea: Samson was a man of God, but he smelled of the world

Intro: Jerry Lynn wanted to hook up his cable television, and he was tired of waiting on the cable company. So he decided he would just do it himself. However, he wasn't sure where he needed to drill the hole to run the line. After thinking about it, he came up with a plan. He figured could get his wife's alarm clock, set it, and then lower it down through the air vent in the wall on the second floor. That way he would hear the alarm when it went off and know where to drill the hole. So that is what he did. Jerry went and got his wife's alarm clock and tied a string around it. He went up to the second floor and set the alarm to go off in ten minutes. Then Jerry lowered it down through the air vent in the wall.

When he thought it was in the right place, Jerry tied it off and ran downstairs. But when he was going downstairs, the string broke and the alarm clock fell, lodging itself between the air vent and the wall with no way of getting it out. Sure enough in

ten minutes, amplified by that air vent and stuck in between the walls, there was this incredibly loud buzzing for one solid minute that went over the entire house.

Well, Jerry didn't know what to do but drill the hole and leave the alarm clock where it was. So that is what he did.

Therefore, every night at 7:50pm...every single evening at 7:50pm the alarm clock went off. And every evening Jerry said, "Don't worry the batteries will die." Thirteen years that alarm clock went off. Those must have been the best batteries on the market. But by the end of thirteen years Jerry said, "We pay it no attention. It is so much a part of life now at 7:50pm we don't even notice the alarm clock going off. In fact, unless someone is visiting us and in the house and they hear it go off, we don't even recognize it."

Now, here is the great tragedy in that. In the life of so many Christians, people who follow Jesus Christ, sin has become such a part of so many of our lives that when the Holy Spirit goes off inside of us, we don't even hear Him. Sin has become such a part of who we are, so habitual, so much a part of our lifestyle, that when our conscious goes off and sounds the alarm we are unresponsive to our conscious and the Holy Spirit about the sin in our lives. And this is exactly what has happened in the life of our twelfth judge. His name is Samson...Samson the Unlikely.

Inquiry: Samson's birth was miraculous. His mom was barren, but one day the Angel of the Lord visited her. He told her and Manoah, her husband, that she would bear a son who would begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines (13:2-5). The angel also told him that the boy to be born was special, so she was to follow a strict Nazirite diet throughout the pregnancy. She was also instructed to raise the boy as a Nazirite; he was to never drink wine or strong drink, cut his hair, or break the regulations of the Nazirite vow.

The woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson. The boy grew and the Lord blessed and began to stir him (13:24-25).

Something tragic, however, happened in Samson's life between 13:25 and 14:1. This called out man of God with the Spirit of God upon him became increasingly numb to the promptings and the voice of God. We know this because of how chapter 14 begins. Samson goes down to Timnah and sees a woman. The Hebrew word used to speak of this woman in Timnah is not the word typically used in this kind of situation. We would expect the word for woman to be the one that refers to her being a virgin. Instead, the word used just refers to her as a woman, meaning she could have been divorced or widowed. Regardless, she had a past. She was not the right woman for a Nazirite who was set apart to God. On top of that, the woman was a Philistine. All Jews were forbidden to intermarry with Gentiles; Samson was doubly forbidden to do so. The alarm of the Holy Spirit must have been sounding off when Samson was in Timnah and longing for this woman, but he paid it no attention.

Samson tells his parents to get the woman for him. The wedding is arranged. Then on one of the trips to Timnah, Samson took and ate some honey from the carcass of a lion he had killed (14:9). Surely, the alarm was going off. By doing this he violated part of the Nazirite vow. He was to never touch a dead corpse. Later, at the wedding feast, Samson presented a riddle to the Philistine attendants. He hoped to swindle them, but it backfired on him when the attendants got Samson's wife to tell them the secret (14:17-18).

Samson was furious, so he went to Ashkelon and killed thirty men and robbed them to pay his debt. Surely, the alarm was going off. Then he went home without his wife, so her dad gave her to another man. After some time, Samson went back for his wife. When he found her in another man's home, he again was furious. He caught and tied 300 foxes together. He put a torch between them and set them loose in the grain fields

(15:5). Surely, the alarm was going off. The Philistines responded by burning Samson's wife and her father alive, so Samson hunted down and mutilated those who killed her (15:6-8). Surely, the alarm was going off.

Then the Philistines marched on the people of Judah. The Judahites responded by arresting Samson. When Judah delivered him to the Philistines at Lehi, Samson snapped the ropes that bound him and killed the 1,000 Philistines soldiers with a jawbone who came to transport him (15:14-15). Surely, the alarm was going off.

After this Samson visited a prostitute in Gaza and was ambushed by the Philistines. Surely, the alarm was going off. He pulled up the gates of the city and carried them away with him as he escaped (16:1-3). Then he loved another Philistine woman named Delilah who deceived him into telling her the secret of his great strength (16:17). She shaved his head one night while he slept on her lap. When the Philistines stormed in the room that night, Samson had no idea that the Spirit of God had left him (16:20). The Philistines gouged out his eyes, bound him with shackles, and put him in prison. Surely, the alarm was going off, but he was impervious to it.

It is here that we would expect Samson's story to end, but this is not the end. 16:22 tells us that Samson's hair began to grow again. The grace of God was extended to a man who had refused to listen and had forgotten how to hear the voice of God in his life. One day, when his hair had grown out, Samson was brought to the palace as a showpiece for the Philistines as they celebrated before Dagon their god. Samson prayed to God and asked for strength one last time. God answered his prayer, and Samson pushed against the pillars of the palace, causing it to crumble. In this final act, Samson killed more Philistines than all his other feats put together (16:28-30).

Samson was a man of God, but he smelled of the world. Paul told the Corinthians that as a follower of Jesus, believers smell like Christ.

Illust: Everyone has their own personal scent. I smell very much like my dad and grandpa did. When I take my shirt off, I smell my dad and my grandpa. It brings back good memories of hugging them as a child.

For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, - 2 Cor 2:15

The key verse in Samson's story is 16:5.

And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Seduce him, and see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to humble him. And we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver."

The Philistines had no idea that his strength came from God. They did not smell God on him; they only smelled the world. These chapters teach us a lot about how we as God's people ought to live. Here are four lessons we learn from Samson:

1. You are known best by what consumes you the most.
(16:5)

When the Philistines bribed Delilah to deceive Samson, they hoped to gain an advantage over the strong warrior. They had tried everything they knew to do to get the upper hand, but in every situation they had failed.

It is interesting that the Philistines had no idea that Samson's incredible strength was attributed to the God of Israel. It never entered their mind. This fact clues us in to the reality that Samson's life gave no evidence of walking with God. They didn't know him as a man of God with the calling of God upon his life. To them Samson was known for his taste for the sensual, fits of rage, and unprecedented strength. The Philistines knew Samson by the things that consumed his life.

Appl: Likewise, the people around your life know you best by what consumes you the most. What are the things that consume you? What are you known by today?

- Your language
- Your recreation
- Your money
- Your family
- Your toys

2. The battle is lost when you neglect the details.

(13:24-14:3)

Samson's desire to have a Philistine woman with a likely checkered past didn't just happen. His battle with temptation and desire wasn't lost on that particular day. It was lost long before then when he began to neglect living by God's Word. It started with the small and seemingly insignificant neglecting of God's Word and little by little led up to that day in Timnah.

“What you do in the hour of temptation will depend upon what you were the day before.” – Bob Jones

“Temptation discovers what we are.”
– Thomas à Kempis

Appl: You play like you prepare. Victory is always secured in the details.

3. Prayerless choices lead to destructive habits.

(14:1-3, 7; 16:1, 4-6)

Of the four chapters dedicated to the life and story of this man of God, we only find Samson praying on two occasions. The first time is after he killed the 1,000 Philistine soldiers with the jawbone at Lehi. Following the battle, Samson was deathly thirsty, so he called

upon God. I think it is better to say that Samson called out God because his prayer is not something we should model (15:18). The second time he prayed was in the palace as a Philistine prisoner with his eyes gouged out. He prayed to God for strength in order to get revenge for what they did to him (16:28).

Do you think if Samson would asked God for wisdom when he was in Timnah that it would have made a difference when he saw that woman? Do you think that if Samson would have had an intimate and open dialogue with God each day that it would have made a difference in his choices? I do. I think he would have gone on past the lion that day. I believe Samson would have never pursued the woman in the first place, which means the lion would not have attacked him.

Appl: All the problems in Samson's life stemmed from his lack of prayer. The prayerless choices he made early on in his life developed into destructive habits. The same is true for you and I today. When we make a decision without seeking God's will, that sinful choice will lead to destructive habits. This is true:

- In our finances
- In our health
- In our morality
- In our relationships

4. God's grace is greater than all your sin. (16:22)

Grace is an amazing thing, but what exactly is it. If mercy is God not giving us what we deserve (judgment), then grace is God giving us what we do not deserve (forgiveness).

“The word grace emphasizes at one and the same time the helpless poverty of man and the limitless kindness of God.” – William Barclay

Samson had lived his entire life for himself. He indulged in the pleasures of self-gratification without any care of what God thought or how it might impact others. His fixation upon the sensual had long ago drowned out the voice of God in his life. Samson's sinful choices had wrecked his life, body, and left him as a prisoner in the enemy's land.

BUT GOD!!! *"But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved."*

Appl: Samson smelled like the world. He was hardly even recognizable as a man of God, but God purposed to do a new work in Samson's heart and life. The same truth is true for you and I today. You may smell so much like the world that no one would ever know that you are a child of God. You may think that you are beyond the forgiveness of Christ because of how you have forsaken him over and over. You may think that there's no way God could ever forgive you. The truth is if God can extend grace to Samson, He will extend grace to you. His grace is greater than all your sin!

Conclusion: God had to completely break Samson. He had to come to the end of himself before God could remake him. He had to wake Samson up. He had to open his ears to the sound of the alarm clock sounding off. The way God worked in Samson's life is the same way He works in our lives today. The Lord will allow you to fall as far as needed for you to realize your sin, repent, and trust in Jesus.

Christian, how do you smell today? Do you smell like Christ or the world? How do others smell you? Would they say you smell like Christ or the world? Lets stop being comfortable in our worldliness and come home to a life that is being changed by Jesus. The alarm is going off. Do you hear it?