

JUDGES

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Judges chapter 15 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Last week we began looking at the last Judge in the book of Judges and his name is Samson. We tend to think of Samson as this big, strong, muscles bulging everywhere, a man's man type of guy. But as I read the story of Samson I think he was just an average looking guy, maybe he had a few muscles but nothing spectacular!

I know, that is hard for many of you to believe because we have been taught otherwise by Sunday School classes, books and even movies. But I think they got it wrong. First of all when you read the things that Samson did, I don't care how strong, how muscular he was, he would not be able to accomplish these things. Thus, this was a work of God's Spirit empowering Samson for the work!

And the problem, the struggle we see with Samson is that he let his flesh, his bodily appetites control his life instead of the Spirit of God! Thus, he sees a woman, a Philistine woman in Timnah, which is Philistine country and he demands that his parents get her as his wife. They tried to persuade him to marry a woman of Israel but he refused and thus, down to Timnah they go and they make arrangements for their son, Samson to marry this woman!

Since Samson had no friends or family in Timnah, since it was enemy territory, the Philistines provide him with 30 young men for this drunken seven-day wedding feast. And it is during this feast that Samson gives these guys a riddle to figure out, a challenge and a bet and there is no way that they would be able to figure this out on their own. So they pressure Samson's wife, they threaten her that if she does not find out what this riddle is all about and tell them, they will burn her house and her father's house down and I get the idea they would be inside when the house went up in flames!

Thus, Samson's wife begins to cry and carry on before Samson, "You don't love me anymore!" And Samson finally gives in and he tells her what this riddle is all about and she in turn goes and tells these 30 Philistine men.

When they tell Samson what this riddle was all about and they got it right, he tells these guys, ". . . **'If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle!'**" Judges 14:18. Not a great way to talk about your wife. And keep in mind that the marriage was not consummated yet; they did not have sexual relations yet. And Samson, when he finds out what his wife did, he is so mad that he just leaves the feast and heads back home to his father's house. In Judges 14:20, as this chapter closed, we read last time, "**And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.**"

That is where we will pick up our study this evening as Samson is going to think about what he did, the foolishness of it all. So let's begin reading in Judges chapter 15, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word!

JUDGES 15**VERSES 1-3**

1. Samson truly is an enigma. He leaves his wife before the marriage is consummated and we don't know how long he is gone. Thus, her father gives her to the best man in the wedding and they are now married. But now Samson wants her back and as a love gift you might say, he brings her a goat! Guys, I don't mind doing marriage counseling, but let me save you some time. If you are bringing a gift to your wife, don't bring her a goat and if you do, I am sure I will be seeing you. I guess it was a popular gift back then but not too much today!

2. And once again Samson is mad, he is angry at the situation he was in and he is threatening to destroy some Philistines or do something to them. First of all he should have never been down in the enemy's camp in the first place. Secondly, he should have never tried to marry a Philistine woman. And thirdly, all this anger is not a fruit of the Spirit but it is a work of the flesh and the consequences of unleashing this work of the flesh is not good!

3. Now remember what we read in Judges 14:4 regarding Samson marrying this woman in the first place. We are told, **“But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord — that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.”** Please don’t come to the conclusion that the Lord was condoning the actions of Samson because He was not. But God used even the sin of Samson to accomplish His plan and purpose. The problem for Samson is that he did not guard his heart and out of it came gushing forth all this evil. It is as Solomon said in Proverbs 4:23-27, **“Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil.”** Keep your eyes focused on Jesus being guided by the Spirit of God!

VERSES 4-5

1. Most feel that the word translated, **“foxes”** should really be jackals. That does seem to fit since jackals are known to run in large packs, sometime up to 200 at a time. But in either case, and I do think it is jackals, Samson caught 300 of them, tied their tails together, put a torch between them and then lit the torch on fire and let them go. And for these animal rights groups, “No animals were hurt in the execution of this plan!” Anyway, as these jackals are running all over the place they are catching the grain, the vineyards and the olive groves of the Philistines on fire, destroying them. This is nothing more than a temper tantrum on the part of Samson because Samson did not get his way!

VERSE 6

1. So as the Philistines inquire who had done this dastardly deed, and no it was not Snidely Whiplash, but Samson! But since they could not get to Samson they decided to go after his wife and her father and they burn them to death! What a sad story this is but there is death and destruction when there is sin!

VERSES 7-8

1. When Samson finds out what the Philistines did he blows a gasket! He took out his anger, his revenge on the Philistines and that expression, “**he attacked them hip and thigh**” is speaking of a cruel and unsparing slaughter. That was Samson, a man out of control.

2. Now a Judge was to lead the people but Samson, he is all alone in his actions. He never tried to lead the people like he should have and the reality is that Samson couldn't even lead himself!

3. Why did Samson dwell in the cleft of the rock of Etam? Why didn't he just return home to his family, his parents? Because he was now a fugitive, the Philistines were looking for him and they wanted him dead or alive! Thus, he did not want to put his family in jeopardy! So his sin caused him to live in isolation and this is not going to help him draw close to God. In fact, I see it pushing him farther away from God, not that this is what God wanted, but it was a choice on the part of Samson!

VERSES 9-10

1. The Philistines have no idea where Samson is so they go to Judah looking for him. They want this guy, like I said, dead or alive but out of their hair because of all the trouble he is causing them, all the death and destruction that seemed to follow Samson. Now are the men of Judah really going to give Samson up? Let's read on and see.

VERSES 11-13

1. How could these men of Judah turn Samson over to the enemy? It is like they said to Samson, **“Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us?”** Look at the oppression that the Philistines brought upon the children of Israel, the fear they had on them. They were so afraid of the Philistines that they would rather turn in on their own than face the consequences of not obeying the Philistines. In other words, they were willing to place their support upon the Philistines instead of the one who was to deliver them, Samson!

2. It is easy to lose sight of what God is doing because we focus upon the situation instead of God. These men of Judah, we don't see them praying or seeking God. They only succumbed to the enemy. Folk's, John reminds us in I John 4:4, **“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”** May we not forget that as we walk by faith, keeping our eyes upon the Lord!

3. So these 3,000 men of Judah take Samson and tie him up and the one stipulation that Samson has is that these men of Judah would not kill him. How could Samson be so brave, so strong? Some speculate that it was his faith in God, that he was willing to put himself in this difficult situation knowing that God would take care of him. That sounds great but I don't see that with Samson. I see a man who thought he could do anything, and yes, maybe with the help of the Lord but he truly is not looking to God but I believe he is looking to himself to deliver him from the mess and maybe God is along for the ride!

VERSES 14-17

1. As the Philistines see these 3,000 men of Judah bringing Samson to them all bound by ropes, they start rejoicing because their enemy has been captured. But not so fast because the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Samson, the ropes come off and he picks up a fresh donkey jawbone! Come on; is that the best we can do here? I mean a fresh donkey jawbone; it still could have some flesh on it!

But God empowered Samson with that jawbone and he killed 1,000 Philistines with it. This was a pretty sweet victory for Samson with this weapon that was very unusual. And this little poem that Samson makes is a little hard to translate, but it might go like this, "With the jawbone of an ass I have pilled them in a mass!"

2. As Samson finished his work here he calls the name of the place Ramath Lehi or literally, "Jawbone Hill." I guess it is a fitting name!

VERSES 18-20

1. After killing these 1,000 Philistines Samson is thirsty. That makes sense. Now the response here by Samson some feel is good, that he is relying on God for water but listen to his words. Yes God gave him the victory but now he is basically saying, “Thanks for the victory God, what are you going to do now, let me die of thirst?” I see Samson moving farther away from God. Notice what verse 16 says, “**I have slain a thousand men.**” Really, I thought God did that but I must not confuse myself with the facts!

2. Now God is gracious and merciful and He does provide water for Samson. I think God is trying to draw Samson back to Him with His love but Samson was not listening and he is going to have to hit rock bottom before he will look up again and seek the Lord and allow the Lord to be in control of his life! Samson’s flesh, his bodily appetites became the thing that controlled his life, as we will continue to see in the next chapter.

3. Now as chapter 15 closes it does so by telling us that Samson Judged Israel for 20 years, but his story is not over yet. As we move to chapter 16 we see how unpredictable and undependable Samson was because he was a double-minded man. That is, Samson was strong before men, but weak before women. He fought the battles of God by day but succumbed to his flesh by night. And being a double-minded man, we will see that he is very unstable in his actions. But again, God is letting Samson run until he can run no further and he will have to turn to the Lord. As tragic as this story ends, there is a happy spot in it all and we will see that as we conclude the next chapter. Let's dig into chapter 16 and see how Samson let the lusts of his eyes, the lust of his flesh and the pride of life be his downfall and he did not know it until it was too late!

JUDGES 16

VERSE 1

1. Now Samson is moving deep into the enemy's camp, way down to Gaza, which was located on the south seacoast. And if that is all you read, that Samson went down to Gaza in Philistine country, you might come to the conclusion that this man of God was going down there to defeat the enemy, but we are told the real reason and it was not a mission to conquer the enemy. No, Samson makes his way all the way down to Gaza for the sole purpose of having sex with a prostitute! Did God use Samson? Yes He did and it was not because Samson was this man of God, but God used him in despite of his sin to accomplish His purposes, His plan. Samson was a man who was controlled by his fleshly desires and not by the Spirit of God!

VERSES 2-3

1. When the men of the city found out that Samson was in Gaza, they laid in wait for him. But by this time Samson had satisfied his flesh and it was getting late, Samson was ready to move on. Now I think, by his actions, he realized what these men were doing and thus, because the city gates were closed, he did what any strong man would do, he pulled them out of the ground. These gates did not keep Samson locked inside the city! Now Samson not only removes the gates but he places them upon his shoulders and carries them off to a hill that faces Hebron. Now Hebron itself was some twenty miles away and as you read this verse it does not say he carried them to Hebron but again, I think he took them to the top of the hill on a road that was leading to Hebron.

2. Again, I don't care how strong you think you are, you are not going to be able to pull up the gates of the city, the posts out of the ground and then carry them all the way to the top of a hill. Maybe if you gave me a few months I could get the equipment to do it, but not in my own strength and I don't think Samson did this in his own strength, I don't think he was that physically strong. I believe again that it was the Spirit of God that empowered him despite the sin he was involved in but that is going to change shortly as we will see. One more point here and that is this. I'm sure that these guys of the city were not happy.

Why do I say that? Because these men of the city were going to have to retrieve those doors that Samson took to the top of the hill and then they are going to have to bring them back to the city. That was not going to be a fun thing to do! And that is the end of this incident with Samson. He went into a prostitute and God leaves it there, just a note of the out of control life of Samson. But the story does not end there. Look what happens next!

VERSES 4-5

1. We don't know how long after he lay with the prostitute he fell in love with this Philistine woman named Delilah who lived in the Valley of Sorek. Now in reading this it seems like it may be okay, he is in love, but there are some problems here. First of all this Valley of Sorek is the valley of choice red grapes. He was a Nazirite and thus, he should have stayed clear of this valley, but he didn't. How often do we go into those valleys that we should stay clear? What a lesson to learn here.

But that is not the end of it. He falls in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah. Her name comes from the Hebrew root that speaks of making poor or to impoverish! Isn't that interesting? That is what she will do with Samson and she will take whatever he will give to her and steal it away! Folk's, what Delilah's do you have in your life that are robbing you, making you impoverished spiritually speaking? Because whatever it is, if you give into it, it will take whatever you give to it! Be careful, be on guard, do not go down to the enemy's camp, don't go where you don't belong and don't go after things that will leave you spiritually impoverished! And think about this, how many people call their daughters Delilah?

2. And here again we see that the weakness of Samson's flesh, a woman, and that would finally break him, Samson will fall and fail at the hands of a woman named Delilah. And the Philistines hire her as sort of a hit man or in this case, hit woman, to find out where Samson's power came from and how they could overcome his great strength. You see, Delilah was not in love with Samson, but in what she would get in return for her information, MONEY! These 1,100 shekels made up more than 140 pounds of silver! And it seems as you read this that she was going to get 1,100 shekels from each of the five lords of the Philistines! Thus, Delilah was more in love with money and she was going to take from Samson, making him poor, impoverish him spiritually speaking!

VERSE 6

1. I don't know about you but when I was dating Julie if she would have said to me, "Joey dear, honeybunch, tell me where your great strength comes from and how you can be bound so you can't escape!" that would be a red flag to me that something was wrong. And for Samson, there were many red flags to alert, him, to warn him that what he was doing was wrong, but if he missed all of those, he should have seen this one. And maybe he did see it and he was just playing with her. Teasing her. He was just having fun with her. After all, he was Samson and no Philistine could stop him, God was also with him, and thus, as some Christians say who are living in sin, "I'm good!" when in reality they are not!

2. And here is an important lesson for us. Don't play games with the enemy, don't think you are in control and nothing can stop you because you will become spiritually impoverished if you go down that path! You are in a war and not playing games and thus, may we act accordingly, for as Proverbs 16:18 says, "**Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.**" May we be wise in the Lord and walk accordingly!

VERSES 7-9

1. So Samson gives in but he is just playing games with her. He does not tell her the truth of where his great strength comes from. And so Samson tells Delilah that she needs to get 7 fresh bowstrings and tie him up with them and then he will be weak. So she does it, ties Samson up. Why he allowed it, maybe he again is just playing games with her, thinking that he was in control. Here, as she yells that the Philistines are upon him he breaks those bowstrings and is freed and the secret of his strength is still a secret, at least at this point!

VERSES 10-12

1. Fool me once, shame on you, fool me twice, shame on me! Samson is either fooled or again is just playing games and now Delilah is turning up the heat. “Samson, how can you lie to me? Don’t you know I love you? Now tell me what is the secret of your strength sugar cakes and what you can be bound with that you will not be able to break free!” And he jumps right in, maybe thinking this is getting fun now but he does not realize that downward spiral he is in, he does not realize how far away from God he is moving! This second plan is to bind Samson with new ropes, but again that does not work. Now these could have taken place over a period of time, hopefully not one right after another. But whatever the case, it was very dangerous!

VERSES 13-14

1. Delilah does not give up but she keeps coming at him and what a great lesson for us. Don’t give the enemy a foothold in your life to impoverish you. Don’t play with the enemy because the enemy will not give up until he has destroyed you! For Samson, again, I think he believed that he was in control, but he wasn’t!

2. This is the third time she is pestering him, badgering him wanting to know his secret and he tells her if his hair is braided into seven braids, he will be just like any other man. This too was a lie. Samson is guilty of compromise; he should have just told her it was none of her business and exit stage left. But he doesn't and each time he is getting closer to telling her the truth of the secret of his strength!

3. As Christians, if someone asks you to go out for a drink or to do something that you know is wrong, don't tell them, "I'm too tired" or "I don't feel good." Just tell them that you are a Christian and that you love the Lord and don't want to feed your flesh. They will never ask you to go out for a drink or probably anything else again. But if you make an excuse why you can't go, then they will keep asking you until you finally give in and it will become to you a Delilah, leaving you spiritually impoverished. Learn the lesson; don't tease the enemy, for the enemy can destroy you. Draw close to God and the Devil will flee!

VERSES 15-18

1. Here is this amazing man who could kill 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey and yet fall to the nagging and tears of a woman. We don't know how long this took, all this pestering day in and day out, but he kept coming back until he finally gave in and he spills the beans and says that if you shave my head, cut off my hair then I will be weak like any other man. He tells Delilah all that is in his heart. His faithfulness to his flesh was stronger than his faithfulness to God! It is as Jesus said in Luke 6:43-45, "**For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**" Where is your heart at because wherever it is at, that is what will come flowing out of your life!

2. Now does this mean that those who have long hair are in the will of God and those that are bald are not? Of course not! The strength of Samson was not in his hair, but in his vow, that he was separated unto God. His hair was just a symbol of that vow. And at this point, I am not sure how, but Delilah knew that Samson was telling her the truth. And the men she was doing business with knew it too for they brought her the money for her information!

VERSES 19-21

1. How evil was Delilah; she lulls him to sleep with the intention of having his haircut off so the Philistines could capture him. And, it then says she was tormenting him, really, I think she started tormenting him a long time ago and he was not aware of it or didn't care! Thus, after he was asleep she had the local Philistine barber come in and cut off his hair!

2. At this point, as Samson heard the commotion he awoke and thought he would be able to do as he did before but his strength had left him, he was like any other man! You see, Samson had reached a point in his life where he did not even recognize that the Lord had departed from him. He had walked so far away from the Lord, was so accustomed to his sin that he did not even recognize that the Lord was gone, the power, the strength that he once had in the Lord was not with him any longer!

We are told in II Chronicles 15:2, “. . . **The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.**” Samson found that out the hard way! You see folk’s, as you play games with the enemy; it is possible that you can be totally unaware that the anointing of God is no longer upon your life. Don't play with fire!

3. Now please understand that there is nothing magical about Samson’s hair, as I have said. It was just a symbol of what his life was to be about, dedicated to the Lord. And he had broken this vow many times before but now God was going to give him what he wanted, a life apart from God!

4. So the Philistines capture Samson and they put out his eyes. He then is brought to Gaza to work as a slave, like an animal, grinding at the millstone, which was a job that was usually reserved for a donkey or mule. Here is this mighty man of God who has been brought down to the pit because he did not take God seriously and now he was suffering the consequences of his actions. God was very merciful with Samson, very gracious but now judgment came and as we will see when we finish this story, this judgment was to bring Samson back to God if Samson would allow it.

5. Now let me make this important point here because it does relate to us. Here we see this man of God that is now blind, bound and grinding at the millstone. What a sad picture this paints for us in regards to sin. You see, sin **BLINDS**, **BINDS**, and **GRINDS** us. As you allow sin to continue in your life, it will begin to blind you to the truths of God. And as you continue down that path you will awaken one day and not even realize that you are blind, that the anointing of God is gone in your life. And you will become aware of this only when the enemy has overtaken you.

We saw that in Samson's life as he continued in his downward spiral into sin not even aware that the Lord had departed from him until it was too late and the enemy had defeated him. There are many Christians today who are blinded to the truths of God and are walking around, being guided by the world. And because they are using the world as their Seeing Eye dog, to lead them where they should go, we see them involved in all kinds of activities that are contrary to the word of God.

We see that sin binds us by its power and places us in bondage. Sin has the power to bind us and make us ineffective in our walk. Samson had bronze fetters applied to his hands and feet. The enemy made him immobile. But God says that He has broken those chains that bind us and has set us free through Jesus Christ. We should no longer be slaves to sin, and carry that heavy weight around with us.

In Hebrews chapter 12 Paul says, **“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”**

Hebrews 12:1. You see, you would never run a race carrying weights around with you. Thus Paul is saying that sin in our lives is like a heavy weight that entangles us and makes us ineffective in the race we are in.

And we also see that sin grinds at our lives and makes us miserable. What a miserable place to be in - to have sin just grinding at your life. Samson knew exactly what it felt like for he was the one at the millstone grinding the wheat, a job that was usually done by a mule or donkey. And it must have just eaten him up on the inside. This was a constant reminder of his failure before God and his people.

In Psalm 32, David is confessing his sin with Bathsheba, and David shares with us what it was like to live in sin. How sin affected his entire life. He says, **“When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into drought of summer.”**

Psalm 32:3-4.

David is saying that as he lived in unconfessed sin, that his whole being was affected. When he sinned against God not only did it affect his spiritual relationship with God, but it also affected his physical well-being. His strength was taken away and he felt old and weak. His life was dry and barren and the joy of the Lord was gone! And for one year David tried to hide this sin, but God was working on him the whole time. God was convicting David of this sin and trying to draw him back to Him.

God was breaking David of his condition, but like us, it takes time. David fought God and kept silent about his sin. But under the grinding of this constant conviction, David came to see his sin and repent of it. Psalm 51, also speaking of this time in David's life, we read, **“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which you have broken may rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. . . .The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart - these O God, you will not despise.”** Psalm 51:8-9, 17.

David is saying that the Lord's conviction upon his life has brought him to a place of brokenness. That he recognized his sin and has confessed it before the Lord. And he asks God to make him holy, to cleanse him as white as snow, to restore that joy that he once had with the Lord.

And when David acknowledged his sin, Psalm 32:5 says that the Lord, **“ . . . Forgave the iniquity of My sin.”** And the Hebrew implies that as soon as David confessed in his heart his sin, God was standing there with forgiveness.

Samson was a broken man at this point in his life. He had great potential to be used by God to deliver Israel from the Philistines but because he let his flesh control his life, he was now a captive, ***BLIND***, in ***BONDAGE*** and ***GRINDING*** at the millstone. But keep in mind that God did not bring him to this place to leave him there. Let's read on and see what the Lord is doing in Samson!

VERSE 22

1. Does that mean that Samson's strength was in his hair and as it grew back he got stronger? No, not at all. His long, uncut hair was just a symbol, an outward symbol of the vow he had taken, the Nazirite vow. And the Holy Spirit is telling us, in regards to his hair growing back, that a period of time has elapsed for Samson. That he had those long days at the millstone to reflect on his life and his relationship with the Lord. And I truly believe that Samson finally reached a point in his life that the only place he could look was up, for he had hit rock bottom. It was at this point that Samson recognized what he had done and he confessed his sin before the Lord.

2. And I think that Samson's relationship with the Lord at this point was deeper and richer than ever before. God had his undivided attention. All day long he spent focusing on the Lord, drawing closer to him, worshiping him. No longer was Samson focused on self, but on the Lord, and thus, **“The hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.”**

VERSES 23-25

1. The Philistines had a party to their god, Dagon, and as things got going they called for Samson, who was defeated by their god, and they wanted to mock this man who was blind and broken. What did we say that Delilah meant? It means poor or impoverished and that is exactly what we see here in Samson. He is being put on display, being mocked by the enemy because he let the flesh control his life. And folk's, the same can happen to us because when we fall, the unsaved, the enemy loves to mock us and make fun of the God we serve. Just look at the big name preachers who have fallen and what the media did to them. Be wise. Don't go down that path!

VERSES 26-31

1. Notice how at ease the Philistines are as they have a young boy guard Samson. But Samson is no longer going to be a natural man but a supernatural man, one who is empowered by the Spirit of God! You see, Samson repented and God forgave and restored him and yet, there were consequences for his actions as we have seen.

2. In his life Samson killed at least 1,030 Philistines, but in his death he killed more, 3,000. Samson had the potential of delivering the children of Israel from bondage, but instead he was in bondage to his flesh. Because of that it caused him to fall far short of what God had planned. But I am encouraged in that Samson did not become angry with God, nor forsake the Lord. He drew close to Him as he had many hours to spend contemplating on his life and repenting of his sin. Samson rededicated his life to the Lord, and so this blind and broken man is used one last time to defeat the enemies of God, not in his own strength, but in the power of God. Again, that is why I say he was not a muscle man, but an average man who was used mightily by God, empowered by God to do a great work, even here at the end of his life.

3. As I close this evening may we heed the warning that Paul gave to Timothy, **“Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”** II Timothy 2:22. Don’t go down those paths that are going to rob you of all that God has for you. May we be able to say at the end of our life what Paul was able to say, **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”** II Timothy 4:7-8. Samson had great potential but came up far short, may we be all that God wants us to be for His glory. For 20 years Samson was a Judge in Israel but it was not till the end of his life that he truly was fruitful for the Lord! What a powerful lesson for us to close on this evening!