

Transcript* - Samson, Strong Man, Weak Will – Pastor John Enabnit – 9/27/2026

My thanks to the worship team, the singers and musicians. It all. It all comes together so nicely. But one thing we need right now is to bow our hearts and heads. Would you come before the father with me, Lord? Right now, in Jesus name, we come before you, thanking you that where we are gathered, there you are in our midst.

We count that a privilege and a blessing, Lord, that you would be present with us. And I pray that in these moments that we have not only in worship, but now in the word, that you would open our hearts and our minds and our spirits to your truth. God let us take our thoughts captive now in this moment and make them obedient to Christ.

And I pray this in his precious name. And everybody said, well, good morning, I am. I'm John Enabnit, one of the pastors here at Broadway, and I'm so glad you're with us today, both online and in the house. And before I, get into the message, real quickly, a week from Saturday, that's October 10th. We are privileged to have a bus trip up to the Grand Canyon.

And, one of the premier people that really understands what God is about in terms of the Grand Canyon. You may have been there a dozen times, but you have never heard some of the things that Russ Miller has to say about the Grand Canyon. And you'll be able to see it and experience it from a biblical creation viewpoint.

So let me encourage you to, to sign up for the trip and join us. Those of us who are going to go on the bus, it's going to be a day long. It's going to be fun. It's going to be informative and inspiring in every way. So join us for that. Okay, now, now to the message there.

There are a lot of heroes in the Bible, men and women, you look at and say they were really heroic in their time, but there's one only, legitimate superhero. And that's this guy we're going to talk about today named Samson. Now, when you think about superheroes, our minds, almost automatically go to guys like Batman and, and Superman and Spiderman, and every one of these superheroes has a story of origin.

Superman was born on the planet Krypton, which gave him amazing superpowers here on Earth. Spider-Man as you know, was bitten by a radioactive spider, which gave him all of his spidey senses. And, and Batman didn't have any superpowers, but he had a lot of time. A lot of money, a lot of ingenuity that allowed him to build these crazy good tools to fight crime.

So they all have a story of origin, but they're all fictional characters. There are products of someone's imagination. Now, when we talk about Samson, he is not in that category. He is not an imaginary

human being. He's a real flesh and blood person. Now, I know that he lived thousands of years ago, but through modern technology we've been able to reproduce a likeness of Samson.

Let's put this up on the screen right now. There, Samson. Any resemblance to anyone you might know is purely coincidental. Okay. Samson didn't have a cape. He didn't have a Batmobile. He couldn't fly. All he had was this long hair and amazing strength and terrible judgment. Samson may be the closest thing the Bible even gives us to a superhero.

Now, I mean, this guy tore a lion. Listen to this. He tore a lion apart with his bare hands. Think of that. He. He killed a thousand enemy soldiers with simply the jawbone of a donkey as his weapon. He was out for revenge. Speaking of revenge, I heard about this woman who was feeling really sick. She went to the doctor.

He examined her and he said, I'm afraid I've got some really bad news. You've contracted rabies. And he told her that, and he left her room for a few minutes so she could kind of collect herself. And when he came back, she in the room, she was busily writing something on a piece of paper, and he said, are you making out your will?

She said, no, I'm making a list of the people. I'm going to bite them.

Samson ripped the gates off a city wall and carried them 40 miles away. The gates that weighed hundreds, if not thousands of pounds. When Samson walked into town, the Philistines quit asking, who is this guy? They asked and said, what has he done this time? Samson was incredibly strong in the outside, but incredibly weak on the inside.

He could defeat an entire army single handedly, but he couldn't control his own appetites. He could break strung ropes like they were nothing but strings. But he couldn't break his bad habits. But here's what makes his story so interesting and so relevant, even thousands of years later. You know his greatest enemy weren't the Philistines the sworn enemy of the Israelites?

His greatest enemy was himself. Now, I don't want you to raise your hand, but right here, right now, if we could point to the person that is our biggest enemy in life, my guess is a lot of us would point to ourselves, wouldn't we? That's just the way it is. So open your Bible study the judges, chapter 13.

We're in a sermon series currently from the Book of Judges and Samson. The one we're looking at today is the very last of the judges. And by the way, this was a very dark time in Israel. Here's the phrase that's repeated throughout the Book of Judges. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. That's a repeated phrase.

Get this. Were seven books deep into the Bible, and already people have totally turned their backs on God and the final chapters of judges, we've got two more Sundays after this. The final chapters depict this shocking violence that we see among God's people, as if to say, this is how far they have fallen. All of this points to not just the Israelites needs, but all of humanity's needs for not a temporary rescuer, not a temporary judge or redeemer, but a full time permanent redeemer, a full time permanent King.

And indeed, 2000 years ago, that one came along in the person of Jesus, the Son of God. Amen. That's who we have. Most of us will never tear a lion apart. I doubt very highly you have ever even been inclined to do that. I mean, a lot of us have reached the point in life where we're even opening a new jar of pickles feels like a spiritual battle.

Amen. But every one of us knows what it's like to have strengths and weaknesses, living side by side. Every one of us knows that. That's why the story of Samson resonates with us. You can love God with all of your heart and still struggle with certain areas of your life. You can be gifted and still make stupid choices in life.

You can have years of experience as a believer and still have blind spots along the way. So we're going to pick up Samson's story now in judges chapter 13, picking up in verse two. Here we go. In those days, a man named Manoah from the tribe of Dan lived in the town of Zorah. His wife was unable to become pregnant, and they had no children.

The angel of the Lord appeared to my Noah's wife and said, even though you've been unable to have children, you will soon become pregnant and give birth to a son. So be careful. You must not drink wine or any other alcoholic drink, nor eat any forbidden food. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and his hair must never be cut, for he will be dedicated to God.

As a Nazarite from birth. He will begin to rescue Israel from the Philistines. So even before Samson is born, God has already had a purpose for his life. Which brings us to the first lesson of this message. Your greatest strength, my friend, is what God has given you. Your greatest strength is what God has given you. He didn't create his own strength.

Samson didn't hit the gym. Five, six, seven days a week. This was a supernatural thing that he had. I mean, if he if Samson had looked like Arnold Schwarzenegger in his prime, it wouldn't have been a mystery. It wouldn't mean a secret what his strength was. The Bible never says that Samson looked unusually muscular. In fact, the Philistines were going crazy trying to figure out what the secret of his strength actually was.

If he had looked like an Olympic bodybuilder, it wouldn't have been a mystery. How did he get his strength? Well, have you seen the size of his arms? They look like tree trunks. No. Samson was a very ordinary looking man, much like Brian. Stand up for a minute, would you please just. Now look at.

Your. You're flexing. You are flexing. Yeah. Well, that that is a good one.

Samson probably looked a lot like Brian here. Except he was probably better looking than Brian. Certainly younger, more hair, but. But other than that, he looked exactly like Brian looks today, you know. Thanks, Brian. Love you man. Appreciate that.

So apparently Samson's ability, his strength was a supernatural thing, right? He got a strength from God. Judges 14 verse six says, at that moment the spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him, and he ripped the lion's jaws apart with his bare hands again and again. What you see in the Book of Judges is that Samson's strength is tied into the Spirit of God, and he was a Nazarite from birth, now a Nazarite.

They had to take certain vows, special vows. They were set apart. People, his hair was never to be cut. He was never to drink wine or any kind of alcohol, never to touch a dead body. But. But those were all outward things. The hair, the strength, everything else. The real source of his strength was from God, which is an important lesson for all of us.

Listen to me very carefully. What? Whatever you have, God gave it to you. Amen. Whatever it is, your personality, your abilities, your spiritual gifts, your influence, any wealth that you might have, any physical blessings, any material things, all of it is a gift from God. Even the ability to get out of bed in the morning without sounding like a creaky old staircase.

Those are gifts from God. Paul in first Corinthians four he asked this question. He says, what do you have that you did not receive parenthetically from God? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? That question destroys pride, any pride that we might have. Well, look what I've done. Notice what I have accomplished.

No. Anything you've done, anything you have. Whatever you are, it's all from God. You don't have a thing that God didn't give you. Turn to your neighbor and say that you don't have a thing that God didn't give you.

Samson's mistake. Samson's mistake was that he began to treat gradually God's gift as something that he possessed. The longer he went in his life, the more and more he forgot that whatever God had given him was actually was actually God's. He thought it was his. And we can do

the same thing. You know, we we can count on past experience for future, for present battles, you know.

Oh, I can yeah. And we look at something going on in our world and we think, well, I can handle this. I've, I've done this before. After all, I've, I've been a Christian for 50 years. Well, that's all wonderful. But just because you were faithful yesterday doesn't mean you don't need God today. Yesterday's victories do not guarantee tomorrow's strengths and victories.

And Samson got into trouble because he began to identify God's gifts to him as his own. Which is dangerous. The longer and the more God blesses you. The human tendency is to treat it as though it's mine is my accomplishment. It's my effort. We forget where the blessings come from. So every once in a while I would counsel you to pray a prayer of humility that goes something like this.

We'll put it on the screen. Lord, everything good in my life came from you. Keep me grateful. Keep me dependent. Keep me humble. Let's pray that together, shall we, Lord, everything good in my life came from you. Keep me grateful. Keep me dependent. Keep me humble. Because there's a second lesson from Samson. It's this little compromises can become big problems.

Little compromises can become. Samson didn't ruin his life in one afternoon. I mean, he drifted. One compromise led to another. One bad decision made the next bad decision a little easier. Here we go. Chapter 14, verse one. One day when Samson was in Timna. Timna was a Philistine community, by the way. I don't know what he was doing there, but he was one of the Philistine.

Women caught his eye when he returned home. He told his father and mother, a young Philistine woman, and Timna caught my eye. I want to marry her, get her for me. Which pretty much sums up his life. You know, he sees something, he wants it. He takes it. That's the philosophy of his life. If I want it, that settles it.

Verse three. His father and mother objected. Isn't there even one woman in our tribe, or among all the Israelites you could marry? They asked, why must you go to the pagan Philistines to find a wife? That is a good question, Samson. What in the world are you thinking? Why would you look to the enemy of the Israelites for a woman, for your life?

Samson knew the Bible. I mean, in Deuteronomy seven, God had been very specific as to who Israelite men and women could marry. And let me just sum it up for you you can't marry anybody that is not a member of this nation. All right? Wasn't about racial purity. God wasn't there wasn't racial prejudice racially. It wasn't. So it wasn't about that.

It was about spiritual purity. And Samson, because he's got a problem with the ladies, overlooks that certain prohibition. I mean, just like a guy that lived a couple hundred years after him by the name of Solomon. I bet you've heard of him now, Solomon, in case you didn't know this, listen to this. I'm not making this up. It's in the Bible.

Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. That's a thousand women. Church in a concubine is like an apprentice wife. Okay, not not fully. Not fully there yet. But. But on their way, a thousand women.

You think I'm going to make a joke about that, don't you? Okay. All right, well, no. And can you imagine? Poor Solomon, he's got 700 wives, 300 concubines. Wanted to take them all out for dinner one night at a restaurant. Can you imagine that? In fact, there are rumors that archeologists have uncovered the skeletal remains of Solomon apparently starved to death, waiting for those women to decide what restaurant they wanted to go eat at.

Solomon Solomon was the wisest man in the world, and as wise as he was, he made the regrettable choice to begin marrying foreign women who enticed him away from the worship of Jehovah God. In fact, he actually built a high place for Camanche. That's the name of the pagan god of the Moabites, detestable god who was in fact part of the worship of cosmos was child sacrifice.

Solomon's love for foreign women pulled him away from God. Same is true for Christianity today. Look, I'm going to be really blunt, and you may not like what I'm about to say, but I need to say this if you're a Christian and you're thinking about getting married, I don't know if that applies to anybody in the room. But if you're a believer, a follower of Christ, thinking about getting married, you have no business marrying a non-Christian.

None. I'm not saying that the Bible says that. All right. Now I know what people say. We get enamored with the person that we've fallen in love with. And we think, well, I can convince him, I can, I can convince her to become a Christian after we're married will really make that a focal point of our lives. Baloney.

It doesn't work like that. You you get them. Say first you get them on fire for Jesus first, and then you say, I do. Amen. That's just the way it is. Samson knew the Bible. He knew of the prohibition against marrying non Israelites. In fact, his failure to keep that vow that God had said isn't going to get him into all kinds of trouble, and eventually it will cost Samson his life.

But he insisted to his parents that's what he wanted. Now there's something that you need to see in verse four. It says his father and mother didn't realize the Lord was at work in this, creating an opportunity to work against the Philistines who ruled over Israel at that time. One of the lessons of the Bible is that God is pretty good at accomplishing his purposes through flawed people.

Did you know that? And look around the room. Is anybody here not flawed? We're all flawed. And yet God still is at work in this place now. Samson totally compromised his Nazarite calling. Besides the hair getting cut. We'll get to that in a minute. I mean, he touches the carcass of a lion. No, dead bodies. He has alcoholic drinks.

He tries to marry a foreign woman. Samson is compromising all the time. Repeatedly gets too close to the enemy. And every time he gets away with it, he becomes more confident. Which is how temptation works. Rarely does Satan walk in and announce, hey, I'm here to destroy your family. I'm. I'm all about ruining your marriage, torpedoing your relationship with God, your usefulness.

It doesn't work that way. We would probably decline if we knew that's what the end product was. Instead, temptation says this isn't serious. Everybody does it. No one's going to find out. You can stop anytime you want. Listen to me. Nobody gets fat overnight. Nobody wakes up one morning suddenly out of the blue and says, I think I'm going to have an affair.

It's gradual. It happens over time and you keep moving the line you said you'd never cross. And so Sam Samson compromises his life. He keeps. He kept playing near the edge. Here's a good rule for life. Listen to this. If you keep walking along the edge of a cliff, eventually gravity will have an opinion. So as a Christian, the question is not how close tonight can I actually get to sin without sinning?

That's the wrong question. The question is, how close can I draw to Jesus Christ? Because, my friend, there are places that you should not go. There are conversations that you should not engage in. There are relationships in your life where boundaries matter. There are websites we should not visit. There are habits we should stop excusing, not because God wants to take the joy out of your life.

Not at all, but because God can see the beginning from the end and he can look down the road, that path you're on and see exactly where it leads. Samson kept saying, I can handle it until he couldn't. Which brings us to Delilah. Y'all heard it. Delilah haven't show. He falls in love with this woman named Delilah. And we don't know if she was philistine.

I'm guessing she was, because she gets in cahoots with the Philistine leaders. When they discover that Samson is in a relationship with her, they come to her and offer her a fortune if she can just discover the secret of his strength. And so she asks him and he lies to her. He lies to her. He says, if they tie me up with seven fresh bow strings, I'm as weak as anybody else.

Well, she does that and he's not. And then she gets mad and she asks again and he lies again. She asks again. He lies again. I mean, he keeps lying to her after she asks, what's the secret of your strength at some point, don't you think Samson would have grown just a little bit suspicious about this whole business?

I mean, when the woman, when when the woman that you're dating keeps tying you up and.

And and and inviting the enemies into your bedroom, wouldn't she kind of question what's going on? You don't need Doctor Phil to tell you that, but. But Samson keeps playing games. Why? Why? Because. Listen to me. This is important. Sin makes smart people stupid. That's it. Sin makes smart people stupid. As I was writing this message, my mind process back to men that I've admired Ravi Zacharias, Bill Hybels, Robert Morris I could go on and on.

Men who are used of God in. Sin make smart people stupid because sin makes you think. Temptation makes you think. Well, the consequences that happen to everybody else will never happen to you. Trust me, they're going to happen to you. You will suffer the consequences of your sin. And finally, Delilah wears him down. Verse 16, she tormented him with her nagging.

I'm I'm just reading what the Bible says day after day until he was sick to death of it.

I'm sure there's not a single woman in the audience that's like that. Okay. Verse 17. Finally Samson shared his secret with her. My hair has never been cut. He's confessed, for I was dedicated to God as a Nazarite from birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me and I would become as weak as anyone else.

And he falls asleep, and after he's fast asleep, she invites another man into the room and he shave Samson's head. Which kind of boggles the mind because trust me, if someone were shaving your head while you're sleeping, you'd probably wake up, wouldn't you? Anyway? Anyway, no matter. Then comes the saddest verse in his story. Verse 20. Then she cried out, Samson, the Philistines have come to capture you.

When he woke up, he thought, I'll do as before and shake myself free. But he didn't realize the Lord had left him. That is a sermon in and of itself right there. He didn't realize the Lord had left him. This is frightening. I'll do this before he says. But he didn't realize the Lord had left him. He assumed that yesterday's victories would have short tomorrow's victories.

But he didn't know the Lord had left him. He assumed that God's power would be available to him no matter how he lived his life. But he didn't realize the Lord had left him. He assumed there would be no

consequences for his choices. But this time there were. Which brings us to the third lesson. Sin will take more than you plan to give.

So the Philistines sees Samson gouge out his eyes, bind him in chains, and put him to work grinding grain in prison. Yeah. You know, there's an old saying about sin that's painfully true. You've probably heard this before. Sin will take you further than you want it to go, keep you longer than you wanted to stay, and cost you more than you were willing, and you wanted to pay.

True for Samson, true for us. So he sin always advertises the pleasure, but hides the price tag. No, nobody begins an addiction thinking, well, I sure hope this destroys my health. Nobody starts an affair thinking I hope this devastates my family. Nobody starts feeding bitterness in their own lives, thinking I hope I become a miserable old person that nobody wants to be around.

Samson story gives us a picture of what sin does. It blinds us, it binds us and it grinds us. It blinds us to truth. It binds us to whatever habit that is. And it grinds away at our joy, our character, our relationships with people and with God and our usefulness. And for years, Samson has been playing with sin.

Well, sin is no longer playing with Samson. I thought about this, this farmer that I read about. True story in South Africa. He had rescued this. This baby hippo, hippopotamus. And when? When it was just a calf, it was there was a flood in in a nearby river. The farmer rescued this hippo and adopted him into his family.

Treated him like his own kid. Basically, he fed him by hand, brushed his teeth, petted him. There's even a picture of the farmer writing this. Hippos back his. He nicknamed him Humphrey. He called him Humphrey. And the farmer became extraordinarily attached to Humphrey. He treated him like a like a family member. But his friends kept warning him, you know, he's a hippo.

He's wild. You can't really tame a hippopotamus. In about 6 or 7 years later, when Humphrey now weighs thousands of pounds one day, out of the blue, unsuspecting, this hippo takes the farmer that has loved him and bites him severely and drags him to the river and drowns him, kills him. And this farmer said something is kind of haunting before all of this happened.

One day he said, people will say he'll kill me one day, but I don't believe it. People will say, this hippo will kill me one day, but I don't believe it. Well, here's the thing a hippo is going to do what a hippo is going to do. That's what a hippo is. And sin is going to do what sin is going to do.

And I think somebody today understands that some of you listening understand that maybe there's something small in your life. It started out small, but it keeps growing, whether it's resentment or lust

or alcohol or gossip or gambling or anger or pride, whatever it is, you've been carrying bitterness for 20 years about something that somebody hurt you some way.

And Samson reminds us, you don't try to manage sin. You don't pet it. You don't play with it. You don't negotiate, should negotiate with it. You bring it to God. You confess it to the Lord. Maybe bring somebody alongside you to stand beside you, to hold you accountable. You put boundaries in place in your life. Because, my friend, strength is not the absence of weakness.

Strength is recognizing your weakness and inviting God into that place. And that leads us to the final lesson you're going to love. This failure doesn't have to be the final chapter.

Samson failed badly. You know, he he's in a he's in a bad place. His his choices have led to devastating consequences. He never did get his eyes back, didn't get his freedom back. Even though God forgives him and he does. He'll forgive any sin you've ever committed, my friend, but he will not necessarily remove the earthly consequences of that sin.

Now we get to chapter 16, verse 22, where it says, remember, he's a now a captive to the Philistines. But it says, before long Samson's hair began to grow back. I don't know how the Philistines missed that. I mean, they knew the secret of his strength. Either way, one day the Philistines decided to hold this festival honoring their pagan god, the god of the Philistines named Dagon.

And they gather all the elites, all the rulers, all the leaders. Thousands of people are gathered in the temple of their god Dagon, and they bring Samson in to laugh at him, to ridicule him, to make sport of him. This, this once mighty ruler of Israel, this judge. He's now a laughing stock. And they're laughing and celebrating the fact that their god Dagon has defeated the god of the Israelites.

So Samson comes in, he's being led by a servant. Can't see a thing, of course. And Samson says to the servant, hey, would you put me between these two pillars so I can just feel where I am? And then they do that. Then he prays this prayer, verse 28, sovereign Lord, remember me again. Oh God, please strengthen me just one more time.

Notice something here earlier, he's been depending on himself. He said, I'll just do like I've always done. This time he knows the source of his strength. See, in the beginning, Samson had just depended on himself. But now he's totally dependent on God. Verse 29, Then Samson put his hands on the two center pillars that held up the temple, pushing against them with both hands.

He prayed, let me die with the Philistines. And the temple crashed down on the Philistine rulers and all the people. So he killed more people when he died than he had during his entire lifetime. So his

life true, ends tragically. But church, not uselessly. Now listen to this. Centuries later, something remarkable happens. The writer of Hebrews, whoever it was.

Yeah, it was writing along in Hebrews. And then we come to chapter 11 of Hebrews, which is this chapter of great faith. And he begins to name the people of great faith. And the names you would expect were there Abraham, Moses, David, Samuel, the prophet, and all. Then you get to verse 32, and this is how it reads.

How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon Barack Hussein next name. I can't hear you, Sam, Sam, Jephthah, David, Samuel and all the prophets. Hold it. Samson is listed in the names of people with great faith. Yes, yes, because God's grace is bigger than our failures.

Can I get an amen from the house? Thank God for that. Because if the Bible is filled with the names of people who are only perfect, it would be a very short book. Amen. Very short. Samson spent so much of his life saying, I can handle this. And finally, at the end, his best moment came when he said, Lord, I need you.

Lord, I need you. Maybe that's the prayer somebody here today needs to pray. Is that you say, Lord, I need you. Do you buy your hearts and heads with me? If that's you, if you're the person that says, Lord, I need you, then I invite you to pray this prayer with me just silently, just to yourself, because God can hear you just to say something like, Lord, I need you.

I've tried in life and I failed in life, but here I am today. Sing this time God, let my strength come from you. Because Lord, I need you.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed. There's not a person in this room that is ever going to be anything apart from God, not one of us. We all need the Lord desperately. I want to invite you this morning at the close of the service. If you're that person that says, Lord, I've tried to live life on my own.

I've tried to live my way. And it's it's not worked. It's been a failure. Listen, failure isn't final. There's more to come if you'll just let God go to work in your life. Lord, I pray for that person, that man, that woman, those people. Lord, the right now need to come before you in humility and and honesty just to say, Lord, I need you.

Would you do your work in their lives in Jesus name, Amen.

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