

Despite Our Failures and Weaknesses

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Date: 12 September 2021

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to the book of Judges. The book of Judges, if you need a Bible, the chair in front of you, if you start in Genesis, find page 192 in that black Bible in the chair in front of you.

The black Bible, page 192, Judges, chapter 14. Judges 14. Judges chapter 14. Again, this month, it's 14, 15, and 16.

I'm gonna finish up the book of Judges this month. Judges chapter 14, the life and the story of Samson. Judges chapter 14, again, page 192 in that black Bible.

I'll read and then we'll jump in with both feet. Judges chapter 14. Then Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah, the daughters of the Philistines.

So he came back and told his father and mother, I saw a woman in Timnah, the daughters of the Philistines. Now therefore, get her for me as a wife. And his father and his mother said to him, Is there no woman among the daughters of your relatives or among all your people that you go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?

[1:15] But Samson said to his father, Get her for me. She's right in my eyes. However, his father and mother did not know that it was of Yahweh, for he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines.

And at that time, the Philistines were ruling over Israel. 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 roared toward him.

And the spirit of Yahweh rushed upon him mightily so that he tore the lion as one tears a kid. Not a kid kid, but a baby goat. Though he had nothing in his hand, he did not tell his father and mother what he had done.

So he went down and talked to the woman, and she was good in Samson's eyes. When he returned, later take her. He turned aside to look at the carcass of the lion, and behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the body of the lion.

So he scraped the honey into his hands and went on eating as he went. When he came to his father and mother, he gave to them, and they ate. But he did not tell them that he scraped the honey out of the body of the lion.

[2:18] Verse 10, Then his father went down to the woman, and Samson made a feast there. For the young men customarily did this. And it came about when they saw him that they brought 30 companions to be with him.

Then Samson said to them, Let me now propound a riddle to you. If you will indeed tell it to me within the seven days of the feast and find it out, then I will give you 30 linen wraps and 30 chains of clothes.

But if you're unable to tell me, then you shall give me 30 linen wraps and 30 chains of clothes. And they said, And propound your riddle that we may hear it. So he said to them, Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet.

That's how he sang it, too. But they could not tell the riddle in three days. And it came about on the, some versions say, seventh day, that they said to Samson's wife, Entice your husband that he may tell us the riddle, lest we burn you and your father's house with fire.

Have you invited us to impoverish us? Is this not so? And Samson's wife wept before him and said, You only hate me. I hate you, I hate you, I hate you. And you do not love me.

[3:25] You propound a riddle to the sons of my people and have not told it to me. And he said to her, I haven't even told my father and mother, so why should I tell you? That's paraphrasing. So however, she wept before him seven days while their feast lasted and it came about on the seventh

day that he told her because she pressed him so hard.

She then told the riddle to the sons of her people. So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey and what is stronger than lion? That's how they sang it. And he said to them, If you did not plop with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle.

That's how he sang it. Then the spirit of Yahweh rushed upon him mightily and he went down to Ascalon in 30 killed 30 of them and took their spoil and gave the changes to those who told them, who told the riddle.

And his anger burned and he went up to his father's house but Samson's wife was given to his companion who had been his friend or best man. I told you at the beginning of this year that I was going to start reading the Chronicles of Narnia.

Well, I finished the Chronicles of Narnia I think in March and I started reading the Tolkien books. I started with The Hobbit and then I've actually read all The Hobbit and all three books of The Lord of the Rings.

[4:43] I finished that. I still need to read the Silamerlan Silamerlan Simamerlan I still have to read the Silamerlan I still need to read that one.

But now I'm actually reading The Mysterious Benedict Society I started the book one I think there's four books on that one five books on that one so I started reading that one. I stayed up too late last night too.

It was like 10.55 like oh I gotta go to bed and I read like put it away I was so engaged with the book. Anyways it was intriguing reading The Lord of the Rings the trilogy and what intrigued me the most is if you've read the books you know that how Frodo and Sam are presented in the books is very different from how they're presented in the movies.

In the movies Frodo and Sam and even the other two Hobbits Sam and Mary they're okay they're kind of brave kind of courageous in the books no these guys had it they were the heroes of the books plural the most unlikely people they were courageous they were brave they went after it and you wouldn't think this because they were Hobbits they were small halflings they were like children oh look at those pathetic looking kids and they're like you know they come out I mean he thought of them to be weak that's one of the ironies of the books as you read them you would think that this person would be the hero and this person would be the hero but then you find out Aragorn who's the king he ends up bowing to them they're the heroes despite their smallness their weakness and despite your weakness despite your failures believe that there's many he got it

I have many too despite our many blunders God will still use us for his glory to accomplish his plan and that's what you see here in chapter here in chapter 14 put up here the theme don't forget the theme his overwhelming love for his people his never ending love for his people his relentless love for his people that love's there despite our failures and weaknesses his love remains despite your failures despite your weaknesses despite your blunders despite our failures and weaknesses God will accomplish all his purposes displaying his glory and his love for us his chosen people I mean the greatest display of weakness the greatest display of so to speak failure is the cross

[8:13] I mean that's where you see failure that's where you see weakness no that's where you see victory that's where you see strength in the world's eyes it's failure in the world's eyes it's weakness but to God to us it's the power of God what looked like failure was actually victory it gives us such great hope hope that he'll use our weaknesses and even our sin to fulfill his plans I mean you know the phrase right there in Genesis Jacob dies and the brothers are scared because they sold Joseph into slavery you remember they sold Joseph into slavery and his brothers came they're like oh we remember what we did oh they bowed down to him he says look

I'm not in the place of God what we mean for evil God according to his sovereign decree he means for good people do bad things but God's greater than that God still faithfully loves us and faithfully orchestrates all things in his providence so that we would be a people who chiefly love and want him and so he gets all the glory Samson's not the hero God is Samson's not the hero here Yahweh is he's the real hero because you see Samson and everything what he's doing but God used this real historical event the story of Samson to teach his people the great truth of his love for sinners by showing them his gracious compassion he's the real hero and we can almost think of

Samson as a mini Israel as Israel was set apart for Yahweh so was Samson set apart for Yahweh and as Samson played the harlot with his weaknesses and his failures so did Israel with their weaknesses and their failures but Samson is a type of Christ the type is in the Old Testament the

anti-type is in the New Testament Jesus is the fulfillment of this Jesus who would be faithful and fully dedicated to God unlike Samson having a life of perfection obedience unlike Samson and solely loving and desiring God and his word unlike Israel and then dying for us to save us is that amazing or what God and his plan will accomplish what he's going to do you have a chapter here that's filled with secrets well not for us we see the end game right we can read it and be like and not for Yahweh he was working all things out for his glory even this strong weak man to accomplish his good and perfect purposes for his people to save his people and deliver his people would you see that beginning would you see that in verse 20 so God's spirit was driving Samson through the acts of his will to achieve God's purposes that's what he does and it just seemed like Samson just wanted to indulge his desires with no regard for his Nazarite vow which yeah sort of but God who foreordains all things would use him to display his glory I've read this to you in messages past in the book of Judges I've read this to you from the Westminster Confession of Faith about God's decree let me read this to you again because this communicates well and it's helpful to us Westminster Confession of Faith says this about God's decree God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass so it's everything every decision you ever make you will make have made everything has been foreordained yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away but rather it's established what does that mean

Judges chapter 14 that's how it works itself out that's what you see Samson making all these decisions and yet God is the one who's planted it all he planned it all as we see these historical events unfold before us we see Yahweh working on all things for his glory of his name and the good of his people even when they were unaware and in spite of their sin and waywardness see that's why God truly is the hero see this gives you great assurance here's the assurance it gives us when we are least aware of it and even in the midst of our waywardness God will work out all things to show his glory and bring his grace upon his people you can be assured of that man you can take that to the bank all begins with the failure it begins with the weakness

[14:32] I put it like this despite failure and weakness verse 1 through 3 verse 1 he went down to Timnah he saw a woman in Timnah Timnah is between Judah and what was at that time Dan Samson is about 20 years old now and remember the Philistines ruled over them for 40 years so it's been about 20 years now the Philistine rule was a little bit more subtle and Judah had become content with it life had become normal being their slaves it's too bad it was like this but he saw of the daughters of the Philistines he came back to his father and mother verse 2 I saw a woman get her for me as a wife I want her get her for me I mean his parents would be crushed look at verse 3 said to him his father and mother is there no woman among the daughters of your relatives or among all our people you have to go take a wife from the uncircumcised little things almost in anger they pled for him to look at the women of his own people she's a pagan

Samson we're not supposed to intermarry with them Samson it's sad he ended the same way he began he had a weakness for women hmm what he says here in the verse 4 Samson said to his father get her for me no I want her that's how you can translate it for today and it's very clear this was a weak point in his character lust and passion yeah like many young men today who struggle with pornography who struggle with their passions but Samson didn't care what he wanted is what he wanted he sees it I'm going to take it that's how he would it despite failure weaknesses notice God's purpose verse 4 however his father mother did not know that it was of Yahweh he Yahweh was seeking an occasion against the Philistines and at that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel was Samson driven by his glands oh yeah typical judges kind of guy he did what was right in his own eyes he fit well he wanted this girl bad but Yahweh was working his will to use this ordained opportunity to strike the Philistines by using Samson do you see this one writer put this is a fascinating story between human responsibility and God's sovereignty I mean you have Samson's stubbornness his weak passion even his foolishness was unable to stop Yahweh from accomplishing his plans and design and the same thing goes for us we're stubborn we're strong in our passions we're foolish in our decisions and yet

God is sovereign one writer put it like this quote Yahweh can and will use the sinfulness or stupidity of his servants as the camouflage for bringing his secret will to pass end quote now does this give us a license to be stubborn no does this give us a license to let our passions go no does this give us a license to be foolish no but the fact of the matter is you will be stubborn you will be sinful you will

be stupid you will be foolish I can attest to that in my own life but God will use us for his glory despite us not because of us it's not going to be because of you it's not going to definitely be because of me it's going to be because he's very gracious and his love you know this chapter it gives us great hope because it looks like failure you actually see glory you actually see his love what we mean for evil

God will mean for his and our good one writer put it like this God will always work in spite sorry God will always work in spite of your quote yuck and muck end quote I like the yuck and muck I like that and the writer in this he brought up the smell of onions now you might smell onions and you might like that lots of people don't like the smell of onions by themselves it's just kind of not to mention like you smell like whoa that's like really strong right so you see this thing in your life and all you smell is the smell of onions and we're unable to see the thick juicy tasty cheese running down hamburger upon which those onions go with the tomato and the lettuce and all the fixings and that nice beautiful hamburger but all you see is what all you smell is what the onions but you don't see the big picture do you we don't see it all all we smell is the flavor of the onions all we see are the onions we can't see the whole plan you know we've talked about this before

[20:41] God is never dull is he he's never boring he's not lifeless I'm boring hopefully this message isn't boring but God's not boring he's not lifeless he's not dull he creatively uses all events to show how awesome and great that he is so that he gets the glory and we as his people we get him and his love as our eternal reward remember we talked about that last week what do you receive you receive him and you receive his love that's your eternal reward and he gets all the glory you know it's so encouraging as well when you see here about Samson's parents and then Samson wanting this wife from the Philistines this turned out horrible sometimes you wonder what may become of one of your kids who willfully walk away from the

Lord and all we think about is the should haves and could haves and would haves but we fail to read this part remember however his father and mother did not know that it was of Yahweh and then the writer he says this which I think is appropriate quote what we don't know may yet prove to be our deepest comfort amen so you have despite failure and weakness you have God's purpose and then look at you see God's glory verse five and six Samson went down with Timnah with his father so he was his parents had gone ahead he was maybe farther back and a lion roared upon him and yet Yahweh's spirit rushed upon Samson giving him a tremendous amount of human strength now it seemed like he already had this strength given the Nazarite vow but but really it was linked to the spirit rushing upon him mightily and he takes this and lying and tears it in half like a kid not a kid kid but it is a baby goat that's what he's talking about and this was a sign to Samson when this happened to Samson it was a sign because what Yahweh was communicating this was how Yahweh was going to use him for his glory to begin to judge the

Philistines in other words Samson should see how inadequate he was but how adequate Yahweh would be Samson should have seen how inadequate he was but how adequate Yahweh would be so he could rely on Yahweh in the near future that's what he should have seen and remember Samson is a mini Israel Israel should have seen this they should have seen that they're so inadequate without Yahweh but they can be so adequate with Yahweh behind them so they can rely on him in the future oh maybe that's something for us too right so you see God's glory displayed here in verse 5 and 6 but notice he did not tell what his father and mother we had done that's for later because then it moves back into failure and weakness despite failure and weakness and that's not only verses 7 8 9 10 but it's also only verse 18 notice what happens in verses 7 8 and 9 he went down talked to a woman she looked good in his eyes verse 8 he returned later he turned aside to look at a carcass of lion there a swarm of bees honey was there he scraped the honey into his hands went on eating as he went honey was inside the dead lion he was not to touch anything unclean per the Nazari vow remember that but he broke it and then he gave it to his parents nice what was he doing he knew better than that he did not tell them that he scraped the honey out of the body of the lion so here's the weakness notice verse 10 his father went down to the woman and Samson made a feast there verse 11 came about when they saw him they brought 30 companions probably bodyguards these 30 guys he was in hostile territory but Samson's passions are seen here he couldn't come to terms with his separateness in these two instances first he ate honey from a dead lion and now he possibly drank wine now I know his conjecture we're not totally sure but the word here they have in verse 10 Samson made a feast literally means a place of drinking he's a nazirite he's not supposed to be drinking any strong drink or wine isn't he now I know some guys

say well it's possible he didn't really drink he just served it okay sure I guess it's safe to say it was possible we're not absolutely certain that he drank it but still more of Samson's weakness comes out and yet again as we walk through this section and really the rest of his life we see as many Israel he's set apart by

God he used by God for his glory and yet they played the harlot over and over and over again where in the book of Judges but God would use them anyways Israel because through Israel in spite of all her weaknesses in spite of all her stupidity in spite of all her foolishness from Israel would come the deliverer the Messiah our redeemer so God was going to preserve his people isn't that great you still see this well as it continues on notice verse 12 the riddle issue Samson's at the feast he challenged these Philistines I'm going to try out a riddle on you and if I win or excuse me if you win I'll give you 30 sets of underwear all the kids are like and 30 new suits from Lynn's warehouse but if so if you win I'll give it to you but if you lose then I get those from you now these clothes would be made this fine linen they're made of linens they're of high quality making these clothes it was a nice prize big time so they said propound the riddle the eater came something to eat verse 14 the strong came something sweet but they couldn't tell the riddle in three days so then and some versions say fourth day and other versions say the seventh day the old ancient manuscripts have seventh day but whichever one the point is they couldn't figure it out and so they went to Samson's wife and they said get your husband to tell us what this thing is to tell you so you can tell us in other words we don't want to lose to this

[27 : 58] Israeli slave no they became desperate so they threatened the bride notice in verse 15 we'll burn you in your father's house with fire oh that's nice if you don't get him to tell you the riddle and notice verse 16 she pressured him you only hate me and you don't love me you prepared a riddle that's done by people I even told my father mother why should I tell you but then he caved into her one ride put her like this her conjoining her nagging and she was probably possibly even doing it for the full seven days and then they pushed her on the seventh day now he was going to teach them a lesson so they they came to him and right notice verse 18 they said to him on the seventh day what is sweeter than honey what is stronger than a lion and he said them if you would not plow with my heifer you would not have found out my riddle in other words heifers were not normally used for plowing in other words the 30 did not play the game fair and he was ticked off now before we go into the lesson that we're going to go into verse 19 and 20 let's stop here

Samson should have learned his lesson he should have learned his lesson from this episode with this woman and her people they could not be trusted he didn't learn his lesson we look at Samson's story and very easily point out what went wrong can't we he should have learned his lesson what's wrong with you Samson because what's going to happen another chapter or two later same thing with Delilah same almost same exact thing we can look at Samson's whole story and very easily point out where he went wrong and where he'll go wrong again with Delilah Yahweh's strong servant he had a huge weakness and it would come back to bite him hard and yet you know we're so quick to judge Samson when you know what's probably happening is that we're looking at ourselves in a mirror there go I but the grace of God you know we know the end story but you don't know the end story of your life do you we're so quick to judge Samson and yet be careful we need to be careful that we're saying look if there go I but God's grace in my own life huh so we're pointing out his failure we're pointing out his weakness verse 7 all the way verse 18 and yet the great part about this the end of this chapter you see the glory and the love of God displayed in verse 19 and 20

God's glory God's love how is that displayed let me show you verse 19 known as the spear of Yahweh rushed upon him mightily what did he do he went to Ascalon which is over 20 miles away Ascalon was one of the five key Philistine centers he killed 30 nicely dressed Philistines he took their clothes and then he gave it to those jerks wow that's like getting back at them he was ticked off he was so mad he was so mad that he left his new wife known as first night end of verse 19 and his anger burn he went to his father's house but Samson's wife was given to his companion had been his friend he was his best man and if the wedding had not been consummated she could legally be given to another and she was and chapter 15 that's going to be bad because you're going to see what's going to happen with that now now before we start saying Samson well yeah real bad temper Samson hold on time out take it easy don't look so much for upon Samson's horrible temper but the fact that

Yahweh's spirit came upon him what was he beginning to do do you remember the prophecy he would begin to deliver Israel what is this God was accomplishing his purposes for his people to deliver him here's God's great love for his people we're so quick to see that oh this is just explained that's just so mad he's just doing this and yet we've forgotten the big picture of what God's trying to do he was beginning to deliver Israel because what's going to happen now the Philistines instead of focusing their attention on Israel now they're going to be ticked off at Samson and then Samson's going to come along and start judging and taking out Philistines why because God is going to show his love to his people because he's faithful to his people don't miss that don't miss the glory of God and a love of God you see here and really you see a small window looking at the Lord Jesus you actually see that too who would do the father's will in the power of the spirit and yet he'd be perfect and then he would go die on a cross for us as sinners Samson's a type of Christ and yet Jesus would be perfect and yet Jesus would die for sinners don't miss that part because Jesus would come to deliver his people from their sins are you here have you been delivered from your sins do you need to be rescued do you need to come and experience the love of God repent and trust Christ God's love is offered freely to you come and he will save you come and he will deliver you from your sin you know what we mean for evil God according to his decree he will always mean it for good he will use our weaknesses and even our sin to fulfill his plans he'll do it he's faithful to do that where we only see this part where we only see this little aspect God's accomplishing his perfect design and plan despite our failures and weaknesses God will accomplish all his purposes displaying his glory and his love for us as chosen people he'll always do that and remember the cross is truly the epitome of weakness and failure because what looked like Jesus being totally weak and God truly failed Jesus says it's finished and God won the victory which is perfect because we're going to celebrate the Lord's Supper this morning where you get to think and actually feel and taste the victory that was on your behalf Jesus dying for your sins offering himself as our substitute and if you're here you're not a Christian these elements are not for you instead let them let them be a show or a sign to you this is what we believe is the gospel the inherent part of the gospel we believe Jesus died for us he shed his blood for us he was our substitute and we actually taste and actually feel it actually a tangible way where we see the gospel at play before us and if you're here and you come from a different church or something like that if you come from a church of like faith and practice we would prefer you're baptized by immersion you can partake the elements with us even though you say well I'm not a member here your church of like faith and practice be a part of that with us it's a display of the gospel really and of God's seemingly weakness seemingly failure but it's the power of God it's the victory of God let's take a moment let's pray preparing our hearts to take the

[36 : 15] Lord's Supper and so father we come thank you you've spoken from your word we do not take this lightly we're so grateful that despite our failures and weaknesses you use us for your glory you're going to accomplish your plan encourage us with this truth and thank you that the cross is the epitome seemingly looking like failure seemingly looking like weakness but instead it's victory the power of God it's the cross that saves us and it's trusting in Christ Jesus you save us thank you for the life of Samson thank you

Yahweh God that you're the real hero using Samson it gives us this great hope hope in Christ hope in your plan hope in your promises hope in your goodness hope in your faithfulness so I want to encourage you at this time just take a few moments give me a few moments of silence for you to ponder, think and to prepare your heart to partake of the Lord's Supper we examine our hearts because we say once again I remind myself of my love for you and how much you've loved me and your son I remind myself how much I need you

I remind myself of my desire to follow you so let those thoughts run through your head in these next few moments as of silence as we have silence and then we'll Jane will play and then we'll sing and all those things but just about a minute for you to prepare your heart as we partake of the Lord's Supper together and remember what Jesus has done to be warned let this