

And It's a Gracious Love!

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[0:00] Book of Judges, if you're, Judges chapter 13, if you are visiting with us and need a Bible or you left your cell phone at home, you can pull out the Bible, black Bible, in the chair in front of you. Start in Genesis, the first book of the Bible, and find page 191, 191. That's where you'll find Judges chapter 13. Again, Judges, book of Judges, chapter 13, seventh book in the Bible, after Joshua's Judges, chapter 13, page 191 in that black Bible. We're going to study chapter 13, and I decided to, I was going to do 14 and 15 next Sunday, and then chapter 16 on the 512.

What's that, on the 22nd? No. 512, yeah, 22nd, right? No. 512, 19th. And then, but I decided, no, I'm going to do 13, 14, 15, 16, 512, 19, 26. So every Sunday for this month, we're going to take one chapter and really study the life of Samson. So chapters 13, 14, 15, 16, and then the end of this month will be done with the book of Judges. And then I'm going to have like a, something I'm thinking about doing in October, the first Sunday of October. I might do two messages on something else, and then probably the end of October, maybe beginning of November, that's when I'll start on the Gospel of John. Although, so you're getting, this is what I'm thinking all week. I thought about maybe doing the book of Philemon, like a Sunday or two. I thought about just doing that, might be fun. Just like do Philemon, you know, just, it's like, just like one little letter, it's like, I don't know, 20 verses, I don't know. So I'm like, oh, maybe I'll just do that.

That'd be kind of fun. Just do like, and then got Philemon, you know, it'd be, I don't know, just, that'd be fun. Wouldn't you think it'd be fun? Yeah, see, it'd be fun. See, yeah, yeah, see, yeah. I want to do fun. I don't know. So I thought about that. It's just a jumping in Philemon for like a Sunday or two, and then jumping into the Gospel of John. So, I don't know. We'll see. See what happens. But that's kind of the schedule for this month. I'm going to go through all the book of Judges each Sunday, 13, 14, 15, 16, 5, 12, 19, 26, those Sundays. So, and today is Judges chapter 13. This is the only chapter in the book of Judges actually gives the birth of a judge. The only time you see this in the book of Judges.

So, it has some significance. So, Judges chapter 13, let's read, then we'll study. Now, the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of Yahweh, so that Yahweh gave them into the hands of the Philistines 40 years. And there's a certain man of Zorah of the family of Danites, whose name was Manoah. And his wife was barren and had born no children. And the angel of Yahweh appeared to the woman and said to her, Behold now, you are barren and have born no children, but you shall conceive and give birth to a son. Now, therefore, be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing. For behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.

Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome. I did not ask him where he came from, nor did he tell me his name. But he said to me, Behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son. And now you shall not drink wine, nor strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing.

[3:40] For the boy shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death. She's like, she's so excited. Verse 8, Manoah entreated Yahweh and said, O Adonai, please let the man of God whom you've sent come to us again, that he may teach us what to do for the boy who is to be born.

And God listened to the voice of Manoah. And the angel of God came to the woman as she was sitting in the field, but Manoah's husband was not with her. So the woman ran quickly and told her husband, No, that was probably in the edited version. Anyway, unedited version.

Behold, the man who came that day has appeared to me. Then Manoah arose and followed his wife. And when he came to the man, he said to him, Are you the man who spoke to the woman? He

said, I am. And Manoah said, Now, when your words come, what shall be the boy's mode of life in his vocation? So the angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, Let the woman pay attention to all that I said. She should not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor drink wine, or strong drink, or eat any unclean thing. Let her observe all that I commanded. Verse 15. Then Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh, Please let us detain you, so we may prepare a kid for you. And the angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, Though you detain me, I will not eat your bread. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to Yahweh. For Manoah did not know that he was the angel of Yahweh.

And Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh, What is your name? So when your words come, we may honor you. But the angel of Yahweh said to him, Why do you ask my name, seeing that it is wonderful? So Manoah took the kid with the grain offering and offered it on the rock to Yahweh. And he performed wonders while Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came about when the flame went up from the altar toward heaven that the angel of Yahweh ascended in the flame of the altar. When Manoah and his wife saw it, they fell on their faces to the ground.

And the angel of Yahweh appeared no more to Manoah and his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of Yahweh. So Manoah said to his wife, We will surely die, for we've seen God. But his wife, now his wife is calm. His wife said to him, If Manoah desired to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands. Nor would he have shown us all these things, nor would he have let us hear things like this at this time. Verse 24, Then the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson. And the child grew up and Yahweh blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Mahanedan between Zorah and Eshter.

[6:22] Do you know how many Cinderella movies there are? And the reason I was thinking about this was because just like two weeks ago, Amazon is now putting out another Cinderella movie. So I wonder how many Cinderella, and I mean the ones that actually follow the storyline from 1950 original version. So including that version, there's five movies.

And if you include them on Amazon, that's six. I found a lot of Cinderella movies. I personally, I mean everyone likes the 1950 version of course, but I personally like the 2015 version. You need to go look that up. And there's one aspect that just stood out to me every time I watch it. It's towards the end. It's a spoiler alert, so sorry. Cinderella was walking away from her stepmother and she turns and she says, just out of the blue, I forgive you.

You know, and your first reaction is, you should say, off with your head! You know, right? Cut her head off! I think that if I remember correctly, the stepmother ended up working in the kitchen of the palace and Cinderella never saw her again.

Forgive you! That's so undeserving! Undeserving! Undeserving of forgiveness was that set, mothers. That's why it stood out to me. There should be justice, but there's grace.

You know, how much more is God so filled with grace? Grace means undeserved or unmerited favor. And Judges is about His gracious love.

[8:16] Well, that's the title really for this chapter. It's a gracious love. His overwhelming, never-ending, relentless love for His people is a gracious love.

You don't deserve this love. You're not worthy of His love. You didn't merit His love, a Christian. His overwhelming, relentless love for His people, and remember the subtitle to Judges, He wants us to want Him chiefly, solely, and He'll discipline us.

He disciplines His people to make that happen in your life. He squeezes so that He would be our one and only love. love. So we're reminded, once again, starting here in chapter 13 with Samson, we're reminded once again of God's gracious love for us as His chosen people, elect before the foundation of the world.

We are so unworthy of His compassionate love. It's by grace. He wants us to chiefly want Him. And see, that's what this whole book of Judges has been about.

[9:42] 16 weeks we've been in this. Israel to chiefly want Him. It's a book about God disciplining His people so that they would want Him and He's showing His gracious love towards them.

And Judges, it focuses on Israel's sin, God's gracious discipline for their sin, and His deliverance from His discipline.

Discipline. Because the people are so quick to defect away from loving and focusing upon their God. As we have sung before, prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.

Yet, amid their faithlessness, God remained patiently faithful. He will always keep His promises. Always.

Being faithful, gracious, and long-suffering so that we would love, admire, and desire Him alone. You see, this is the solution.

[10:51] This is the remedy, if you would, to the struggles that we have, loving God with everything. All that we are. This is the solution to the struggles that we have with sex, with porn, with drugs, with alcohol, same-sex attraction, pleasure, food, health, diet, exercise, safety, a pain-free life, you name it.

If these things reign in our lives, then Christ is not first and foremost in your life. That's why people turn to... God will take His people and discipline us so we will say, you're my greatest joy. I have to have you like a drunkard needs his wine. That's why God is deeply involved and sovereignly at work in our lives, preserving us, disciplining us, and overruling all things to work for His good and then also our good.

And He works on all things so that I have a people who want Him above all else. That's His gracious love. And here we have with Samson, another judge, which shows this gracious love that God has for His people because 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. and realize this, Samson's not the hero of the story God is. It's not about Samson's strength. It's about God's power and strength and that He's dealing with such stubborn people, such obstinate people.

[13:00] Nothing like you people. Of course. You're not like that. Never. I'm not like that. No. No, no, no, no. It's Israel.

So foolish, God, Israel. You're so stupid. How could you act like that? You're not sophisticated like us. For Israel, when they would read Samson's story, especially this chapter about his birth, they'd be reminded of their own birth as a nation and how Yahweh rescued them from their Egyptian slavery is interesting.

The themes of evil, slavery, the beginning of deliverance and how as God birthed Samson from nothing, a barren woman, so God birthed Israel out of nothing.

He was gracious. Samson's time period was between 1 Samuel chapter 4 and also 1 Samuel chapter 7 and if you want to know more about the locations, you can go to Leon Wood's book The Distressing Days of the Judges.

He does a great job looking at all the different geographical locations. But here, we step into the story of Samson, a major judge with the most information about him, rivaled only by Gideon.

[14:38] Gideon had just a few verses less than Samson and the only judge with info about his birth. And he's the last judge in Judges who actually judged with Eli.

Eli was a judge from 1 Samuel chapter 2 to 1 Samuel chapter 4. But see, Samson was different because he worked solely by himself through great feats of strength to subdue the Philistines. And his great strength was from Yahweh so all honor and glory was to be given to Yahweh, not Samson. And Samson needed to remind himself that his strength was by God's grace not from himself.

So, as long as Samson lived, the focus was placed on him. So the Philistines were driven away from their focus on Israel to focus on Samson.

They wanted him dead. He was a nuisance. He was a pain. He was an irritation. He was annoying to them. So, that's why all that direction that lasts 20 years you'll see it's directed instead of that Israel it'll be directed right at Samson.

[15:59] It's amazing. His parents were visited by the pre-incarnate Christ. We'll talk about that more in a moment. His birth is predicted. He's uniquely dedicated to Yahweh as a lifelong Nazarite.

He experienced the power of the Spirit more than any other judge and yet you will see his life was marked by both victory and even more so tragedy.

so you can actually almost think of Samson as a mini Israel a little Israel as Israel was set apart for Yahweh so Samson was set apart for Yahweh yet we also see huge character weaknesses in Samson a mixture of both strengths and weaknesses just like there was with the nation.

One writer he put it like this this is a good quote he says quote he was separated to God Samson but could never fully come to terms with his separateness let's change it a little bit okay let's say this Israel was separated to God but could never fully come to terms with their separateness very similar as Samson went after other women and was drawn by his passions in the same way Israel went after other men drawn by her passion for idolatry and we've looked at this and you've seen it in

the book of Judges Israel played the harlot remember that just like Samson so Samson was vital yes it's true but Yahweh is the real hero of the story and God's love is the really amazing aspect in the story of Samson it's really what it's all about it was Yahweh who saved Israel through Samson and they didn't deserve it and yet he's significant and an important judge to remind Israel and to remind us of our need for the king to come not just a king but for the king to come see Samson points to our need for the true king who was faithful and fully dedicated to God he had a life of perfection obedience he was solely loving and desiring God in his word and then what did he do he died for us Samson is actually a type of Christ to come Samson should point us to Jesus Samson should point us to our need for the Messiah who's going to come in the future but but but Jesus is going to far outweigh Samson far beyond Samson he's going to be wonderful so notice how the text begins verse 1 now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of Yahweh so Yahweh gave them to the hands of the Philistines 40 years

[19:39] I actually have just three main points for you Israel sins Yahweh disciplines Yahweh loves pretty simple notice Israel sins again again again don't forget that adverb again sins they did evil in the past so Israel did it again they played the harlot again their lust for pleasure again and then Yahweh faithfully disciplines but notice this time he gave them to the hands of the Philistines for how long 40 years that's the longest oppression in any of the oppressors of the book as a matter of fact it spills over into 1st Samuel as a matter of fact it spills over into 2nd Samuel because that's when Philistines the Philistines are finally subdued not subdued by Saul they are finally subdued by David that's how long

Israel's apostasy God's judgment but notice there's no hint of them crying out to Yahweh did you see that or should I say did you not see that in other passages in other places in the book of Judges they would cry out and groan and moan but you don't have that here and yet here chapter 13 starting in verse 2 all the way to the end of chapter 16 it maps out Yahweh's gracious loving compassion towards his people he will use Samson for his glory and you know it's a good thing it's a good thing that God still helps us even when we don't ask for it isn't that a good thing you know what that's called dot dot dot grace that's his grace he loves his people even when we foolishly think we can handle situations on our own without his help he's still gracious to you isn't he this shows how much

God loves his people how much he loves his chosen ones and it shows how much he was committed to them because from Israel would come his Messiah who would save his people from their sins Israel again sins Yahweh faithfully disciplines and the third point Yahweh graciously loves and then notice this is verses 2 through 25 this whole thing of God's gracious love for his people notice how it begins first you see his gracious love God's gracious love from Manoah's wife and you'll see first that the wife is going to be set apart which means the child is going to be set apart because Israel has been set apart you see the correlations here jump in verse 2 certain men of Zorah Danites same as Manoah his wife was barren but the angel of Yahweh and this is the pre-incarnate

Christ before Jesus took on flesh this is Jesus here appearing to the woman notice verse 3 behold now you're barren you have no children thanks for reminding me but you shall conceive and give birth to a son now therefore be careful not to drink wine strong drink before behold you shall notice something shall have a son surely happen but notice something or I should say did you not notice something or did you say notice not something you get what I mean we again see God using the obscure to display his glory we don't even know her name what's her name I don't know one of the most well known judges whose birth was recorded by Samuel I mean you can go down the streets and you can say to somebody no

Samson oh yeah didn't he have like like lots of strength he could down there anyone would know about Samson but we don't even know the name of his mama God loves to do this God loves to do this Yahweh brings his awesome loving deliverance of his people from nothing from the obscure from the nobodies he loves to do that he loves to demonstrate his great power where it looks to be with impossible odds and total failure she was barren she's a no-namer she's a nobody God loves to do that he loves to use nobodies he loves to put us at a place where we can't do anything he loves to put us at a place where we have to totally depend on him he loves to drive us to the point where you are totally helpless so you have to depend on him he'll push you to that limit you're barren thanks

[25 : 28] I know it's been like that for a few decades pal yeah but you're gonna have a son you know the birth reminds us remember of Sarah she was a 90 years old Sarah and Abraham it also similar to the angel appearing to Mary to give the news about Jesus birth which is why Samson Samson is a type of Christ Christ who would do his work in the power of the spirit only he'd be the perfect judge won't he he would die for us now go back into the text verse 4 now therefore be careful not to drink wine or strong drink nor any unclean thing for behold you shall conceive and give birth to a son and no razor shall come upon his head for the boy shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb he shall begin to deliver

Israel from the hands of the Philistines now this is called the Nazarite vow Numbers chapter 6 verse 1 through 8 Nazarite simply means dedicated or consecrated and in the book of Numbers chapter 6 verse 1 through 8 a person would volunteer to be a Nazarite dedicate themselves to God for a certain purpose a certain vow and it would be for a limited time it wouldn't be for their whole life and there would be faithful to certain outward actions not drink any form of strong drink you don't consume anything from the vine you were afraid from cutting your hair and you never come near a dead body and even don't come near anything that's dead at all so why would they do these outward actions because the outward actions displayed an inward dedication of one's life to Yahweh so Samson's whole life was display of dedication to Yahweh which is why he's a tiny Israel he's a mini Israel because Israel is supposed to be what dedicated to Yahweh consecrated you shall be holy for I'm holy which is why oh by the way his whole life was like this but the mom was supposed to observe it too while she was pregnant you need to observe this as well so you're going to show you're dedicated while you're pregnant then he's going to be his whole life so Samson's success of delivering

Israel would be in direct proportion to the degree that he continued in a Nazirah vow and with this correlation we can see why Samson is viewed as a mini Israel Israel was set apart consecrated dedicated to Yahweh as his chosen people but they abused that consecration just like Samson which you'll see next week chapter 14 already right to get the already playing the harlot so notice verse 6 and 7 the second communication of what's going to happen she's so excited she goes to her husband man I've got a period of me told me all this he recounts all the angels I'll be told her and then Azirah vowed that she would have to take it he would take she would have to take this and fulfill it while she's pregnant this is God's gracious love to Manoah's wife and notice God's gracious love for

Manoah look at verse 8 he treated the Lord and said oh Adonai please let the man of God whom you sent come to us again teach us what to do for the boys to be born probably wanted to confirm the visitor's words get more instruction for the child given this important mission vow but he didn't get it if you look at verse 12 Manoah says when the works come what shall be the boys mode of life the angel of the olive said let this one pay attention all he said she said anything that comes from the vine or drink wine or strong drink it's a third time it's recounted three times recounted the angel doesn't give him any more information that's it yet we see God's grace here how do you see God's grace displayed God listened to his prayer God listened to Manoah God didn't have to do that do you see here

[30 : 36] God's grace you know it's a good thing praise the Lord thank the Lord that he stoops down to us to listen to our weak and even many times muddled prayers and answers them that's why it's called grace you see his gracious love towards Manoah and then you see his gracious love for Manoah and his wife first both now see the pre-incarnate Christ and guess what both of them this is kind of important they didn't die when you see God like that you're probably going to die you know that's what God said but he was gracious to them notice what happens the angel of Yahweh came gives him these instructions to Manoah let us make a meal for you let's detain you so we may prepare a kid for you no

I'm not going to eat it sorry not hungry but offer burnt offering to Yahweh do that Manoah did not know he was the angel of Yahweh verse 17 Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh what's your name okay don't want to prepare a meal for you okay what's your name he wanted to give the man the proper recognition when all this stuff happened to his wife verse 18 the angel of Yahweh said to him why do you ask my name seeing it is wonderful you sure you want to know my name the word wonderful it's actually used in Psalm 139 6 and here's the idea of the word when the angel of Yahweh used the word wonderful here's the idea my name is beyond you it is so grand and amazing that you can't take it all in that's what angel of

Yahweh means by wonderful in other words you have no idea what you're asking pal you can't handle what my name is you know this is good reminder for us here's Jesus before he took on flesh appearing to Manoah and his wife together it reminds us something it reminds us that we can know God truly but we will never know him exhaustively see that's why heaven will be so wonderful heaven is not so much about a place it's about a person we will learn more and more about this amazing awesome great God and your joy will actually become sweeter more satisfying more gratifying you ever thought about that how can you have more enjoyment it's almost like there's times you can reach a level of enjoyment I can't get any more happier than this but it will and it will continue more and more can you imagine that that's what heaven that's why heaven is going to be so wonderful because you will never stop knowing about your amazing awesome gracious loving God it will just keep growing more and more and more see that's why we're called to constantly trust him he truly he baffles us which creates in us a cautious humility and yet a longing for him doesn't it well you see here verse 19 through 22 that they offer this kid and then a grain offering to Yahweh and it says in the end of verse 19 he performed wonders while Manoah and his wife looked on what wonders was he doing for verse 20 it came about when the flame went up from the altar toward heaven the angel of Yahweh ascended in the flame of the altar when Manoah's wife saw this they fell on their faces to the ground so the wonder of him going up in the flame it would be the way he would authenticate the message was from Yahweh when I'm speaking to you about this boy's gonna come from your barren womb it's really gonna happen and the way I'm gonna show I'm authenticating it by going up in this flame this wonder that I just did before you it would happen flame went up ascended into the flame they both watched this they fell on their faces notice Manoah said to his wife we shall surely die why because he knew finally realized this is the angel of Yahweh great we're dead we're gonna die we're dead we're dead we're dead we're gonna die because those in the old sense they knew if they saw God they saw God when they saw the angel of Yahweh they knew when that happened you're dead this is amazing they saw Jesus before the incarnation that's the graciousness of God so we rejoice with trembling over our great sovereign loving God we don't take him flippantly nor do we cower in fear no there's a fearful joy we have of him isn't there we have to be careful he's not the big man upstairs he's not to be trifled with one writer puts it like this quote where do we ever get the idea that the presence of God is not dangerous it is dangerous and yet praise Jesus we can come into the presence of God praise Jesus but because of Jesus we can come into the presence of God you see that here see little glimpses of that here in these few verses well notice the wife she gets she's the logical one here calm down

[36 : 49] Manoah verse 23 we shall surely die he says his wife if the Lord desired to kill us he would not have accepted a burnt offering a grain offering from our hands he would not have shown us all these things now let's hear these things at this time he won't consume us he'll preserve us because his goal is to be compassionately loving towards his people grace and notice what happens verse 24 the woman gave birth to a son named him Samson God was gracious he blessed her for her faith in Yahweh she became pregnant she had a son she named him Samson and then you see the last point underneath God's gracious love God's gracious love for Israel Yahweh blessed him verse 25 and the spirit of the Lord began to stir him and Mahanedan between Zorah and Eshtoal he was given more of the spirit of Yahweh than any other judge that Samson recorded again a type of Christ who had far surpassed Samson in every way because he would begin to deliver

Israel there's his grace praise the Lord he displays his great power not to remind us that he can destroy us but to assure us that his power will save us because his gracious loving will is to save us not to destroy us but he could but he doesn't so you see God he used this real historic event the beginning of the story of Samson to teach his people the great truth of his love for sinners by showing them his gracious compassion God is the real hero of the story and we'll see the next three weeks Samson is like a mini Israel set apart and yet so weak and yet God still shows his gracious love to his people so Samson he points to our need for the true king the true king who was faithful and fully dedicated to God a life of perfection and obedience solely loving and desiring God and his word and then dying for us that's the gospel and that's for you if you're here today you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ you need to know that God did not come to destroy you he came to save sinners come repent trust Christ he'll save you he should judge you you deserve it and so do I but he shows his gracious love in Jesus who died as a substitute resurrected from the dead repent and

trust Christ and you'll be saved his gracious will is to save do you remind it we're reminded once again of God's gracious love for us as his chosen people we're so unworthy of his compassion love gracious love or as we sang earlier what love my God let's pray what love my God so gracious and extreme that you would come and fight for me to go through hell as you hung on the cross Lord Jesus you faced hell the very wrath of God and then you went to the grave so you can raise me up so I can have relationship with you face to face it's this gospel truth I'm reminded of this gracious love that we remember we are unworthy we don't proclaim our worthiness you are worthy and yet thank you that you brought us to yourself we're adopted as your children chosen before the foundation of the world your love is like a flood at this time

I want to encourage you which is what we do each week encourage you to take this time there will be about a couple minutes of silence where you can reflect upon the passage maybe recount aspects of the gospel allow this time to fill your mind with scriptural truth fill your mind with truth ponder it mull through it be amazed at the gracious love of God in Christ which is wonderful after a couple minutes we'll sing two songs we'll pray let this time these couple minutes be a time between you and the Lord to allow yourself to fill your mind with the truth of his word and foster a passion and a love for your Savior do that now please bersoo told you let this■ and c hear you