

Just Not How You Expect It!

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[0 : 00] Let's get that Bible, which is in the black Bible in the chair in front of you. Find the book of Judges on page 192, Judges chapter 15, Judges 15.

Judges chapter 15, again page 192 in that black Bible, Judges chapter 15. We've been working through the book of Judges, it'll be 21 weeks next Sunday.

We went through already chapter 17 through 21, we did that earlier because that was actually earlier in the time of the Judges, not later. Judges chapter 15, we'll finish that next Sunday.

And Judges chapter 16, as we look at the story of Samson, the last judge in the book of Judges. So we read Judges 15 and then we'll jump in and we'll see what the Lord has to tell us this morning from His word.

But after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it came about that Samson visited his wife with the young goat and said, I will go into my wife in her room.

[1 : 11] Father, father did not let him enter. And her father said, I really thought you hated her intensely, so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister more beautiful than she?

Please, let her be yours instead. Samson then said to them, this time I shall be blameless in regard to the Philistines when I do them harm.

And Samson went and caught 300 foxes and took torches and turned them tail to tail, put one torch in the middle between the two tails. When he had set fire to the torches, he released the foxes into the standing grain of the Philistines, thus bringing up both the shocks and the standing grain, along with the vineyards and the olive groves.

And the Philistines said, who did this? And they said, Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he took his wife and gave her to his companion. So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

And Samson said to them, since you act like this, I will surely take revenge on you, but after that I will quit. And he struck them ruthlessly with a great slaughter, and he went down and lived in the cleft of the rock of Etim.

[2 : 23] Then the Philistines went up and camped in Judah and spread out in Lehi. And the men of Judah said, why have you come up against us? And they said, we've come up to bind Samson in order to do to him as he did to us.

Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etim and said to Samson, do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you've done to us?

And he said to them, as they did to me, so I've done to them. And they said to him, we have come down to bind you so that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines. And Samson said to them, swear to me that you will not kill me.

So they said to him, oh no, but we will bind you fast and give you into their hands. Yet surely we will not kill you. Then they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock. Verse 14.

When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him. And the spirit of Yahweh rushed upon him mightily so that the ropes that were on his arms were as flax that is burned with fire and his bonds dropped from his hands.

[3 : 25] And he found the fresh jawbone of a donkey. So he reached out, took it, and killed a thousand men with it. Then Samson said, with the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of a donkey, I've killed a thousand men.

That's how he sang the song. I know that. And it came about when he had finished speaking that he threw the jawbone from his hand. He named that place Ramath-Lehi.

And he became very thirsty. And he called to Yahweh and said, you've given this great deliverance by the hand of your servant, and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised? But God split the hollow place that is in Lehi so that the water came out of it.

When he drank, his strength returned and he revived. Therefore, he named it En-Hakor, which is in Lehi to this day. So he judged Israel 20 years in the days of the Philistines.

This past Wednesday, I got the opportunity to clean up a bookshelf that I had. I needed some serious help.

[4 : 28] The bookshelves were kind of falling apart, so to speak. And it was a great accomplishment. I just needed to be done. I had papers for my mom. I needed to take care of that. All this stuff, you know.

So it was a great accomplishment. So I'm so glad I got that done. So you're probably thinking, that's great, right? You think about it, you get a good accomplishment. It's great. It's a good thing. You're probably thinking well of me. Maybe.

But here's the catch. It came from my angry outburst. I became angry over something and I took the stuff and I threw it all over the floor.

Now you don't think so well of me, do you? And my wife was so gracious.

She heard what happened. She came and she's like, oh no. So she started helping me clean up the mess. And then she came over, she was rubbing my back. And I'm like, I'm sorry. She's like, hon, you're just so stressed.

[5 : 27] You've got so much you're trying to do. She's rubbing my back. And she's rubbing my head, rubbing my back. And then she found, like on clearance, like 25, 30 bucks, a huge bookcase.

It's normally like \$100. It replaced this one that was just falling apart. She got that, her and Isaiah and some of the other kids, they put it together and put all my stuff back.

It's like, oh, wow. That's so cool. Cool. Now I tell you this, not because I am in any way excusing my response.

That was a sinful response. I know. Or, I'm not telling you this, I'm telling you this not because I am in any way, shape, or form like Samson.

Or that he's acting like me. He's just, he's just getting angry, so he's acting like me. I'm not saying that. I tell you this for two reasons.

[6 : 31] One, you know I'm a sinner. None of you would probably respond that way. I did. But also, second, God will show his grace to us in very unexpected ways, doesn't he?

He does that time and time again because he's unpredictable. He does things when you least expect it, in ways that you least expect.

And he loves us that way. That overwhelming love. That never-ending love.

That relentless love. That's the theme of Judges. God's overwhelming, never-ending, relentless love for his people. And yet for the chapter for today, the title, subtitle is this.

He loves you just not how you expect it. He loves you just not how you expect him to love you.

[7 : 44] He loves you, Christian, just not how you expect him to love you. And this is odd because the world has their way how they define love.

That's not going to match up to what the Bible says and how God's going to show his love to you. God loves you, Christian, just not how you expect him to love you.

It doesn't mean God's not going to be kind. Love is kind, is generous, is self-giving, is self-sacrifice. Paul, this said on 1 Corinthians 13. But just the different ways he's going to show that, you're not going to expect it.

God loves us as his people, just not how we expect him to love us. Like the greatest way he shows his love, in the way that you least expected it, he took on flesh and died on a cross.

You didn't expect that, did you? See, we have to understand, God is never dull or boring. He'll use creative and unexpected ways to show his great love for us.

[9 : 05] And that last part, even if it means you'll suffer. Even if it means you'll have horrible days. Even if it means you'll be in pain.

He uses these creative and unexpected ways to accomplish and fulfill his purposes. And that's the great part about our God, who loves his chosen people.

God involves himself in the normal, and lots of times, muddy, murky stuff of our lives. He doesn't hesitate to be engaged.

He doesn't go, Jim's acting like an idiot. Get that guy out of here. He does the very opposite. He comes in.

Now, he does think I'm an idiot. But he comes in. And shows grace. He's personally immersed in our lives so that we would actively love him.

[10 : 24] Love him chiefly. Love him most. But he's unpredictable. He'll act in ways you least expect him to act. Because you see this with the story of Samson.

You're like, what's with this guy? I mean, he just gets you, and he starts killing people. Right? I mean, you're like, what's with this guy?

This guy has a bad temper or something like that. What's the matter with him? What's with this guy? No. Remember, 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.

Because remember, who's the real hero of the story? God is. Not Samson. If you think Samson's the hero of the story, you're wrong. He never was the hero of the story.

Look at this guy. Look at the way he lived. You want to talk about an idiot? It's so good for us to look at him and go, oh, oh, look at this guy.

[11 : 38] Oh, I just can't believe this. I would never do that. And yet we must realize that God has given us a small little picture of who Christ is going to be like.

A small, small little window. Samson is a type of Christ. Christ Jesus, who would be faithful and fully dedicated to God. He would have a life of perfection and obedience and solely loving and desiring God and his word.

And then, and then when you least expect it, he'll die for you. That's the gospel.

God does something that you least expect. Like the most unpredictable event that's ever happened in history. God took on flesh and then dies in the place of sinners and calls you to repent and trust him.

That's the gospel. And you'll have eternal life and have relationship with God. So he says, come, repent, trust me, says Jesus. You'll see and you'll experience my love.

[12 : 48] God does things so unpredictable and unexpected, doesn't he? And we'll see as we go through this chapter and then next week as well, we see every move that the Philistines made would bring disaster all because of this nuisance of a guy, Samson.

Ah! Which is what Samson would do. Samson, all the focus is gonna be put on Samson so the focus gets away off of Israel. That's how God was gonna begin to deliver his people.

How he was gonna show his love to them. A sub, sub, sub theme you can see in these chapters is the stupidity of the Philistines. They're kind of like the punchline of the joke.

Like, like the joke's on them. So, before we get into this, was Samson wrong for taking revenge like this?

You read some guys and they say yes. You read others and they say no. So which is it? Well, Samuel, who's writing this, the prophet, he doesn't tell you.

[14 : 01] He just tells you what happened. Now, should we take revenge? No. Should we respond in anger? Probably not.

So what do we see? Grace. God truly loves his people so much he'd even use this guy to achieve his purposes, to fulfill his will.

And if he uses this guy, oh, dear Christian, certainly he'll use you. Right? Just not the way you expect.

So let's look at God's creative, unexpected way, number one. Verses one through five. Verse 15, excuse me, chapter 15, verse one.

After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a young goat. Now, so mind you, remember what happened from chapter 14. He went away, wife stayed there.

[15 : 11] Now, it was the custom of the Philistines for the wife, if she gets married, to live with the family, even though she's married. I don't know why they did that. It's kind of weird, but that's what they did. It was kind of the custom. So Samson comes with flowers.

Goat. Flowers. Same thing. In that time period, it was flowers. It was a good thing. So, but guys, don't bring a goat to your wife. They'll probably know he wanted it. Comes with flowers, goat.

He says, I want to be with my wife, end of verse one. I want to go into my wife, but her father did not let him enter. Oh, Samson. Hey.

How you doing? Yeah. Yeah. About that. I thought you were gone. So, I gave her to your best man.

But hey, great news. Here's her younger sister. She's way better looking than her. You can imagine the daughter. She's like, oh, thanks a lot, dad. Can you imagine it? You're like, thanks a lot.

[16 : 13] So, why don't you have her instead? Please, please let her be yours instead, right? Verse three. Samson then said to them, this time, how shall we blame us in regard to the Philistines when I do them harm?

He was ticked off and he blamed the Philistines. Why? Because they were the ones who started this problem in the first place in chapter 14. They were the ones that brought this on. So, what does he do?

He's going to hold them responsible for what they did. Three times, he's going to just put out his anger and his revenge on the Philistines. Notice verse four.

He caught these 300, excuse me, 300 foxes or jackals. They could be jackals. By the way, catching this quantity would be extremely difficult. Samson does it with ease.

He tied the tails, put a torch between the tails, set them on fire. Sure way, they would run wild, by the way. He let them go in the fields. They set the whole land on fire.

[17 : 15] Notice the end of verse five. Burning up both the shocks and the standing grain along with the vineyards and the olive groves. You realize there's a bit of humor here. I mean, do you see it?

One writer said, quote, biting satire for what Samson did to the Philistines. That's because, we've talked about this before, God takes seriously those who oppress his people.

He'll use creative ways to stop them. He will even make sport of Israel's oppressors as a way to humiliate their oppressors and exalt himself.

That's exactly what you see here. This is humiliation. It doesn't set well with God when enemies attack his people, even if he is the one who brought it about.

Their stupidity is ridiculed in this chapter. The joke was on them and Israel and even us, we read this and almost have a good laugh.

[18 : 21] What a bunch of losers. One writer says this, quote, Yahweh makes fools of those who seek to ruin and crush his people. Mind you, don't mess with God's people because they'll come back to bite you.

And notice what happens. the vineyards are destroyed, the crops are ruined, stack grain is destroyed, everything's destroyed, a year's worth, everything's gone. There's God's creative way.

Samson's now beginning to judge Israel, beginning to deliver God's people from the oppression of the Philistines. This is this creative way, unexpected way, number one.

Notice God's creative, expected way, number two, verse six. Which is sad. Notice the Philistines, who did this? They said Samson. Once the Philistines found out who did this to their crops, so the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

This is sad. A brutal way to take out their vengeance on Samson, but they're going to regret doing that to him.

[19 : 37] notice what happens and what Samson said, verse seven. He said to them, since you act like this, I will surely take revenge on you, but after that I will quit.

And he struck them, literally it's a leg on thigh, which is a ruthless slaughter, and he went down and lived in the cleft of the rock at him. He would make them pay severely for what they did in killing his wife.

He struck them down so bad that you can see in a moment they sent a huge array of soldiers against Judah to catch him. So how is this a creative, unexpected way?

God was delivering his people by Samson. That's what he's doing in the way that you wouldn't expect it though. So now you have this part here in verse nine through 13 I was trying to figure out what's a way to describe this?

What's the opposite of creative? What's the opposite of unexpected? It's probably you could say boring. So I thought about saying Israel's boring, but I thought about putting this up here.

[20 : 48] Israel's mediocrity. Look what happens in verse nine. So he went up to camp to Judah and spread out Lehi, the men of Judah.

Hey, hey, hey, hey, what are you doing? What are you here for? Why are you here? Notice, we've come up to bind Samson in order to do to him as he did to us. They couldn't keep having this wild maverick of a clown run around messing everything up.

It would create doubt that they were ruling over Israel. They're not going to have that happen. No way. And notice what happens here. Look at verse 11. Then 3,000 men of Judah.

Did you read that? 3,000 men of Judah. You know what that tells you, right? They're just as scared of Samson as the Philistines. They're scared of him.

So they send these 3,000 men. Okay, we got 3,000. To the cleft of the rock eight times and such and such. What are you doing?

[21 : 55] What in the world are you doing? Don't you know the Philistines rule over us? Are you crazy? Are you insane? Friends, these are sad words. What do you think you're doing?

Stop it. They blamed him for bringing danger on them. What then is this that you've done to us? See, all they wanted to do was keep peace with the Philistines.

They didn't care about Samson. They accepted domination from the Philistines and so should you, Samson. And they would not dare defend him.

Oh, no. They were afraid of the repercussions. And I believe this has to be one of the top 10 funny, sorry, funny responses in the Bible.

Look at what Samson says. He said to them, as they did to me, I've done to them. Eh, just so nonchalant.

[23 : 02] I paid them back for what they did to me. What's the problem if they have a hissy fit over what I did to them? Too bad for them. Hey, relax.

Notice Jude's mission though. Verse 12, they said to him, we've come down to bind you so we may give you into the hands of the Philistines. We've come to bind you and hand you over to the enemy.

He says, well, swear to me you're not going to kill me. Oh, no, no, no. We're not going to kill you. We want them to kill you. Oh, nice. Thanks, guys. One writer says, quote, spineless wimps was Israel.

Unfortunately, Israel allowed their enemies to rule. Here they had the opportunity to follow. Oh, no way. Instead of rallying around Samson and welcoming him as the leader whom they would follow, they bounded him and then they gave him up and delivered him to the Philistines.

This is sad that they had accepted their plight. They submitted themselves to the Philistines. You know, it shows just how low Israel had gone in their sin and it shows just how low they had gone in turning away from Yahweh.

[24 : 21] They had gone so low in their sin. They had gone so low in turning away from Yahweh, they just took it as it was. Israel's mediocrity, boring.

You can even say waywardness. So God uses creative way, number one, creative way, number two. Here's the creative way, number three. Verses 14 through 20, look at what Samson does.

Least expected. And these things are happening real fast. When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him, oh that, that was not good. That probably just ticked him off even more.

Notice the spirit of Yahweh rushed upon Samson, that's what the word means, rushed upon him. He broke the bonds like they were like nothing. He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, killed a thousand Philistines of the Philistines' best guys.

Kind of reminds us of Shamgar who killed the Philistines with an ox goad, remember? Then he sang this taunting song, this taunting I'm making fun of them song.

[25 : 35] And one writer puts it like this, with the jawbone of a, and I'm not going to say the word, but it's the old word that they use for donkey. With the jawbone of a donkey, I piled them in a mass.

With the jawbone of a, I piled them in a mass. It's kind of, he's making fun of them. He's taunting them. Because it's interesting here, the word for heap and the word for donkey are actually spelled the same in the Hebrew.

Hebrew. Throws the jawbone and names it Jawbone Hill, Ramoth Lehi. That's what that means. I mean, can you imagine with one swoop killed a thousand men, sang a song, threw the jawbone, named it, but this was how Yahweh used Samson to begin to deliver Israel when they least expected it.

By the way, watch out for Yahweh's spirit rushing upon you. Now, you're not going to go kill a thousand people, at least you probably shouldn't.

But think about it, if Samson could kill a thousand men with a donkey's jawbone, what about us? You know, have we lost sight of Yahweh's power, his love for us as his people?

[26 : 55] Have we lost sight of that, saying no to our flesh? Saying no to sin? Saying no to the world system? Resisting the devil, he will flee? I mean, we're Christians, aren't we?

Don't we have the Spirit of God? The same Spirit who rushed upon Samson lives inside of you, Christian, and yet you live a life that's so defeated. What's wrong with us? Notice what happens in verse 18.

He became thirsty. Call to Yahweh. You've given the straight deliverance by the hand of your servant. Shall I now die of thirst? Was Samson being rude and demanding of Yahweh?

Maybe. I mean, he did acknowledge he was Yahweh's servant, right? He did acknowledge it was Yahweh who delivered them, right? And he did acknowledge that he needed water from Yahweh, right?

So he acknowledged his dependence. He knew God was working through him. Maybe he was a servant of Yahweh at his convenience. It's hard to tell. But notice the point of the passage.

[28 : 09] Verse 19. But God split the hollow place that is in Lehi so that water came out of it. When he drank, his strength returned, he revived. God miraculously, graciously, miraculously gave him water.

And it shot out. And if you know your Old Testament, it would bring up in your head, oh wait, I remember something like that happened before.

God provided for Israel, his people in the desert, remember? Oh, Exodus 17. Oh yeah. Numbers chapter 20. Oh yeah. God provides for his people.

He does. That's his grace. His mercy. Not because of Samson. He's not the hero.

But because of God. He's the real hero. God did this for Samson. Calls it Caller's Spring. Notice verse 20.

[29 : 13] So he judged Israel 20 years in the days of the Philistines. Samson showed, excuse me, Yahweh showed Samson as well as all Israel that he was using Samson to judge his people.

Or at least beginning to judge them. Learn and understand. When we read this, we're taught in the New Testament, Paul says, these are written for our instruction to teach us so we would learn.

What are we learning? Here's God's love for his people in ways that we would least expect it. Israel did not expect this. They were clueless.

God is never dull or boring. He'll use creative and unexpected ways to show his great love for us even if it means you'll suffer. Even if it means you'll be in pain.

Even if it means things aren't gonna go your way. Even if it means you respond in sin. He'll still accomplish his ways.

[30 : 26] God loves us as his people just not how we expect him to love us. And what's the greatest, most unpredictable, most unexpected act that God has ever done?

He actually took on flesh. And then he dies for you. He dies in your place as your substitute. All your sin is placed on him.

So when you trust Christ on Christ alone, he saves you. He changes you. you experience his love. How unexpected.

Yes, Christian, God loves you just not how you expect him to love you. As you go through this week, as events happen and things take place in your life, things with a job, things in a relationship, relationship.

Okay. I mean, you gotta, you gotta, you gotta remember. Okay, God loves me in Christ. God loves me in Christ.

[31 : 36] Okay. Do I really believe that? Let's pray. Father, do we, do we really trust you in this?

and what you're doing in our lives? All these events from the small things to the big things that take place in our lives, in our world, in our country, these things happening where there's a virus, this pandemic, you're showing your love for your people.

Help us because it just can become cloudy sometimes. It's, it's not how we think you should show love to us because we think things should just be fine and dandy and peachy keen in our lives.

no, if, if Jesus suffered, we're gonna suffer too.

Remind us of that. And now forget the promise of your covenant love that's bound by the very blood of the Son of God.

[33 : 19] Jesus, we love you. Jesus, we adore you. May our response be of submission.

May our response be yielding. May our response be trusting. May our response to you be praise, thanks, and great love.

Amen. I wanna encourage you, which we do each week, just take a few moments, like a minute and a half or so.

We'll just have silence. And you can let your mind be filled with the truth of God's word, of what we've seen in his word this morning, and maybe reiterate gospel truths to yourself.

Maybe just take the time to pray for the Lord to help you to trust him. Just these few moments between you and the Lord.

[34 : 53] And after about a minute, Jane will play. She'll just play something soft. a minute. But just continue to think and ponder, take in between you and the Lord the truths of his word.

Please do that now. Please do that now. Thank you.

Thank you.