

# God's Monkey Wrench

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Father, we ask that you would make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, learning to live for your glory. We give you thanks and praise, Father, that you do not whitewash over the things that we do that are wrong, and you don't whitewash over the things that other people do that are wrong, but that your gospel clearly states that they're wrong, and your gospel clearly offers us hope of redemption in the person of your Son, Jesus Christ, that in light of the gospel and in light of what he has done for us, and in light of your Son and Holy Spirit and you yourself, Father, living within us, that we will begin to have power to live in a new way as we are fit for heaven by you.

So we ask that the Holy Spirit would lead and guide us into all truth as we read and think upon your word this morning. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated. There's lots of people in our culture, and maybe some listening in today, maybe some of you here, that as far as they're concerned, just about any spiritual path or religious way is better than Christianity.

When in movies increasingly it says it's going to be biblical, it means usually that there's going to be lots of chaos, destruction, and death. And for many of us and many of our hearts, when we look at the Bible, we see how people can see that.

I have to confess to you that this time that of me preaching through Samson last week and this week and next week, it's the first time in my ordained ministry that in the sermons I've preached through Samson.

[ 1 : 5 9 ] And it's never part of the old lectionary. And I have to confess, I sort of, you know, maybe if I go back, if I was able to go back in time, I'd be able to hear some of the sermons in Sunday school and books and all in a different way.

But it seems to me as if whenever I heard the Old Testament being preached, it usually was sort of in the form of Pilgrim's Progress, you know, where there's each person represents a certain type of a character.

And they were able to get very, very good moral lessons out of it or very good practical help out of it. But I don't know, maybe it's partially that my mind is just wired the wrong way or the right way. I would read these stories and I couldn't, for the life of me, figure out how I could get a positive moral out of it. And, you know, let's just be honest. What we're going to do is we're going to have an honest looking at the story of Samson.

And if we're honest, you cannot get good morals out of a guy who decides to rip off 30 people. When his plan is failed, he murders 30 people and robs from them.

[ 3 : 0 4 ] And it just gets, it goes downhill from there. That's not the bottom of the hill. It keeps going downhill after that. So let's turn in the Bible. We're going to look at the story ourselves. Maybe some of you as well have had fears about how to look at the Bible and the Old Testament and what God is really like and how he reveals himself.

And we're going to look at this ancient story. And just in terms of the context, and by the way, last week I shared that if you were dividing these, this talks about Samson in three bits, last week could have been the birth of Samson.

This week could have been Samson's battles. And I couldn't think of a word that began with B for the last bit. And somebody emailed me, Andrea Burrell. And next week it's Samson brings down the house.

So there's three Bs there. Brings down the house. Anyway, so what happened last week is we're now in the, Samson is the last of the 12 judges who's recorded in the book of Judges.

The time of period between Israel entering the promised land and the beginning of the kingship. And it's a time of great chaos and great unfaithfulness in Israel.

[ 4 : 13 ] And Samson is born as a judge. The people of Israel are under the oppression of this pagan seafaring nation that has occupied part of Canaan named the Philistines. And Israel is under their dominion.

And a very miraculous and wonderful story happens. The angel of the Lord appears to a woman who's never been able to have children. And the angel of the Lord says, good news. In a sense, you're going to have a baby.

He's going to be a boy. And God is going to use this baby boy to be the beginning by which I deliver my people Israel from the Philistines. And then he says this boy is to be so special.

He is to live a very special life right from birth. He used to have the vow of a Nazarite right from birth. And in fact, it even goes into the womb. He has to have this vow, a special time of being set aside to God.

And then there's a spectacular miracle that goes along with it so the husband, Minoah, and his wife understand what's going on. And then the very last words of chapter 13 is that the Spirit of God begins to move in Samson.

[ 5 : 13 ] And so, you know, especially for Christians, you're reading this and now you're prepared for this to be a really remarkable baby. Like it's hard for a Christian to read this story and not think of John the Baptist, not think of Jesus, like not think of just it's going to be a remarkable baby.

And now the story continues. And here's how chapter 14 begins. Samson went down to Timnah and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines.

Then he came up and told his father and mother, I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah. Now get her for me as my wife. But his father and mother said to him, Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives or among all our people that you must go and take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?

But Samson said to his father, Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes. And just before I read the last verse, just pause here for a second. Some of you, maybe you're having a season right now where you're having great disappointment with God.

But it's a very, very common thing, struggling with disappointment with God. And right off the bat, Samson's parents must have a great disappointment with God. And even those of us who are readers, there's a bit of a disappointment about what happens here.

[ 6 : 35 ] So here we have this special baby. And this special baby is going to be the one to begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. And the first thing we see as Samson as an adult is not that he's going to deliver Israel from the Philistines, but he wants to marry them.

Like that's the opposite. And the other thing in here, and it's just a little bit of an aside, but it's an important thing. The Bible doesn't teach ethnic or racial prejudice.

In fact, it's only the Bible, out of all of the religious and intellectual texts in the world, there's no spiritual or religious tradition more than the Christian faith, which completely and utterly at a very deep level condemns all prejudice and all racism because it teaches that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God.

Every man and every woman equally created in the image and likeness of God. It roots our dignity at a very, very fundamental level. This phrase about Samson's parents saying about them being uncircumcised, it's a pointer to, which I don't have time to go into, but I just want to sort of highlight it, is circumcision was a sign that you were under the God's covenant, that you were his covenant people.

And non-Jews could be under the covenant by acknowledging the Lord as their Lord. Moses' wife wasn't Jewish.

[ 8 : 04 ] So the issue isn't somehow that they're different. Like, it wouldn't be as if, you know, I grew up Irish and my dad and mom say, never marry a Polish person or something like that, you know, or never marry a person who's French-Canadian or anything like that.

No, it's not ethnic. The circumcision thing is this little bit of a reminder in the text that God desires his covenant people to marry other people of the covenant.

It's in the New Testament, it says don't be unequally yoked. It's a whole other topic that, in a sense, a Christian should just marry another Christian. I just want to highlight it, but I don't want to go any further.

You can ask me about it during the break. But the main thing that's going on here is that Samson isn't doing all what he seems to be supposed to be doing. And then it says his father and his mother, verse 4, did not know that it was from the Lord, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines.

At that time, the Philistines ruled over Israel. We're reminded that the Philistines rule over Israel.

And you'll notice that just before this, it said Samson says that this woman is right in my eyes.

[9:10] And this idea is going to be emphasized again by Samson. Look at verse 5. Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and they came to the vineyards of Timnah.

And behold, a young lion came toward him roaring. And in the original language, it's a special word for roaring. It's the word that signals that the lion is about to attack.

It's not like a dog or something or an animal making noises to scare you away. It's a word that means the lion is about to attack. Verse 6 said, And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat.

But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. Then he went and talked with the woman. Once again, she was right in Samson's eyes. Now just sort of pause here for a second. We're going to talk about this a little bit more in a moment.

But you can just well imagine, for many people reading this text, they wonder, Why on earth would the Holy Spirit come upon Samson, and he does something? Like, why doesn't he just catch the lion and tie it up?

[10:20] Like, why doesn't he catch the lion and take it somewhere else? Like, why does he do something so unbelievably violent to the lion? Like, what is it that God's Holy Spirit would come upon Samson, and he would do something like this?

I mean, that would be a very, very common thing. I mean, some of you have seen the picture of the Vegans protesting against Joe Biden. And Joe Biden's wife, you know, jumping and pushing them off the stage.

I mean, like for many people in our culture, why would this Holy Spirit do that? Or allow Samson to do that? And that's a bit of a puzzle, which is only going to get deeper as we see the next two times that the Holy Spirit rushes upon Samson's life.

Well, what happens next? Remember, he doesn't tell his mom and dad what happened. Verse 8. So they've gone down to Timnah. They had some talk with the family about Samson marrying the woman.

They've gone back, and now they're going back again. Verse 8. After some days, Samson returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and behold, there was, in the original language, it actually says a community of bees in the body of the lion and honey.

[11:29] There's been a bit of a miracle. Either it's been so long that the carcass is now, there's no guts or anything, it's just bones, just a skeleton and a bit of fur, and so the bees could make a hive there.

It's either been so long that there's been some type of miraculous thing. It doesn't tell us. It just is. At this point in time, it's not a carcass. It's, I mean, it's not like all bloody and everything like that. It's just the bones, and there's the bees there. And in verse 9, Samson scraped it out into his hands, some of the honey, and went on eating as he went, and he came to his father and mother and gave some to them.

I think this is really gross, but then there you go. And they ate, but he did not tell them that he had scraped the honey from the carcass of the lion. And now we come, I think, to the bit that Anya read. Verse 10. They go down, and here we discover this. His father went down to the woman, and Samson prepared a feast there, for so the young men used to do.

[12:28] As soon as the people saw him, they brought 30 companions to be with him. And just sort of to pause here for a second, there's a bit of a subtext about this in the original language.

It isn't as if the families looked around and said, let's pick 30 young guys. I think, you know, I think Samson would like to hang out with you, and I think Samson would like to hang out with you, and I think he'd like to hang out with you. No, the way to understand it is, it's military-aged males who are probably in military service, who've been taken away from military service to watch Samson. Those are the 30 companions. Okay? So they're obviously a bit concerned about Samson for whatever reason, but they pick these 30 military-aged males.

In fact, it's like picking 30 corporals, and they're going to be Samson's companions. So Samson, verse 12, said to them, let me now put a riddle to you.

If you can tell me what it is within the seven days of the feast and find it out, then I will give you 30 linen garments and 30 changes of clothes. But if you cannot tell me what it is, if you cannot tell me what it is, then you shall give me 30 linen garments and 30 changes of clothes.

[13:47] And they said to him, put your riddle that we may hear it. And he said to them, out of the eater came something to eat, out of the strong came something sweet. And in three days they could not solve the riddle.

Now just pause here. This is not a good character trait of Samson. Samson's trying to rip them off. Very, very simply. He would be as if, I don't know, you know, like in Back to the Future.

And when's in Back to the Future, he knows who's going to win the series games and stuff like that. So he thinks he has it all rigged. He has something that they'll never guess in a million years.

And this is a chance to rip them off. That's what he's doing. And so he poses it and he's probably pretty happy with himself. But they don't take very kindly to it.

Look at verse 15. In verse 15, on the fourth day, they, that is the 30 military-aged young men, the 30 corporals, said to Samson's wife, entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is.

[14:51] Listen to this. Lest we burn you and your father's house with fire. So, nobody in this story is going to look good. Like, it's not as if you go back and say, Samson was such a terrible man.

Those Philistines were so good. No. just because they're going to lose a suit each, they threaten to burn her and her family to death.

That's what they threaten. So, verse 16, and Samson's wife wept over Samson and said, you only hate me.

You do not love me. You have put a riddle to my people and you have not told me what it is. And he said to her, behold, I have not told my father nor my mother and shall I tell you?

As if a husband should tell his wife things. Anyway, she wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted. On the seventh day he told her because she basically wore him down.

[15:56] Then she told the riddle to her people. Verse 18, and the men of the city said to Samson on the seventh day before the sun went down, what is sweeter than honey?

What is stronger than a lion? Samson knows what's happened. He said to them, if you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle.

So what does Samson do? And this is going to be even made more terrible because the Holy Spirit comes upon Samson.

Look what happens. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him and he went down to Ashkelon and struck down thirty men of the town and took their spoil and gave the garment to those who had told the riddle.

To those who had told the riddle. In hot anger he went back to his father's house and Samson's wife was given to his companions who had been his best man. So Samson goes to another city, murders thirty men, steals their stuff, goes back, gives the stuff, and walks away angry.

[17:14] You can see why for many years I had problems preaching on this. Like, how do you find a good moral lesson out of this?

Like, there's no good moral lesson in this. And things are going to get worse before they get better. In fact, they just keep getting worse. And once again, it's even made harder because it's the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Samson.

Like, why doesn't the Spirit of the Lord come upon Samson and make him calm? Like, why doesn't it say that he could just, you know, laugh it all off or negotiate or do something?

But why is it that the Spirit of the Lord comes and then he goes and murders thirty people? Well, by the way, what we're going to see here in these next verses for those of you who are dads who have more than one daughter, you're going to see what you never say to somebody else.

Okay? This isn't go thou and do likewise but this is a lesson of what you never, ever, ever say.

Chapter 15, verse 1. After some days at the time of the wheat harvest, so Samson thinks things have cooled down, Samson went to visit his wife with a young goat and he said, I will go into my wife in the chamber but her father would not allow him to go in and her father said, I really thought you utterly hated her so I gave her to your companion.

[18:46] Here's the line, is not her younger sister more beautiful than she? That's not the thing a dad should ever say about one of his daughters, period.

Same thing with sons. If you have two sons, don't say, oh, bye. Take the other son, he's way better looking or way smarter or way anything. Like, you just don't say this. But anyway, that's what the dad said, okay?

That's on top of the fact that it's just, the Bible isn't saying that it's alright to treat women like property. It's recording a story of people who from beginning to end are deeply morally and spiritually confused.

the whole story is about people's morals, religion, spirituality is all messed up. It's messed up to messed up to messed up to messed up.

Verse 3, and Samson said to her, this time I shall be innocent in regard to the Philistines when I do them harm. So what does Samson do? And by the way, lots of this story is just so much like real life.

[ 19 : 54 ] Verse 4, so Samson went and caught 300 foxes, it's really jackals, and took torches and he turned them tail to tail and put a torch between each pair of tails and when he had set fire to the torches he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines.

Here's the kicker, and set fire to the stack grain and the standing grain as well as the olive orchards. So what you see here is if you go and watch a superhero movie or a superhero cartoon, what you're seeing here is the superhero villain who when his will is frustrated wreaks havoc massively, way out of proportion of what's happened.

Basically what he does is he burns all of their standing grain, all of their grain reserves and all of their olive orchards, two of their most important crops, all completely and utterly demolished by Samson in his anger.

So how do the Philistines respond? You see, this is a story where it just goes back and their response, the Philistines' response is completely and utterly incommensurate with what's happened and completely horrible.

Verse 6, then the Philistines said, who has done this? And they said, Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because the dad has taken Samson's wife and given her to Samson's companion.

[ 21 : 17 ] And the Philistines came and burned her and her father with fire. In other words, they picked a time when the whole family was in the building, they locked the doors and burned the house down on them, burning them to death.

It's completely and utterly horrific. But just like in politics, just like in economics, just like with neighbors, just like with nations, just like with gangs, just like with husbands and wives or dads and sons or moms and daughters, when you get into this cycle of just vengeance upon vengeance upon vengeance upon vengeance, verse 7, Samson said to them, if this is what you do, I swear I will be avenged on you and after that I will quit.

That's the motto of all escalating violence. Right? I'm going to get them, that'll be it. But the person you get, they say, one moment, that's not it, I'm going to get you.

And then you say, whoa, that's not over and you get you and it just gets more and more and more and more and more out of control. And in verse 8, the English standard version is being coy.

When it says he struck them hip and thigh with great blow, with a great blow, it meant he kills them. I don't know if it's the 30 military-aged males, but whatever it is, he kills them. And after he kills them, he went and stayed in the cleft of the rock and eat them.

[ 22 : 57 ] So is it over? Samson thinks it's over, it's not over. What Happens Next? Well, What Happens Next is very, very, very interesting and actually, even though I've read this story many times, it was only when I studied it very closely that I realized that what happens next is actually part of helping to understand what on earth is going on in the whole story and why something so crazy would actually be in the Bible.

Verse 9, then the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah and made a raid on Lehi. In other words, basically what they do is they mobilize a significant armed force and they go and invade. I mean, they already rule all of Judah. But they bring their armed forces. So it would be as if in Canada, you know, all of Canada is under our government and as if they mobilize the armed forces in Petawawa and they bring them down into Ottawa to deal with a problem.

They mobilize the armed forces and that's what the Philistines do. They mobilize part of their armed forces and they bring them into the area they still control but close to where where there's a majority Jewish population and in verse 10 and the men of Judah said, like just like all of a sudden we look out the door today and all of a sudden there's all these armed forces guys all around us and they have their guns out like we go out and say like what's going on?

Right? Like what? Like what are you doing here? What? Like are there terrorists hiding here or something? And that's exactly how the Jewish people respond to the Philistines and the men of Judah said in verse 10 why have you come up against us?

[ 24 : 31 ] It's very obvious in the original language like they're puzzled like what are you doing here? And the Philistine army says we have come up to bind Samson to do to him as he did to us.

Now remember in all the way through the book of Judges if you've read it from beginning to end now that God raises up a judge and usually at some point in time the judge calls forth the army the people get emboldened the spirit of the Lord comes upon the judge the Jewish people unite around the judge that God has raised up and they go and they fight the Philistines so here we have this situation the Philistine army is there in Jewish majority territory and what do the Jewish people say? The Jewish people in effect say okay listen we'll handle this you just camp here have a good time it's a nice day to have a camp like just camp just wait here we'll mobilize our forces and we'll get Samson for you that's what happens verse 11 then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Edom and said to Samson and here in the original language as well like they're puzzled like Samson do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us?

It's not a complaining point okay would be as if like it would be as if the soldiers have gone to Toronto and the people say don't you know that Trudeau won?

like why are you here? like we all voted for Trudeau like what's the problem like to Samson like our guys like our guys are the rulers Samson what's going on?

[ 26 : 10 ] do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is then that this you have done to us and he said that to them still in verse 11 as they did to me so I have done to them so they make a deal with Samson and the deal is they're still going to take him back to the Philistines and look at this verse 12 they said to him we have come down to bind you that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines and Samson said to them swear to me that you will not attack me yourselves they said to him no we will only bind you and give you into their hands we will surely not kill you so they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock in verse 14 once again we have this odd experience of the spirit of the Lord the third time the spirit of the Lord comes with power and does the spirit of the Lord come with power to make the Philistines say we're all wrong listen we have to stop this cycle of vengeance does the spirit of the Lord come upon Samson giving great words of wisdom what happens is this verse 14 when they came to Lehi the Philistines came shouting to meet him then the spirit of the Lord rushed upon him and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire and his bonds melted off his hands and he found the fresh jawbone of a donkey and put out his hand and took it and with it as a weapon he struck one thousand Philistine men and the struck here means he kills them and Samson said with the jawbone of a donkey heaps upon heaps with the jawbone of a donkey have I struck down a thousand men and as soon as he had finished speaking he threw away the jawbone out of his hand and that place was called Ramath

Lehi so what's going on with this story I'm going to ask you a very very just a question to help us to try to figure out a little bit about what's going on in this story and why this story actually is pointing to something very wise and something which is unbelievably important for every single person to understand if they are to be made right with God first question are there any Philistines living in Ottawa today no are there Philistines in the streets of New York City no are there Jewish people in Ottawa today yes just this week I talked to an Orthodox Jewish man who's a regular one of my coffee shops we had a nice pleasant conversation are there Jewish people on the streets of New York City yes there's lots of them it's actually a very large Jewish population where are the Philistines today they don't exist there's no

Philistines left but there are Jewish people one of the keys to understanding what's going on in this story is to actually go back to chapter 14 verse 4 chapter 14 verse 4 and here we have this very very odd line his father and mother did not know that it was from the Lord this is Samson wanting to marry a Timnite a Philistine woman for God was seeking opportunity against the Philistines you see this is what has happened we discover that the Philistines if you look at the whole story that for 40 years the Philistines had ruled Israel if you go back and you read the story out of all of the major judges not the minor one out of all the major judges this is the only story where none of the Jewish people call out to God to deliver them that doesn't happen you know why they like having the Philistines as the rulers they're becoming Philistines it is that phenomenon

I don't know if it's true but it's in management books of the frog and the kettle at first it felt a bit uncomfortable but the Philistines were a more advanced civilization than the Jewish people and it felt funny having them over them but after a while they grew to like the Philistines they liked their gods they liked the way they lived they liked the way they ran the economy they liked the way they ran their military they liked their religion they liked their spirituality and so after a time after 40 years of Philistine rule they've come to the point in time where they can be completely and utterly puzzled as to why the Philistines would come and ever bring an army against them because we're buddies we're buddies they don't want to be delivered from the Philistines they want to become more like the Philistines and if God does not throw a monkey wrench into the situation there will be no Israel and that means there will be no

King David and there will be no Joseph and Mary and there will be no Jesus because Israel will become Philistine and there are no Philistines in the streets of Ottawa or of Toronto or of New York City but there still are Jewish people God does something if God does not act there will be no Israel now here's another problem because some of you are wondering okay but that's all weird just this week I was sitting in a coffee shop and there happened to be an older woman talking to a younger woman right beside me and the older woman was obviously giving advice to the younger woman and the older woman gave very very very very good advice it's the type of advice we've probably given to other people many times in our lives she said to the younger woman I didn't hear what it was I just heard this phrase but I guess the younger woman was telling her the different issues and the older woman says to her you've got to learn to think outside the box isn't that the type of advice we give people you've got yourself trapped in a box you've got to learn how to think outside the box and if you think outside the box you're going to be able to solve the problem now here's the problem for us why is it good advice for us to tell a human being to think outside the box but why is it not good for God to think outside the box huh but why well you see here's what happens for us as human beings remember a couple of weeks ago some of you might or might not remember

[ 32 : 30 ] I said that the fundamental way that human beings sort of organize their mental universe about morals and right and wrong is that we drift into this is that we divide the world into good people and bad people and most religions and spiritualities keep leaning into this to making the world into good people and bad people a lot of what we call spirituality North America basically creates a world where like 95% of us are good and only 5% or maybe 99% but that evil 1% is bad but we move into thinking of people being basically the world is divided between good people and bad people and one of the things is if you actually read the Bible from cover to cover what you discover is that the Bible rejects the idea of the world being divided between good people and bad people and that the Bible teaches that the division between good and bad runs down the center of every single human being the world isn't divided between good people and bad people but we naturally think even when we come to even though we can read that and know that that that's what happens for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God yet we because we sort of run to that default part of our human brain we read a story and we start to think that the world is divided between good people and bad people and in a world where there's good people and bad people who are the only people that God can work through good people right it's the only way he can work we put God in a box because then we have to say whoa whoa whoa whoa whoa whoa whoa one moment here does that mean that the only way that

God can do anything in the world is wait for good people to decide to do it and then he can come along and help them you see this is the beginning of unbelievably good news Israel doesn't want to be delivered Israel wants to become Philistine and God throws a monkey wrench right into the center of Israel's plans and completely and utterly screws it up and the name of the monkey wrench is Samson by the end of the story Israel and the Philistines are separate by the end of chapter 16 they're separate

Israel is still deeply corrupt you see the fact the matter is the fact the matter is is that the Lord is saving Israel despite Samson and despite Israel the Lord is saving Israel despite Israel he's saving Israel despite Samson it's a beyond this the topic of this sermon but only the Christian worldview helps us to understand how it is that God can be completely and utterly free and Samson is completely and utterly free and at the same time that Samson is completely and utterly free like you go back and you look at it later on you look at verse three and verse seven Samson's doing what is right in my eyes but at the same time that Samson is doing what is right in my eyes God is doing what is right for Israel and for you and me at a very very very deep level the Lord saving Israel

despite Samson and despite

Israel and here's the truth the Lord saves me despite me and the Lord saves you despite you despite you he saves you while we were still sinners Christ came while we were dead Christ comes while we were his enemies Christ comes when we had all turned our back on him Christ comes for all he comes despite us to save us sometimes some of the monkey wrenches in our lives is God trying to get our attention so that we will return to him you see at no point in time in the book does it say that what Samson done is right the Bible very clearly teaches that the end never justifies the means it's one of the ways that the biblical worldview is completely different from almost all moral reasoning in mainstream Canadian thought because in the very heart of all mainstream Canadian thought the end justifies the means in the Bible the end never justifies the means never justifies the means so what is God doing God isn't defensive he's not passive he's not waiting until Israel decides they want to seek him they're sinking into a place where they will they don't want that at all but God still loves them so he invades he invades you see true grace saving grace invades evil against evil for the true good of the person cheap grace God whitewashes whitewashes over evil baptizes evil and tells you it's all fine but true grace saving grace costly grace invades evil and deals with evil for the true ultimate good and so what we see here is that God uses the freedom of [ 38 : 40 ] Samson to begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines and it points to this profound invasion against our will that happens in the person of Jesus I mean if you go back and read the Gospels it's quite remarkable it's very clear that his own do not receive him the people in a sense just like in Samson's case the people who should rejoice that God has brought a true and greater Samson to come to deliver not just Israel but all people Philistines and Romans and Irish and Polish and French and African and Chinese and all people that God in the person of Jesus God invades the fallen world God comes from outside the created order into the order that he himself created and he comes from outside into the created order and he comes when nobody's seeking him when nobody wants a savior like that and he comes despite our sin and he comes and bears our sin and it's all an invasion that comes from the loving heart of God for our true good when our backs were turned to him our fists were raised to him our ears were closed to him our mind and heart was hardened to him our will was completely rock solid I will never bow to him in such a situation

Jesus comes to save we'll talk about it more next week but in Samson you see all the sin of Israel but it's not redemptive in Jesus you see all the sin of the world laid on him and at the heart of the invasion is that he invades to be both sinless but bear the sin of the world your sin and mine for your good and mine please stand bow our heads in prayer for some of us some of us our outward lives look very ordered but our inward lives are maybe just as completely and utterly chaotic and filled with vengeance and anger as we see in Samson and if you are here in this situation today then this is a profoundly important story for you because you see in God's word that God knows deeply your internal chaos and anger and cycles of vengeance and not letting go and God sees it at a very deep level because it's in his word and some of you might even be it's you've hidden it from others and you've hidden it from us but you're in fact not just your inner life but your outer life is consumed with chaos and self-centeredness and vengeance and this shows that God understands it and for all of us in different ways the word will hit us in different ways we'll maybe come face to face with how we're putting God in a box and our disappointments come because not because God is ever disappointing in himself or the gospel is ever disappointing but because our boxes our boxes are entrapping us our boxes are really that pot of water and we are the frog and the kettle is the water's gotten warmer and warmer and we don't realize that we're so locked in our box that we don't see the glory of the goodness and the love of God and his perfect providence and sovereignty and our freedom and his love to invade into evil for our good and we're so trapped in our boxes we're disappointed whatever it is the Lord is doing your heart there is no better time than now to thank him for invading and for those of us who are Christians that he invaded me that he invaded you let's pray father thank you that you are not passive that you are not on the defensive we thank you that you look with love we thank you that you throw monkey wrenches into evil we thank you father that you looked in love and invaded when we had our backs turned to you our hearts away from you our wills away from you our minds away from you we didn't think it would be possible that you could be God that Jesus could be king that he could be our savior not only did we not think it was possible but we didn't even want it to be true and and in in that midst still you sent your son to die for us and and reveal your love and your heart and your goodness and your greatness and your glory at the same time as dying to do all that had to be

done to reconcile us to you father we thank you for Jesus we ask father that you make us people who are gripped by the gospel the wonder of who it is that Jesus is and what you have done for us so unbidden and so undeserving father grip us with the truth and wonder of the gospel and help us father that that might be our life that might be our north star that might be the grant the air we breathe the food we eat the water we drink the place upon which we stand the lens by which we see the world and so be used by you in the power of your Holy Spirit to bear the fruit of the Spirit and to make a difference in the chaos and the vengeance and the craziness of the world for the good of people the salvation of souls and your great glory and all God's people said amen you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you