

Power Failure

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[0:00] Judges 13. Judges 13.

It's one of my great fears when I'm rounding up, preparing my notes for the message with! just minutes to spare, as you do.

I'm just about to print them out at 9.25am before I head off to get here, late as usual in the prayer meeting. Right before I head off to leave, what are my greatest fears?

Before I press print is there will be a power outage, there will be a power outage and I might be able to print my sermon notes. My printing won't work and I'll lose my sermon.

What a disaster that would be if I didn't have my sermon notes to help me keep on track. I'd end up like some of these people would get up here and go on for ages. No, I need these sermon notes to keep me on track.

[1:01] And a power outage is a big problem isn't it? It's a big problem having a power outage. Have you ever had a power outage? A power failure. Sometimes it can happen at awkward times.

I think there was one time I was in the shower and there was a power outage. There's awkward times to have power outages. Power failure. What about a spiritual power failure?

A spiritual power failure. I want to talk about one of the great dangers that we face as a church, as individual Christians. A loss of power.

We can lose our power. Our spiritual power can be lost. How does this happen? How can we lose power? How can we restore the power?

Where can we find the power supply? How does a power shortage happen?

[1:59] We see this problem of powerlessness that many believers face today. graphically illustrated in the living example of a man called Samson.

Be careful lest you also suffer the Samson syndrome. Power failure.

Samson was one who lost the power. Here he was, Samson. The strongest man that ever lived, you could say.

In the time of his strength, he was a virtual one-man army. Samson. He defied armies and he triumphed. There was a time when God's power was very evident in Samson's life.

Through many of his exploits, battling both man and beast. Triumphant over armies that were against him. We first meet Samson in Judges 13.24.

[3:06] Judges 13.24. The context is his birth was a miracle. It seemed like his mother was past the age of bearing children.

And it says that his parents called him Samson. Samson. Some have said it can mean minister or servant. It says, verse 24, the child grew and the Lord blessed him.

And verse 25, it says, the spirit of the Lord began to move him. Samson, he was spirit empowered and he was separated unto God as God's own, as God's own special man for God's own special work.

Samson, we read how there was something special about him. His hair was a symbol of the promise that was made.

Samson was a symbol of his dedication as a Nazarite, as a man of God. It was a sign of that promise of dedication, of separation unto God.

[4:27] Samson was a problem to the Philistines. The godless Philistines feared Samson. When Samson came up on the scene, the Philistines got pretty scared.

Samson was, it seemed, unconquerable. Samson had amazing strength.

One time he tore the gates of the city along with their posts and carried them from Gaza to Hebron, a distance of at least 20 miles.

Imagine that. Not just a little door like one of these doors here. Not like these cheap and nasty doors that you get down at the Boeings that are hollow.

We heard that when our church doors got smashed one day and they just about got in because they were so weak. But these are the gates of the city.

[5:28] Big bulky gates along with the doorposts, he carried them some 20 miles. But Samson, for all his power, Samson, as much as he was a problem to the Philistines, Samson had a problem.

Samson had a problem. He had a weakness. This man, this man who carried the city gates 20 odd miles. This man, this slew a thousand with an unlikely weapon.

The jawbone of a donkey. One thousand fell as he slung it around. God's great strong man.

A ladies man, you could say. Samson. Yet, for all his power, one woman whipped him. One woman whipped Samson. Her name was Delilah.

It's been said that her name, Delilah, it means a flirt, desire or lustful. You could see that in her ways.

[6:31] We can learn some lessons from Samson. Lessons about power failure. Lessons from Samson. Number one.

Number one. The powerless believer lacks discernment. The powerless believer lacks discernment. This is one of the big problems in the church world today.

People are madly following after all kinds of fads without stopping to think. Is it of God? Or is it not of God?

If it's not of God, we certainly ought not. To partake of it. Samson, it seemed like he didn't have that discernment. He went to some places he had no business going.

In Judges 14 verse 5, he went down to the vineyard. What would a Nazarite who is supposed to abstain from drink, go down to the vineyard?

[7:35] Doesn't compute, does it? He mixed with people he shouldn't have been mixing with. Samson, hanging around with the Philistines, the heathen, pagan, God rejecters of the day.

Samson lacked discernment big time. And this is where Samson's problems just started. Where the problem of powerlessness began for Samson.

He disobeyed God. Joining up and marrying. No less. One of the Philistines. A heathen nation.

Although God ended up using Samson's error for God's own glory.

The Philistines wanted to overpower Samson. They saw what a problem that he was. So they started to plot against him. They wanted to find a way to trap him.

To find the secret of his power. And to take it from him. Samson is a picture of one who is worldly.

Brothers and sisters, Samson is a picture of one who is worldly.

[8:40] In other words, he acted just like the world around him. He acted just like the unbelievers that he was around about him. He went along with the spirit of the world.

No wonder the modern church is marked by powerlessness. Powerlessness. When it does this same thing. Samson did not stop and think about what he was doing.

About where he was going. Who he was hanging with. Getting close and familiar with the pagan culture. The world. Ending up marrying into it. Just joining hands with the world.

Imitating the world. When we do that, we're going to get into trouble. People, we're going to get into trouble. Church, we're going to get into trouble. When we mess with the world. Samson is a picture of one who compromised with the flesh.

He made the mistake of mixing with bad women and more than once. And he was captured to his own lusts. Early on. We don't have time to cover all the ground here.

[9:46] Read it through. From Judges 13 through. There was a time he became infatuated with the Philistine woman. He ended up marrying her against his better judgment.

She betrayed his confidence. And she ended up slain by the pagans. Then he fraternised with a prostitute at Gaza. He just would not learn the lesson.

Ultimately, he had a fatal attraction towards deceitful Delilah. Deceitful Delilah. And the Philistines offered Delilah a lucrative deal to betray Samson.

It was worth a lot of cash. And Delilah liked money more than she liked Samson. Delilah was quite happy to take the cash.

Delilah tricked Samson into revealing to her the secret of his power. Judges 16. From verse 16. You take it up at verse 16.

[10:47] And it came to pass when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him. You know, she tried a few times to trick him. But this time she got him snookered.

She said so that his soul was vexed unto death. He got sick and tired of leading her on with different ways that weren't the secret of his power. Now verse 17.

He got so sick of this that he told her all his heart. And he said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head. For I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb.

And if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me. And I shall become weak and be like any other man. Verse 18. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he has showed me all his heart.

Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her and brought money in their hands. While he slept, his hair was cut. Delilah was Samson's downfall.

[11:53] Samson played with temptation. Samson fell into a trap. He lost his power. Here is Samson. Great Samson.

Judge of Israel. Foolishly sleeping on the lap of a wicked woman. Verse 19.

And she made him sleep upon her knees. And she called for a man and she caused him to shave off the certain locks of his head. He had long hair but it was in locks.

It was braided, I suppose. And she began to afflict him and his strength went from him. His strength went from him.

The shearing off of Samson's hand was the surrender of his separation. Samson's power was gone. His promise to God was gone.

[12:49] His separation was gone. He gave it up as he was shorn of his power. Friends, we can lose the power when sin creeps in.

That's what happened. Number one. The powerless believer lacks discernment. Number two. The powerless believer lacks relationship with God.

Verse 20. And she said, Delilah said, the philist comes to me upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of sleep and said, I will go out as at other times before and shake myself. And he wished not that the Lord was departed from him.

He didn't know. He didn't realise. God had departed from him. Thought I'm going to wake and shake myself and do the. No. It was gone.

The power was gone. God was gone. Samson awakened, but he was powerless now. Samson's power was not superhuman. It was supernatural. It was God's power.

[13:55] When God left him, the power left him. God was the source of his strength. However, Samson did not know that the Lord has departed from him.

He didn't even realise it. He didn't even realise it. Why? Because he was not in close communion with God. The relationship with God had grown dim and distant.

His uncut hair was that outward sign of his Nazarite vow. By which he separated himself unto the Lord. Now, long hair is referred to in Scripture as a sign of weakness and submission.

It represented really not how Samson was strong, but how he was weak. Relying on God's strength. Spiritual power is lost because of disobedience.

Now, it's interesting in the Scriptures where it talks how long hair on a Christian wife carries the message, I'm submitting to my husband, recognising his authority over me.

[15:09] Of course, it's just a symbol. And this is not to negate. Some women may choose not to have their hair long. But in the Scriptures, it's a symbol of that submission.

It's a symbol of, I'm taking the weaker place. I'm the weaker vessel. And in Samson's case, it reflected that dependence that really and truly he had on God.

That it was God that was his strength. It wasn't his hair. His hair showed his weakness. His hair was a constant reminder that God was the real source of his strength.

Why are so many Christians powerless today? It seems like they're powerless in these days of testing times.

Why is it so? Friends, brothers and sisters, your real strength and power is the Lord. It's him. It's our God.

[16:10] Why this loss of power? Power is lost when the power lines get cut. You know, what does the enemy do when they want to invade a nation?

They cut the communication lines. They cut the power lines. They blow up the power stations. One reason we can be spiritually disempowered is when the power lines get cut.

What's that power line? It's that relationship. That relationship with God. We need to reconnect.

Reconnect. Reconnect. To restore that relationship.

That closeness with God. Restore it. Refresh it. Renew it. The powerless believer lacks discernment. Lacks relationship with God.

Thirdly, the powerless believer will lose his separation. Samson lost his separation. He neglected it. The hair was just a symbol of that dedication to God.

[17:19] But there were times before Delilah where Samson showed those signs of slipping away. Slip, slip, sliding away. He joined in the wine drinking feast of chapter 14 verse 10.

As a Nazarite. He had no place there. He got himself in the wrong company. Feasting and flirting with the Philistines. And then he took honey out of the carcass of a dead animal.

Violating the laws of separation again. Number 6 verse 6. There were ceremonial laws that he broke. He violated God's word.

Samson refused to accept the control of God's word over his life. He did not follow its directions. He disobeyed God. He lost his separation. His personal holiness was compromised.

Brother, sister, don't compromise your personal holiness. You'll walk with God. Samson, when he lost that symbol of his separation, he compromised his consecration.

[18:28] He lost the power and presence of God from his life. Number 4.

Another lesson we can learn from Samson. The powerless believer will lose his spiritual vision.

The Philistines caught hold of him and they gouge down his eyes. Verse 21.

We see the effect of sin on a life. Samson's a picture of a man captive. A prisoner of his own sinfulness.

We see the binding, the blinding and the grinding effects of sin. Sin will cost you dearly. Sin will cost you. Cost you dearly.

Verse 21. But the Philistines took him and put out his eyes. And brought him down to Gaza and bound him with fetters of brass. And he did grind in the prison house.

[19:32] But Samson, the backslider, had vision problems before this.

Before his eyes were gouged out, Samson lost the vision of God. Of God's will for his life.

At least now, Samson didn't have to lose with one of his sin problems, the lust of the eyes. He didn't have them anymore. They were gone. The powerless believer will lose his spiritual vision.

The powerless believer will lose the ability to see, spiritually see, and become a slave. Held fast and bound in the prison house.

Have you ever been to prison? I have. I have been to prison. I have been inside Gatler's bars. I was a visitor, thankfully. But it wasn't a very pleasant place to visit, I tell you that.

It was a very pleasant place to be. It was a very pleasant place to be. Inside a prison. Inside a prison cell. Well. Julie and I went to a prison in London that was made up to look like a prison in the dark ages.

[20:50] And it was dark and dingy and gloomy. There wasn't the smell of rotting, putrid flesh and foul things.

They didn't put that in there, but you can imagine what it was like in those days. It was alongside the Thames. And there was a hole in the ground.

And apparently they kept the prisoners in there, in this hole in the ground. And the water from the River Thames would come up into this hole and go down again.

They were there, swimming. In this foul, dark, awful place. I don't know what Samson's prison was like, but you can imagine it.

Probably, yeah, it would have been a holiday camp compared to what Samson had to put up with. In that deep dungeon of Israel. Dark, moist, miserable, smelly, foul.

[21:57] The powerless believer lacks discernment. Lacks relationship with God. Lacks separation. Lacks spiritual vision.

And will end up held captive. Captive. He was cast into prison. A powerless Christian can be trapped and held captive with the things that snare them and trip them.

Friends, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth that, also shall he reap. Sin is costly.

Powerlessness affects believers today in their daily living. Many Christians are living defeated lives because they've lost the connection with the power. The power supply.

The power source. Many Christians are living in defeat and discouragement. Trapped with sinful addictions. Whether it be alcohol addiction, immorality, gambling.

[22:55] The life of Samson teaches us that lust and passion can control and ruin a man. The Bible tells us to flee fornication.

Run from it. Run for your life. Many Christians are living in doubt and despair. Just like those who do not know the Lord.

Samson's sin led to this dark dungeon. Bound, tied up to a grinding wheel.

Made to grind grain like an ox. Day after day after miserable day. What a pitiful sight he was.

Treated like an animal. Blind and bold.

Mocked and scorned. The object of ridicule. Walking round and around and around in that same circle. Grinding the grain.

[23:57] What a pitiful state he was in. The powerless believer. Verse 22. Things started to change. How been?

But the hair of his head began to grow again. Notice God gives Samson another chance. Another opportunity. Backslidden Christian.

God will give you another chance. God will give you another opportunity. God can turn it all around.

God can turn it around. God's grace is so great.

That even in that dark dungeon. In Samson's foul sin. God's grace still came. Thank God he keeps us by his grace.

He keeps us in spite of our weaknesses. Verse 23. Then the lords of the Philistines said. Hey. Let's have a big sacrifice now. To the god Dagon. The fish god.

[24:54] And rejoiced. And they said. Our god hath delivered Samson. Our enemy into our hand. Notice that. The powerless believer. Will lose his testimony. What a shame.

What a reproach. This man of God. Become a tragic. Pathetic side. The powerless believer. Will lose his testimony. Friends.

You might blow it. As a Christian. And be a. Poor testimony. To the god. He professed to believe in. There's still hope.

There's still hope for you. There's still hope. There's still hope for Samson. Still hope for Samson.

When the people saw in verse 24. They praised their god. For they said.

Our god hath delivered. Into our hands our enemy. And the destroyer of our country. Which slew many of us. Here was this destroyer. Of their country. Who they had destroyed.

[25:52] Ha ha ha. Now in public disgrace. Once the pride of Israel. Now a bald headed clown. In a putrid dungeon.

Once in the highest office of the land. As a judge of Israel. A leader of the nation. Now what a pathetic sight. How hopeless it was for Samson.

What a picture of the powerless believer. Maybe you feel like that sometimes. I've blown it big time. I belong in a dungeon like Samson. I've made a mess of my Christian testimony.

The powerless believer. Has a stained character. Christian brother or sister. Your compromise will destroy your testimony. The wicked. Philistines taunted.

And jeered. And mocked him. Verse 25. That sounds like they're pretty sloshed here. In verse 25.

And it came to pass. When their hearts were merry.

[26:54] They said call for Samson. That he may make us sport. They wanted Samson to play and dance. And act a fool for them. Like a circus clown.

Provide them with some live entertainment. At his expense. It goes on. Verse 25. And they called for Samson. Out of the prison house. And he made them sport.

And they sat in between the pillars. This was a great occasion. The pagans. Pulled out all the stops. You know. The. The drink was flowing.

The. The parties were. Were all happening. The band was playing. This was this great victory over Samson. As they honoured their idols. And the royal family of the Philistines were there.

The high officials. The whole administration of the nation. And they were seated in some. Elevated platform. As you would imagine. In a sports stadium.

[27:54] They're in some kind of elevated. Platform. Over the arena. And Samson was the. The main attraction. The main event. Verse 26. And Samson said.

Unto the lad that held him by the hand. Suffer me. Let me. That I may feel the pillars. Whereupon the house standeth. That I may lean upon them. And the little boy led him to the pillar. The column. Of the. House. And now the house is full of men and women. And all the lords of the Philistines were there. And there were. Upon the roof. Just on the roof.

About three thousand. Men and women. And beheld. While Samson made sport. All the rulers of the Philistines were there. Ridiculing him. They'd seen the powerlessness of Samson.

We see Samson. The powerlessness of Samson. He lacked discernment. He lacked relationship with God. He lacked in his separation. He lacked in his spiritual vision.

[28:51] He's a picture of a believer suffering power failure. Held captive. Bound. Trapped. Lost his testimony. So how can the power be restored?

How can the power be restored to the powerless one? At home. The power goes out. Where do you go? Go to the power box. And usually it's just put the button back on.

Isn't it? You know. You go back to the power source. Don't you? Amen. That's where you go. You go back to the power source. Maybe you've got to ring the power company. Pay the power bill. You know. Reconnect the power.

Reconnect the power. That's what we have to do. Spiritually too. There's some things we can do. To reverse the creeping problem of powerlessness.

Maybe you can reverse all of those things we've been hearing about in Samson's life. Ask the Lord to restore the discernment. To restore that relationship. Your walk with him.

[29:52] To restore that separation. Your personal holiness. To restore your spiritual vision. So you can see and do his will for your life. To loose you from those chains that hold you captive.

To regain your testimony. Thankfully we see in Samson what happened next. Everything changed. We can thankfully by God's grace restore power.

Through prayer. Verse 28. What did Samson do? He prayed. Amen. He prayed. And Samson called unto the Lord and said.

Oh Lord remember me. I pray thee and strengthen me. I pray thee only this once God. That I may be at once advanced of the Philistines.

For my two eyes. Samson had had a lot of time to think. And to pray. In that dirty damp dungeon. To reflect on his life.

[30:56] On his mistakes. On his sin. And to pray. What does it say? Those who renew their strength.

They that wait. Yes. On the Lord. Shall. Renew their strength. Restore the power. Through prayer. In his former days of power.

Samson had prayed. He called on God for strength. And sustenance. And God had answered his prayer. For example. Chapter 15. 18 through 19. When he was thirsty.

God supplied. God supplied. His need. When he had the sense. To pray. When Samson prayed. He gave glory to God. For his victories. He acknowledged that God was his deliverer.

He gave credit to God's delivering power. For the good things he had done. Do we. Do we. Stop and pray. And consider God's grace.

[31:57] Restore power through prayer. Restore power through trusting in God. Through faith. Verse 29. He took hold of the two pillars. On which the house stood.

One on his right. One on his left. What a crazy thing to do. Here he is in this. Massive. Monolithic building. You know.

You see some of these old buildings. From Greece. Or Rome. Or Britain. They stood for centuries. Centuries. What is he doing?

Is he thinking he'll push this over? What a joke. But he was trusting in God. He was trusting in God. That's what made the difference. Faith made the difference for Samson. For all his faults.

Samson trusted the Lord. This was humanly impossible. That he would push these pillars over. That he would destroy this huge building. Yet through his life.

[32:54] Samson was empowered by God. Even though he never led an army. His victories were achieved only. As God. Empowered him. As God was with him.

He. And we have become disempowered. We need to break. From. That which holds us. And chains us. Here he was.

Samson. A chain prisoner. Yet truly free. We can break the chains. That bind us. Through faith. And verse. Next.

Verse 30. We can restore power. Through surrender. In verse 30. He said. Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed his head.

Sorry. He bowed himself. With all his might. And the house fell. Upon the lords. And upon all the people. That were therein. So the dead. Which he slew at his death. Were more.

[33:52] Than they which he slew. In his life. Samson. By faith. In his surrender to God. Pushed over these two mighty pillars.

Of this heathen temple. And the roof. Collapsed. Thousands were killed. There was 3,000 just on the roof. Samson surrendered his life. In this final battle.

As he yielded himself. He surrendered to God. It was his crowning achievement. God was willing to hear. And forgive Samson. And use him.

For his glory. In this work of deliverance. For Israel. Friends. There is power. With God. For you believer. You might feel.

I'm a bit like Samson. I'm not really. Living the life. There is power with God. There is power with God. For you. For me.

[34:48] When we surrender. When we're willing to be a living. Sacrifice. God is able. As he was able with Samson. When you consider yourselves weak. And unable.

Even more so. At that time. What did Samson have? Blind and chained. What a state he was in. Ephesians 3. Verse 20. Now unto him that is able. To do exceeding. Abundantly. Above. All. That we ask.

Or think. According to the power. That worketh in us. Thank God. God's mighty power. Works in human people. Just like you and me.

The big problem. Of powerlessness. In Christian homes. And churches. And lives today. Is when we. Go astray. And we.

[35:48] Get out of touch. With the spiritual power. That we need. Just quickly. Where is this power?

It's not a human might. Or strength. It's the power. Of the Holy Spirit. That's right. The power of the Spirit of God. Time and time again.

Samson's power came by the Spirit of God. When it came upon him. Now it lives in us. He lives in us. The Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is what the powerless believer needs.

2 Timothy 1 verse 7. For God hath not given to us the spirit of fear. But of power. And of love. And of a sound mind.

Amen. As the church we desperately need the power of God. In our lives and churches. Not some strange fire. Not some pretend thing. But the real deal.

[36:47] The real. Holy. Spirit. We need him. We need him to strengthen our faith. To empower us. To be his witnesses. To help us pray.

We must rely on the Lord. You know there's a scripture. 1 Corinthians 4 verse 7. It says. What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Everything we have.

Is received from him. Everything we owe it all to Jesus. We need the power. Of the Holy Spirit. And we need the power. Of the Holy Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 1 verse 18. It says. The preaching of the cross. Is to them that perish foolishness. But to. We that are saved. It is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 5 verse 11. It says. The time is coming. Says the Lord God. When they will stand a famine in the land. Not a famine of bread. Not a thirst for water.

[37:45] But of hearing the words of the Lord. The words of the Lord. There's a power problem today. Because we've neglected the Holy Scriptures.

The word of God. The power of the gospel. For I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. For it is. The power of God.

Unto salvation to everyone. That believeth. When the book came. Revival came. That's revival. Where the book is.

Revival is. We see that in 2 Kings 22. Hilkiah found the book. 2 Kings 22. Verse 8. Hilkiah said. I have found the book. Verse 11 of 2 Kings 22. The king heard the words of the book. And he tore his clothes. In repentance.

[38:47] 2 Kings 22 verse 13. They say. They say. Our fathers did not. Harken to the words of this book. That's why we're in trouble. It had been missing for 77 years.

The book. When it was found. Revival came. Revival came. The hearing of God's word. Has spiritual power. We found the book. Amen.

We found the book. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. And when God's people are spiritually empowered. They'll hunger and thirst for his word. For his truth. For the word.

And it says in 2 Kings 23 verse 2. The people came. All the people came. Small and great came. And he read in their ears. All the words of the book. And things changed.

When the book. Was heard. And acted on. Friends. We need the book. We need the word of God. We need the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Scriptures. And friends. The good news about Samson.

[39:47] Is for all of the mess. Of Samson's life. Hebrews 11. Still has Samson's name. Isn't it? Thank God for that. Samson. This man who messed up.

Backsleaved big time. He made a total mess. Of his testimony. A reproach. There's lots of good things he did.

Mind you. But Hebrews 11. Counted him still. As one of those. Who had a good report. He was a man of faith. So friends.

To wrap up. There's hope for you. For me. If we're feeling powerless. If we're feeling. I'm a bit like Samson. I've gone the wrong way. Many times. I don't deserve.

Really anything from God. Other than being. Grinding grain. In a dungeon. Yet. God. Is with you. As he was with Samson. Power failure.

[40:46] Power failure. I pray. For you. I pray. For us. That we. As a church. That we. As individual. Christian believers. That we would be aware.

Of the danger. Of power failure. That we'll have discernment. We'll have that relationship. We'll have that separation. We'll have that spiritual vision. We won't be held captive.

By that which binds us. We'll break loose. We won't lose our testimony. We'll restore it. We'll regain that prayer. That trust in God. That surrender.

That whatever it be. Will go all the way. Whether it be. As a living sacrifice. And we'll have the Holy Spirit. The Holy Scriptures. To empower. And refresh.

Our lives. Friends. Personally now. Is your battery running low? Reconnect.

[41:41] Reconnect. Recharge today. Let us pray. Thank you.