

A Tragic End

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Preacher: Pastor Andrew

[0:00] Well, good morning. It's good to see all of you this morning. I want to encourage you to open up your Bibles, if you would please, to Judges chapter 16. Judges chapter 16. If you're using the Pew Bibles, it's on page 215. Judges chapter 16.

Pastor David already mentioned this, but I want to just bring it to your attention one more time. I want to encourage you to come and take part next Sunday evening at 6 p.m. and we're going to have an opportunity for our mission team, who several months ago had the opportunity to serve the Lord together at Skyview Ranch and many of you not only kind of invested and supported them in being able to go, but also prayed with them along the way. This is a chance for you to hear how God worked in their lives and to get a sense of how that trip went and teens, a chance for you to celebrate God's work in your life as you share next week. Also, there have been several baptisms, as you know, over the last couple of months, and we have a chance then to vote on those people for membership. I trust you've already either heard their testimonies or you've read their testimonies of how God saved them and drew them to himself. Also, we'll have a couple more individuals who give their testimonies of salvation and we'll vote for them in membership as well. So, it's a chance for us to hear what God is doing, to get a taste of the fact that God is still in the saving business and to see and to hear about those stories and to celebrate God's work among us in that way.

I trust that you will be a part of that time together as we hear God's work in the lives of our teens and also those who are becoming members.

Well, we are winding down. We're just now today and next week away from finishing our time in the book of Judges. And as we get closer to the end, I don't know if you've kind of sensed this gravity, this weight, the moral decline that's taken place in this group of individuals.

[2:21] And to read about this can be a little depressing. There's a heaviness about what's taking place. There is a gravity about the significance and the seriousness of what it looks like for a nation to turn away from the Lord.

And I'm telling you, as I prepare to preach and even as I came this morning, I'm like, oh, here we go again. We're going to be looking at this story and man, it can be so depressing.

That is not the message of Judges, really. Yes, it is a message of this moral decline. But I want, I hope what comes through in our time together today is that in spite of this moral decline, in spite of a people that keep pushing God away, and it's embodied in Samson, kind of this rescuer who is raised up in a sense, and he's coming to deliver Israel, and he has the hand of God on him.

And yet he keeps spending all this power on himself. And it's so easy to get depressed, but I want the message to come through that God does not abandon his people.

God does not abandon his people. There can't be a more encouraging truth than that. Especially when we begin to look at ourselves, and we, if we're taking a very serious, a very honest look at our repeated failures, and the times that we continue to mess up, or fall on our face, or blatantly rebel against the Lord, that God still stands ready to forgive.

[4:17] That God still stands ready to save. God still stands ready to deliver on his promises because of his faithfulness.

And that's what I want to settle in on our hearts as we look and listen through this passage again in Judges chapter 16. You have a God that stands ready to save.

We see this again. We see that God introduces us through this book to 12 different individuals and to varying degrees of commitment to the Lord.

But whatever their posture towards God will be, whatever they will do in terms of delivering Israel and answering the call of God on their life, or rejecting the call on their life, the main character of

this entire book, and the main character of the entire narrative from Genesis to Revelation, is God himself.

God himself stands ready to speak to his people, to invite them, and to participate with him in fellowship that comes through his son Jesus Christ.

[5:33] Jesus Christ who stands ready to save. Whether or not the judge is aware of God's work in his life, everything good that happens in the book of Judges is owing to him.

Everything that happens in your life that is good is owing to him. Even in this heightened state of a nation who is rejecting the Lord, we saw last week in Judges chapter 13, we saw spotlighted throughout our time in the book of Judges, and especially here at the end, that the spotlight is on God.

And we saw that he is initiating God. That was our first point last week. And just calling us to remember that while this story seems to be about Samson, and certainly he is one of the characters that keeps coming out into view, the real character, the real person, the real hero of this story is God himself.

The faithfulness of God who continues to show initiative. We're aware, we're familiar with the initiating work of God.

John 3, 16, for God so loved the world that what did he do? He gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

[7:03] We have an initiating God. We have a God that takes the first step. We have a God that moves out in the front regardless of a people who resist him, regardless of a people that rebel against him, regardless of a people, by the way, that the Bible calls enemies of God.

That God demonstrates his love towards us even though while we were yet sinners, enemies, Christ died for us. Marvel at the fact that we have an initiating God.

A God who takes the first step. John will also write in his letter in 1 John 4, 19, it says, we love him. Why? Because he first loved us.

And so that's the, that's kind of the story that we're living right now but it rewinds and we see the same God who stands over the entire narrative.

In the book of Judges, in initiating God, he takes the first step. It's incredible. And we saw last week in Samson's story a life that was infused by God's initiating power.

[8:17] God's initiating blessing. God's initiating by providing his spirit. Right from the start, God takes the lead. We saw that in Judges 13, verse 1.

And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord gave them into the hand of the Philistines for 40 years. And we saw last week that that word again is probably better translated, they continued or they increased or they added to so that the people didn't just fall into sin again.

No, they continued in sin. They increased in sin. They filled themselves up with sin. It was now the pattern that would mark them as a people.

And in spite of all of that, God intervenes. In spite of their rebellion, God intervenes. A nation, by the way, that is no longer confessing their sin.

A nation that is no longer repenting and turning away from their sin. A nation that is no longer even asking for a deliverer.

[9:23] No longer asking for salvation. No longer asking for someone to help them against the oppression that they're facing. God is still intervening and helping and coming to the rescue.

This nation that God comes to personally, He delivers a promise through the angel of the Lord. The promise to a barren woman that she will have a son.

And He is to be devoted to God. We saw that in chapter 13, verse 5. For the child shall be a Nazarite to God. He's supposed to be set apart. This word, Nazarite, is the word to consecrate, the word to dedicate.

He's supposed to be dedicated or consecrated to the Lord because what God cares about first is not deliverance from an oppressor, but deliverance from sin.

Samson is supposed to call a people back to God Himself. And he's supposed to be set apart. God was after a holy people. And this outward expression of this holiness was to have an outward form.

[10:33] In verses 4 and 5 of chapter 13, Therefore be careful and drink no wine or strong drink. Eat nothing unclean. For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head.

For the child shall be a Nazarite to God. From the womb, he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines. So God delivers on this promise.

And Manoah's wife will conceive. She'll have a baby. A son is born. And God is going to make good on His word. He's faithful to deliver on His promise.

And one commentator says this. He says, The conception and birth of Samson declare emphatically God's refusal to let this nation die.

I love it. Israel may be doing all in its power to destroy itself from within, but God must preserve this nation. The honor of His name and the cosmic mission of His grace is at stake.

[11:35] God's glory, God's reputation, God's fame is what's at stake. So God will deliver on His promise to His people. We have an initiating God.

We also have an empowering God. We saw that last week. In chapter 13, verse 24, we saw in verse 24 particularly, And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson.

The young man grew and get this, and the Lord blessed him. And the spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Mahanadan between Zorah and Estol.

God graciously gives a son. He's marked out. He's set apart. God blesses him. God puts His spirit upon him.

He stirs him up. He moves him forward and immediately we begin to wonder, okay, is this going to be the point where national revival happens?

[12:35] Because God is embedded in this story. His spirit is here. His blessing is here. Is He going to move this man to deliver the people in a way that's going to create some national revival?

But as we read through the life of Samson, we observe a life from start to finish. A life that is marked by going down.

A downward spiral. The downward spiral that we saw in chapter 2, verse 19. Every subsequent generation that starts a little further down the path.

This moral decline that's taken place. This collapse that is settling in. And the beginning of Samson's story is marked out the same way. This five-fold repetition of a verb to go down.

In Judges chapter 14, verse 1, Samson went down to Timnah. In verse 5, Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah. Verse 7, then he went down and talked with the woman.

[13:39] In chapter 14, verse 19, and the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him and he went down to Ashkelon. In Judges 15, verse 8, he struck them hip and thigh with a great blow and he went down and stayed in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

This moral decline that was true about the people is now characteristic of the life of Samson as well. A man who is dominated and as we saw last week, a man who is dominated by desire.

A man who is driven forward by his passion. What he craves, what he wants. What Samson wants, he gets and nothing stands in his way. He's controlled by his cravings.

And then, as the story continues, we see this tit for tat, this retribution, this settling a score, this getting even that seems to be true of his life.

And we read this several times throughout chapter 15. Chapter 15, verse 3 says, And Samson said to them, This time I shall be innocent with regard to the Philistine when I do them harm.

[14:52] Then in chapter 15, 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. Chapter 15, verse 10.

The men of Judah said, Why have you come up against us? Speaking to the Philistines, they said, We have come up to bind Samson to do it to him as he has done to us.

And then in chapter 15, verse 11, Then the 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Edom and they said to Samson, Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us?

What then is that you have done to us? And he said to them, As they did to me, so I have done to them. With brilliant irony, the narrator describes Samson as a free spirit, as a rebel who is driven by selfish interests, doing whatever he pleases without respect for his parents and with no respect for the claims of God on his life.

But in this process, he ends up doing the very thing that God has called him to do and that is deliver the people because out of the hand of the Philistines.

[16:10] And this doesn't condone the activities of Samson, but it helps us to recognize the sovereignty of God that even in our rebellion against him, God is still sovereign over those activities.

In Judges 14, verse 4, it says, His father and mother 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. God's plan will not be thwarted, even in spite of disobedience. And while Samson's activity was completely self-directed, he was still serving God's purposes.

One commentator says this, No other deliverer in the book of Judges matches his potential. Called from birth by Yahweh, stirred up as a youth, called by the Spirit of God, empowered with extraordinary gifts by God, granted exceptional opportunities for heroism by God.

And the narrator devotes more attention to Samson than any other deliverer. Despite all of these advantages and this special attention that Samson accomplishes, he accomplishes less on behalf of the people than any other of his predecessors.

[17 : 37] Samson has all of this potential, all of this power, all of this strength that's been endowed by him, by God, and he spends every ounce of God-given strength on himself.

Imagine how useful Samson would have been if he had devoted the strength that God had vested in him and he had spent it in the right direction. Samson was driven by his cravings.

And much of his life was controlled by revenge and settling a score and getting even, this retaliation. And it sets itself apart from what we learn of Christ's life, don't we?

Christ's life was the opposite of that. Christ came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. And we all understand that Christ offers a better way.

We know the two great commands, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. We know that those are the commands that the Lord lifted up from the Old Testament to help us understand what a life that's driven by love for God will look like.

[18 : 55] Do you realize that in Leviticus chapter 19 we find both instances of that second command? It says this in Leviticus 19.18 it says, you shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

I am the Lord. You know what the opposite of loving your neighbor as yourself is? The thing that stands in the way, the thing that is most often most visible that sets itself against loving neighbor? It's turning revenge on a neighbor. That's what Leviticus wants to draw attention to. Don't carry out your own agenda on your neighbor.

Serve your neighbor. And we know this. This is what Christ draws attention to. Christ is the preeminent example of this. And he encourages us in Matthew chapter 5 verse 43 and 45 he says, you have heard that it was said you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

But I say to you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust.

[20 : 22] This is what God calls us to. But what is in us what is in me I should say and I think what's probably in all of us what's prevalent in us is when we receive a measure of injustice the last thing that we want to do is extend kindness.

Especially verbally. When we're cursed we want to curse. We don't want to bless. And when we are oppressed when we are taken advantage of we want to get even.

We want to settle the score. I was just reading a report recently from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. in 2025 just last year it says that 96% of US drivers reported at least one aggressive driving or road rage behavior.

96% I think that's probably covers a lot of us in this room. Right? And I know that there are times when I feel like I want to get even.

And by the way just this past week there was an incident that happened while I was well I won't tell you where I was. There was an incident that happened and I thought for sure that somebody was going to die because the conflict that took place between two people that were driving and getting out of the car and yelling at one another through the windows and I thought for sure it was it was going to go down right in front of me.

[22 : 01] And that's the kind of thing that happens a lot. And we understand this. We recognize this. It's in us. We are these kinds of people. We want to get even. 96% of us do this in some fashion or the other.

And it says that 11% admitted to violent behavior such as intentionally bumping another vehicle or confronting another driver.

Now compare that with just 10 years ago. This is up 67% from 10 years ago cutting off another vehicle or honking out of angry anger is up 47% from 10 years ago. You see it's a symptom of our society. It's where we are. We've all felt it. And whether we've carried it out we have probably at least been whispering or yelling under our breath. It comes out. And this is what we see in the book of Judges. We see a group of individuals Samson in particular who stands out as needing forgiveness. [23 : 16] Needing help. Needing to submit his life to God. And God is continually even in the story of Samson God is still available.

God is still there. God is still carrying Samson in spite of his rebellion. And so when we turn the page to chapter 16 we see another aspect of God that I want to draw our attention to. In chapter 16 we're going to see that we have a present God. We have a present God. Now here's what's fascinating.

Through this entire narrative chapter 13 through chapter 16 God is silent. Now in chapter 13 the angel of the Lord speaks to Manoah and speaks to his wife but once you move into the narrative where Samson is there's no more speaking God has remained silent to his people and yet God is still present.

How do you know? Well we see that God is present through his continuing power. He continues to empower Samson even at the end of this story. Judges 16 verses 1 to 3 says Samson went to Gaza and there he saw a prostitute and he went into her the Gazites were told Samson has come here and they surrounded the place they set an ambush for him all night at the gate of the city they kept quiet all night saying let us wait till the light of the morning then we will kill him but Samson lay hold excuse me Samson lay till midnight and at midnight he rose and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts and pulled them up bar and all and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is in front of Hebron remember what Samson's story has taught us remember how Samson has now repeatedly gone after the things that were right in his eyes we saw that in chapter 14 verse 3

[25 : 26] Samson said to his father get her for me she's right in my eyes and then in verse 7 then he went down and talked with the woman because she was right in his eyes everything that is right in Samson's eyes he does and here we are we pick up the story in chapter 16 and what does he do well he sees this woman he wants her it doesn't matter what God has said about this it doesn't matter that God had specifically given some instruction about how these kinds of relationships were to happen because Samson is a law to himself and now he's gotten even bolder now we're going to find he's going to begin to explore he's going to begin to experiment a little bit he's going to walk on the edges he's going to see how far he can wander and still enjoy the power first he's wandered from home and we don't know the geography very well and so we need to be instructed you see Gaza was a place that was not just had pagan deities as we're going to see at the end of this story but geographically it is as far as he could be away from home at least in the

Philistine world he's moved to the edge he's moved as far away as he can be and then we're going to see in chapter 16 there is no explicit mention of the spirit of the Lord coming upon him we saw that once in chapter 13 we saw it once in chapter 14 we're going to see it twice in chapter 15 four times the spirit of God comes on Samson in this narrative and yet in chapter 16 the spirit of God is not mentioned now it doesn't mean that the spirit of God is not there he's present he's just not mentioned and the reason he's not mentioned I think is because Samson is beginning to wonder if the power that he enjoys is a power that is resident within himself that's why he's beginning to experiment he's beginning to believe the press reports that he's invincible and yet for all of Samson's physical strength in resisting the power of enemies there's one enemy he's been unable to address the enemy of his flesh succumbing to women what does he do well he gets up at midnight we're to presume that it's dark somehow he slips out past the guard he's able to pick up these gates he tears them up he places them on his shoulder he walks to Hebron he sets it in place now Hebron is 40 miles away 40 miles away how do you suppose

Samson did that it was another indication of the power of God that was resident on his life even though Samson was completely oblivious to this power and even though the narrator will now begin to conceal this power it's clear through the activity that God is still allowing his presence to remain on Samson to accomplish these miraculous things it wasn't through Samson's strength Samson's confidence though is growing his boldness and arrogance is growing he's feeling like he is invincible no one can touch him so he's exploring he's experimenting he's testing the limits he's

seeing where those boundaries are he's wondering if this strength is really resident in himself but God continues to empower we move to this next story the one that you're familiar with Samson and Delilah in verse 4 after this he loved a woman in the valley of

Sorak whose name was Delilah the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her seduce him and see where his great strength lies and by what means we may overpower him that we may bind him to humble him and we will see we will give you 1100 pieces of silver so Delilah said to Samson please tell me where your great strength lies and how you might be bound that one could subdue you you know the story Samson again is driven by his cravings he sees another woman he wants her he gets her and under the cover what we're led to understand is even these heathen individuals even these pagan individuals in Philistia who worship Dagon understand that Samson's power is coming from somewhere Samson may be oblivious to where this power is coming from but even those that watch and look they know where is the secret to this power so they they have this fourfold strategy they want to see where the power is coming from they want to overpower Samson they want to bind Samson they want to humble Samson and so they pay Delilah 1100 shekels of silver to get this done now this is 1100 shekels by the way for each of these Philistine lords and so it's it's closer to 5500 shekels not 11 shekels because there are five Philistine lords and to give you some some comparison 10 shekels as we're going to see in the next narrative from chapter 17 to 21 10 shekels of silver is what it was going to cost to pay for the services of this Levite who would come to Micah's house and to perform his duties 10 shekels in a year do the math 1100 shekels divided by 10 110 years and then multiply that by five 550 years of income is what they were willing to pay

[31 : 36] Delilah to find out what the secret was you're familiar with the story Delilah goes to work she pleads with Samson to tell her the secret and we see that in verse 6 so Delilah says to Samson please tell me where your great strength lies and how you might be bound that one could subdue you Samson will say will bind me with seven fresh bow strings then I will become weak like any other man that's in verse 7 what is lost with us because of the cultural distance from where we are is these bow strings were typically made from the carcasses of dead animals the sinews or the ligaments of these dead animals he's asking for fresh seven fresh bow strings which means he's defiling himself by touching a dead animal becoming unclean beginning to flirt a little bit more beginning to experiment a little bit more beginning to push the boundaries just a bit more will this nullify my power he's flirting with the edges of course these seven fresh bow strings are bound on Samson and Delilah will say in verse 9 the Philistines are upon you and he'll be able to break those bow strings he'll be able to free himself and then he says in verse 11 bind me with new ropes that have never been used second strategy and Delilah does it and she says in verse 12 the Philistines are upon you he breaks those ropes he frees himself and the cycle continues and now

Samson's playing with fire in verse 13 Delilah says to Samson until now you have mocked me and told me lies tell me how you might be bound and he said to her if you weave the seven locks of my head with the web and fasten it tight with the pin then I shall become weak and be like any other man so Delilah does it we find in verse 14 the Philistines are upon you he's able to pull out the pin he's able to free himself and he's able to remove the oppression then we come to verse 15 she says to him how can you say I love you when your heart is not with me you have mocked me these three times you have not told me where your great strength lies so Samson says he told her all his heart no razor has come upon my head for I have been a Nazarite to God from my mother's womb if I am shaven then my strength will leave me this is the first time that that Samson's acknowledging where his strength finally lies and what his calling has been this divine calling on his life to be a Nazarite to God and now he finally submits that to Delilah this is the purpose for which God has raised me up in this significant moment he refers though to God only as Elohim and not as Yahweh see Delilah knows now that he has told her all his heart and so she lulls him to sleep she cuts his hair she says the Philistines are upon you and then we come to chapter 16 verse 20 he woke up from his sleep and said I will go out as before at other times and shake myself free but he did not know that the Lord had departed from him God's presence gracious presence had been with and on Samson and he was totally oblivious all of this strength all of this power all of this potential God graciously had given to him and he was totally oblivious and now it's gone and he doesn't even know this devastating reality that Samson went out as before he thought

I can take care of business I can do what I've done all along believing that he was truly invincible not appreciating the fact that it was only in all ways of God then in verse 21 the Philistines seized

him and gouged out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles and he ground at the mill in the prison but the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved overnight this man is transformed transformed by one whose life was governed by what was right in his eyes to an individual now who has no eyes who has no sight who has no vision overnight a life of coming and going at his pleasing has now turned into a life of bondage Samson has now been humbled but we have this this glimmer of hope in verse 22 but the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved once we turn to verse 23 we not only recognize that God is present we recognize that God graciously continues to answer prayer God continues to answer prayer in spite in spite of the wicked heart of Samson verse 23 says now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their God and to rejoice and they said our God has given Samson our enemy into our hand and when the people saw him they praised their God for they said our God has given our enemy into our hand the ravager of our country who has killed many of us and when their hearts were merry they said call Samson that he may entertain us so they called Samson out of the prison and he entertained them and they made him stand between the pillars Dagon was the God of the Philistines and it seems that Samson was put on public display in this place of humility now Samson will call on

[38:12] God for help we see that in verse 28 then Samson called to the Lord and said oh Lord God please remember me and please strengthen me only this once oh God that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes now again Samson calls on the Lord he's called on the Lord previously in chapter 15 verse 8 he was thirsty and God graciously gives him water miraculously gives him water and now here he is again humbled again desperate again his strength has failed again he's praying now to God one more time but in this episode we find that he speaks to the Lord God the word there Lord is the word Adonai it's the word sovereign it's the word king and this word for God is the word Yahweh he does finally acknowledge the Lord God the God of Israel this covenant keeping God and he asks that God would remember him now remember back to

Judges chapter 8 verse 34 it says and the people did not remember the Lord their God who had delivered them from the hand of the enemies and now Samson is asking God please remember me but then we see this motive what was the motive the underlying purpose for Samson's prayer we see this again in verse 28 remember me and strengthen me only this once oh God that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes he wants strength again to be avenged nothing has changed in Samson's heart one final act one underlying motive revenge settling a score getting even you see Yahweh is the one who needed to be avenged

Yahweh was the one whose reputation was being violated in the company of the Philistines as they celebrated their God Dagon look what Dagon has done and all Samson can think of is not the glory and renown and reputation of Yahweh but the glory and renown and reputation of Samson remember what David will eventually say in 1 Samuel 17:26 when Goliath comes and confronts the nation of Israel he will say who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God David's desire was the reputation of the Lord himself of God how can anyone defy the name and renown of our living God may it not be so give me a shot at making this right

I want God's name to be known but here we find the same old Samson returns this Nazarite who'd been set apart for service to God wants to die with the uncircumcised Philistines this man who with his unprecedentedly high calling and his extraordinary divine gifts has wasted his life indeed he has accomplished more for God dead than alive but God change changes and with that

I close with with Ezekiel chapter 36 verses 25 and 27 it says I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols I will cleanse you and I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put on you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules this is the age in which we live today the age of God's forgiveness sending his son Jesus Christ who died for our sins on the cross who paid the price the penalty for our sin the price that we could not pay that sin demands punishment and that punishment is death and separation from God forever but God has sent his son

[43:30] Jesus Christ to pay that price so that anyone who comes to him and believes in him for forgiveness of their sins and asks and confesses that Jesus Christ has died and risen again and that he is Lord will enjoy the benefits of salvation the psalmist will say blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven whose sin is covered blessed is the one to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity we are living in a blessed day we are living in an age where the Holy Spirit can

change us fundamentally from the inside out and what Samson never experienced we can experience not because we deserve God's work of initiating power but because God is worthy God is worthy so wherever you are on the continuum of spirituality if you feel like you've fallen you feel like you've departed you feel like you have pushed

God away God continues to extend himself his offer of forgiveness in the joy that we can have in the presence of God the cleansing power of the Lord Jesus Christ who can change us from the inside out I love what Paul will say in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 18 he talks about the spirit of the Lord who changes us from one degree of glory to the other and that isn't because of us that's not glory to us that is glory to God and that offer is available here's what often stands in our way is that while the offer is there and many of us have even enjoyed the benefits of the spirit's indwelling power it is not a guarantee that we're going to be transformed because we can push that work away we can grieve the Holy Spirit we can quench the Holy

Spirit and if that's true of our life we're not going to enjoy the benefits of that transformation that's offered to us we need to have hearts and lives that are pliable that are submissive that give way to God's work in our life so that when the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin we not just confess that sin but we turn away from it we find ways to pursue the Lord Jesus so that redemptive changing transforming work can continue to happen within us praise the Lord for the book of Judges in the reminder that God delights in saving sinners he delights in making much of himself and as the world around us gets darker it's a chance for the light of Christ to shine more brightly in and through us may God help us to shine brightly for his glory oh God we praise you that you have not given up on us and I pray that you would help us to give way to you to submit to you not to resist you but to allow you to have your way in our life thank you for this story and the reminder that you are faithful that you will honor your word and I pray that our lives would be a testament to your working and wondrous power in Jesus name amen you have a great week thanks for coming today