

Samson 3

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[0 : 0 0] It is read in the Old Testament in the book of Judges, chapter 16.

The book of Judges, chapter 16. Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.

And it was told the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning when it is day, we shall kill him.

And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron.

And it came to pass afterward that he loved a woman in the valley of Zorok, whose name was Delilah. And the Lord of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth.

[1 : 2 9] And by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him. And we will give thee, every one of us, eleven hundred pieces of silver. And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.

And Samson said unto her, If thou bind me with seven green withths that were never dry, then shall I be weak, and be as another man. Then the Lord of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withths, which had not been dried, and she bound them with them.

Now there were men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he break the withths as a thread of toes broken when it toucheth the fire.

As a thread of toes broken when it toucheth the fire, so his strength was not known. And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies.

Now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

[2 : 5 0] And Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound them therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And there were liars in wait, abiding in the chamber.

And he break them from off his arms like a thread. And Delilah said unto Samson, And hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies.

Tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with a web. And she fastened with a pin, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson.

And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with a pin of the beam, and with a web. And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?

Thou hast mocked me these three times, and thou hast not told me where in thy great strength lieth. And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death, that he told her all his heart, and said unto her, Let it not come a razor upon mine head.

[4 : 0 6] For I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb. If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like other men.

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 hath showed me all his heart.

Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees, and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven

locks of his head.

And she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as had other times before, and shake myself.

And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. 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.

[5 : 25] Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again, after he was shaven. Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice, and to Dagon their guard, and to rejoice.

For they said, Our God hath delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised their guard.

For they said, Our God hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport.

And they called for Samson out of the prison house, and he made them sport, and they set him between the pillars. And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me, that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there. And there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

[6 : 48] And Samson called unto the Lord and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines.

And 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 than they which he slew in his life.

Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down and took him and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtol in the burying place of Manoah his father.

And he judged Israel twenty years. We turn now to the chapter we read, Judges chapter sixteen.

[8 : 12] And perhaps as our connecting link, we'll take the words at the end of verse twenty. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.

Now, if I get through what I intend to say here tonight, it will bring to a close study of the judges referred to in Hebrews chapter eleven.

Jephthah, Barak, Gideon and Samson. And I hope you haven't found these studies too tedious.

I would like to continue from look at Samson's life the past two Sabbath evenings and look tonight at this man on the way to ruin and to recovery.

there were two particular stages on that road to ruin.

[9 : 50] One was in Gaza, the place in Gaza where he visited a prostitute's house and the other the one that really hastened his decline was his association with Delilah.

Now, that is one of the best known stories in the whole of the Bible. And as such, it has very many solemn lessons to declare to us all.

It is probable that the events recorded in this chapter his association with the prostitute in Gaza and with Delilah took place during certainly during the second half of his twenty years as judge in Israel. And it is probable too that they took they took place after many exploits against the Philistines which are not recorded for us.

and the rest during the time that he was still in possession of his great physical strength and of course during the time while he was still a Nazirite that is a man who from the womb was dedicated to the Lord.

[11 : 14] He was a child of the covenant. but we know that Samson had one great defect in his character one great moral weakness and as I said two Sundays ago and there's no point in calling it anything else it was really a sexual weakness and he was never able to master that weakness as that moral defect.

It is significant that the man who had slain hundreds of Philistines as someone has put it could never slay this particular weakness in his own life.

And it is quite possible that as a consequence of a long and perhaps long immunity from danger that he may have presumed upon his strength.

Of course this is one of the great dangers to which we are all exposed. I suppose that there are some elements in our makeup in which we are particularly strong and we tend to presume that because we are strong in that area then we can go through life unharmed.

But that is not the case at all. Each one of us also has his own particular weakness, and it is at the point of our weakness that our adversary the devil will always try to grasp the opportunity.

[12:58] Samson became quite simply a victim of his own lusts, and in that case we know for a fact that his life was lived in conflict with the will of God.

Though he was a man who had many victories as it were under his belt against the sworn enemies of Jehovah the Philistines, nevertheless he was still living in conflict with God.

He was toying with temptation and consequently exposing himself to peril. Now no man or woman can condone that kind of life.

No matter how dedicated a person may seem to be outwardly it is quite wrong for that person at any time to toy with temptation.

And one of the great lessons of a study of the life of Samson lies just there. It warns us against the danger of toying with temptation.

[14:19] One of the problems when you toy with temptation is this that you think that you can handle the situation. But as we'll see hopefully tonight Samson thought that he too could handle the situation.

That night that the Philistines overcame him and shaved off his hair he got up with it here thinking that he could get up and go as before.

I can cope. I can manage. I can handle this, that he discovered that he couldn't. So it is when a person starts out in a course of be it drink or drugs or dishonesty or whatever it is that the person is doing wrongly it always starts with small things.

Things that he or she thinks they can handle. But they don't realize that the thing is getting such a grip of them.

that there comes a time when they cannot handle it at all. They just can't cope and they're caught in the mesh.

[15:38] Their strength is gone and they become a slave, a victim to their own particular course of action.

Well that is what happened to Samson, when he went to Gaza to this prostitute's house, probably obviously drawn there because of his own desires, he didn't realize that he was under surveillance. The Philistines found opportunity to watch him and eventually overcame him in the company of Delilah. It's very strange, you know, that though there are people who may not know the secret of a person's strength, it won't be too long, perhaps, until they discover the secret of his or her weakness.

It will eventually inevitably come to light. And so they let him wait for him. But they failed to take him. And this is the section of the history which gives us this account of his deliverance through that feat of Herculean strength of his when he carried away the gates of the city of Gaza.

[17:07] He was still strong, but he was on the way to losing his strength. And without who's knowing it, though he had extricated himself from the net in Gaza, though he had been delivered from the trap which was set for him in Gaza, another net also woven by his own reckless sensuality, was to become fatal.

And that is where we look now at the story of Delilah, who, whether she was a Philistine or a Jewess, I think the majority of commentators believe that she was a Jewess, this story is one of the most graphic and tragic in all the pages of history.

Because here Samson was to reap the fruit of the seed that he had been sowing for many a long day. And I think that that text which I believe ought to strike terror into the bones of every individual can assuredly be applied to Samson, be sure your sin will find you out.

Let us look at how this ruin of his approached him and how the ruin was completed. Now as you read the story of Samson and Delilah, don't run away with the idea that this took place in a matter of three or four nights.

The story really recounts for us what obviously went on over a considerable period of time. And she made these attempts to find out the secret of his strength at different times.

[19 : 07] And when she saw that her opportunity was particularly good. And after each interval of time she was blunting the keenness of any suspicion that may have arisen in Samson's mind.

I must say myself that when I read this story I'm filled with absolute amazement that this man, to use a colloquialism, this man didn't smell a rat.

Especially that night when he fled from the house with his hair tied to the homemade weaving loom that Delilah had.

Perhaps a hand loom. It's strange that he didn't sort of come to his senses when he found himself out in the street with this contraption tied to his flowing locks.

Why did he not take stock of the situation and say to himself I'm an idiot, I'm a fool, I'm an ass, I can't go on like this. But I think that that is where the lesson of Samson's history lies for us all.

[20 : 23] How sin entices each individual into a false sense of security and makes him think as I said earlier that he can handle the situation.

Though there are times when he sort of when he stops in his tracks like a drunkard, like a person addicted to drink. There are times, there are periods in that man's life, in that person's life, when he will not touch it because he realised what it has done to him.

And then he goes back to it. And so it was with Samson. There was this evil influence, this evil power in his life which he was never able to master.

And the other thing that is, and I'm just bringing before you one or two thoughts in connection with this and applying it to ourselves. The other thought I want to suggest to you is this, that moral ruin is never sudden in the life of an individual.

One of the Puritans said that every public backsliding has a private history. It begins perhaps without anyone knowing it.

[21 : 40] And it's going on over a period of time. And then it breaks the surface, comes to light. Morally, a person doesn't fall over the precipice immediately.

It's as though he's going down the slope. And the further he goes down the greater the momentum until he reaches the bottom and he's ruined.

Take the case of Peter. There was a man who denied his Lord, was cursing and was swaying the night which Jesus was betrayed. One of his closest confidants, Peter, was with him in the high priest's hall.

Jesus didn't know that he was there. That is Jesus say, the man didn't know that Peter was there. And there was Peter being questioned about his relationship with Jesus, his relationship with the disciples, his relationship with the teaching of Jesus.

And he denied at every turn any connection, any association. I don't know him, I wasn't with him, I don't know them, I'm not one of his. He denied a personal connection with Jesus.

[22 : 51] And to confirm the reality of his denial, he cursed and he swore. In their presence. Now the thing about Peter is this, you wouldn't have expected that of that man.

It wasn't Peter. He did something and he said something that just didn't square with the kind of man he was. He was caught, as James tells us in his letter, he was caught unaware.

He was caught suddenly by the devil and he fell suddenly. Samson is the exact opposite. This was something that went on and on and on and on in his life.

Maybe the reason it went down to Gaza in the first place was that in that city of the Philistines, at least though obviously outwardly the man was so well known being a Nazarite with these long flowing locks of his, he was known wherever he went, but at least he may have thought that in Gaza he could do something that wouldn't be known somewhere else.

And this is very often the way that sin works. People want to get away somewhere where they're not known. Perhaps go somewhere where no one will recognise them.

[24 : 14] Be somewhere where they can feel free to do what they like. Maybe that kind of thing was working in the life of Samson as well.

His visits to the house of Delilah were frequent. She knew his strength. She knew his weakness rather, but she didn't know his strength.

And she was used by the Philistines, five lords of the five cities of the Philistines, five major cities. And the civic leaders of these cities came up to Delilah and offered her a sum probably now equivalent to £25,000 if she could get him to disclose the strength, the secret of his strength.

Something like the gutter press today when they offer great sums of money for people so that they can give them their sordid stories. This was the same principle at work in the Philistines, using her to get at him.

And Delilah accepted the offer and accepted the offer no doubt with great alacrity. And so began the process. And Samson we see here toying with Delilah she asks him the question how are you so strong?

[25 : 41] Or how is it possible to lose your strength? So there is you can almost see them laughing together as he toyingly suggests to her well try this.

Then when that fails perhaps the next time they have a laugh over what happened the first time and well try this. And there were three suggests they made to her tying him with with with tying him with strong rope and tying his hair to this handloom that she had.

Well of course that wasn't the secret of strength at all. But Delilah refused to let him go.

She was prepared to wear down his resistance. And this is exactly the way that Satan and sin operate. When Satan gets you when sin gets a hold of you it just will not let you go.

Satan tried this with Jesus. Time after time after time he tried to wear down his resistance tried to make him sin. And you know that this is the way he does it with you and with me.

[27 : 03] And the unfortunate thing is this at first it may be quite easy to resist sin but then to resist temptation but then when it comes back again it's not so easy and then a person begins to toy with it he begins to dabble with it and perhaps after a few weeks after a few months what was unthinkable at the beginning is becoming quite natural now it's becoming almost second nature this is the problem for example with the force of evil habits let me give you an illustration when a child begins to learn the alphabet it's a terribly difficult process for some and then begin to put a few letters together to learn words and then the words become short sentences and the short sentences become longer and the longer sentences become paragraphs and paragraphs become short stories and short stories become essays and you see there's a process of learning and discipline and difficulty in it all but at the end of the day that process culminates in the ability to read and the person who was a five year old found these words so terribly difficult to say to understand to read can now read through a book in a night no problem at all they become used to doing that and in a sense sin is like that it's not so easy at the beginning perhaps someone will suggest come on just have one no the next time fine one becomes two two becomes three three become five and six until in a few years time it's part of his make-up he just can't do without it that's the way that sin operates and that's the way it operated in

Samson's life and that's the way this is the culminating process now here's the man on the road to road he's toying with it all the time he's becoming enmeshed he's becoming more acquainted with it it's something that he needs something that's part of his make-up and Samson is known not so much not only for his great physical prowess but also for his terrible moral weakness that led him to this road and Delilah works away just as sin works away at the life just as Satan works away and the man finds that he can't handle the situation and his resistance is ultimately broken down and he reveals to her the secret of his strength you cut off my hair and that's the secret of my strength now you know what the long hair signified every

Nazirite was identified by this length of hair the hair he never had a haircut and you can imagine the length it was and the thickness of the hair and it signified it was the outward sign of an inward consecration and devotion and commitment to the Lord this man was a servant of the Lord he was a man of faith that's what the epistle of the hebrews says he was a believer and this was the badge the identity of his relationship with God this was the mark profession so he says to her this is it now that wasn't sudden either remember that the third attempt that Delilah tried he told her if you tie my hair to the web of the loom that's the secret and there he was beginning to toy with his profession with the outward sign of his consecration to

God and once he began to toy with that the next step I suppose was inevitable so he succumbed to a treachery his resistance was broken down and in one awful secret which he had guarded for years was revealed someone once summed it up like this in most solemn solemn words one rush moment can mar the work of a lifetime one rush moment can mar the work of a lifetime and you know I say to you who are here tonight members of the church of Christ as I say to myself oh how easily we can fall into temptation let him that standeth take heed lest he fall there is a person in the church in the

Christian church whom I don't particularly like and it's a person who's forever criticizing other people if only that person stood and had a long hard look at himself and herself perhaps a word of criticism would never again escape from their lips my friend before you criticize another destructively you get to know yourself Samson succumbed to her entreaty and as I said earlier he was a man who no doubt thought that he could handle his situation so he said to himself oh well in that case when he woke up he was drugged into asleep on our knees in our lap and when he woke up with the usual call the philis ends be upon the something he thought he could get up and go as before and as I said earlier there's another thing that sin does it dulls the senses a practice a habit has a tendency to do this you don't realize what is happening and evil tends to make us insensitive to its presence we become so used to it we don't recognize it

[34 : 19] I referred earlier to the way in which perhaps a person starts this course it isn't all that easy at the beginning but then it becomes almost second nature someone put it like this that conscience which was at first as sensitive as the palm of a baby's hand becomes ultimately seared with a hot iron and when you begin to play with what you know to be wrong this is what will happen in the course of time it won't look wrong at all you know that when you're you may not be aware of this the thing is and this is how sin works you may not be aware that sin has done this to you but if you were living if you were in a foul atmosphere people who are living in a foul atmosphere become so used to it they're not aware of it but if someone walks into that foul atmosphere walks out of the cold into it it hits them so they're walking into a door it hits them because they haven't been part of it so it is that you should be very careful what sin is doing to you have you ever heard it is said about there's a particular type of vampire bat and it is said of the vampire bat that when it settles on the neck of its victim it begins it begins to suck its blood but as it sucks it flaps its wings in such a way that the poor victim is lulled into a sleep from which it will never again awake and that's what sin does that's what temptation does when you fall into it the longer it is indulged the more thoroughly does it see does it steep the soul in an unconsciousness of its slavery until the day comes that he sleeps his life away in the service of sin never again to awake in the room of mercy and that's the warning that Jesus gave his hearers see says that you don't die in your sins may I perhaps here this evening ask you who are here before me tonight ask you what is your relationship to sin what is your relationship to sinful practices to a sinful course you can become absorbed in sin just as a

Christian is to become absorbed in Christ let this mind be in you that's the advice given to the Christian which was also in Christ but unfortunately there are others who are absorbed in sin and another thing that we have to say about this is that sin makes itself so desirable sin never presents itself in ugly forms I noticed that quite recently an American theologian put an American writer put it in the way that I suppose that Americans tend to put things anyway Satan he says puts this poison in the middle of a sirloin state and then invites you out to dinner sin is made so desirable so attractive so pleasing so necessary so fulfilling so satisfying and that's why people give themselves to sin sin never presents itself in its true colors sin will never tell you that the wages it offers is death sin will offer you life sin will offer you fulfillment sin will offer you new horizons

Satan came to Eve in the garden of Eden a holy woman and said to her do you mean to tell me that God has given you all this and yet he's denied you the fruit of that particular tree what is that God is that go on you you try that tree then you will be like God go on indulge yourself it's made to look attractive ah you who are here tonight to the threshold of life I'm sure of one thing but you agree with me on this I'm sure that our life in the service of sin as you know it is far more appealing to you tonight than a life committed to Christ is that so and do you know why that is because you have been duped into believing that by

Satan and his associates but sin at the end of the day will offer you nothing but death and ruin and that's what it offered Samson as well he was dragged down and dragged down until eventually he was sucked into a situation from which there was no escape he had got away with it before but no not now he wished not that his strength was departed from him and I think that that is one of the saddest verses in the whole bible he thought he could get up and go as before but his strength was gone why well his hair was shorn but what was that the evidence of it was the evidence of commitment to the lord and consecration to the lord and he had left the lord he had forsaken what his profession was reminding him of and as he had forsaken the lord so the lord had forsaken him spiritually his contact with god was gone and once that contact is gone once the contact is broken the life of god flows no more into the soul he was he didn't know that he had lost his weakness till he tried to accept his power he had lost the sense of the reality of his consecration to god it was all

gone some years ago remember the great year that we had here that uprooted so many trees in the castle grounds some of these trees there as in other places were knocked over not because there was anything wrong with the roots as such but because there was no life in them themselves the story told about an elm tree in a part of

England which was a beautiful tree full of foliage and full of beauty very leafy and sturdy and one night during a first storm it was laid low with a great crash and in the morning people saw what they had never suspected that the heart had beaten out of that tree there was nothing to it but just a shell of bark and so it is that spiritual life can be eaten out of our character as well it can be eaten out of our religion or you can retain a veneer of religion without any life being in it things come in that spoil and destroy your spiritual life the strength that God my friend the one sure way to make sure that you and I retain our strength is to keep close to the

[43 : 19] Lord to feel his touch to hear his voice to see his face Samson failed to recognize his true condition what about you and me here tonight what is the true condition of our lives spiritually bear with me what I just bring to your attention in a word this ruined man brought to recovery that day that Samson entered Delilah's house for the last time he entered it with his eyes open that night he was a man whose eyes had been gouged out bored out the human treatment of the Philistines this was the way in which they dealt with prison or some people in the old days their eyes were bored out his feet were put in fetters and he was living the life of a slave in the service of the

Philistines he was to be had become an object of derision and of sport to his enemies and the eyes that once delighted in forbidden tastes were now no more and the feet that hurried often to forbidden places were now fettered he was a slave reduced to that level and he may well have contemplated a circumstance situation in that condition he may well have asked what brought me to this what leaves me like this why am I here and there was no man in the world better able to answer the question himself because I was so self-willed because I despised authority because I failed to listen to advice remember the advice of his godly parents don't marry that woman of the Philistines he was warned he was counseled by people who knew better than himself but who were there to tell him here was a self-willed man now abandoned by god but he's on the road to recovery he recognises the level to which he has been brought and there is the beginning of repentance in his life his hair began to grow that is remember the hair the outward sign of his relationship to the lord and here it is coming back and the great the one final lesson in the story of Samson is this it's a lesson of mercy a message of mercy and hope and love and forgiveness from the god of all grace that no matter how far we may stray from him no matter how low we may sink the lord can lift us up this is the message from

Samson's life it doesn't close the chapter doesn't close with his arrest it closes with his recovery and with his triumphant death albeit together with the Philistines and I say this to you as I say to myself this story I hope may trouble you it troubles me I say this I can't remember when I tried to prepare a sermon that caused me greater concern and soul searching than this and I found it difficult to come out here tonight and I found it difficult to preach here tonight but I rejoice in the knowledge that God is full of mercy and full of forgiveness and no matter how far you may have strayed no matter how bleak your spiritual experience or history tonight no matter how weak you are no matter how often you have succumbed to temptation my friend there is forgiveness with God

Samson came to the place where he recognized it and he prayed to the Lord in the face of 3,000 enemies who were gathered there to honor their idol Dagon gathered to make sport of Samson gathered to pour scorn on a child of God and hear the child of God praise he recognizes where his strength is and he says in effect Lord without thee I can do nothing strengthen me this once it's a great thing for a man and a woman boy or girl to come to that situation Lord I know that I failed I failed because I relied on myself now I look to thee help me is that your cry tonight oh my friend may it be that may that be your cry because you can cry to one who will help one who will listen one who will answer because the

Lord answered Samson there is hope for a man when he comes or a woman when they come to realize their condition when they come to realize their dependence upon God when they come to realize that they've been miserable failures when they fall on their knees and they say there is no one in the world I despise more than myself I spoke about the critic earlier the thing about the critic that I don't like is this he despises everyone else except himself the thing about the penitent is this there is no one in all the world he despises more than himself there is no one in all the world worse than him and you remember that this man was a hero of faith otherwise he wouldn't be in that cat

look in Hebrews chapter 11 do you despise yourself if you know yourself you will and I suppose that one prayer you have tonight is oh lord don't expose my heart to anybody else if he did you wouldn't be here and neither would

[49 : 57] I here's a man who cries oh what a blessing that he was reawakened in the Philistine dungeon and what a blessing to you my friend if God brings you to see your own condition in the land of the living pray that you won't die that you won't die ignorant of your true spiritual state because then your eyes will be opened in a place where there is no mercy where there is no recovery where there is no forgiveness where there is no return and that surely is hell as someone put it to be conscious of your degradation and to know that you can never be restored to what you ought to be return whatever the cost may be whatever the sacrifice whatever the difficulty and I know it's not easy to tear yourself away from sin but you must say with another

Lord what dare that idol be help me tear it from my heart and worship only thee help me to flee to thee to distance myself from sin and from temptation and so Samson places himself in the hand of God at this great festival he asks one more time Lord give me strength give me strength leads the boy who was leading him he who was blinded ask this boy lead me to these two pillars and wrapping his arms round the pillars with that phenomenal strength which came to him under the influence the supernatural influence of the spirit of God remember he only exercised that strength as he was supernaturally enabled from time to time by the spirit of God he wasn't a Hercules every day of his life it was the influence the divine influence of the spirit of God possessing him that enabled him to achieve these

Herculean feats he pulled and the building crashed down and he cried let me die with the Philistines and worried that he slew more in his death than he had done in his life I wish I had time just to add one or two things here you know his strength returned but his sight didn't you know what I think that suggests to us it suggests this that sin will always leave its mark it will always leave its mark unfortunately there have been cases in the Christian church where people who used to be pillars in the church have fallen away but when they were restored by the grace of

God in many respects they could never be what they were never the strength came back but perhaps something else didn't same with Samson strength came back but his eyes never saw again and in that sense God as someone put it is able to turn the consequences of our sins into instruments of his glory but that in no way will ever condone sin God is able to use our mistakes to his own glory but we can never condone our own mistakes and here's this man who as someone has put it being enticed he had sinned having sinned he had suffered having suffered he had repented having repented he had prayed having prayed he waited on the Lord and having waited on the Lord he received his strength let me die with the Philistines as though he was saying to God may the shame of my sin be taken away with them may the heathen have no cause to gloat and to glory and to triumph over me and may they certainly have no occasion to glory and triumph over thee the God of Israel let me die with the Philistines and the Lord was merciful to Samson and he died in faith and I think that's a note that I would like to end this series with it is no secret what

[55 : 26] God can do what he's done for others he can do for you my friend don't despair if you think tonight that you're so too deeply enmeshed in sin to come to him I say that you're wrong because God can forgive and God can restore no matter what distance you are no matter the problem of coming no matter the agony and the anguish of tearing yourself away you're encouraged to do it by the story of Samson there was never a greater moral weakening than Samson but God strengthened him God heard his cry and God enabled him to die in triumph he can do the same for you let us pray oh Lord our God we confess our sins we are ashamed we are ashamed at the poverty of our witness and the poverty of our own spiritual lives oh to thou bless us bless us in thy mercy and in thy grace and keep our feet from falling and our eyes from shedding tears for

Christ's sake Amen