

The Power of Sin in the Life of Believers

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[0:00] I'm going to preach a message that I have directed toward men, not just dads, but to men.

! But I'll go ahead and tell you on the front end that really the truth of the particular scriptures that we're going to be looking at this morning. The truth of what I hope to proclaim and communicate to you really is for all of us, men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and singles, and kids even that are here.

But you're going to hear me specifically attach it or connect it to men or address it to men because it's Father's Day, okay? Now, so to begin with, I want to begin by asking a few probing questions. And I'm going to ask the men because, again, it's Father's Day and so... But the women, they can answer these questions in their own hearts. But I'm going to ask you men to raise your hand in response to these questions.

They're not trick questions. In fact, they're very serious questions. They help us introduce what I believe is the lesson to learn from a particular man in the Old Testament.

[1:33] Here are the questions. Have you ever failed at anything in your life? Just raise your hand, all right? Ever failed at anything?

And I see some men without any hands raised. And we'll have a time at the end of the service for you to confess your sins. We've all failed at something along the way, haven't we?

Even if they're just minor things or things we set out to do and set out to accomplish and we just didn't make it. So that's an easy question. Second question, have you ever failed the Lord?

Just raise your hand if that's true. Have you ever failed Him? Have you ever sinned? Okay, same question. When we sin, we fail Him.

We fail our Lord and our Savior. And so really, we all ought to have our hands up for this. This third question, I'm not going to require you raise your hand. But I want you to answer the question in your own heart.

[2:36] Have you ever failed the Lord? So miserably. And then felt, felt like you did not deserve a second chance.

There's some men who have failed in that way. And, you know, the substance of that failure and what it might have been will vary from person to person.

Some, maybe it's just some minor little thing. And yet you have failed. You feel as though you have failed so miserably that God can never forgive you.

Or that you'll never again be used by Him. Never again know the kind of sweet communion you had with Him before.

Now, if you answered yes to any of these questions, and especially the third one. And again, that answer, your answer to that one is a private one.

[3:45] If you've answered yes, then God's Word has some good news for you this morning. Some great news.

And that news I might define in this way, that God is a God of a second chance. And a third. And a fourth.

And so there's good news here. And it comes to us through the life of a very familiar man in the Old Testament, as I have already said. And he was a man. And I would say to you that he was a man's man.

And his name is Samson. Samson. And maybe some of you are thinking, what a peculiar or an odd kind of person to use on Father's Day.

Because most of us think of Samson in this sense that he was an utter failure. Miserable failure. And that he was a sinner.

[4:54] And he did, you know, did terrible things. And he could have been used mightily for God. And he just threw all that away. And most of us think of Samson in that sense.

And indeed, he failed. Miserably. As we're going to see here this morning. But I want us to consider this man. And to begin with, it's a very familiar story.

But to begin with, to kind of set us up, to get us started. I want you to look at Judges. Book of Judges. And find chapter 13.

And then find verse 24. Judges 13. And I'm going to read just two verses. Though we're going to, as we go along, read some other portions of the story.

I'm not going to read the entire story. It's so familiar. Most of us, if not all of us, know pretty much the basic movements of the story. We know it by heart. But to get us started, I want to read verses 24 and 25.

[5:56] Judges chapter 13. So the woman bore a son. And called his name Samson. And the child grew.

And the Lord blessed him. And the spirit of the Lord began to move upon him at Mananay, Dan, between Zorah and Eschol.

Eschol. Something like that. All right. So that's it. Here we have an introduction to Samson. He was born. And it says something very specific about him at this point.

Even before we learn more about Samson and as his life kind of unfolds before us on the pages of Scripture. We know that he was born and that the spirit of the Lord was upon him.

Now, Samson was a judge. Of course, obviously, he's mentioned here. He's recorded here in the book of Judges. As Israel was given by God a series of judges to rule over them and to lead them and to help them in the defeat of their enemies and so forth.

[7:11] And so Samson was one of these. He was a judge. One of the judges. And the spirit of the Lord was upon him. Now, you would all agree with me that Samson was, even though we've not gotten into this part of the story, but since you already know who he was, you would agree with me that he was a very unusual man.

Samson was. He was unusually strong. In fact, I think it's safe to say he was supernaturally strong. And I would say that Samson was the strongest man who has ever lived. Now, let me just have you think about it for a moment.

As I kind of remind you of some of the story about Samson. Just remember on one occasion. When Samson, with just the jawbone of a donkey, took that jawbone and he killed 1,000 Philistines.

I think it's safe to say that Samson was unusually strong. Not just simply a good warrior, but just one man with a jawbone of a donkey and he kills 1,000.

[8:25] And that may be just a rounded off number. I don't know. But 1,000 Philistines. The entire Philistine army was terrified of that one man.

He was unusually strong. On another occasion, and we're going to look a little bit at this as we go along, but Samson's walking along there on the road and out jumps a ferocious lion face to face. And he did not flee. That is, Samson didn't. The lion should have. And was Samson afraid of him? No, apparently not. In fact, he took him and with his bare hands he ripped him to pieces.

Samson was a strong man. On another occasion, you might remember this part of the story of Samson's life. They had somehow captured Samson and they chained him to the gates of the city. I guess they're thinking was it was the strongest place in the whole town. And you would expect the gates of the city to be quite fortified and strong. And they chained him to the gates.

[9:32] But that did not hold Samson. He just took the gate and the frame of the gate and pulled it away from the walls of the city and took it on his shoulders and fled and freed himself.

Incredible. Incredible strength. Now, I'm kind of setting this up for you because even though this is familiar, I want us to consider something. And that is, you know, just a simple question.

What was the source of his strength? This Samson. What was the secret of his great strength?

Now, think about it for a moment or you'll make a mistake.

I saw a cartoon caricature of Samson not too long ago and I've seen others and you probably have too and it pictured him as this man with mountains of muscles, you know.

And that's usually the way we picture him. Is that the way you picture Samson? I mean right now.

As I mentioned the name Samson. Is that the image that comes into your mind? You know, this hunk with bulging biceps, has no neck and he walks around every day without a shirt on.

[10:46] Is that the kind of guy that you picture? Probably. And yet I've got to tell you, I do not believe the secret of Samson's strength was his physique.

In fact, I don't really think that he looked all that out of the ordinary. Physically. If that was the source of his strength, that secret of his strength that the Philistines were so intense on discovering, if that was it, then it would have been no secret.

All you have to do is just look at him and he's got these big muscles. He's got, well, there's the answer. I mean, that's why he can do all these things that he does. But that's not it. It was not in his physique.

And some of you Bible theologians are out there thinking, well, you're kind of chomping at the bit because you know the secret of his strength, right? And you're saying, Brother Don, of course, that it was not his bulging biceps.

That was not the secret of his strength. Everybody knows it was his long hair. That was the source of his strength. Right? Do you know why Samson had long hair?

[12:04] Samson was a Nazirite or was under the Nazirite vow. That is, you know, the short answer here is that he was separated unto the Lord, set apart for the Lord, exclusively for him, and he vowed to abstain from certain things like alcoholic fermented beverages like wine and other things like that.

He was not to touch that. And also he was not to touch any dead thing. That is, no dead people, no dead animals. And what was the symbol of this vow?

It was his long hair. That was the outward visible symbol that he was a Nazirite, had taken the Nazirite vow. It was a symbol.

Samson was a Nazirite. And there were other Nazirites in the Bible. Samuel was a Nazirite. I believe John the Baptist was.

Now, do we read anything in the Bible about them having supernatural strength? No. We don't. It wasn't his long hair. It was not that.

[13:19] So what was it? Well, we've already read what it was. In verse 25, the Spirit of the Lord began to move him.

The secret of his strength was God. And the Spirit of God that had rested upon his life for a purpose, to perform a certain function according to God's providence and plan.

That was the source of his strength. God gave Samson unusual strength through the Holy Spirit upon his life.

And that is really it. And other than that being slightly interesting, what's the point? Well, Samson's physical strength in the Old Testament is an illustration of spiritual strength given to us today through the Holy Spirit.

That's what we need to understand about Samson's strength. Now, the other things we need to understand about Samson that are very important to us and we're going to get to that, but now, let's just put to bed this old idea that Samson was strong because God just simply gave him more muscles than anybody else.

[14:43] or that Samson was strong because of his long hair. Okay? That's not it. God did it. God gave him unusual strength.

Alright? But now, the story of the life of Samson, you would also agree, I think, is one of the saddest stories in the Bible. I mean, it really is.

Here's this great man chosen by God to be a judge of all Israel. And he failed miserably and ultimately died a terrible death.

Sad, sad story. And the story is all about the power of sin. And I direct this toward the men here.

I know this is not uplifting on Father's Day. You know, the women, the mothers, they always get the real encouraging sermons. And then the men, they get pounded. I'm sorry, but I'm a man and I need to be pounded and I just figured that you need to be.

[15:50] Okay? We need to come to grips. We of all people, we men, need to come to grips with the reality of the power of sin.

The power of sin in our lives. And I'm not talking to unbelievers. I'm talking about the power of sin in the life of a believer.

Samson was a believer. He was. He was a believer in the one true God, Yahweh. He was in that sense a child of God.

And Samson fell, fell, and failed in sin because he did not understand the power of sin.

And that's what we need to understand. And especially we men. And so first I would say to you that this story here of Samson, a familiar story, in some sense a childhood story.

[16:51] I mean, we even tell this story to our children, which is good. As long as we bring out the lesson that the Bible intends to teach us in this story. But it's such a familiar story and the story here stands first of all as a warning to us.

A very strong warning. And the warning is about the power of sin as we see it manifested in the life of Samson. As Samson went from hero to zero.

Literally. But we also need to notice here, and we're going to see here this morning, that though this is a tragic story, it also ends in a way that encourages us.

You say, I'm having difficulty as I kind of scan my memory about this story. I'm having difficulty seeing that and hopefully by the time we're done you will see this. There's an encouraging lesson that we all need to get here from this story about Samson.

No matter how low we may fail or fall, and no matter how miserably we may fail the Lord, through repentance and obedience, turning back to the Lord, we can be restored and not only that but mightily used of God.

[18:27] And we need to get that lesson. So, you know, like Samson, we may on occasion in our journey of life, that we don't have to, but sometimes it does happen, we can go from hero to zero, but with the power of God in our lives, as we yield to Him, we can go then from zero to a hero, just like Samson.

All right, now, let's notice some things about Samson's sin. Sin is not a pleasant subject, but, and it seems to me that it's a subject that is finding less and less coverage in the pulpits and churches in America today, but we need to consider this, and we can't avoid it if we're going to consider what the Bible says about Samson.

So, let's consider a few things about his sin. Number one, the source of his sin. The source of his sin. How did Samson fall into sin?

Well, he fell into sin the same way you and I can fall into sin, exactly the same way. And the Bible tells us how this happens in James chapter 1, and if you want to turn to it, you can, the very first chapter of the epistle of James, and listen as I read verse 13.

James says, let no one say when he is tempted, I'm tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he himself tempt anyone.

[20:00] But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. And then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin when it is full grown, brings forth death.

And we could go on from there, but that's enough. You see, not any of us can say, God tempted me. And we know that, don't we? You know, you can't say that.

God does not tempt us. We can't in any sense say that God is at fault when we fail or when we fall. And maybe God didn't answer my prayer, or God didn't give me enough strength, or God didn't protect me from this or that, or going in this direction or that direction. And you can't say God is at fault.

Right? Of course not. Likewise, you cannot say like Flip Wilson. How many of you remember Flip Wilson? very few.

[21:03] You might remember what he said, even if you don't know who said it. Now you'll know it was Flip Wilson. And what did he usually say? The devil made me do it. Well, we can't say that.

The devil can't make you sin. Now, he can tempt you, and he does tempt you, but you do not have to succumb to the temptation. You choose to sin.

So you can't find fault with God. God. Now, Satan has some blame here, but when it comes to sin, you choose that, so you can't say the devil made you do it.

Rather, as James says here, each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires, or lusts, I think is the word in the King James.

Drawn away, enticed by his own lusts. And then when desire is conceived, it brings forth sin, and sin when it is full grown, brings forth death. There's how it happens.

[22:06] That's the source of sin. It comes from within. Now, listen, I don't think any of us fully realize, as we ought to realize, the full potential for sin that is in every one of us.

there isn't anyone in this building that is so spiritual that you somehow are not susceptible to the sins of the flesh like other people are.

You and I are capable of committing any and all sins of the flesh. That's right. You say, well, not me. Are you any better than Samson?

You might be able to put forth an argument. Yes, of course. I'm better than Samson, surely. All right. Well, let me ask it this way.

Are you any better than Simon Peter, one of Jesus' choice apostles, who was there with Jesus and walked with Jesus and sat at his feet as he preached and taught God's Word?

[23:09] and as he served and ministered in the power of Jesus and listened to his teaching and saw his miracles? Are you any better than Simon Peter, one of the elite of the apostles who three times denied even knowing Jesus?

Are you any better than him? Well, maybe not. How about Paul? Are you any better than Paul? And Paul said, I'm the chief of sinners. How about King David?

King David, who had this testimony from Scripture, God's testimony was that David was a man after his own heart, and yet David committed adultery and murder and then attempted to hide both things.

Are you any better than him? No, we're not. The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 12, Wherefore, let him that thinks he stands.

I'll take a little liberty here. Let her too. Who thinks she stands. Be careful. Or, take heed.

[24:25] Be careful. Look out. Lest he fall. That's what the Bible says. And so, the source of Samson's sin is really quite simple, isn't it?

It's not complicated. It is his own flesh, his own craving and desires and propensity toward gratifying those desires of sin in his heart.

Let's see, second, not only the source of his sin, but also consider the course of it. The course it took. Because we can learn a great deal about the power of sin once we understand, fully understand, how it operates in our lives.

How we can get from point A to point B. And point B being a place we never thought we would ever reach. What is the course of it? Well, look at chapter 14 now in Judges.

And listen as I read the first four verses. Now, Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.

[25:40] She was a Philistine. So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, I've seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. Now, therefore, get her for me as a wife.

Then his father and mother said to him, Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren or among all my people, that is Israel, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?

And Samson said to his father, Get her for me, for she pleases me well. But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord that he was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines.

For at that time, the Philistines had dominion over Israel. Now, I included verse 4 just to make sure I didn't miss an important point or maybe answer a certain objection. It might be those who would say that Samson did what he did because it was the will of God, that God wanted him to take some pagan woman, that God wanted him to do this and thus and such and all of that.

That's not the point of Scripture here. God had a purpose for Samuel. He was going to use him, but Samuel chose the course. God did not tempt Samson to sin.

[26:59] God did not force him to do things that were contrary to his word so that he could accomplish his will. God knows all ends, all scenarios, and God worked through even the sinfulness of Samson to accomplish his purpose.

So let's put that aside and let's just consider something else, the main point of the text here, what is shared with us from the narration. And I'm going to give you, not only from this passage, but a few others we'll add here in just a minute, three steps of Samson's sin.

Three steps. The first one is a careless life. Now, remember, keep this in the front of your mind, Samson represents a believer.

He's not acting like one. We're not going to get into a debate about can a believer in the Old Testament be the same, like we're not going to get into that. But Samson was a child of God, a believer in Yahweh.

Keep that always before you. And then notice from what we just read here or what I read to you, that Samson was being very careless in his life.

[28:23] Very careless. Do you think, just from what I read there a moment ago, do you think that at this point, Samson's desire, number one desire, was to please God?

Certainly not. I mean, he didn't even honor his father and mother here. And you cannot honor God and dishonor father and mother.

It can't be done. So no, Samson's not doing that. He's not seeking to please God. Samson, at this point in his life, and then from then on out until the finish, Samson is out to please himself.

Samson's out to gratify his own desires and pleasures, and it doesn't matter what it is, like he said to his father, get her for me, because it pleases me. He's just interested in himself.

And in that, he's being very careless in his life before the Lord. Because, number one, he had no business being down there among the Philistines in the first place.

[29:30] These uncircumcised, these pagans, these idolaters, these wicked people, and they were extremely wicked, and he was hobnobbing with them, and enjoying time with them, and having parties with them.

And not only that, but he was looking at their women. And he even selected one for his own wife out of the Philistines.

Now, folks, Samson had no business marrying an unsaved, pagan, idol-worshipping woman. No business doing that. That was not God's desire for him.

And this is where Samson's problems began. And it came through a careless association with wicked unbelievers.

I want to read something to you from 2 Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 14. Would you just listen as I read this passage?

[30:30] where Paul wrote, Do not be unequally yoked or bound together with unbelievers.

For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial?

Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? believer. And what agreement has the temple of God? And that's what we are, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. And so what's Samson doing?

Well, he's letting sin take its course in his life and he's being very careless. And you and I can do the same thing. We can be very careless.

[31:29] Go where we have no business going. Watching things we have no business watching. Looking at things we have no business looking at.

Getting into associations with unbelievers that we have no business doing. And we can stop praying and trusting God for some of life's decisions and on and on and on.

We could go with various things and decisions we can make that represent a very careless life. And it leads to worse things.

It's the course of sin. But now, also notice Samson's second step in his downward track. First he became very careless.

And a careless life, his careless life, led to, number two, a carnal life. That is a life that's ruled by the flesh.

[32:39] A carnal life. Look at, back at Judges, chapter 14, look at verse 4. But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord that he was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines.

For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother and came to the vineyards of Timnah. Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him.

And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

Then he went down and talked with the woman and she pleased Samson well. After some time when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion and behold a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the lion.

He took some of it in his hands and went long eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

[33:54] So his father went down to the woman and Samson gave a feast there for the young men used to do so. That was the custom.

And it happened when they saw him that they brought thirty companions to be with him. And Samson said to them, let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing.

But if you cannot explain it to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. And they said to him, pose your riddle that we may hear it.

And so he said to them, out of the eater came something to eat. And out of the strong came something sweet. Now for thirty days they could not explain the riddle.

Now I'm going to stop right there, though I'll tell you the rest of the story in a minute in case you don't know it. Let's just kind of think about this for a minute. It's an interesting part of the story, isn't it?

[35 : 01] Samson's walking along and out jumps this lion and he just rips it up. The Bible says as if, you know, a man might just rip apart a young lamb, just a little wee lamb. Had no problem destroying the lion.

And then later he comes back and there's the carcass of the lion and bees, kind of an odd place for a beehive to form.

I'll have to have John lichens afterward if this is a normal kind of thing. But there are the bees and he takes some honey and eats the honey and he gives the honey to his parents.

But he doesn't tell them about it and why would that be? He's a Nazarite. He's not supposed to touch dead animals. And so he does that and then he goes on down to the party and I'm sure along the way he got to thinking, you know, I could have some fun with this.

And he gets down there to the party and there are some of the companions of this woman that he is marrying and 30 of them, as a matter of fact, 30 Philistines, and he says, I've got a riddle for you and if you can answer the riddle, then you have to give me 30 new suits of clothing.

[36 : 13] And if you can answer it, then I have to give you 30 suits. Kind of an interesting kind of deal. And they went for it. And so he gives them the riddle and they can't understand it.

And then when we go on with the story, we discover that they decided to go to his new wife and ask her to somehow get the answer out of Samson.

All right, so she goes to Samson and she turns on the charm and also turns on the waterworks, you know. Women sometimes can do that.

And she says to Samson, Honey, you know, I don't know what she said. But she did say, you don't love me because you didn't tell me the answer to the riddle.

Then Samson made his first big blunder. He said, I haven't told my parents. You think I'm going to tell you? Hmm. That wasn't too smart. Now, it's been a long time since I've been a newlywed, but I have got enough sense you don't tell your new wife that.

[37 : 17] Okay. But she eventually gets the answer out, doesn't she? And so she takes the answer to her Philistine friends and then they bring the answer to Samson and they say, here's the answer to the riddle.

And so he loses the bet and it makes him very, very angry and then he makes his next huge blunder. He says in verse 18, he says, if you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have gotten the answer to the riddle.

Now guys, you know, it's not a good thing for wives to, you know, betray their husbands. But it's a terrible idea for a husband to call his new bride a cow.

Basically what he said. I mean, this guy is just going down for the fall. But all joking aside, here's the idea. Samson is going down.

He's becoming more and more carnal and carnal. And he goes out and he kills 30 Philistines and takes their clothing so that he can pay the bet.

[38 : 26] pay that bet off. And so, listen, a careless life in Samson's life led to a calloused life, calloused spiritually.

He dishonors his parents. He marries a pagan woman. He touches a dead animal, which was against his Nazarite vow, so he broke that. And I'm sure, and we could even prove the case a little bit later in the course of the story, that he's also now drinking and getting drunk, and he's joking around and jesting and carrying on with these pagans, and he's fighting and gambling, and he's out there killing, and next he breaks off his relationship with his new wife, this Philistine wife.

Samson is going down. It's the course of sin. And the moment a man becomes careless about his life for Jesus, he begins to move away from his lordship in his life and begins to more and more rule his own wife, his own destiny.

Carnality rules the day. And when that happens, you'll find yourself thinking and doing things you would have never dreamed, you would ever think or do, because that's the course, the natural course of sin.

Step number three is a calloused life. Calloused. Chapter 16 and verse 4 afterward, and I'll fill in the blanks here in a minute, but afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the valley of Zorek whose name was Delilah, the famous Delilah.

[40:32] Now, we've already seen that he married a pagan woman, and now that marriage is over, he left her. And then he has had an immoral relationship with a prostitute.

We skipped that part. And now he falls in love with another prostitute named Delilah. And we might be thinking and should be thinking, how, how, Samson, how could you be doing this?

How could this happen? I mean, you, you know, you're a mighty man. You are a wise man, apparently.

God chose you, Samson, to be a judge of all Israel. There's something very special about you. And Samson also was a believer, as I have said.

A believer in the one true God, Yahweh God. How could he allow this to happen? You see, the devil is very crafty.

[41:45] Have you discovered that? Very crafty, very subtle, very shrewd. And from the very beginning, he deceived Samson.

Because not once did he tell Samson where all this was going to lead in his life. Not once did he do that, and certainly Samson did not know.

It never entered his thoughts. That he was going to go down a certain track and end up a certain place. And that's just the way it is when it comes to sin.

We become very short-sighted. And the devil knows that and he loves that. You know, for example, do you think the devil tells a man, go ahead, have a drink.

Have a beer. Have a couple. A mixed drink from time to time. Go ahead. I've got great plans for you. Because one day you're going to become an alcoholic.

[42:57] And one day you're going to abuse your wife and your children because of your alcoholism. Won't that be great?

Is that the way the devil operates? Certainly not. He says, go ahead, have that drink. You know, because one of these days I've got big plans for you, you're going to find yourself in the hospital with liver disease.

And you probably will die. Won't that be great? And if you're lucky and you really follow my lead, you may have the privilege of slaughtering some poor family out on the highway.

Do you think a guy on the front end, before he gets into alcoholism, you think he rehearses those kind of scenarios in his mind? Certainly not.

And certainly the devil is not going to lay those things out and tell the man on the front end where all this is going to lead. He doesn't come and say, go ahead, just take a trip now and then down to the casinos.

[44:14] You know, it's just entertainment. It's just a place of fun, good, clean fun. Besides, I've got a big plan for you. Because you can look forward to a life of debt and guilt and you'll probably lose your job and maybe your family.

At least, that's my plan for you. Isn't it exciting? Isn't it exciting? Or go ahead. Pornography is okay. You know, just watch that movie or look at that magazine or click on that website. Enjoy. You know, as long as you don't touch, it's okay.

Maybe besides, I've got plans for you. Guess what I'm going to do for you? I'm going to steal away from you your desire for your wife. That's what I'm going to do.

And I'm going to flood your mind with lustful and filthy thoughts all the time. And every time you see a woman, a good looking woman, you're going to be rehearsing those thoughts and applying them to her.

[45:29] And I've got big plans for you. And I'm setting you up for the big one. As a matter of fact, adultery. Aren't you excited? That's the way the devil operates.

Well, you know it's not. And so what's the point? Sin, you see, always starts small. It did with Samson. A very small thing.

And Samson never dreamed that one day he would find himself lying in the arms of a harlot. I don't think that entered his mind early on.

Certainly not. But that is the way sin's course makes its devilish way through our lives. That's the way it operates. From carelessness to carnality to callous, a calloused spirit.

And let me just ask you, has your definition of sin changed in any way over the years? And what I mean is, what you once considered to be sin, do you now kind of think, you know, it's okay?

[46:39] It's acceptable in your life? Can your sin, or can you sin rather, and it not bother you in any way as it once did?

Can you set your eyes on unclean things, and it not smite your spirit as it once did?

Now, I'm really speaking to the men here, though this can apply to women as well. Certainly. Is it, is there some sinful, harmful habit that has taken root in your life that you seem powerless now to refuse?

Then, you have not done, or you have done rather, what Paul warned the Romans not to do in Romans 6.12. Let me read it to you.

therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

[48:03] Samson, Samson needed to read this. Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness.

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace. Now, some of you might be deceived into thinking here this morning that this sermon is good, but it's just not for you.

Some of you thinking that? you've not yet allowed that to be applied to your life.

We have a tendency to do that, you know. I mean, we don't mind a sermon on sin every now and again, and it's very needed, and you might even say, amen.

And yet, all the while, not allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to your brother, your problem. I'll see it. Kind of like the story I heard about some college fraternity brothers.

[49:24] And these guys decided to play a joke on one of their frat brothers, and while he was asleep, they took some Limburger cheese and put it on his mustache. And when he woke up, he sat up in the bed, he said, it stinks in this bedroom.

And so he went out into the hallway, and he goes, this hallway stinks. And he ran out into the living room of the frat house, and he, this living room stinks.

And he went out into the street, and he took a big whiff, and he said, the whole world stinks. And all the while, he failed to realize that the problem was right under his own nose.

And that's the way it is with us, many times. Sin is right under our nose.

And the moment that you get to thinking that sin can have no power over your life, as it did with Samson, as the tragic story is laid before us, that very moment, you better look out.

[50:36] And then there are some who would say, Brother Don, sure, I might sin sometimes. Little sins, you know, from time to time, but never would I ever find myself in the grips of sin, as we see Samson was.

That would never happen. I'm a child of God. I'm a born-again believer. That kind of thing could never happen to me. Samson. Well, it happened to Samson.

Samson was a child of God. Samson had been set apart for God from his mother's womb. He was a Nazarite unto the Lord. But sin took Samson down.

And sin took Samson from hero to zero. And I don't care who you are this morning.

it can happen to you. Just as it did with Samson. So we have the course, the source of his sin. The course that it took.

[51:45] And I would also say something about the force of it upon his life. How it ruined his life. What did sin do to Samson?

Well, a number of things. You see, sin always carries a consequence. Always does. And it's inescapable.

The Bible says in Numbers 32-23, Be sure your sin will find you out. Now there are a whole lot of things in this world you think you can be sure about. But really in this world there's nothing you can be absolutely sure about.

Not even death and taxes. But you can be sure about this. Be sure, God says, your sin will find you out. And Samson's sin certainly found him out. And I want you to notice the force of it upon his life real quickly here.

Number one, Samson's sin blinded him. Blinded him. The Bible tells us, and we'll not take time to read it, but you know the story, that when they captured Samson, God withheld or took away from Samson his power because he had forsaken God and had forsaken his vow.

[52:59] And God removed his presence and his spirit from him. And so they captured Samson and they cut off his hair and they took him and they took a hot poker and gouged out his eyes.

It blinded him. You see, Samson's sin in a literal sense led to his blindness. But folks, long before that, Samson was blinded by sin.

Can't you just see Samson there with Delilah? Just kind of picture that whole scene, that whole scenario. And you want to just say, Samson, wake up.

Don't you see what she's trying to do to you? You? It blinded him. And this physical blindness of Samson's was only a graphic illustration of the spiritual blindness that will take hold of you and me once we allow sin to take its course in our lives.

Not only it blinded him, but the force of his sin also bound him. They took him, the Bible says in verse 21 of chapter 16, they took him and they bound him in fetters of brass.

[54:28] Brass chains. We're picture. I mean, in one moment he's taking the jawbone of a donkey and slaying a thousand Philistines and with his bare hands he's ripping apart a ferocious lion.

And now he is bound in fetters of brass. And so his sin has blinded him and now it has bound him. But long before they bound him in those fetters, he was bound by sin. He was a prisoner to sin.

A lot of people say they want to be free. They want to do what I want to do and go where I want to go and make my own calls on everything in my life.

I want to have fun. I want to be free. But the biggest slave in the world is the one who is a slave to his or her own sin.

[55:33] It's slavery. In fact, the Bible says, if the son, S-O-N, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I mean, really free. Apart from that, there's no freedom.

Sin, see, his sin blinded him and it bound him and thirdly, it belittled him. Verse 21 says that they chained him to the grinding stone.

That's what they did with animals. Donkeys, oxen, dumb animals. I mean, just think about it. This is Samson.

This is the mighty Samson. Samson. A hero to thousands of children, Israelite children. If they had trading cards in that day or figurines, they'd have one of Samson.

We've got them today, as a matter of fact. He was a hero. And now, he's a dumb ox, a donkey. He's the laughing stock, not only of Palestine, of the Philistines, but also of Israel as well.

[56:41] what a disappointment. See how it took him down and belittled him. And listen, how our young people today need to understand this, to learn this truth before they waste their lives.

Sin does not make you somebody. It doesn't. It belittles you. If Samson could have written his autobiography, he would have said, the devil lied to me.

He said, I was going to be somebody. And he lied. The devil always lies to you because he wants you dead.

And so, the force of Samson's sin, it blinded him and bound him and it belittled him. But the story is not over yet. Because certainly we see the course of sin in his life, its source and course and the force of it on his life and how to wreck his life.

And we've seen how Samson went from hero to zero very quickly. But in the end, we see that God takes him from zero to hero once again.

[57:59] And so finally, there is the remorse of sin. I want you to listen to what the Bible says here in chapter 16, verse 22.

However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven. Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their God and to rejoice.

And they said, Our God has delivered into our hands Samson our enemy. And look at verse 28.

Then Samson called to the Lord saying, O Lord God, O Lord God, remember me, I pray.

Strengthen me, I pray. just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes.

Now folks, they made fun of him. They ridiculed him. This Samson, this mighty Samson, this one who was chosen of God, this one who was a judge over Israel, and now Samson's spirit, his mind is full of remorse because Samson learned finally three things about sin.

[59:45] The same three things that you and I need to learn. Number one, sin will always take you further than you want to go. Second, sin will always keep you longer than you want to stay.

And third, sin will always cost you more than you want to pay. The remorse of Samson.

And then something changed. He began to pray. God did what he should have done from the very beginning.

And if he had done this in the beginning, he would not have ended up where he was. Now, God's purpose would have been fulfilled and the judging of the Philistines would have been accomplished. But it would have been a different way. It didn't have to be this way. If he had done this before.

Because Samson learned that God is a God of a second chance.

[61:02] Did you know that Samson was one of the greatest heroes of the Bible? We don't think of him in that way. We think of him, yeah, a strong man who failed miserably.

But he was one of the heroes. In fact, he's recorded in the book of Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 11 as a man of great faith. You say great faith, where was that in the story?

In the end. Samson failed miserably, but he finished well. Didn't he? And he prayed.

And he trusted the Lord. See, you may have fallen God. You may have failed God.

And you may have, some of you may have even checked out spiritually because you thought, well, I failed the Lord. There's no going back.

[62:07] But our God is a merciful God and a forgiving God. Turn to him. Repent and turn back to him.

Those sins that you've committed, that you thought pushed you away from God forever, just lay them before him.

1 John 1:9 says, if we will confess our sins, that is, agree with God, lay them all out there, God, here they are.

He is faithful and just to forgive us of all our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteous.

In a nutshell, that's what Samson learned at the very end and God accounted that as great faith.

And the same can be true of you.

[63:26] Thank you.