

The Prayer At The Pillar

Judges 16:25-30 - NIV

²⁵ While they were in high spirits, they shouted, "Bring out Samson to entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them.

When they stood him among the pillars, ²⁶ Samson said to the servant who held his hand, "Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them."

²⁷ Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform.

²⁸ Then Samson prayed to the Lord, "Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes."

²⁹ Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing him-self against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other,

³⁰ Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

INTRODUCTION

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMEBACKS

- There is something about people, maybe just Americans *who like comebacks*.
- We like to hear of men who were once down and outers make it big.
- We like to hear of men who become destitute financially and then strike it rich.
- Why is that???
- Because we like the underdog.
- The man who is not supposed to win and does it anyway.

THE LIFE OF SAMSON

A. His Birth

- If there was something promising about the life of Samson **it would have to be the company that he came from.**
- He came from a group of men who ***angels came and announced their births.***
- ***Isaac's birth*** was preceded by an angelic messenger.
- ***John the Baptist's birth*** was preceded by a visit from Gabriel.
- ***Gabriel visited Mary*** before the birth of Jesus.
- ***Manoah was visited*** by an angel before the birth of Samson.

- It was clear from the outset that this small baby named Samson was going to have a profound impact on the lives of Israel.

B. Samson's Victories

- Samson became a **Nazarite.**
- By the **vows of the Nazarite**, the razor was to never touch his hair.
- He was never to have any strong drink to **inebriate his mind.**
- It was to be ***a life of commitment.***
- Because **he was set aside for God,**
- **God** endowed him with a *great strength.*

The accomplishments in the life of Samson are many:

- He had the ability to slay lions with his bare hands.
- He then took honey from the beast.
- At Lehi, he took the jawbone of a donkey and ***slew one thousand men*** with the instrument.

C. Samson's Failures

But even with all of the great victories associated with life of Samson, ***he had a deficiency in his character.***

- **Men have deficiencies in their lives and if the Spirit of God is not in control there will be that failure every single time.**

No man can afford to drift from the doctrine once delivered to the saints.

- **Samson found** a pretty young Philistine that took his breath away.
- His time and energies were consumed by the passion of Delilah.
- He found himself being **wooded into a web of trickery and deceit** - - -
- **Delilah** started questioning him about the source of his great strength.

- When the devil begins to question you about **your own strength** –
- You better forget about it being your strength.
- **It is the power of God** that has the ability to keep us aligned in the proper relationship with God.

1. The Source of Satan's Power

When we begin to investigate biblically from where the devil gains his power, it leads to an interesting conclusion.

- ❖ **From Isaiah 14**, when the devil asserted the five “I wills”, he was cast from heaven. So before creation ever began he had been thrown from heaven and God had effectively destroyed his power in heaven.
- ❖ **In Genesis 3**, after the fall of man, one finds that the power of the devil has been removed and he is forced again to understand his submission to God.
- ❖ **In Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John** after the event at Calvary, one finds again that the devil has his power removed from him, for he no longer controls death, hell, or the grave.
- ❖ **So the question now arises**, “Where does the devil get his power from?” The devil can only control those whom allow him to. A Spirit-filled man has power over the devil and his imps.
- ❖ So to those who believe that the devil can give them power, they are fooling themselves. The devil cannot bring power to any man's life. The paradox is that the man gives the devil the power to destroy everything active, positive, and alive in his life.

2. The Strength of the Spirit

The key to successful Christian living is found in the letter to the Colossians.

Colossians 3:2-4 - NIV

²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

❖ **Your life is hid with Christ in God.** This strength is not some obligation to morals, it is not strict discipline that keeps one from sin, it is not my righteousness. It is the power of God that keeps me from the life of sin.

❖ **Samson kept putting his head in the lap of the world.**

- He kept getting closer and closer to the failure.
- He started talking about being bound with seven green vines.
- Then he progressed to being bound with new ropes.
- Then he progressed to the weaving of his locks of hair.
- Finally, there was nothing left to withhold from Delilah. "My great strength lies in my hair. If it is cut then I will be as weak as any other man."

❖ When Delilah had his head shaved, she awoke him with the silky voice, "Samson, the Philistines be upon thee."

He arose to shake himself as he had done in times past and found that his strength had deserted him.

He fell like the timber under the woodman's axe when the Philistines jumped him.

Judges 16:20 - NIV

²⁰Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!"

He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." **But he did not know that the LORD had left him.**

❖ **Samson soon found himself at the grindstone.**

- His **eyes** had been burned out with hot irons.
- **He was bound** in chains of brass.
- His head was shaved.
- His strength was gone.
- The great judge of Israel was grinding corn for the Philistines in the prison house.

❖ **It is full of irony how that the devil will reduce your life to nothing.**

- He will allow all of the spiritual victories that you can handle
- In the end he wants you to be a failure.
- It looked as if **Samson** would just rot in some Philistine prison.
- But God still has the power in reserve for *those who are willing to be a comeback*.

THE PRAYER AT THE PILLAR

- A day came to the kingdom of Philistine for a grand party. ***It was a wild, drunken affair where everything wicked was embraced***.
- **One of the Philistine governors**, perhaps decides that it is time to bring out the great Israelite champion, **Samson**.

The Bible very clearly distinguishes the setting for us.

Judges 16:23-25 – NKJV - Samson Dies with the Philistines

²³ 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!”

²⁴ When the people saw him, they praised their god; **for they said:**

“Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, the destroyer of our land, And the one who multiplied our dead.”

²⁵ So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, “Call for Samson, that he may perform for us.” So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. **And they stationed him between the pillars**.

A. The Sport Made of Samson

- **The Philistines** began to laugh and chant at the champion.
- The Bible says that they made sport of him.
- They hurled their sarcasm at him.
- They insulted him.

B. The Sport Made of the Church

- There are some who may feel **that the Church has lost some of her former glory**.
- **I am not** here to argue that because due to the timing of my birth **I am confined to this generation**.
- **Satan** has stood long enough and made sport of the Church long enough.

The areas of the sport that Satan uses:

- **He has said** that there is such a thing as safe immorality and some have fallen for it.
- **He has given us** the concept that abortion is a political and social issue and not a moral issue.
- **He has given us** the concept that homosexuality is a political and social issue and not a moral issue.
 - Since 1964 violent crime has increased over 500%.
 - Since 1964 illegitimate births have increased over 400%.
 - Since 1964 divorces have increased over 400%.
 - Since 1964 children living in single-parent homes have increased 300%.
 - Since 1964 teenage suicide has increased 200%.
 - Since 1976, child abuse has increased 340%.
- There are 58% of America's children ***who do not live with a father in the home***.

But there are even more specifics to this sport that the devil has with the Church.

1. Fear

Gideon is a classic study of fear. God called him to do a job but he was too scared of the Midianites.

There is **enough power that God can give us that will push us beyond our fears.**

We're scared that **we cannot witness.**

- I am afraid of what people **might think.**
- I am afraid of what people **might say.**
- So we stand in the midst **of a hell-bound world.**
- The devil is using **our fear to make sport of us.**

Make a conscious choice -

Begin to change into the image that God desires for you...

God took Gideon and a straggly band of three-hundred men and went and created **a nightmare in the camp of the enemy.**

I am talking about asking somebody **to lead you to the pillar.**

2. Rejection - The devil often uses rejection to make sport of us.

A classic study of rejection would be the life of Jeremiah.

- He was a man **called to preach**
- **Israel** never **heard a word** or **heeded to a word** that he said.

They totally rejected him.

- He still **preached**. They still **laughed**. He still **wept**. They still **ignored him**.

But inside of him, **God had started a bonfire.**

It was such a fire that Jeremiah said - ***It's like a fire shut up in my bones*.**

It does not matter that you have been rejected in the past, the present, or certainly in the future, ***God still has a plan for your life*.**

3. Inadequacies – We say we cannot do it!!!

Moses was the man who said that he could not do it.

Let my people go, it sounds great but I can't talk.

So **Moses** kicked in with his excuses.

God said **enough** of the excuses.

- **Throw your rod down**, it turned into a snake.
- **Pick it up**, it become a rod again.
- **Hold your hand out**, it was leperous.
- **Put it under** your coat, it became clean.

I have got to get with the program.

You **don't** have to engineer it yourself, ***let God take care of the difficulties.***

4. Doubt

The devil takes **his doubt** and sits it right on our shoulder.

- You will **never do anything** for God.
- ***The devil chats to us*** during times of weariness, distress, and discouragement.
- The talk of the devil **inflames us** and **deteriorates our faith**.
- ***Doubt has got to go.***

C. The Prayer At The Pillar

Samson shimmies up to the pillars.

Not just any pillar but the pillars "where upon the house standeth."

Here is the champion of Israel, blind, chained, and being made fun of.

- **He does not stand a chance.....**
- There is but a sprinkling of the hair that **once was his glory.**

CLOSE: - Some of us sit here this morning in the same shape.

- You have been blinded by your past mistakes.
- Your hair is gone from the commitment that you lost.
- You are being scorned by the devil and by the world.

The only thing that you have left is like Samson, a prayer at the pillar.

- A maybe.....

Judges 16:28 - NIV

²⁸ Then Samson prayed to the Lord, “Sovereign Lord, remember me. **Please, God, strengthen me just once more**, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.”

- It just may be the day that I am avenged of my eyes.

Matthew 20:30-34 - NIV

³⁰ Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

³¹ The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

³² Jesus stopped and called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

³³ “Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.”

³⁴ Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

- The two blind men just had a maybe.
- Maybe this is the day that Jesus will heal us.

Samson and his prayer at the pillar was enough for God to move things out of his way.

This is our day. The day that the Church is going to flex her muscles.

- ***The devil has made sport of the Church and of you for long enough.***

