

The Wounded Warrior

Since 9/11, few organizations have done more to help the injured veterans and stir the morale than the “Wounded Warrior Project.” I recall being touched when I spoke at one of our church member’s dad’s funeral and the Wounded Warrior’s Blanket that was given to him for his contribution was proudly displayed in his embrace inside his coffin. It is a worthy project.

Mythology has the made-up hero of super human strength Hercules. In our faith, we have a real hero of super human strength Samson. When we write our biographies, we often gloss over the errors and exalt the person to the heights. God doesn’t take lightly anyone’s sins and tells the whole truth and nothing but the truth. In Samson, we have a warrior, but he is a wounded warrior. Samson did not have difficulties winning flesh and blood battles, but it was the spiritual and moral battles where he found his greatest wounding. Let’s enter the story of our wounded warrior.

I. THE ANGST

Judges 13:1, 2

A. A Country

For forty years Israel had been under the domination of the Philistines. She needed deliverance. The bondage Israel was experiencing was in direct correlation to the sins she committed as a nation.

Numbers 32:23: “But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.”

Compare Deuteronomy 4:7-9 and Judges 2: 7-14. I want to pinpoint these thoughts especially. Deuteronomy 4:7: “For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?” Judges 2:10b, 11, 14c: “...And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim...so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.”

B. A Wife

The deep, deep longings of a wife for a child are great. Elkanah attempted to comfort his childless wife Hannah by saying in I Samuel 1:8, “...why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?” Hannah prayed until God finally gave her the child she requested and she gave the child back to God. The truth is,

not even a husband can take the place of a child. We hear the angst of a childless mother's cry, all these years earlier in Genesis 30:1, "And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die."

II. THE ANSWER

JUDGES 13:14-24

A. A Savior

In Judges 13:18 and 19 we find these revealing facts--first the Angel of the LORD declares his name is "Secret." Then we are told the Angel of the LORD did "Wondrously." Both secret and wondrously come from the same word, "Wonderful." We would be remiss not to draw the parallel as found in Exodus 15:11: "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" And again, how can we fail to mention Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Manoah was quite sure he knew Who had just paid them a visit when he said in Judges 13:22, "And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God." We are promised more than help; we are promised the presence of God! Psalm 46:1: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

B. A Son

Judges 13:24: "And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him." God granted the wife of Manoah a son. And she named him Samson. The name Samson in Hebrew is "Shimshon" which means "sunlight." We might call Samson, "Sunny Boy." He certainly brought sunshine into the lives of his parents. There was to be a strict directive from the Lord as seen in Judges 13:7, 8, 12. Samson, as a perpetual Nazarite, is required to be super separated unto the Lord as directed in Numbers 6.

III. THE ABERRATION

Judges 14:1-16:3

A. Double-crossed

Aberration is a departure from the normal; more often, an unwelcome departure. In Judges 14:1-3 and Judges 16:1 Samson is making important life

decisions based on the lust of his flesh (I John 2:16; Galatians 5:16). We see Samson also breaking his Nazarite vow by approaching the carcass of the dead lion that he had killed earlier. He was going after the sweet honey. It would do well to keep in mind, it is never right to do wrong under any occasion. Honey is good, but for Samson it was a transgression in the way he obtained it. Samson's wife sold out to the Philistines against her husband. Then Samson's father-in-law gave her to another man. In angry response Samson burned a great portion of the Philistines' harvests with the use of torches and foxes he had captured. Then he slew 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey! Even after Samson had been in an illicit immorality, the next morning he was given strength to carry the gates of the city of Gaza all the way up to the top of the hill before Hebron.

It is rather hard to understand how God can keep using someone even after they have sinned against Him. Two thoughts come to mind: 1. Romans 2:4 teaches, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" God in His longsuffering ways is leading a wayward child to repentance by first using His goodness. It was the goodness of the prodigal's father that helped bring the son back from the far country (Luke 16:7). 2. God is working through and in spite of our failures to accomplish His greater good as illustrated in Judges 14:4.

B. Deceived

Judges 16:4-22. In Judges 16:16, the Bible says Delilah tempted Samson "...daily with her words..." Then in Judges 16:17 tells us that Samson "...told her all his heart...I shall become weak, and be like any other man." And that is exactly what happened. Judges 16:21 outlines the progression and end result of sin, 1) Sin blinds 2) Sin binds 3) Sin grinds.

IV. THE AVENGER

JUDGES 16:22-31

A. Favor restored

Judges 16:22

B. False assurance

Judges 16:23-25

C. Faith victory

Judges 16:26-31

Conclusion:

Romans 12:19: “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” Our Lord came into the temple of our sinfulness. Man mistreated Him and yet Christ took hold of the pillars of man’s sinful condition and pulled down all the pain and punishment of our sin, receiving the very vengeance of God. Because Christ received the payment of our sin, we may live the more abundant life on earth and heaven at the end.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.