

SAMSON

(Hebrews 11:32-38)

- Introduction:
1. The inclusion of Samson in Hebrews 11 is perplexing.
 - a. The Bible seems to present him as a rash, undisciplined, and immoral man at times.
 2. Yet, there he is, listed among those of whom the world is not even worthy.
 3. While we might be blinded by his mistakes, there is good reason for God to include him in this list.
 4. Let's examine several practical lessons that can be gleaned from Samson's life, and in the process of doing that, maybe we can also help to answer the question as to why he is included in Hebrews 11.

I. SAMSON WAS AIDED BY HIS UPBRINGING

- A. (Judges 13:3-5) The angel of the Lord appears to Manoah's wife.
- B. Manoah prayed to speak to the Angel of the Lord and ask him "what will be the boy's rule of life and his work (Judges 13:12).
 1. In other words, he wants to know what's expected of his son. He wants to know what the boy is to do.
- C. (Judges 13:13-14)
 1. The answer that the Angel of the Lord gives is instruction to the mother, not to the boy!
 2. The responsibility for a consecrated life did not start with the boy, but with his mother.
 3. Also, consider the argument for life beginning at conception.
 - a. Samson was to be consecrated to the lord for his entire life.
 - b. But note when this begins.
 - c. Not when he's born, but had implications for the mother while she was carrying him in her womb.
- E. Ills. Of British Prime Minister.
 1. He was bemoaning the hatred between Jews and Arabs.
 2. He said he wished that the Jews and the Arabs could sit down at a table and work out their problems like "good Christians."
 3. It's unreasonable to expect Jews and Arabs to behave like Christians, because they aren't. And it is just as unreasonable to expect our children to grow up to be good Christians if we do not instill within them a love of Jesus.
- F. (Genesis 12:8).
 1. Abraham pitched tent, and built altar.
 2. Today we built our tents and pitch our altars.
 3. When there is a conflict between our social obligations and our spiritual obligations, when does God ever win?
 4. We live in a "post Christian culture" today. The world knows we'll follow their lead, so little thought is given to our Christian convictions.
 - a. We see this played out in the number of school and sporting events that take place on Wednesday night and Sunday.

5. Ills. Of Wizard of Oz.
 - a. Whatever happened on the Yellow Brick Road?
 - b. I had no idea for years! All I knew was that Dorothy's house dropped on a wicked witch, she started skipping, then the next thing I knew she was throwing a bucket of water on another witch.
 - c. The reason I never knew what happened between those events is that this show came on once a year, (no VCR's or DVR's) but it aired on Sunday evening, when my family was worshipping.
- G. (Genesis 22:9-12).
 1. Ills. of Mt. Moriah experiences.
 2. I'm sure Isaac never forgot the day his father was willing to sacrifice him in obedience to God.
 3. Nor would Isaac ever wondered about his father's commitment to God after this event.
 4. Question: What "Mt. Moriah experiences" are we creating in our homes for our children, so that they will never question our love for God?

II. THE RECOGNITION OF TROUBLE FROM MIXED MARRIAGE

- A. (Judges 14:3).
- B. I know of no relationship that will have more bearing on one's eternity than that of marriage.
- C. I'm not saying to teach your children to marry Christians, I'm saying to teach your children to marry one who loves the Lord.
- D. Ills. stats from three churches.
 1. Bobby Key and the church in Miami, Oklahoma (1958-1977).
 - a. 79 married non-Christians and 57 of them had left the faith (72%).
 - b. 14 of the 79 converted their mates (17%).
 2. Gene Catterton, in Wynne, Arkansas (1962-1981).
 - a. 76 married non-Christians and 61 of them had left the faith (80%).
 - b. 11 of the 76 converted their mates (14%).
 3. Steve Higginbotham in Glasgow, KY (1989-2010).
 - a. 76 married non-Christians and 57 of them had left the faith (75%).
 - b. 4 of the 76 converted their mates (5%).
- E. Note the similarity of these stats! Though they take place over a period of 50 years, and though they take place in congregations from three different states, the results are almost identical!

III. THOUGH STRONG, SAMSON WAS VULNERABLE

- A. Isn't it ironic that Samson, noted for his great strength is equally noted for his great weaknesses?
- B. Ills. Moses (Numbers 12:3; Numbers 20:7-12).
 1. Moses was known for his meekness, but fell by losing control.
- C. Ills. Peter (Matthew 14:22-29; Matt. 26:35-51; Matt. 26:69-75).
 1. Peter was known for his courage, but he fell by his cowardice.

- D. There is vulnerability in one's strength.
 - 1. Maybe this is due to the fact that we always seek God's help with regard to our weaknesses, but when is the last time you prayed and sought God's help in matters you feel you have under control?

IV. **SAMSON REMINDS US THE NEED FOR SEXUAL PURITY**

- A. (Proverbs 6:27).
- B. Protect yourself, build hedges, establish policies that will protect yourself from sexual sin.
- C. Whatever momentary pleasure might be gained through such encounters, is more than swallowed up by the pain, shame, destruction, and regret.

V. **SAMSON WAS A MAN OF FAITH**

- A. Why Include Samson in the list of faith? Because he was just that; a man of great faith!
- B. But what of his mistakes?
- C. Is a true measure of one's life the mistakes he makes?
- D. What of the flaws of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Jephthah, Barak, etc.?
- E. (Psalm 25:7).
- F. Would you want someone to judge "who you are" by picking four or five isolated moments from your life?
 - 1. Could someone make you look really bad if they did this?
 - 2. Could your true character be overshadowed by those isolated events, if that's all they knew of you?
- G. Samson was more than his mistakes.
- F. Yes, Samson made some mistakes, but up to this point, he still had long hair. In other words, he was keeping his vow.
 - 1. This would have required a great deal of sacrifice and commitment.
 - 2. Notice how he dies - was he raising a defiant fist at God due to his self-inflicted troubles?
 - 3. No, his dying breath was a prayer for strength to fight against the enemies of God (Judges 16:28).
- G. Samson was a man who lived a consecrated life, risked his life, and fought against God's enemies to his dying breath.

- Conclusion:
- 1. Samson should give all of us hope.
 - 2. He reminds me that God can use, even me!
 - 3. It's not that God overlooks our weaknesses, rather he made provision for them.
 - 4. God doesn't need perfect men to fulfill his purposes; rather he fulfills his purposes by perfecting men.