

# Judges 14

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, we've got business meeting tonight, so you should have got prayer list and business meeting information when you came in.

So we do have that. Before we get into that, we'll take a few moments to get into the Word together. So we'll be in Judges chapter 14. Judges chapter 14 will be our text this evening.

I will tell you that we will be looking at the entire chapter, but it won't be as long of a message. I tried to condense for the sake of time.

Honestly, I didn't know I was on the timeline, but I did know we had a lot going on. So for the sake of time, I did try to condense it a little bit because honestly, I believe that Judges 14 and 15 are so wed together in one account that we do better to look at them as one story.

So I'm just going to ask that when we come back to the book of Judges, which may not be this Sunday night, normally on Wednesday and Sunday nights, we are going through, just going through the Bible.

[ 1 : 05 ] Just a heads up, Sunday night, we'll probably do a Q&A; time, okay? It's been a while since we've had that. I've had some asks, so Sunday night, Sunday is a very busy day here in the church world.

We've got Sunday morning services, we've got the men's fellowship, we've got deacons meeting, we've got all those things going on, but probably do just Q&A; time Sunday evening. So we'll come together and we'll disciple one another.

We'll kind of iron sharpen iron, hopefully, so you can be thinking on your questions now. So I say all that, but next time we get together in the book of Judges, I need you to hold on to the events of the 14th chapter because it's directly connected to Judges 15.

It's actually one of the main events in the life of Samson. The account of Samson is tied to two events, and both of those events revolve around a woman.

And both of them see great failures in that reality. One thing that we see in Judges 14 and 15, which is the first event, we are introduced to the Spirit of the Lord coming over him or empowering him to do things.

[ 2 : 19 ] By the time we get into the account in the 16th chapter, no longer do we have the mentioning of the Spirit of the Lord overcoming him or empowering him. Rather, he's just moving forward in his own spirit.

But as we begin to look at that in Judges 14 this evening, we'll read the text and we'll get into it together. Then Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines.

So he came back and told his father and mother, I saw a woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines. Now therefore, get her for me as a wife. Then his father and his mother said to him, Is there no woman among the daughters of your relatives or among our people that you go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?

But Samson said to his father, Get her for me, for she looks good to me. However, his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord, for he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. Now at that time, the Philistines were ruling over Israel.

Then Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother and came as far as the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion came roaring toward him. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily, so that he tore him as one tares a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand.

[ 3 : 26 ] But he did not tell his father or mother what he had done. So he went down and talked to the woman, and she looked good to Samson. And when he returned later to take her, he turned aside to look at the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the body of the lion.

So he scraped the honey into his hands and went on eating as he went. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they ate it. But he did not tell them that he had scraped the honey out of the body of the lion.

Then his father went down to the woman, and Samson made a feast there, for the young men customarily did this. And when they saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him. And then Samson said to them, Let me now propound a riddle to you.

If you will indeed tell it to me within the seven days of the feast and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen wraps and thirty changes of clothes. But if you are unable to tell me, then you shall give me thirty linen wraps and thirty changes of clothes.

And they said to him, Propound your riddle, that we may hear it. So he said to them, Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet. But they could not tell the riddle in three days.

[ 4 : 31 ] Then it came about on the fourth day that they said to Samson's wife, Entice your husband so that he would tell us the riddle, or we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us to impoverish us?

Is this not so? And Samson's wife wept before him and said, You only hate me, and you do not love me. You have propounded a riddle to the sons of my people and have not told it to me. And he said to her, Behold, I have not told it to my father or mother, so should I tell you.

However, she wept before him seven days while their feast lasted. On the seventh day he told her because she pressed him so hard. She then told the riddle to the sons of her people. And so the men of the city came to him on the seventh day before the sun went down.

What is sweeter than honey and what is stronger than a lion? And he said to them, If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle. Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of them and took their spawn, gave the changes of clothes to those who told the riddle.

And his anger burned, and he went up to his father's house, but Samson's wife was given to his companion who had been his friend. Not really a course on etiquette there, right?

[ 5 : 45 ] I always remind husbands, this is no way to talk about your wife. If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have known my riddle.

Yet we're in the book of Judges when each man does what is right in his own eyes. We see in the 14th chapter the faithfulness in spite of failure.

Faithfulness in spite of failure. The Bible tells us in the book of Hebrews that Samson did things by faith. That by faith he delivered the people of Israel.

Yet he is not faithful. He does not walk in faithfulness or righteousness. As we have said, and we've looked at it, Samson is probably the lowest of the judges.

He is not the standard that we should strive for. Rather, he is the one that we should avoid.

Because with each successive judge, the morals and the standards are getting lesser and lesser and lesser.

[ 6 : 41 ] And then we're finally at the last one, which is Samson. And we're really at the bottom of the barrel. And though he does some mighty deeds and he's very strong, and the Bible says in the book of Hebrews that he does things by faith, he is definitely not a standard of righteousness and faithfulness.

So when we say faithfulness in spite of failure, we're definitely not talking about Samson's faithfulness. Rather, we're talking about how God overrules the efforts of man to fulfill his purposes. How God has the power and the authority to overrule the efforts of man to fulfill his plans and purposes.

Just because God, we need to be careful here, just because God can overrule it and does overrule it and does use it to fulfill his purpose does not mean that what Samson did was endorsed by God. because we have to say that and we have to answer that because the Bible cannot contradict itself. And I'll show you why in just a moment. So we see God's faithfulness in spite of man's failures.

[ 7 : 47 ] And that's really the theme throughout the book of Judges that God is faithful. He is the one who redeems. He's the one who restores. He's the one who... You remember the people weren't even crying out for a deliverer here and yet God is raising them up.

The first thing we see is the sinful desire of Samson. It says, So Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman. Timnah is about three to four miles away from where Samson lives.

It's not that far away but Timnah is the land of the Philistines. It is the land of the enemies of the people of God. And we understand this, that sin always starts when we go down into the presence of the enemy rather than staying into the presence of the Lord.

And he went down into the enemy's territory and you hang out in enemy territory long enough and you're going to end up in situations you shouldn't be in. But rather than going down into enemy territory to fight a battle, he went down into enemy territory to look around.

See, the thing he should have been battling he began to look at. And the thing he should have been fighting he began to be longing. And the thing that he should have been destroying he began to be coveting.

[ 8 : 56 ] And it says that he went down and he saw a woman and she looked good. And now all of a sudden we enter into what the Bible says the lust of the eyes. Because the sinful desire starts with being somewhere we shouldn't be and looking in places we shouldn't look.

Whatever that place is. We know that Samson's one great weakness according to the text appears to be ladies. We see that in the book of Judges.

He's strong enough to resist to kill a lion. He's strong enough to use the jawbone of a donkey to slay a thousand. He's strong enough to kill and to break ropes and to kill everybody that comes against him.

But he can't resist the pleadings and the begging of a woman. We see it. But one thing we notice is this sinful desire that he goes down he looks and he's in the land of Timid and he sees a woman and he wants that woman to be his wife so he does something that is really contrary to customs. He goes back to his father and mother and says I saw a woman and I want her to be my wife go get her for me. The marriages were prearranged at this time. Now that's nothing new. I mean the mother and the father would prearrange a wedding but it was very unfitting for the son to tell them who to go get.

[ 10 : 07 ] It was usually the parents' responsibilities. But he tells them and they say well why did you go there? You shouldn't look there. Did you not find any among your own relatives or your own people? And he says no I found someone now get her for me.

I want her. Now this is where we have to say that this can't be of the Lord. I know God uses this. I know what the text says and we'll see it in just a moment. But yet God had also said that they should not intermarry with the Philistines.

And so scripture will never contradict itself. God had told them not to give their sons to the daughters of the inhabitants of the land and to not take the daughters of the inhabitants of the land and give them to their sons or the sons of the inhabitants of the land and give them to their daughters.

The intermarriage with the Philistines was absolutely forbidden. But yet because of this sinful desire Samson says that's who I want. Go get her for me.

Now the text says that the father did not understand that it was of the Lord for he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines.

[ 11 : 10 ] Now the reality is is that in spite of or because of however you want to read it Samson's sinful desires God was using him to create an occasion to bring about the battle that was supposed to happen anyway.

Just because God uses the situation doesn't mean Samson should have ever been there to begin with. It was his sin that brought him there. It was his desire and the lust of the eyes that led him to this place and he was completely disobeying everything God had commanded his people to do but yet the Lord was using this to create an occasion to fight the Philistines.

And we don't dare look at Samson and say oh wow look at what Samson does rather we stand amazed at how God is using even this to bring about his purposes and his plans.

And the wonder is that even in Samson's faithlessness God is faithful. this sinful desire that was putting him in a place he should have never been God was going to use it simply because God had a plan.

God had a purpose. The second reality we see is the broken vow. Now Samson was a Nazirite. He was a Nazirite from the womb.

[ 12 : 37 ] Remember the angel of the Lord had declared this to Samson's mother. And his mother said he would be a Nazirite from the womb to the tomb all of his life. Now to be a Nazirite meant there were certain things that he couldn't do.

He couldn't eat of the vine or drink anything from the vine. No eating of grapes no drinking of wine or nothing like that. He couldn't touch a dead body. He couldn't defile himself with anything that was unclean even if it was his mother and father.

He couldn't do any of these things. Yet because of his sinful desire that vow that he was committed to for life was looked down upon and really not even considered.

Because it says as they went down to Timna and I like how Warren Wiersbe points this out because I wouldn't have caught it if he didn't point it out. It says they came to the vineyards of Timna.

Now a vineyard is not a good place to hang out if you're a Nazirite because grapes grow in a vineyard and you're not supposed to be eating anything from the vine. It says when they came as far as the vineyards of Timna a lion came upon him.

[ 13 : 42 ] Now we know his mother and father are not with him so evidently he'd went a little further into the vineyard to you know eat some of the grapes that he wasn't supposed to be eating more than likely and the reason we know his mother and father wasn't with him is because when the lion came upon him and he killed him in the spirit of the power of the Lord his parents didn't know about it.

Now a lion doesn't charge and you're standing right next to it and you're unaware of it right? They didn't know anything about it and then when they come back later and he goes to the carcass his parents know nothing about it so he had to be at least some distance away from them so we see that even though the spirit and the power of the Lord is overpowering him and showing him that through his presence he is able to overcome even these great challenges he kills the lion he's hanging out in the vineyard he shouldn't be in to begin with and then he goes down and says and Samson threw a feast now at a wedding feast we know the only other wedding feast we find in scripture they all have wine Jesus' first miracle was done in a wedding feast where he had the jugs that he turned water into wine and that was traditional right so he's throwing a feast and it's a seven day feast the wedding ceremony itself is a very short ceremony the wedding celebration is a long celebration so it's a seven day feast and he throws this festival there and surely there is wine and the vow again is broken on his way to the feast after he went and he saw the woman they were betrothed he went back home and sometime later he came back either months or as much as a year later he came back he turned aside he saw the dead carcass of the lion and he saw that in the lion there was a honeycomb in there so he reached in and he touched the dead carcass of the lion so now he's drinking of the vine and he's touching the dead animals the only thing he has not broken up to this point is he's not cut his hair because when we're walking in sinful desires any promises we've made to God are soon forgotten and when we're walking according to the lust of the flesh no matter what we've dedicated to him and no matter how much we've committed to him those things are not easily held on to and vow after vow after vow is broken and yet God is still faithful because the question we have to ask ourselves is does

God have to use him is God bound to use him well according to his word he is because remember what the angel of the Lord said he will begin to deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines he made that declaration before he was even conceived in his mother's womb he had made this declaration that this is who I'm going to use and he breaks the vows we see the sinful desires which lead to broken vows and the third thing is disrupted plans Samson goes there and when he shows up and scholars kind of go back and forth they bring 30 men to be his companions because this would kind of be like his the groomsmen right that's a big wedding some say this kind of shows that Samson's family must have had some money because to have 30 groomsmen or friends of the groom is pretty astounding others believe that the reason the

Philistines brought 30 in was to put them there as guards because you know Samson's a pretty big guy in case y'all have missed the story a little bit he's got a lot of strength and so they thought well we don't want anything kind of go sideways here we're overruling them right now we're ahead over them he's not from us so they bring the 30 in but either way Samson decides to have a little fun at his party he propounds his riddle you know the riddle out of the eater came something to eat out of the strong came something sweet now we know what it is because we've read the story they don't know what it is because they weren't there even his father and mother don't know what it is and he hasn't told anyone and they get really upset because they can't figure it out so they start pressing his new bride his wife now the the the custom was to come together to exchange the vows to have a seven days celebration sometimes 14 days celebration at the end of which the wedding would be consummated made official when the two would go together and the two would become one so at

this point they're legally married the wedding has not yet been consummated but they are legally wed right so they're they're waiting until that day and building up until that day of consummation and and here he propounds this riddle and they they can't figure it out and you know changes of clothes weren't like us right I could go home right now and get you some there whatever they had is what they wore so essentially what he's saying is if you can't tell me the riddle you're going to give me the clothes off your own back and they go to his wife and say are you trying to you know fleece us here I mean what's going on are you trying to to put us down the only reason you called us here was to you know to make us spend all this exuberant amount of money we can't do this and and so they they challenge her say find out the answer if you don't we're going to burn you and your father's house down that's a lot of pressure so she goes before Samson you read the story she's weeping and crying and he won't tell her and she finally puts on a good enough show that he tells her that's a recurrent theme in Samson's life right we'll see that again later and so they come to him on the last day at the last hour literally right before the sun goes down and they tell him the answer to his riddle they say what is sweeter than honey and what is stronger than a lion and Samson responds immediately if you had not plowed with my heifer you would have not known my riddle and he gets angry and now we read again the spirit of the Lord overcame him mightily and he went to [19:40] Ashkelon Ashkelon is about 30 miles away Ashkelon is in the heart of the Philistine territory is actually one of the major cities of the Philistine so he went there so that when he would go there and do what he does that he would have time to get back and you know word doesn't travel very fast at that time so he goes there and now one man's sinful desire led to him breaking vows which leads to him killing 30 people but this is what God had raised him up for right God had raised him up to battle the Philistines and yet now he's vengefully killing the word actually there in the original wording there is that he went in his anger and he spirit of the Lord came upon him and went down to Ashkelon and he killed 30 of them and took their spoil and gave the changes of clothes to all who hold him in real it means he killed them violently it's like a wrestling term like he literally just destroyed them he got the changes of clothes and he brought them and gave them to the men and he was so mad he went to his father so notice what never happened the weddings never consummated right the plans were disrupted because in all of his scheming and all of his plotting still God was using him see in his faithlessness God's faithful and never consummate the marriage he goes back to his father's house if we were to continue reading in the 15th chapter you'll find that when he cools down he tries to go back and get his bride he finds out she was given to his best man it's what we find at the end of the 14th chapter that when he left they said oh well he'll never come back so they gave her to the best man which again just starts another series of events we're not going to get into tonight but here's the question we have to ask ourselves in reading portions of scripture like this and we're going to get into our business meeting in just a second here's the question we have to ask ourselves the plans and purposes of God will come about that's settled what

God has declared is going to happen God was going to use Samson to begin to deliver his people from the hand of the Philistines what God has declared is going to happen the choice we have to make is are we going to follow him in faithful obedience according to those plans or is he going to have to overrule our actions to bring them about it is not whether or not what God has declared is going to happen the question is where are we going to fit into it so much better to be those who walk in obedience and say this is what God has declared is going to happen I'm going to walk in faithful obedience I'm going to fight the battles he's called me to fight rather than him having to overrule my sinful actions to bring them about because as we continue to read in the 15th chapter the spirit of the Lord comes upon him you know he sets the fields on fire he rips the gates of the city down he the job on the donkey he prays here in the 15th chapter he has a prayer answer then we get into chapter 16 by the way there's no more spirit of the Lord there's no more spirit of the Lord it's the power of

Samson because we fail to walk in obedience long enough God will bring about what he declared is going to bring about but we'll end up doing it in our own power and at his death he finally accomplishes he prays the second time in his life right before he dies Lord give me strength one more time pushes the pillars remember that there's it by faith there at the end of his life may we not wait to that final hour to try to exhibit some faith but rather may we walk in faithful obedience daily so that God does not have to overrule our efforts to bring about his purposes because what God has said is going to happen it is Samson is a case study of the reality that we find at the end of the

book of Judges each man did what was right in his own eyes Samson was going by his eyes until the Lord so saw to it that he no longer had eyes and when he no longer had eyes he finally could cry out in faith but here we still see him walking in faithlessness and in failures and God still being faithful

God is the one we turn to and trust in not Samson God is the one we count on to deliver from our enemies not Samson because he overrules even man's grandest efforts to walk in failure Judges chapter 14 all right so Thank you.

Thank you.