

Last week we looked at Jdg14&15 as we compared the difference between
The WAY of the WORLD vs The WAY of the WORD

Today I want to look at Judges 16 as we look at the UNDERPERFORMING LIFE OF SAMSON.

Judges 16:1-31 v1 One day Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her. v2 The people of Gaza were told, "Samson is here!" So they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the city gate. They made no move during the night, saying, "At dawn we'll kill him." v3 But Samson lay there only until the middle of the night. Then he got up and took hold of the doors of the city gate, together with the two posts, and tore them loose, bar and all. He lifted them to his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron. v4 Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. v5 The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver." v6 So Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued." v7 Samson answered her, "If anyone ties me with seven fresh thongs that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man." v8 Then the rulers of the Philistines brought her seven fresh thongs that had not been dried, and she tied him with them. v9 With men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the thongs as easily as a piece of string snaps when it comes close to a flame. So the secret of his strength was not discovered. v10 Then Delilah said to Samson, "You have made a fool of me; you lied to me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied." v11 He said, "If anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used, I'll become as weak as any other man." v12 So Delilah took new ropes and tied him with them. Then, with men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the ropes off his arms as if they were threads. v13 Delilah then said to Samson, "Until now, you have been making a fool of me and lying to me. Tell me how you can be tied." He replied, "If you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on the loom and tighten it with the pin, I'll become as weak as any other man." So while he was sleeping, Delilah took the seven braids of his head, wove them into the fabric v14 and tightened it with the pin. Again she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and pulled up the pin and the loom, with the fabric. v15 Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." v16 With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death. v17 So he told her everything. "No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man." v18 When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, "Come back once more; he has told me everything." So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. v19 Having put him to sleep on her lap, she called a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him. v20 Then 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. v21 Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took

him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in the prison. v22 But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved. v23 Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands." v24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, "Our god has delivered our enemy into our hands, the one who laid waste our land and multiplied our slain." v25 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, v26 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." v27 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. v28 Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "O Sovereign LORD, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." v29 Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, v30 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. v31 Then his brothers and his father's whole family went down to get him. They brought him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had led Israel twenty years.

Introduction

I am sure most of us know people who not lived up to the potential that they displayed in their early years. I remember a young man who was a few years ahead of me at school, here at Dale. He was the Dux Scholar for his year group. Everybody expected him to go to university and be one of the top students there as well.

Imagine our surprise when one of the teachers in my Matric year used him as an example of a failure. For he had gone to University on a full Scholarship, with pocket money included. Unfortunately, he had never learned "self-discipline". For, while he was still at home, his parents kept him under their thumb. He wasn't allowed to go to parties, hardly played any sport, and a great expectation was placed on him to achieve academically. HOWEVER, when he got to University, he was free of the protected confines of his home. Life was one party after the next, and in the end, he failed every subject in the final first year exams, and subsequently lost his Scholarship and his place at University.

Samson was such a person

In every way he was superior to all those around him. He was incredibly strong. He was a phenomenal warrior. He was a natural leader. He was chosen by GOD. He was healthy. A teetotaler – he never drank. He was brave – he fought lions. He was clever – he could make up riddles. The girls loved him, and he could have anyone he chose.

BUT HE HAD A PROBLEM

WHEN BONDAGE TO SIN GIVES WAY TO VICTORY

Before we can talk about VICTORY OVER SIN, we need to talk about BONDAGE TO SIN:

1. EVERYONE WHO SINS IS A SLAVE TO SIN.

Judges 16 v1 One day Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her. v2 The people of Gaza were told, "Samson is here!" So they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the city gate. They made no move during the night, saying, "At dawn we'll kill him." v3 But Samson lay there only until the middle of the night. Then he got up and took hold of the doors of the city gate, together with the two posts, and tore them loose, bar and all. He lifted them to his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron. v4 Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah.

Samson had a problem with desire!!!

While Samson could have had the choice of any Israelite maiden, he seemed intent on pursuing relationships with godless women from Israel's enemies. In chapter 15 he was betrothed to marry a Philistine woman. When she broke his confidence, he went away to rethink the betrothal, and when he returned to carry through with the marriage, he discovered her father had given her in marriage to his best friend.

At the start of chapter 16 we have him going to sleep with a prostitute, and by verse 4 he has fallen for another Philistine woman named Delilah. I wonder whether the Philistine leadership knew this was Samson's weakness and whether they used the women as bait to tempt Samson into making a mistake.

Friends understand this:

Satan will always tempt you where you are weakest

THE BIBLE IS CLEAR

***Romans 6:16** Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey--whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?*

EVERYONE WHO SINS IS A SLAVE TO SIN

Did you know that everybody that has done serious scientific research into the sexual behaviour of adults has discovered that, "the greater the number of sexual partners you have before you get married, the greater the risk of committing adultery in marriage."

There is a very interesting study on a website called "The Institute for Family Studies", date 14 October 2019, by James L. McQuivey, with the title "The Road to Infidelity Passes Through Multiple Sexual Partners."

As we think about **BONDAGE TO SIN** notice:

2. TEMPTATION IS RELENTLESS.

v5 The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver." v6 So Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued." v7 Samson answered her, "If anyone ties me with seven fresh thongs that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man." v8 Then the rulers of the Philistines brought her seven fresh thongs that had not been dried, and she tied him with them. v9 With men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the thongs as easily as a piece of string snaps when it comes close to a flame. So the secret of his strength was not discovered. v10 Then Delilah said to Samson, "You have made a fool of me; you lied to me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied." v11 He said, "If anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used, I'll become as weak as any other man." v12 So Delilah took new ropes and tied him with them. Then, with men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the ropes off his arms as if they were threads. v13 Delilah then said to Samson, "Until now, you have been making a fool of me and lying to me. Tell me how you can be tied." He replied, "If you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on the loom and tighten it with the pin, I'll become as weak as any other man." So while he was sleeping, Delilah took the seven braids of his head, wove them into the fabric v14 and tightened it with the pin. Again she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and pulled up the pin and the loom, with the fabric. v15 Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." v16 With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death. v17 So he told her everything. "No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man."

Listen to what is written in:

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 *Brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. v2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. v3 They all ate the same spiritual food v4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. v5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. v6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. v7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." v8 We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did--and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. v9 We should not test the Lord, as some of them did--and were killed by snakes. v10 And do not grumble, as some of them did--and were killed by the destroying angel. v11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come. v12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! v13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

We are reminded in **1 Peter 5:8** *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

Even Jesus taught us to pray: "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION!!!"

As we think about **BONDAGE TO SIN** notice:

3. WHEN SIN HAS YOU IN IT'S GRIP, GOD WILL FEEL FAR AWAY.

The saddest verse in this chapter is :

*v20 Then 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.***

We also read in .

Revelation 3:15-16 *I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! v16 So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of my mouth.*

We also read in .

Hebrews 6:4-6 *It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, v5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, v6 if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.*

**SATANS GREATEST VICTORY IN THESE DAYS, IS NOT
THAT PEOPLE ARE ANTI-GOD,
THEY JUST DON'T PAY HIM ANY ATTENTION.**

Now, while **SIN MAY SEEK TO HOLD YOU IN BONDAGE**, I want you to rejoice by knowing:

4. WHERE SIN ABOUND, GRACE SUPERABOUNDS

There is one little word that is often found in the Bible to refer to the work of GOD. In this chapter it is found in verse 22:

v22 *But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.*

The Bible is full of these pivotal moments where we find the phrase "BUT GOD"

Genesis 8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.

Genesis 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman."

Genesis 21:12 But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

Genesis 41:16 "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."

Genesis 45:7 But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

*2 Chronicles 20:15 He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. **For the battle is not yours, but God's.***

Psalms 49:15 But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself.

Psalms 73:26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Luke 12:20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

Acts 2:24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

Acts 3:15 You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

Acts 10:40 but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen.

Acts 13:30 But God raised him from the dead,

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Corinthians 1:27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

Hebrews 3:4 For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.

Hebrews 5:5 So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

Now, while SIN MAY SEEK TO HOLD YOU IN BONDAGE, I want you to rejoice by knowing:

5. GODS STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT WHEN WE ARE WEAK.

v23 Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands." v24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, "Our god has delivered our enemy into our hands, the one who laid waste our land and multiplied our slain." v25 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, v26 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." v27 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. v28 Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "O Sovereign LORD, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." v29 Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, v30 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. v31 Then his brothers and his father's whole family went down to get him. They brought him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had led Israel twenty years.

When he appeared to be the weakest, GOD USED HIM TO ACHIEVE HIS PURPOSE

CONCLUSION

**NO MATTER HOW BAD YOU ARE OR HAVE BEEN,
GOD CAN USE YOU FOR HIS GLORY.**