

Samson: Weak Character, Strong Faith

Ponder: Can God use you?

Scripture: “O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!” (Jud. 16:28, NKJV).

How thankful we should be that God condescends to use imperfect people – indeed, deeply flawed people – to accomplish His purpose! That doesn’t mean He approves of sin; but it shows that His grace and power are greater than human sin.

Among the great people of faith in Hebrews 11, many had serious defects. Think of Samson (Heb. 11:32, see Jud. 13-16).

From birth, Samson was under the Nazirite vow which, among other things, forbade cutting his hair (see Num. 6). As long as he kept this vow, God gave him superhuman strength to fight Israel’s Philistine oppressors. Samson brought God’s judgment upon the Philistines for twenty years (Jud. 16:31).

Self-will and a weakness for women hindered Samson from being the man he ought to have been. Despite his parents’ protests, he insisted on marrying a Philistine woman. “Get her for me, for she pleases me well” (Jud. 14:3). Fortunately, God used that situation to work against the Philistines.

After the death of his wife, Samson became enamored with the infamous Delilah. How could he not see through her scheme as she pestered him to tell her the secret of his great strength? Every time, she had the Philistines ready to kill or capture him. Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me! But Samson let himself be fooled three times and then told her the real secret the fourth time!

God worked through Samson despite the man’s obvious and serious shortcomings. No doubt his twenty year career involved more events than are recorded in Judges, but our attention is drawn to the time he killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey (15:15-16). And of course there is his grand finale as he broke pillars supporting the temple of Dagon, killing more Philistines at his death than he had killed in his life (16:30).

Yes, God’s grace and power are greater than human sin. That includes yours and mine!

Song: “Grace Greater Than Our Sin”

Prayer: Gracious Father, we praise You for Your kindness in letting us serve You despite our sinfulness. Help us to be what You want us to be. In Jesus’ name, Amen.