

**Samson,**  
**Who Could Be God's Instrument,**  
**Despite His weaknesses.**



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**Despite His weaknesses.**

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# Abstract

Samson was a prophet assigned by God to save the Israel people from the Philistines. He was assigned this position from the womb, making him a Nazirite from birth. Even from the womb his mother offered him to God and God's purpose. This is the main theme that is carried throughout this book. Despite Samson's mistakes, character delinquency, and immoral behavior within his own private affairs, God's unrelenting power and grace still used him and all his inadequacies for God's ultimate purpose.

The story of Samson not only shows us what it means for a human being to devote them self to God, but also, and more importantly, how God will use us for His purpose despite all our faults, defects, or sins. This is a story of victory and hope. A story that teaches us to see the miracle of God working in our lives. Even though we may be a violent storm fighting against the will of God, He will prevail and we will always come to realize His presence and purpose in all we have done and will do.

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## Introduction

Amongst all the leaders in the bible who do not fit their calling at all, Samson and Jonah would be them. But Samson is far more criticized than the prophet Jonah, because he gave himself to dissipation. We tend to overly criticize him in the realm of morality. Therefore, the advice we get from the story of Samson is mainly moral advice. But we have to deal with the assessment and advice of Samson in another way. In this book, I will focus on the following.

- With God's sovereign providence, He used the serious weaknesses of Samson to accomplish His calling.
- The bible valued him not as a prodigal hero but as a faithful one.
- God is generous to the fallen.



Samson is not a representative of failures who faced a tragic ending. He was a faithful hero who sacrificed himself for God. Even though he fell by his weaknesses and misdeeds, he was a patient person grinding grain in a stone mill without losing his faith in God's grace and restoration. Although he brought calamity upon himself, in spite of that, God turned Samson's disaster into a blessing.

"The Lord your God... turned the curse into a blessing for you. (Deuteronomy 23:5)

God sometimes punishes us frightfully. The Israel people were also punished as captives in Babylon.

They were taken from their country and became slaves to a foreign country. They wept hanging their harps on the poplars by the rivers of Babylon when they remembered Jerusalem. (Psalms 137:1~4) The land of Babylon was their desert. But Babylon became the place for “receiving a blessing at last” (Deuteronomy 8:16) after being tested and forced to lower themselves.

Samson became a captive of the Philistines and had to pay the price for the shame he brought upon himself. He called out to God anew, being humbled to confess in his desert. In Samson’s desert there were swarms of wild animals and fire snakes and everyday the fear of death haunted him. Samson wept hanging his harp on the prison of the Philistines. But all shames and the bitter cups of suffering were from God’s gracious providence to lower and train him, and to finally give him a blessing.

Both the Jews who were dragged into Babylon and Samson who was dragged into Philistine territory experienced God’s amazing salvation and mercy. God’s people can fall down, but the bible says, “Though he stumble, he will not fall.” (Psalms 37:24) because the Lord upholds him with His hand. God “turns the curse into a blessing for His people.” (Deuteronomy 23:5) People believing in this mercy and the power of God, will be blessed by God in the end.

Samson’s story gives us this question. Is there a hope for those who bring calamity upon them selves? The answer is surely ‘yes’.

Lee Jung Soo

## 1. The Last Prophet (Judges 13:1~14:9)

“For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son: and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson.”(Judges 13:5,24)

Samson was the last prophet among 14 prophets of Israel. The story of Samson appears from chapter 13 to 16 in the book of Judges. Similar to that of Gideon, this is the largest amount of chapters assigned, in comparison to any of the other prophets of Israel in the Book of Judges. The Book of Judges in the Bible deals with the historical events of Israel, three generations after those who were saved from Egypt.

Let us think about the major national historical events that happened in any particular country. The generation, who had to go through the liberation from colonial rule, or the victory of war, could feel a sense of nostalgia and direct personal attachment when recalling what had happened to them. The next generation will grow up hearing from their parents, and the generation after that will grow up hearing about what their parents had often heard. However, those historical events are not even close to being vivid experiences to them. Therefore, the event contributes no emotional connection or feelings of inspiration to them personally. The past events were far from their reality, but instead, they were simply indirectly told and passed down from their ancestors.

In the case of Korea, March 1st, 1919 was when we declared our Independence and protested to liberate from Japan in a nationwide movement. That is why we commemorate March 1st annually, and celebrate this day with many events. However, our younger generation in modern society does not have a meaningful memory or visual impression of this precious day in our history. Reflecting carefully, it has only been less than a century. Another example is the Korean War. Even though it happened as early back as 1950, it is quite unfamiliar to our new generation in Korea.

This is similar to that of Europe as few soldiers of the Second World War are alive today. People who remember the war are dissatisfied with the new generation's disorder and self-indulgence. The Israel people served Egypt for 400years as slaves, but God liberated them by the power of the Lord. The Pharaoh received 10 curses from God. After the Red sea was divided, the Israel people crossed the sea as if it was dry land. Next, the sea went back into place, coming back together again. The Israel people who experienced and witnessed it with their own eyes should never forget this miracle. (Exodus14)

After this event, the Israel people continuously disobeyed God in the desert. God left them to live in the desert for 40years. During this time, the entire generation who experienced the miraculous event of the Red sea died. From their death only a few people were left who could vividly remember God's amazing grace and supernatural miracle. After that and during the next 40years, Joshua and his army attacked and




conquered the Canaanite lands. When Joshua died, it had been 80 years since the Israel people experienced salvation out of Egypt by the blood of the lamb, and there was nobody who could remember exactly what had happened in their miraculous past. Judges is the book that dealt with and recorded the events right after this time.

The Israel people who entered the land of Canaan worshiped and devoted themselves to God. However, their victory of life in remembrance of all the miracles of God done in Egypt did not last long. The period of the Book of Judges consisted of the historical events that took place after three generations of leaving Egypt. They didn't need God as desperately in comparison to the first generation. They were even satisfied to partially conquer the land of Canaan even though God had promised them the entire land. They wanted to live for their own comfort and began to copy the life of the gentiles of Canaan. As a result, they were slowly being drawn into the lifestyles of the gentiles and ideology of culture and religion. Finally, during the entire period represented in the Book of Judges, they were utterly spoiled and addicted to the worshipping of idols.

It is ridiculous that they worshipped idols after all the hardships suffered from the grip of King Pharaoh and the 40 years experienced in the desert, until finally reaching the Promised Land. It was even less than a century ago that they were freed from Egypt. They were more corrupt now than before, instead of becoming the new people of God that was expected of them.

But the even more surprising thing is, God sought to provide another way of salvation for them despite their continuous insults and betrayal towards God. But, they had to be once again oppressed by foreign forces because of their worshipping of idols. Every time they suffered, they cried out for God, and God saved them from suffering through the setting up of prophets to provide help and guidance. This endless routine and pattern of continually turning to worship idols and being saved by prophets was repeated throughout the Book of Judges. (Judges 13:1)

The more the Israel people repeated to sin and continued to fail, the more they fell down to the deep mire. Their existence itself was at stake because of the pressure from the Philistines, and therefore, they needed a savior like Samson. Samson was the first prophet who started to save Israel from the Philistines. (Judges 15:5)  King David was victorious for Israel. (Samuel 8:1)

The Philistines were the most powerful country to oppress the Israel people. To be free from their hands it took several generations to pass. It was Samson who rose in rebellion against the Philistines for the first time. He was devoted to weaken the power of the Philistines, so they could never recover, by attacking their center, their heart. He was the person who received an historical mission to utterly destroy the Philistines, the enemy of Israel. And thanks to Samson, the next generation could drive them out. In the aspect of national security, he made a great contribution as a prophet.

## The Birth of Samson

There was a clan by the name of the Danites among the Israelites. Manoah, from the Danites tribe, had a wife who was barren. One day an angel of God appeared to her. (Judges 13:2~3) God promised her to conceive a son and instructed her that her son must be a Nazirite. Manoah's wife was not allowed to drink wine or eat any detestable thing. (Judges 13:4,7) So Samson was a Nazirite, set apart for God from birth. A pledge of a Nazirite is the ceremony instituted as law in the book of Numbers, chapter 6. This was an individual spiritual devotion in the case of a man or woman wanting to offer them selves to God, differently and separately from priests. As a Nazirite you must never drink wine, cut your hair, or enter into where the dead are placed, in order to prove your holy separation. But this was a volunteered position or duty that was usually only valid for a specific period of time. However, Samson was assigned a very unique mission. Even from birth, he was ready to be a prophet for Israel. An angel of God announced Samson's birth, and God also answered Manoah's offering of sacrificing a young goat by miraculously setting the altar on fire to burn the sacrifice. This kind of supernatural miracle was to prove Samson's mission was to be special. (Judges 13:19~20,23) And surely, as God promised, Samson was born. He had extraordinary health and a unique character. He overwhelmed people and handled things bravely and without fear.

## Assessment on Samson

People usually assess Samson in two ways. One is to regard him as a brave hero or to view him like some kind of Hollywood movie star. He is a representative figure for unpolished beauty. He broke through the wall at the main gate and killed thousands of people, destroying the temple by himself. He is a mythical and powerful figure.

The other way is to view Samson simply as a figure of moral advice in what not to do. For example Samson sought out women, played excessively, and constantly bet for high stakes. His character was too extreme and fueled with revengeful thoughts. And therefore, it is said that even though he received a great gift from God, his lust and desires ended his life as a character of tragedy and disgrace. But this moral advice is a secondary factor of concern. Obviously we can learn many things from Samson's disgraceful behavior. However if we only focus on his big wrongdoings, he'll be left as a failure in the Bible.

Was he really a failure? Hebrews in the Bible didn't think this way. His name is held beside other great masters of faith. This might be shocking. If a Hebrew writer didn't classify Samson to be great, nobody would think of Samson as on the same list of God's great people like David and Samuel. This is similar to Lot. If Peter hadn't called Lot righteous, who would have thought such a thing? Peter described Lot as one "with a righteous soul."(2Peter2:8) And "Lot, a righteous man was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men."(2Peter 2:7) With our own judgment, this righteous description would fit for Abraham. However,

the Bible's account for what is important in an individual is under the work of redemption and the quality of inner faith. "And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets... These were all commended for their faith."(Hebrews 11:32~33, 39)

Judging Samson by his outward appearance, he abandoned himself to dissipation and led an intemperate life. But if you follow his description carefully and keep a writer's intention in mind, Samson's behavior is not just caused by his obvious vigorous character or temper. For example, when Samson went down to Timnah to marry, he desperately accomplished his will in spite of opposition from his parents, and completely looking like a disobedient son. Of course this is part of his stubborn nature. But because he believed this way would help him in order to accomplish God's will toward Philistine, he couldn't give way to his parents wishes and concerns. (Judges 14:1~4) Also, on the way to Timnah, Samson tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done. Why? Because he had faith that God would use this incident to attack the Philistines. (Judges 14:5~6) He didn't tell anybody the importance of the incident so not to ruin God's plan. As the spirit of the Lord came upon him giving him the power to tear apart the lion with his bare hands, he was waiting for this kind of day to come again, but this time to be used for revenge against the Philistines.

In another example, due to the Philistines threat,

the clan of Judah handed Samson over to the Philistine soldiers. But, Samson let the soldiers tie him up and do whatever they wanted because he knew and believed the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him with great power and he could beat them all. (Judges 15:9~17) And that is why if we don't try to seek out his character in relation to his mission, we'll only look at, and see, his outward appearance. Therefore, we need to account for a writer's intension and understand the passages as ones that are inspired by God, penetrating to witness Samson's true motive and character.

In Hebrews he was included as one of the hero's of faith. He was not treated as an exception to the rule, or described as falling behind other hero's because of his disgraceful behavior. He committed vivid sins as well as vivid contribution. The Bible does not focus on his sins to show us his character. Rather, it focuses on how God used Samson, who had a lot of weaknesses to commit 'regular sins' as did other people, with remarkable grace and the providence of God.

### The Mission of Samson

Samson had as many good qualities as he did bad ones. He never doubted his vision from God. Whether he failed or succeeded, he believed God's plan would be accomplished through him. He couldn't utterly destroy the Philistines. However, he minimized their power and paved the way for the Israelites to destroy their yoke. And this was the vision Samson

received from God. God said, “He will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines. (Judges 13:5) He was the person ‘who began to deliver’. He wasn’t assigned and called to perfectly destroy the Philistines by himself, but to decisively weaken their power. In this regard, despite his weaknesses, he accomplished his calling. And, this gives us remarkable encouragement. Everybody can see that Samson had a defect in his character. The bad habits had ruined his life. Nonetheless, he was used as God’s instrument in order to punish the Philistines. He is not just a figure who can give us a piece of good advice; he is a faithful hero who drew the line on the road to God’s redemption. It is for sure that Samson was needed in that time. As written in Hebrew, he was one of the people to be known as “righteousness with good faith.”

### Samson Who Went Down to Timnah

The story of Samson can be divided in two. One is about Samson’s marriage to a Philistine woman and follows their lives together. (Judges 14:1, 15:20) The other is about a decisive victory he had when he died as well as other events and incidences. (Judges 15:20, 16:31) These two main chapters finish respectively with the sentence stating that Samson led Israel for 20 years.

The story of Samson starts with the conflict between the Philistines and Israel. Samson loved a woman in Timnah, which was inhabited by Philistines. Due to an ambiguous border drawn between the two

countries, they shared some land with each other even though they were enemies. Now Samson firmly decided to have a wife from Timnah. (Judges 14:1~2) His parents urged him to choose a wife among the Israelites, but they couldn't stop him from doing so. Why did he intentionally want to marry a woman from Timnah, a Philistine woman? There is a clear answer if you look at Samson's answer to his parents. He said, "Get her for me, she's the right one for me." (Judges 14:3)

This is not just an answer from his stubborn character. He had a purpose, and we can clearly see this in the next passage. "His parents did not know that this was from the Lord, Samson was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel." (Judges 14:4) In another translated version, it is not 'Samson' but the 'Lord' who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines. However, the better translation should be seen as 'Samson' looking for a confrontation. According to the context of the story, the hint that is continually given to us is that Samson's behavior and his will is used for God's plan. This is key to understand the story of Samson in the respect to God's sovereignty and providence. Unless we understand it in this way, we'll just argue whether he is right or wrong on the basis of his outward behavior and this story will be reduced to superficial moral advice. Samson was born in a unique way different from any other prophet. If Samson was uniquely separated from birth for the purpose of God, (Judges 13:25) it might not be wise to analyze every move he made, putting him in the frame we usually



judge people. If the Bible mentions unusual cases from the beginning, we also need to be concerned, giving extraordinary attention, and asking the help of the Holy Spirit to give us insight for the word of God.

Samson liked a woman in Timnah. (Judges 14:7) It was wrong to marry a Philistine woman instead of an Israelite. Maybe he tried to marry her to get a chance to attack the Philistines. A woman in Timnah could be a good pretext and a pathway to get into the Philistine society. Actually he really loved her, and his choice and plan to marry the woman he wanted was completely up to him. But behind that, there was God's plan to liberate Israel out of the hands of the Philistines. That is why he said this came from God, (Judges 14:4) and as proof he finally mentioned that he had killed the lion after this statement. When Samson approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a lion came roaring toward him. At that moment the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power. (Judges 14:16) This is not an occasional miracle for Samson. The reason he went to Timnah was to choose a suitable woman to marry. But suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. This is not a coincidence, considering the development of the story and its importance for what happened in the future.

The Spirit of the Lord always suddenly came upon him in the story of Samson. (Judges 14:6,19; 15:14; 16:30) The time and place, which the spirit of the Lord came upon him, was the point when God's will was accomplished. Samson killed a lion as easily as he might have torn a young goat by the power of the Holy Spirit, and after that he received honey from it. (Judges

14:8) This of course is also not a usual thing to happen. Maybe you could see this as a series of coincidental incidents. But if you look at it carefully and how the story develops, you can find out God's providence was hidden behind the story from the very beginning. The honey he received from the lion's carcass was later used for a riddle to ask the Philistines. (Judges 14:14)

### The Freedom of Being Human and God's Providence

The story of Samson is an example, representative of God working through an individual through desires and incidents. Samson wasn't a religious type of person. He had an extreme temper. Even though he had faith, he also possessed a strong sexual desire he couldn't control. In spite of his weaknesses, God used his character and personality for good to save the Israelites. Nobody can easily imitate his life style. Only someone with a prominent figure and strong desire like that of Samson could have this kind of lifestyle. Therefore God used his character to first attack the Philistines by pouring upon him the power of the Holy Spirit. When his wife disclosed the answer of the riddle he gave them, he went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of their belongings, and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. But the important thing was "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power." (Judges 14:19) The riddle from Samson was just a small bet for amusement in a banquet. But the size of the award that was suggested was extreme and far beyond a mere

level of simple entertainment.

Also it was foolish of him to let his wife know the answer of the riddle only because of her continual and strenuous demand. Samson was weak when it came to a woman's tears and requests. (Judges 14:17) This weak point made Samson fall victim to Delilah's schemes. (Judges 16:15~17) However God used this weak point under His providence.

In many ways, Samson wasn't careful to act as a Nazirite. He followed his desire imprudently. He made his body unclean by eating honey from the lion's carcass. (Judges 14:8; Numbers 6:6) Meanwhile, Samson didn't tell anybody what he had done to the lion. It was a secret. (Judges 14:16) He didn't tell his parents how he got the honey. (Judges 14:9) Of course the riddle he made was a secret too. (Judges 14:14) However, under this secret situation, the Spirit of the Lord made him move toward God's will, (Judges 13:25) and accomplish the purpose of God.

Samson's story indicates how the freedom of being human, and God's providence delicately interact. God works for the good of those who love him, and even unnoticeably.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who has been called according to his purpose? (Romans 8:28)

In case of Joseph, as well, we can witness how the freedom of people's actions had suited to God's set purpose. One day Joseph had a dream. This was about binding sheaves of grain out in the field. But his

sheaf rose and stood upright, while his brother's sheaves gathered around his and bowed down to it.

Joseph had another dream. The sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to him in his dream. (Genesis 37:7-9) His brothers hated him all the more because of the dream he had told them and their father's favoritism to Joseph. They decided to kill him being fearful that the dream may come true and they all would serve Joseph. But, later they changed the plan and decided to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelite merchants who took him to Egypt.

However, what kind of result had come into play. Joseph's dream was from God's revelation. Joseph's brothers committed evil sins in order to prevent Joseph's dream to come true. But because of his brother's actions, Joseph became the person in charge of Egypt and the salvation of Exodus was accomplished by moving to Egypt due to the great famine.

God also orchestrated his plan to be accomplished despite Samson's foolish behavior. Samson was the person who had been called according to his purpose, which was to save Israel, and, so are we. Christians are called to be children of God in Jesus Christ. Therefore, even though we make mistakes or commit sins, God will work for the good with the bad and good things in our lives.

This doesn't mean we do not have to be self-reflective or try to fix our weaknesses. If we misunderstand God's providence, we might start to think as we see fit. God wants his people to live holy. But the lesson we have to focus on from this story is that God's good plan for salvation cannot be shaken by

human's mistakes, sins, or individual weaknesses. On the contrary, the key point of Samson's story shows us how God delivers His people for His purpose even if He has to use human's weaknesses.

### How Should We Look At Our Weaknesses

Everybody has more than one weakness. If we live a perfect life, then there is no problem. But neither are we born perfectly nor do we live perfectly. Even though we are saved through believing Jesus, our weaknesses do not disappear. Our defects are often connected to sins. If you have a weakness in something, then that means you can be easily tempted because of it. And when you are attacked by the darkness, you might be prone to being full of disappointment. Weaknesses can be the reason of regret to everyone.

We should look at our weaknesses in two ways. Firstly, if we try to live like Jesus as a Christian, we can overcome our weaknesses. It might not be at a perfect level but you can reach the point of at least not being discouraged or overwhelmed by faults.

Secondly, we should believe God works and calls for the good according to His purpose in spite of our weaknesses. Samson's unique birth and calling was different from our own, but the power and providence of God for His purpose is the same to everyone.

### The Advice From Samson; A Solitary Hero

If you read the story of Samson more carefully,

you can receive a lot of beneficial and interesting advice from it. The story of Samson is not a mere story of heroism which general literature categorizes it as. Even though Samson was fully qualified as a hero who people praise, only when we focus on his life and his relationship with God, we can understand and better value his calling.

Samson was a hero. He had weaknesses as normal people have. He liked to show off, was easily tempted by what women said, was quick to anger, suffered unnecessarily from his mistakes, and repeated the same mistakes.

Samson was a solitary hero. He had to decide alone and deal with matters alone. He did not have any friends or family to ask for advice. He spent his life fighting against the Philistines for decades. What makes him lonelier was his unhappy marriage and love with a betrayer. The enemy took his wife, whom he was officially married, and he then fell in love with Delilah who ended up taking his eyes from him.

His life was a tragedy. However, if we observe the story of Samson in the Book of Judges through the providence of God's salvation, we will realize there is nothing much to learn from it under assessment on the level of morale or human sympathy. On one hand, this story shows us the entity of human weaknesses, and on the other, it tells us how God leads us to the path of victory in spite of those weaknesses.

## 2. Samson And A Donkey's Jawbone (Judges 14:10, 15:20)

“Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. When he returned, he said to his father and mother, ‘I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife.’” (Judges 14:1~2)

As the savior of Israel, Samson's story starts with his marriage. His mission was to do God's work, but this story is together told with his personal matters. Getting married to someone is a personal matter. However, because of problems, which started from marriage, his mission to attack the Philistines was revealed. In this regard, the way his sacred calling was accomplished is a unique example that could not be seen from the other prophets. But in the last part of chapter 13 in Judges, which is prior to the introduction of Samson's first career, something really important is mentioned.

“The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him.” (Judges 13:24~25)

This passage means God prepared what He needed to do for Him, to establish His purpose by beginning Samson's work through God's Spirit. Also, this points out that the mission of Samson is not through human's spirit but by the Holy Spirit. The

presence of the Holy Spirit comes upon Samson more than any other prophet. Therefore, when we look at the many experiences developed throughout Samson's story, we should consider how God's Spirit works.

Samson went down to Timnah and married the Philistine woman he wanted to. But, because his wife disclosed the riddle, which Samson created in his banquet, he had to give away thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes as he promised from losing the bet. He returned to his father's home with great anger, and if we focus on how he dealt with these problems, it seems like he could do almost anything.

He did not keep his secret. You cannot accomplish things and expect them to work out if you do not keep a secret that must be kept. How many tragedies happen when people could not keep a secret? Samson kept the secret at first. He did not even tell his parents about what had happened when he tore a young lion to pieces with his bare hands in a vineyard on the way to Timnah. (Judges 14:6, 16) He did this because he had a plan to use it for the riddle. He was not just a strong man of muscle. He was the type of person who prepared for the riddle in advance for the wedding banquet. However, he had a weak point, which is not being able to stand a women's pressing.

"Then Samson's wife threw herself on him, sobbing, 'you hate me. You don't really love me.'" (Judges 14:16)

When his wife begged him to tell her, he said he did not even tell his parents about the secret of the



riddle. But from her continuous asking during the whole 7-day banquet, he could not help but give her the answer. Samson kept the secret at first. And until just before the last day of the banquet, he said to his wife, "I haven't even explained it to my father or mother, so why should I explain it to you?" (Judges 14:16) However, his will, which was determined to keep a secret, was destroyed by a woman's word. That word was the arrow aimed at Samson's biggest weak spot. He was weak for a woman's tear. He could do everything to prove his love if his love could not be recognized by his lover. Samson lost his rationality and will when his wife challenged him, saying, "You hate me. You don't really love me."

This is actually a woman's most favorite expression in the entire world. If they say, "How could you do this if you love me? You don't love me." Strangely men are deeply discouraged by these words. Even after several years, Samson fell because of these words. Delilah used the same method to find out where his strength came from.

"How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? (Judges 16:15)

Delilah's word was the same as his wife shooting an arrow directly at his weak spot. Samson could not overcome his weakness for decades. Finally disaster struck him and his eyes were taken from him.

Once is enough to be victimized from weaknesses. If you could not fix the weakness that harms you, then it will last forever. We also carry weaknesses until we

die, as did Samson. Therefore people suffer from the same problems throughout their lives. The power of darkness is continuously hunting our weaknesses. We should reflect ourselves deeply concerning our weaknesses, which are repeated, over and over again for our own spiritual safety. Otherwise, we would make a big mistake later as did Samson.

### Samson Taken By His Wife

Samson's father-in-law thought Samson gave up on his daughter, since he left for his father's house in such a furious rage. That is why his father-in-law gave one of Samson's groomsmen his daughter. (Judges 14:19~20, 15:2) But Samson claimed his right and burned up the stocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards to get even with the Philistines. (Judges 15:1; 3~5) He hated to be defeated by anybody and bared a grudge against other people even though he made a mistake. He didn't know how to control his temper. There was no use to communicate reasonably with him. His father-in-law could not have believed in Samson who was able to leave his wife alone just because somebody solved the riddle in his wedding banquet. Even after that, Samson did not contact his wife. Later on, at the time of the wheat harvest, he suddenly showed up and claimed his right to lay with her. His father-in-law told him that his wife had already remarried and suggested to take her sister as a wife. But his anger was furiously burned.

What Samson had done this time was purely personal. But again, God accomplished His plan

toward the Philistines through Samson's actions of revenge. This time, Samson was used as a financial attacker to the Philistines. This case may also look like just another tale of bravery, but if you look at the process of this case, it brought about the reduction of Philistine military strength. Like this, every story in Samson shows God was working behind the scene. This is another distinctive example of God's providence and humans actions.

Samson attacked the Philistines with supernatural power like he did at Ashkelon, but all this is possible because of the Holy Spirit's power coming upon him. In the New Standard Version of the Bible, it is described, "Then the spirit of the Lord came upon him in power." (Judges 14:19) Without the Holy Spirit's wisdom and power, how could he possibly kill 300 foxes at once? (Judges 15:4~5) The act of Samson came from his personal affairs, but God's spirit used it as an opportunity to get the Israel people out of Philistines control.

Meanwhile, when Samson ruined the Philistine's vineyards and attacked them viciously, (Judges 15:8) they burned his wife and father-in-law to death and invaded the Judah tribe to get rid of Samson. (Judges 15:9~10) The Judah tribe found it too difficult and dangerous to protect Samson and decided to hand him over to them. Samson was both a merciless whip upon the Philistines and a troublemaker to Israel. However handing over their own prophet and general to the Philistines could also reflect their corrupted conscience.

Samson was handed over being tied up obediently to his enemy. Nobody wanted to protect him. His

own people betrayed him. He did not have any hope in the human point of view. But suddenly God's Spirit came upon him. (Judges 15:14) He cut the ropes like charred flax and killed a thousand people with a donkey's jawbone. The donkey's jawbone was not old, so it became a strong and unbreakable weapon.

This case is also unusual if we look carefully. When the bindings dropped from his hands, "finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it." (Judges 15:15) You can say it might be coincidental. But look at this point in time! After Samson had been tied up and approached Lehi, what happened to him?

"As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him Shouting." (Judges 15:16)

It was the moment they were about to kill him. At this very moment God's Spirit came to him in power and at this point of time, Samson found a donkey's jawbone.

Maybe old jawbones rolled around everywhere, but a new jawbone is rare. This bone became a very important tool to lead him into victory. Samson did not find this by accident. A donkey's jawbone is the secret weapon that should exist in a moment of crisis. Therefore, we should consider that God opened his eyes to see the jawbone.

You can find a similar example in Hagar's case. She was a maidservant of Abraham. Hagar was abused by Abraham's wife Sarah and had to run away with her son who was also Abraham's son. She wandered in the desert of Beersheba. When the water in the skin was gone they were about to die. So she put the boy under

one of the bushes and then she went off and sat down nearby. At the very moment of beginning to sob because she could not watch her boy die, she saw a well of water. It was not accidental at all.

The Bible says, "God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink." (Genesis 21:19) God opened her eyes in the road between life and death. So was the same done to Samson? In the confusion of the moment when the enemies were rushing unto him, finding a donkey's jawbone was not accidental but God's providence.

"With a donkey's jawbone  
I have made donkeys of them.  
With a donkey's jawbone  
I have killed a thousand men." (Judges 15:16)

Samson wrote a poem, seeing a donkey's jawbone in his hand, because he knew this bone was a tool from God. Through this, all of a sudden he was considered to rule over Israel as a prophet; all this from being handed over as a captive just a short time ago. (Judges 13:8) The Israel people could not deny him as an awe-inspiring leader for their country. Samson ruled Israel for 20 years. By doing this, Samson had started accomplishing his calling, as it was prophesized. (Judges 13:5)

We can also see a donkey's jawbone if the Holy Spirit comes upon us. If we can become to hold our jawbone, we will be able to do amazing work for the kingdom of God under the marvelous providence of God.

And we will be poets praising God's salvation like Samson. Pray that you could see a donkey's jawbone. When I am seized with all kinds of power of darkness, what I need is a new donkey's jawbone, which the Holy Spirit shows us.

On one hand, these cases may look like just a series of violent actions and revenge, but on the other hand, this is a story of God's power changing defeat into victory and subduing His enemies. Samson seemed to revenge them for his personal affairs, but he confessed that he was a servant of God and through his experiences, God's salvation was revealed.

"You have given your servant this great victory."  
(Judges 15:18)

God had started His work for Israel's salvation out of the Philistines' hands through Samson's personal reactions. Even our small matters could be diverted for the way of salvation under God's providence. Therefore God can intervene and use us in our daily life at any time for His good plan. So, living a life with this expectation is the biblical attitude. What about our reaction? Don't you want God's miraculous work to happen through you? When you worship God with that hope, someday you'll be given the Holy Spirit's inspiration and will praise and exalt the Lord.

### Samson Who Prays

After annihilating the Philistines, Samson faced one of the biggest turning points in his entire life. He

killed a thousand people by himself. He was utterly exhausted and thirsty to death. At this time, the prayer of Samson in the book of Judges was described for the first time. He must have prayed before, of course, but if you look through the book of Judges chapter 14:1~15:17, his prayer was not mentioned. Prayer must not be his priority.

Now that he was put into danger, he began to pray to God. Even though he killed the Philistines with tremendous physical strength, he was so thirsty that he could not maintain the strength of his body. He could not help but pray, since he was put in a dangerous situation where anybody could come along and kill him. He first thanked God for the victory and admitted his own weakness, crying for his thirst. (Judges 15:18)

Samson offered the most spiritual prayer in his entire mission at this time. This also became a distinctive arrow that connected his last glorious prayer in destroying the Philistines at Dagon temple. (Judges 16:28~30) God heard his prayer and showed the miracle of a wellspring gushing out with a huge rush. Samson recovered his strength after drinking water and deeply experienced God's help. (Judges 15:18~10) There are two features in Samson's prayer.

Firstly, he glorified God.

"You have given your servant this great victory."(Judges 15:18)

He had just killed a thousand men. (Judges 15:16) He consumed so much energy. He was worn out from the battle, which demanded his entire physical strength and

mental concentration. He was thirsty to death. At this moment, think about the order of his prayer. He did not ask God, 'Lord! Give me some water,' when he was about to die of thirst. He knew what is more important, and that was prayer. His first word in his prayer was 'Lord! I praise your salvation.' The more you are in a hurry, the more you should glorify first to the almighty God. This is what is needed for a great prayer.

Our prayer reflects our spirituality best. When we pray in our daily life and do not glorify God first, then our priority is about us and not God. When Samson desperately needed help, because he glorified God first, his prayer became the most spiritual event in his entire mission. This is not easy at all. Immediately think of how many times you glorified God first last week. If you are not habitual for praising and glorifying God first during small matters in your daily life, you would not be able to glorify God first in a life and death situation like Samson did, because you would be so engulfed in your own immediately needs. Therefore Peter taught us to glorify God all the time when we serve God.

"If anyone speaks, he should do it as on speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him are the glory and the power forever and ever.Amen."  
(1Peter 4:11)

When we serve, we should praise God, knowing



that we could do it with the strength and source God provides.

“For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?” (1Corinthians 4:7)

It is foolish to boast himself when he did God's work. Whether we do a sermon or just serve the church or neighborhood, we should always exalt the name of the Lord instead of our own names. All mission and serving should be focused on extending God's glory and not your own glory. Because, it is God that provides the strength and resources needed to serve.

Samson originally knew he had nothing in him. It was not his power at all when he killed a thousand Philistines. The only reason the ropes on his arms became like charred flax was because the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power. And he also could kill numerous men because God opened his eyes and made him find a donkey's jawbone. A new donkey's jawbone was the secret weapon God provided. That is why he had to glorify God. He proved his strong spirituality by praising God first when he was about to die of thirst.

What is the meaning of glorifying God? We often speak about habitually praising and glorifying God, but what does that mean? That is to admit God's power which rules over the universe and takes care of it and to give thanks and praise for the grace, which saves us by the cross of Jesus Christ. Glorifying God is to

respect God. This means God is our first priority. If God is first in our lives, we will want His name to be holy and His kingdom to come and His will to be done.

What is the priority of the Lord's Prayer? It is glorifying God first. (Matthew 6:9-10) And then Jesus taught us to ask for our own needs, in "Give us our daily bread". (Matthew 6: 11) This passage comes after God's glory and kingdom. Do you pray, remembering the order of the Lord's Prayer? Or do you always pray for your own fortune, saying, "Give me my fortune, or give me my blessing first." If you want to praise and give thanks to God after receiving your blessing, why don't you praise first since you already received the most perfect blessing, which is being saved. If you are saved by the blood of the cross, you should praise the grace of salvation forever. If 'the grace of salvation' is your praising title forever, then praise God first in all your prayers.

What is the first thing you can come up with when you pray? Is it all your problems such as my money, my children, my marriage, my business, my job, my school, and all concerns and wishes? Of course we should pray and ask God for all those things. These are all classified to 'our daily bread'. Our daily bread concerns are in the Lord's prayer most certainly. However, what we should seek first is not my own but God's concerns.

Then what will be God's concerns? That is God's name being exalted, His kingdom that is to come, and His will that is to be done, perfectly to our life and earth. These are God's concerns, which should be the most important to us. In fact, we are the people who

should live for God's concerns and not for our own matters. The life of praying and trying hard for God's concerns is the life of being a Christian. Jesus Christ had lived for his Father's concerns. Christians are followers for Jesus, so we should live a life of glorifying God. Respecting God means to value what God wants. We always give the priority to what we value most. What could be more valuable than God's will and His name in the world? If we think of God first, we should praise God's glory first whenever we pray. Samson prayed according to what we should pray for first, even before knowing the Lord's Prayer. He praised and glorified God first when he was literally dieing of thirst. After that, he asked for his thirst to be quenched. Samson prayed for God's glory first before his own daily bread. Jesus is pleased with that kind of prayer and is willing to answer. What kind of prayer would you offer before you breathe your last breath? Maybe you have lots of things to ask for. If you usually pray with a lot of asking in your daily life, even when you die, you would most likely do the same. I am not saying prayers that ask God for personal things are bad. But, we should remember what Jesus taught us in the Lord's Prayer, that we ought to pray for God first and not our own survival concerns. What is our priority in our prayers now? Jesus always prayed in accordance with the order of priority. The reason the prayer of Samson is great is because he praised God's salvation first when he was about to die. What is the priority in our prayers now? Isn't it right not to feel wrong even if you do not pray for God first? Or aren't you taking it for granted to say 'Amen' after you put

your entire self-centered prayers in front of God?

Secondly, not only did he glorify God but he also prayed for God's dignity. This is another important part we should not ignore in Samson's prayer. When he asked for water, he prayed his thirst not to be the Philistine's victory as well.

“You have given our servant this great victory. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?” (Judges 15:18)

Circumcision was the mark that separated those people who made a vow with God. (Genesis 17:10) Samson prayed with giving thanks for victory. (Judges 15:18) Uncircumcised Philistines were disobedient children against God. Samson was put in danger where the weakest person was in a position to kill him. He did not want to be killed by the uncircumcised. This could turn over God's victory and bring disgrace on God. He did not ask for his life because he was a great Nazirite. He asked for the uncircumcised disobedient people not to have a victory for the sake of God and His kingdom. He wanted God to be a winner and exalted His name until the end. How fitting to exalt only His name on earth. Samson turned his heroic victory to God's victory.

It is natural that we cry out to God when we face desperate needs.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God.” (Philippians 4:6)

Prayer is a meter that measures our level of faith. Prayer is the confession that discloses where our spiritual interests are. Prayer is the leaflet that announces our real desires. God listens to our prayer. But the answer from God will tell us how we glorified Him.

“Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained.” (1 Samuel 2:30)

#### The Advice In Lehi

Samson well knew he was really desperate. He told God about his desperate needs. God provided him water instantly and dramatically. But with only God supplying the water, the problem would not be solved. Samson actually had to drink the wellspring water. He could not forget this experience. So he called it ‘the spring of those who cried out.’ From this refreshing experience, ‘his strength returned and he was revived,’ (Judges 15:19) he could continue his mission for the Israel people along with the new knowledge about God.

“He who believes in me will never be thirsty.” (John 7:37)

“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.” (John 7:37)

Jesus invites us all to the river of God. He promised the supply of the spring. The river of God is

over flowing. We should drink God's spring like Samson. When you depend on your own gift, someday you will be worn out. The gift cannot save us in danger. Samson had the power that could kill a lot of people all by himself but such a gift could not save him out of his life threatening experience of thirst. Samson was not saved because of his supernatural power but he was saved because God provided him the spring. Therefore we should live depending only on God's powerful spring.

The experience in Lehi made him realize he could fail without God's special help. He could not keep depending on his own gift. He faced death when he consumed his entire physical strength. He discovered the truth, and that was, his physical strength could also destroy him. He could not live up to his own strength. What revived him was the living water from God.

This truth is absolutely certain. Our body and spirit could only be revived when we drink the living water from God. Jesus promised whoever believes in Him, "streams of living water will flow from within him." (John 7:38)

Isn't your body and spirit tired like Samson? Aren't sufferings all around you making you discouraged? Go to Jesus and drink the living water. Experience the living water of salvation that flows from the cross and energizing water from the life of the resurrection. Do you want to drink this living water? Then give thanks to God who called us to drink it first. And go to Jesus and drink the living water He promised.

God Also Can Use The Bad Tempered

When we think of the work of Samson, we are reminded of his extraordinary power. Actually he governed his people by the rule of his fists. But there is spiritual advice here that heroism in Hollywood does not deal with. His achievements were all related to his temper. God promised to deliver the Israel people out of the hands of the Philistines through Samson. (Judges 13:5) But God's good will was achieved through Samson's wild temper that was not that good. The story of Samson shows perfectly how God's providence and human action unconsciously go together toward the same purpose.

Samson was a hot-tempered person. He easily exploded and made big mistakes. He had a strong desire to get even with people, a strong will to perform, and he was also very selfish and often overwhelmed people. But, God used him, despite his terrible temper.

Let's remember a couple of examples. When he tried to marry the Philistine in Timnah, his parents tried to stop him but he refused it stubbornly. He forced his father to bring the woman without condition. (Judges 14:3)

He was the type of person who had to acquire whatever he wanted. He was not the type of person who respects his parents. (Exodus 20:12) Finally he married a gentile woman as he wished in spite of his parent's objection. However, on the other hand, because he had the intention to attack the Philistines, he insisted on marrying her. God used this kind of temper. But, "His parents did not know that this was from the Lord." (Judges 14:4)

Samson tended to be boastful as well. He made a bet with a riddle in a wedding banquet with young men. He said boastfully those who lose should pay thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes. (Judges 14:12-13) But when his wife revealed the answer of the riddle to the Philistines, he mercilessly killed thirty people and stripped them of their belongings. (Judges 14:19) He spoke loud and was cocky so that he would end up being humiliated and kill many innocent people. This was a really foolish thing to do and an unjust use of violence.

But, behind this scene there was God. He did not kill thirty people in Ashkelon by his own power. It was possible because “the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power.” (Judges 14:19) The moment the Spirit of the Lord came upon him was when Samson had to pay back what he owed the Philistines young men from the bet of losing the riddle. moreover, this case was not going to finish here meaninglessly.

From this case, he was burning with anger, and went up to his father’s house. As a result, his father-in-law gave his daughter to one of Samson’s companions. This became a source to another problem, and it was connected to an excuse to attack the Philistines again. In the case of the riddle, which in the beginning just looked like simple entertainment, greatly developed into effecting unexpected quarters. Under this base, Samson’s wild temper assisted God’s plan that was to be accomplished.

God even used Samson’s tendency to revenge in order to achieve His plan. Samson went to Timnah to make up with his wife. That was the time of wheat



harvest. But he found out his wife was remarried. (Judges 15:1~3) He was planning to revenge the Philistines. (Judges 15:3) In Samson's story, it continuously mentions his anger. Once again his personal affairs were used for accomplishing God's plan. Samson was angry personally and officially as a prophet. These two sides line up with his life and mission binding together. God wanted a Savior who was hot-tempered like the eruption from a volcano when the Philistines harassed the Israelites. Samson was the perfect person to be that figure. God allowed him to have such a great temper which was provident in his private life in order for him to be used in God's plan turning his life into a strong club to the Philistines. God planned him to be born in accordance with his time and got him ready giving him the gift he needed, (Judges 13:5) because God needed somebody like Samson for his purpose.

Samson used foxes and ruined the stocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves. Because the Philistines could not attack Samson, they burned his wife and her father to death. (Judges 15:6) Samson went into a rage again. It gave him another excuse to attack the Philistines. (Judges 15:7) He was filled with revenge. This temper fitted his mission, and this time he killed the Philistines and not just farm products. (Judges 15:8)

His temper and calling were well matched together like a perfect couple. When he killed the Philistines, that was private revenge, however, at the same time he achieved the mission from God. Samson acted because of his temper. But it was God who led

his way. Samson acted with his own way but it brought about a great victory for God according to His plan.

Then can the negative parts of Samson's character be justified because his bad temper was used for God's good plan? Samson's character of being like a volcano is not good at all. His foolish behavior, which could not be controlled, brought him a lot of tragedy. He could not enjoy a happy marriage life and had a tough life coming and going between Israel and the Philistines fighting with them entirely by himself.

God can use in reverse not only my bad temper but also other people's wrong motives in order to accomplish God's plan. For example Raban who was a brother of Rebekahs, was greedy and sly. (Genesis 24:28-29) Because he knew that the family of Abraham was rich and saw the nose ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms from Abraham's servant, (Genesis 24:30) he welcomed the servant flatteringly and saying, "come, you who are blessed by the Lord." (Genesis 24:31) Laban also later kept Jacob who was Rebekah's son, long deceiving him due to the greed of wealth. But God trained and gave a great deal of advice to Jacob by using Raban's bad greed. But God was not pleased with what Raban did at all. Even though Raban's tricks and bad motives were used for Jacob as instructive spiritual materials, he could not enjoy the blessing of a close relationship with God.

When God uses me with my worldly self-centered temper, I cannot experience the spiritual blessing in my daily life. Samson was greatly used by God. However, he did not have spiritual joy or rest in his life. God can use our tough personality and harsh behavior in order

to accomplish certain purposes. But as long as we have such bad tempers, we will not have the peace in our life nor experience spiritual well being from the relationship with God.

There are several people around us who have no attraction or are lacking a basic personality who are being used for the work of God. But that does not mean they are servants, fully pleasing to God. God is not pleased with people at all if they do not seek after God's character. But for the good purpose of God, people who have defects in their character can be used in the mission of God's great salvation. This is God's providence.

#### Samson Is The Representative Model Saved By Grace

Samson is a typical example saved by God's grace. All Christians are saved by the grace of God for nothing. But we realize newly how big God's grace is from the figure of Samson. His personality had serious defects. He only thought of himself. He resolved all problems only by force. He was an egoist who must acquire whatever he wants. He was prone to be furiously angry like a burning fire. He fell into temptation as much as 3 times from beautiful women. He did not keep the taboo rules for being a Nazirite. But these character traits are closely connected to God's mission. God used all the negative factors of Samson's character.

Then we should say the salvation that he received was by 'the salvation of grace'. He could not be saved by any means without grace.

What about us? We might say we are not like Samson. Then do you think we are qualified to receive God's grace? The cross of Jesus Christ is for everyone in the world.

“He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2)

We are also sinners who belong to this world. Our sins were large enough to be carried to the cross by Jesus. People who can understand the depth of the sacrifice of the cross just a little bit can consider themselves big sinners. The more we admit the truth like Paul's confession, “among sinners I am the worst,” (1 Timothy 1:15) we are ourselves also the same representative of the salvation of grace as Samson. Moreover in God uses us in spite of our defects, we will be more certain to be saved by God's grace. In conclusion, nobody can be used and be children of God because they are good enough.

### What Should We Do About Our Negative Characters

Even though God used him, he did not care about his personality. He lived by his hot temper. He became easily angry and promptly dealt with each case, living an uncontrolled life through his own desires. He was not careful about himself even though he always fell into temptation from wicked women's tricks. He revenged with violence all the time and put himself at any risk to revenge. Of course his eruptive temper

was used for putting down the Philistines, but it is not desirable to live in the way he did. In the end, it will drive you to fall into trouble.

We cannot justify ourselves because God is using us. It cannot also be beautified because we are used in contribution to the work of God. When God uses us, if we are not careful about our bad temper, sooner or later, we will face trouble.

God can be sovereign in using anything for the accomplishment of His planned purpose. Jesus said if people make disciples keep quiet, he could make stones cry out. (Luke 19:40) God used a normal stick held by Moses. God made a donkey speak so that Balam could prophesy according to God's will. (Numbers 22:21~35) God made a rooster cry 3 times when Peter denied Jesus so that he might repent. (Matthew 26:74~75)

God can use anybody. But that does not mean we can receive together a spiritual blessing just because God uses us. To enjoy deep spiritual blessings from God, our personality should be transformed. The best privilege as a Christian is to follow His will and character, feeling God's presence and providence all the time.

Samson was the person who had faith. But he could not enjoy the blessing of peace and joy. If he lived more spiritually, he would serve God acknowledging Him in a far deeper level. Because God is merciful and sovereign, He chose Samson for the salvation of Israel despite his tough character. But he could not enjoy the spiritual blessing because it is only given to people who follow God's character.

Samson was sure that he received the calling from

God. But he lived by his feelings and acted by his temper. In spite of that God's will and Samson's foolish behavior were fused with mysterious providence and God's good purpose was accomplished. As a result, Samson brought great victory to Israel several times. His mission was accomplished but his eyes were taken. My bad temper brings me disaster even though God is sovereign in using me.



### 3. Spiritual Unconsciousness (Judges 16:1~20)

“Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. 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.’” (Judges 16:4~5)

These passages describe two cases, which involved a prostitute in Gaza and Delilah in Sorek at the time when Samson’s mission was about to finish as a prophet for 20 years.

#### Samson Stopped Up Again By The Philistines



Samson went to the tip of the south, which was Gaza. He had never been afraid of the Philistines and he entered that place as if it were his village. He went all the way to Philistine, which was very far from his house in Israel all by himself. He was planning to teach the Philistines a lesson. He did not hide himself nor walk a back street. He entered into the gate of a castle openly. Samson must stand out since his body was big and he had long hair being a Nazirite. He took risks to challenge the Philistines intentionally as if he spoke up saying, ‘here I am!’ Samson did not have any family or relative there. The best place he could go freely and easily was the house of a prostitute.

But there is a difference between the case of chapter 14 and 15 in the book of Judges and the case of

chapter 16 which was 20 years after. The way he dealt with things was worse than before. The woman in Timnah was taken officially as a wife. But the woman in Gaza was a prostitute who would stay with Samson for a few hours. In Timnah, the Holy Spirit came upon him when he fought with a lion and played the riddle game at the wedding banquet. (Judges 14:6, 19) Also when the Philistines ran into Samson tied up in Lehi, the Holy Spirit came upon him in power. (Judges 15:14) But in chapter 16, it does not mention the Holy Spirit. That is a very important difference. While working for God, if the Holy Spirit does not lead you, you cannot rightly accomplish God's work.

This mission of Samson was in the negative in the first place. He always fought with the Philistines alone. But there were women involved all the time. This was one of his biggest weaknesses. He fell in love so easily. And nobody could stop him if he loved someone. When he wanted to marry a woman from Timnah his parents tried to stop him, but he did not turn his heart. (Judges 14:1~3) He could not distinguish official matters with private matters. He married a Philistine woman and then used his private affair as a stepping-stone to get into the Philistine community to fulfill his official mission. The woman he married however was not on his side.

Samson drove young Philistine men into the corner by giving them a riddle that nobody could solve. But he could not stand the constant urging from his wife. Even though he knew he would be in a disadvantageous position, ridiculously, he revealed the answer to his wife. Later Delilah also prodded him



everyday with the same words saying, “how can you say ‘I love you’ when you won’t confide in me?” (Judges 16:15) in order to find his source of strength. How did he react? It says, “He was tired to death.” (Judges 16:15) Delilah told him the reason she wanted to find out the secret of his great strength was to know “how he could be tied up and subdued.” (Judges 16:6) Samson answered her who wanted to know the secret of his strength to tie him up and kill him.

When we see another person’s weaknesses, it is hard to understand. But other people will think the same way about your weaknesses. All of us have weaknesses. Therefore, we can make mistakes because of those weaknesses and easily fall into temptation, which other people cannot understand. Maybe you do not have the same weak spot as Samson had. But each person sacrifices themselves on the altar through their own weaknesses.

Samson believed women are weak. A woman to him was a delicate person who makes him feel compassion and begs men with tears. Samson had a view of womanhood, as someone who is pitiful, nagging men day and night in order to check whether she is being loved. Moreover he was confident to handle any consequences even if he let the woman win.

Samson could not see properly the dreadful fact that wicked women became a tool of Satan to undo his holy mission. This blind spot of Samson brought unrecoverable tragedy to the last part of his life.

Disgraceful Behavior And Holy Mission

Samson was called on a holy mission to protect Israel from the Philistines. On the processing of accomplishing this plan he entered into the house of a prostitute in Gaza. He used the same method again, which provoked the Philistines by using her. This might be the easiest way for Samson. He aimed at having his cake and eating it too, because he chose the way of doing God's work as well as filling his lust.

He was a prophet doing God's work. He had a strong mind about his calling. Even after 20 years from the first time he fought with the Philistines, (Judges 15:20) he did not give up his calling and was a man with faith determined to break Philistine power.

But he entered into the house of a prostitute first in enemy soil. Did he simply want the prostitute for temporary satisfaction of sexual pleasure? For that he could go near around his own place without going all the way to Gaza. He went to provoke the Philistines to fight against him intentionally. He was going to afflict them by himself without involving the entire Israel community. This was his strategic plan and so he traveled far down to Gaza on purpose.

Meanwhile he entered into the house of a prostitute naturally with no concern. Even though it was his strategic method, the reason he chose the house of a prostitute was most certainly for another purpose. When men look for prostitutes, there could be various motives; one of them is the feeling of disappointment. Samson was a Nazirite. It was not his choice. (Judges 13:5) He had been asked to lead an ascetic life. Wouldn't he want to enjoy pleasures with women as normal people do? His entire life was

not just about killing Philistines. He wanted to love just like other people do.

Samson was young and strong. He began to love a woman. He married her against his parent's will. But he already tasted a bitter breakdown because of a woman. His marriage ended tragically, which he did not want. His father-in-law betrayed Samson, and another man took his wife. He lost his first love. He was so angry that he burned up the vineyards of the Philistines using foxes. And in revenge for all this, the Philistines burned Samson's father-in-law and his wife to death. (Judges 15:6) This awful tragedy happened in his first marriage. This must lead him to feel disappointment putting a stop to his normal overflowing passion of love. At this time the prostitute could easily take the place of this loss, because he can express his need for love without any burden or responsibility as much as he wants.

Samson wanted to give his love to somebody. He could choose other ways to do God's work but he chose the way he can enjoy physically and do God's holy work; a kind of killing two birds with one stone. Samson brought together his pleasure and mission into one. He believed he could satisfy his desire, and do God's holy work at the same time. This type of thinking must result in fatal tragedy, but at that moment, he had not faced it yet.

Samson knew the Philistines would try to catch him in advance and took the initiative. He got up early and took hold of the doors of the city gate, together with the posts, and tore them loose, bars and all. He carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron,

which was about 64km away. Hebron was the center of Judas. (Judges 16:3) This became a national shame to the Philistines. The doors of the city gate symbolize the power of the country and city. The Philistines knew his well planned challenge but at the time could not attack him, being shocked by his supernatural power to do the things he did.

### Samson Fell Into Foolish Entertainment

Samson fell in love again with a woman called Delilah before the confrontation with the Philistines. She was from the valley of Sorek, which was about 20km away to the west of Jerusalem. The name of Delilah was Hebrew so she could be an Israelite by name. And, seeing the fact that rulers of the Philistines promised each of them would give her eleven hundred shekels of silver in return for telling them the secret of Samson's great strength in order to give him up, Delilah must not be a Philistine. If she were a Philistine, they would not offer that much money. But her nationality is not that important. In this chapter it points out Delilah was another object for his entertainment.

Delilah agreed with the offer from the rulers of the Philistines to take advantage of Samson, knowing well that he had fallen in love with her. Samson fell blindly into a trap of love again because he did not know her true heart. At first he refused her begging three times, but could not stand it anymore and gave up. This is in contrast to Joseph caught in Egypt who firmly refused the persisting temptation from Potiphar's wife. (Genesis 39:12)

Samson finally revealed the secret of his great strength since he became impatient with Delilah's nagging. He told her no razor must be used on his head because he is a Nazirite. (Judges 13:5) So he said to her his strength would disappear if he cut his hair. So far, Samson ignored the strict rules of being a Nazirite several times; he approached the lion's carcass; (Judges 14:8~9) he held a party and drank; (Judges 14:10) and he had immoral relationships with a prostitute and Delilah. So, he broke the oath of being a Nazirite, which should be holy in front of God. (Judges 16:1,4,19, Numbers 6) Now he opened his mouth for himself so that people might dare to cut his hair, the symbol of being a Nazirite.

Samson liked to play a game and tease people doing God's work. He made fun of people with jokes and riddles and had a habit to bet excessively. They were all entirely for fun and were meant not to be harmful. He did not consider the possibility of the risk involved, that he could fall into a trap because he was over confident in his power. He did an evil thing, enjoyed it as a game, and was optimistic. How dangerous is this kind of optimism! That was proved at the end of his life. The reason Samson fell down was not because of the lack of strength, but because of the games played insincerely and with over confidence concerning his God's given power when he was strong.

He realized doing God's work is serious and important. He never forgot his calling from God. In fact he afflicted the Philistines his entire life. He did not plan for his benefits like being comfortable or any future means of retirement. Whenever he had a

chance, he entered Philistine territory and brought havoc to a large amount of property and people, and they could not even dare to think about invading Israel because of it. He was not afraid of dying for his mission.

But there were things he should be afraid of. They were women who he often fell in love with. Not all women he met in his life were wicked or objects he should be careful around. But it was a woman that brought the strong down and not a man. Among women, there was a sly figure like Delilah who Samson could never simply dismiss as a game or bet.

Seriously doing God's holy work is not about playing a game in the middle of a mission because you end up playing a game of fire. A relationship that looked so natural and not harmful at all suddenly had the ugly face of Satan jump out. In a relationship between men and women, small behaviors, acted out without any purpose, could develop and become snares that could make you fall. Wild animals are not for pets. When they are babies, they are cute, but when they grow up big and strong, their wild nature will be revealed and you will not be able to control them. Their favorable handshakes will break your wrist, and their friendly hugs will choke your breath.

### Why Did Samson Repeat The Same Sins?

Samson loved Delilah. He played a game with the Philistines, putting her in a position between him and them. He enjoyed Delilah weeping and begging. He was confident to handle the consequences even if he let

her win. He played a game in a free manner but before long, she easily lured him. Samson was too simple to win the bet played with a sly woman. He acted with dulled senses, not knowing the delicate shades of psychology in the world of women.

Every person has merits and demerits. But it is more important to know one's own weaknesses than demerits. Knowing our own weaknesses and making measure for them is far more important. He cared more about his strong attributes than weak ones, and neglected to compensate for his weaknesses. That is why he fell down several times to the same problems. Actually he was also even confident of his weaknesses.

He thought he could keep the secret. But as you saw in the case of his marriage, he was patient at first, then gave up from constant nagging, then became mad at the consequences. (Judges 14:19) Why was he angry even though it was his fault? It is because he felt his pride was hurt. It is a normal reaction for people when they have failed in what they were confident in doing and could easily feel embarrassed. Samson could not control this feeling that normal people experience. He lived by his stubbornness rather than admit his weaknesses and be humble. The best way to stop repeating the same sins is to humble ourselves and not to have trust in only us. Samson did not have that attitude. That is why he could not stand Delilah's nagging and revealed his holy secret as well.

What Is The Secret Of Samson?

Samson was a Nazirite. All Nazirites are not strong

men. The code of rules about being a Nazirite does not say if you pledge to be a Nazirite you can be strong. Then how did Samson know his strength comes from his hair? God only told his parents not to use a razor on his head and He did not mention about Samson's strength coming from his hair. How he got his strength was a secret only Samson knew about.

Of course the source of his power is from God and not his hair. When Samson was powerful enough to fight, the Spirit of God came upon him in power. (Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14) But his hair, which had never been cut, was a sort of secret contract between God and Samson. In the Garden of Eden, it is like the fruit of knowing good and evil actually does not mean they can know good and evil. It was like God's test to find out if they were to obey Him or not. So is the same in Samson's case. His hair is a test regarding his calling as a Nazirite from God. Therefore, he should not tell anyone at anytime.

Samson was well aware of his calling. He said the reason he should not use a razor on his hair was because "no razor has ever been used on my head, since I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth." (Judges 16:7) In spite of that, it is hard to accept the fact that he revealed his secret. It was like committing suicide. A more shocking thing was when he was telling her his secret; he spoke as if he was confessing with some kind of pledge. It is obvious she did not buy what he said at first. If you look at the passages, three times were mentioned that he 'spoke from his heart'. (Judges 16:17, 18) This means he repeated his confession until she believed him. What



an absurd act! He said, “If my head were shaved, I would become as weak as any other man.” (Judges 16:17) Then why should he convince her by even saying this is the truth as if begging her though he knows full well of the consequences?

But his ridiculous act does not stop there. He should have been on alarm and extremely careful since his secret was revealed, but instead he fell down from her tricks again.

### Delilah's Lap

“Having put him to sleep on her lap.” (Judges 16:19)

He slept on Delilah's lap deeply. What on earth is his intention? After telling her he would become as weak as any other man if his head were shaved, he then could fall into a deep sleep. Why? How could he give up everything after giving her what she asked for? Did he determine to sacrifice everything he had for loving her? If that is so, then Samson is the most foolish person concerning love in the entire world and a betrayer to God.

In any case, his act does not make any sense at all. It is not enough just to say he was a fool. There must be a reason we do not know about. What should that be? In a word, he was in a 'spiritual comma state', because his sense became dull spiritually, and he played the game with Delilah. It is like a patient who was in a comma state deliriously talking away. Samson's words were all delirious; the drug of Delilah was controlling him. He was the same as a puppet in a

play. He exposed himself in a trap of temptation. The Philistines asked her to lure him (Judges 16:5) into showing them the secret of Samson's strength. The meaning of 'lure' is the term used by a fisherman, which is baiting a hook to get fish. Samson started to play with Delilah, nagging him about telling her the secret of his great strength. Samson loved to play in any type of game. He played pranks with even his holy calling. He enjoyed watching Delilah upset about finding out that she was cheated, and for her to start to beg and nag him again. Having fun watching another person's loss is the attraction of the game.

Samson told her to tie him with seven fresh thongs that have not been dried. (Judges 16:7~8) And later, he said new ropes would work. (Judges 16:11) He thought every time he was winning against her. But he was getting into a dangerous position. The next thing he suggested was to weave the seven braids of hair into the fabric on the loom. (Judges 16:13) Samson was finally getting to the secret of his holy hair. Now the game is becoming heated, fierce, and dashing into a position in which one of them should be destroyed.

Samson was used to make fun of everything Delilah said. (Judges 16:10, 13, 15) Men seem to feel a mysterious fun when they tease women. Samson was confident, because he was heading to where he wanted. He believed he could control the situation of teasing her. When Delilah was upset saying, "You have made a fool of me, you lied to me," he must have felt that she is weak and a fragile woman. He would be happy and extremely delightful when she was

begging and nagging him to tell her the secret of his strength. Samson must enjoy his tricks a lot, watching and openly laughing at the Philistines who heard from what Delilah said, being deceived and embarrassed every time. But up until that point, it was the last time in Samson's life that he played a stupid game. After this, he could not experience again the immature laughter of making fun of people, which only satisfied himself.

Although Samson thought he was winning hands down, he was already in a trap from a witch. (Proverbs 7:6~27) Delilah looked fragile but she was a wicked person who had pertinacity and very persuasive words. She urged him day and night saying, "Tell me, tell me please." (Judges 16:6, 10, 13) Strangely Samson must have felt that her desperate nagging was attractive. The gestures or look of the opposite sex can captivate hearts. This kind of mysterious symptom between men and women can easily develop into a fire of lust that knows no rational.

Samson was drowning in a dangerous realm. When Samson raised the stakes of the game to the point of telling about his hair, Delilah knew this was her chance to bring out her last card.

"How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me?" (Judges 16:15)

He was driven to the corner which he could not help but tell the truth to defend himself since he had lied to her so many times. If you play with holy things, it may not look harmful at first, but in the end, you will

fall into a deep trap. Samson could not stand her nagging with clenched teeth, and he suddenly surrendered in a moment. He confided to her his entire secret.

He made a mistake in a moment, but this moment is a prepared moment and not an exceptional moment. A mistake in a moment is the inevitable result of desires that had been bore for a long time. Samson enjoyed many days of making fun of Delilah as much as he wanted to. An evil deed will be discovered. Playing with fire will one day get you burned. Delilah's lap is the place that made him fall asleep. Nobody would want to fall asleep in the hill of Gethsemane. In spite of that, they fell asleep. They did not fall asleep in a moment. It was part of their sleep habit, which meant they usually would sleep at this time. So, Samson fell asleep. It was not just a couple of times that he slept on her lap.

Samson originally liked playing games. He found a joy of life in games. He also felt thrilled when he took risks. And, he had always won by his power. But one day, he suddenly fell down by the hand of a wicked woman whom he could not handle with his power. The person who made Samson fall down was not the strong Philistine men, but a persisting woman who knew how to attack a man's blind spot. Samson was too weak for a woman's love. But his love was compassion without rationality. All of a sudden, Delilah looked pitiful to him. He could not say he did not love her when she asked him. He had to prove his love to her. What kind of method was that? It was to trade with God's holy secret. The only thing he could

do to prove his love was to tell of his holy secret between him and God. This was what the Philistines and Delilah had aimed at.

It was a big mistake to tell her everything, who immediately and secretly communicated it to the Philistines. (Proverbs 4:23) You should not tell the secret of victory to the enemy. You should know how to keep well what God has given you. He shared too much with her. He lost everything after revealing everything about his holy secret to God's enemy.

When Joshua attacked the Ai, he was ordered to use an ambush by God. (Joshua 8:1~7) But at this time, what would happen if he let the enemy know this strategy? The special order from God strategically given for a mission must remain hidden.

King Hezekiah made the same mistake. He became ill and was at the point of death. God listened to his prayer and added 15 years to his life. (2 Kings 20:5~6) At the time the King of Babylon sent envoys to visit and bring a gift to Hezekiah. He showed them all that was in his storehouses; all the treasures and armory in all his kingdom. (2 Kings 20:13) God prophesied fearfully through the prophet Isaiah to Hezekiah who did foolish things.

“The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the Lord. And some of your descendents, your own flesh and blood, that will be born to you, will be taken away and they will become eunuchs in the place of the king of Babylon.” (2 Kings 20:17~18)

We should keep holy gifts from God well to our selves. We should not use them as boasting or in a game. A holy thing should be treated holy.

### The Trap Of Untruthful Love

Finally, the role-playing became reversed. Until now, Samson used women for pleasure and to fulfill his mission. But the third woman he met used Samson cruelly for pleasure and money, keeping one step ahead of him. Delilah did not love him. What she loved was the reward and not Samson. Everyday she urged him with the excuse that she wanted to check his love. (Judges 16:15~16) Delilah's disguised love could easily deceive a person like Samson who thoroughly fell in love. Samson was always confident to win. But, Delilah was a master archer who could accurately shoot a sharp arrow into Samson's weaknesses.

There is an expression that is often used in boxing. That is you should never underestimate the opponent. It often happened that unknown players who were considered inexperienced would suddenly knock out champion players. Samson underestimated Delilah. He revealed the secret that never should be told, especially to her, who exchanged love for a monetary reward. (Judges 16:17) How could someone have trust in a person who loves money as she did? Delilah took the money and handed him over to the Philistines. (Judges 16:18~20) It is really unbelievable. A minute ago he was sleeping on her lap, using it as a pillow, comfortably believing deeply in their love for each

other. But Delilah's lap was a dreadful trap to those who were over confident and those who could underestimate another person.

Samson was completely defenseless. What happened while he was sleeping? Samson could not listen to the betrayal message that delivered him to the rulers of Philistine. (Judges 16:18) This is not all. He did not even know his Nazirite's hair, which had never been cut, was actually cut. (Judges 16:19) Delilah's lap is the place that made his spiritual sensitivity fall into a comma.

It is dangerous to have fun in front of spiritual matters using God's gift for self-satisfaction or to be thrilled by physical desires. Samson was reversibly dragged into Delilah's game. Delilah's lap, which he thought was the most comfortable place to lay his head became a trap that made him the most miserable and disabled. Doing God's holy work, if you consider it to be a game, will get you hurt. Striking a match at first is nothing, but if it occurs frequently, before long, you might burn your house down. Playing with fire would not be a beautiful memory at all, as a burn is a type of wound that will never completely heal.

He got himself into big trouble when he combined God's holy work with pleasant entertainment. He was over confident to think he can completely control his games and pleasures. He thought he is the one who controls the puppet show. The previous women that he enjoyed himself with could not be his rivals. But Delilah was different. She set her own puppet show and it was more clever than Samson's and able to destroy each puppet Samson tried to use.

At last Samson, who threw himself to Delilah's lap safely, was caught on fire; furious fire covered him. The flying sparks fell to his eyes. Delilah left coldly after catching Samson on the devils fire. She got her great monetary reward for her effort.

Samson could not be saved in the fire brought by a betrayer whom he believed and loved him. Nobody could save him. He was left utterly alone. Delilah won and Samson was defeated in the play of fire. It was her who led the game and not Samson. It was like he was a puppet on the stage she set. Defeat and the bitter cup of shame poured onto his entire body. Immoral love brandishes a sword of fire. Love disguised with sweet honey turns into the devil when the right time comes. Untruthful love leaves immediately when the purpose is accomplished. Disguised love does not leave affection.

To serve God, Delilah's love was not needed. She gave herself to Samson in the name of love and then took his eyes. As long as she could hold onto the bag of money, his eyes were not in her attention. There is no person Satan would care to give affection for. When his mission is done, Satan would throw anybody away like worn out shoes with absolutely no regret. Samson was in a moment thrown into the dark world where nobody cares.

Maybe Samson could expect the happiness he always wished for from her. The tragedy of his first marriage might have left a painful wound in his heart leaving it to become a dark shade. But, Delilah's heart was not a garden that would plant true love from the broken dream of the first marriage. Her heart was full



of dreaming of only the reward. Love with Delilah brought more awful results than his scar from the first love. The more you fall in love easily, the more you cannot see the depth of a trap. Love is something that should take extra care, time, and attention. God gave us the nature of love between a man and a woman. After the corruption of Adam and Eve, love was left for human beings as the most difficult problem, because corrupted love is originally self-centered.



#### 4. Samson, His Eyes Were Taken. (Judges 16:21-27)

“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.” (Judges 16:20)

Samson originally was a person with a penetrating mind about his calling. He believed he was a man of God. He was well aware of himself as a Nazirite. He had never had his hair cut. He caused a lot of damage to the Philistines from time to time while he was a prophet of Israel. This was the mission he received.

However it was his assurance about his calling that he was not on alarm concerning matters of his private life. He enjoyed entertainment and games without worries believing he could sufficiently control himself. Even though he was a super powerful man who could pull out the entrance gates of Gaza, he could not pull out a woman’s sly tricks. There are so many things that we cannot work out with our own wisdom and confidence. There are so many traps in the world exceeding our own ability and experience. Though Samson had the power to control and beat a lion, he could not beat and control the trickery of a woman. He was confident and his mind was completely abstracted. He thought there would never be any consequences from Delilah’s game. Samson had to fail completely before he could learn this is not so. When you do God’s work after officially receiving a calling from God, your private life is protected without

condition. Satan tries to destroy God's people by attacking their private life if he cannot attack God's work directly.

Peter's encouragement is the alarm bell to everybody.

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” (1 Peter 5:8~9)

Samson told his secret because he could not stand Delilah's impatience any more. But his problem does not stop there. He was too sure of himself and was not even careful even after he revealed his entire secret. He must be sure nobody would dare to cut his hair even if he told his precious secret. However, the knife was directly next to him. Delilah's lap was his chair for his haircut and slaughtering table. Samson disgraced himself playing a stupid game with her. He gratified his lust while doing God's work. But still he thought he was just playing a safe game. The biggest delusion of people lying down on Delilah's lap is a false concept of confidence.

A prophet without eyes is to be despised. Not realizing his hair was shaved and his power gone, (Judges 16:19) he acted like this,

“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.” (Judges 16:20)

He remembered the victory in the past. He had a strong will and was brave enough to fight for the Lord. He had a plan and a vision. But he did not realize “the spirit of the Lord was already gone from him.” (Judges 16:20) This word refers to the worst situation God’s people can be faced with. The tragedy of Samson was neither a lack of power nor death of his wife, or the betrayal from Delilah. His tragedy was that he did not notice the absence of the presence of God. He still believed he could do God’s work without realizing he was alone and disarmed.

He boasted that he was sure to destroy the Philistines with his power when hearing they came to attack without realizing what had happened to him. Who would believe if someone says a heavy star fallen to the ground has risen up shining again to the sky? A hollow assurance in front of the immovable reality can only be a mockery.

We could dream of a big vision and desire to serve God though the spirit of God is gone. One of the biggest tragedies among God’s people is when they want to serve God rashly taking for granted God’s power and presence in spite of their foolish sins.

A prophet, Hosea, described the spiritual status of Israel as follows,

“Foreigners sap his strength, but he does not realize it. His hair is sprinkled with gray, but he does not notice.”

(Hosea 7:9)

The youth of Israel dried up like a people who had passed their prime. The Israel people lost their uniqueness by turning themselves to idolatry. Worshipping idols only brought them poverty and weakness. They were also reduced by their attacking enemies. However, they could not come to grips with their circumstances and the reality they were facing. They expected safety because of their alliance with Assyria, which was a powerful country. Today many believers who turned to idolatry are losing their character. They do not realize the fact that the Lord left them. They recollect their victories in the past as self-consolation concerning their present inability of Christian life saying, 'I'll go out as before and shake myself free.'



“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 prison.”(Judges 16:21)

Samson was the only prophet whose eyes were taken. Accidentally, this tragedy on Samson was repeated to King Zedekiah when he betrayed Babylon in the final collapse of Israel.

“Then they put out Zedekiah’s eyes, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.” (2 Kings 25:7)

The prophet, Jeremiah, warned him if he surrendered to the officers of the King of Babylon, Jerusalem will be safe, but if he doesn't his life would be taken and the city would be burned down. (Jeremiah 38:14~23) But he did not listen to what God had said and got struck down by disaster.

His appearance of grinding in a prison without any eyes as a slave in an enemy State, looked like a person who has been deserted from head to toe by God. People might point at him, mock, and despise him. They must whisper saying he could not protect his country as a prophet, only chase women, ending up the way he did because of God's punishment. Nobody wants a hero without any eyes. Who would have hope for Samson among the Israelites?

God's people are easily tempted to judge and despise men of God. So there are a few people who have to spend the rest of their lives powerlessly though they can rise again. We might think leaders and church congregation members without eyes should be treated as retired people. Also we might believe the kingdom and church of God will be enlarged and in better health without them.

In the history of the church, there was a time when anti-mercism was prevalent. But now, it is the extreme opposite; people complain modern churches do not punish strictly enough like the beginning churches did. People fuss about having too much freedom.

But the church without mercy does not mean it is healthy, as does the church without discipline. If there is no mercy, then that means the church does not

perform the forgiveness of the cross. With discipline, it means they ignore the method of God's correction. The problem is we need both but we cannot accept them at the same time. We should not let those who failed the mission avoid grinding in the prison from God. But the church should perform the mercy to those who have had their eyes taken.

Needless to say, the kingdom of God should develop to be stronger and healthy. But when is the kingdom of God stronger? Is it when nobody commits sins and makes mistakes? If every single person obeys God and is holy, there will be a perfect church. However that kind of church does not exist until Jesus returns. The churches on the earth should grow realistically while waiting for the Advent of Christ.

What is our reality? Still some people have to grind. Some fall and some commit sins. We often fall down and could not follow God's will regardless of whose fault it is. Then should we judge and despise them every time? In the flock of God, there are not only those who are good and strong, but also those who are weak and ugly. But a good shepherd takes care of all without discrimination. If he drove all the ugly and weak sheep out of the sheepfold, there would only be strong and good sheep left.

You might think only strong and good sheep will get along well and healthily with each other, but it is not right. The church of God is strengthened even more when people take care and support the weak. Raising those who have fallen, they can experience the power of healing and love of God. But if there are only healthy and smart sheep, when can we perform an act

of mercy and when can we forgive an offender and show love to the sick or pity for the sinner? If the church does not perform these things first, then at which place can show the love of the cross and nature of Christ? If you do not have any reason or chance to do this because you are clean and perfect and live rightly, then you are not living a healthy life for sure.

### The Church Of God Is The Place For Caring And Sharing

The church that cannot take care of the weak and encourage those who have fallen is weak. The healthy church is to wrap eyes in bandages and lead people with warm hands. The church of God should not be the place which lets the wounded alone. God cannot let the weak be alone. The church is the place that takes care of the wounded and feels pity on the broken hearted. The church of God is the place where good Samaritans serve for neighbors robbed by burglary.

The more sick patients there are, the worse the smell is that comes out. The church will be even more stinky when the fallen have increased. Their looks might not be good as well. But the church of Christ should be the place where people who make me unpleasant with stink gather. It is the church that the Jesus Christ of healing waits for sinners. If you think you are clean but others in church are dirty, you might have to look for the church without sinners. But where there are not any sinners, Jesus is not there either. The Bible says, "so, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you do not fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12)



If nothing happens to those standing firm, this passage might not be needed. Dirty things could be on those in clean clothes. It is quite natural to fall when you stand firm. But only considering yourself clean, what happens when you actually fall and get dirty? Where then will you go? You have to go where dirty people gather. It's the place that makes your eyes and nose unpleasant. But if in that place people take care of my wound as if they were hands and feet of Jesus Christ and if we meet good neighbors who cover my shame, then our attitude toward other patients will be changed.

Have you ever seen that kind of church? If you have, then your eyes are blessed. Have you ever been treated in that way? If you have, you must have met a blessed church and congregation. Have you ever had your eyes taken and been grinded? And at that moment, did the church let you be alone treating you as the wounded? Or did they wrap your wound of suffering and shame up with love and forgiveness of good Samaritans? You must feel grateful and warmth with tears flowing even from a pitiful greeting word thrown to your broken heart, because you could experience being taken care of by such a warm greeting and understanding.

The Israel people did not put their hope on Samson. Why? They did not try to save Samson. Nobody wanted to give an idea to rescue him. No one tried to hold Samson's hands. Samson saved the Israel people out of the oppression of the Philistines several times, but they turned their faces away when Samson needed help. This is the grief of a leader. Maybe they took it for granted that Samson was punished

rather than giving him compassion. What made them think this way? The answer is, they were too ignorant of God.

The history of Israel is about promised people who repeated constant indulgence in worshipping idols and disbelief. Reading their history, we can find God does not deal just simply with His people and just punish them. How did God treat them? He treated them with great mercy and constant forgiveness and perfect healing. The Israel people were favored by God's overflowing love and grace in spite of their accumulated sins. However they did not even think of saving Samson who risked his life to save them and went to the enemy's land ending up in great suffering. After Samson became a prophet, nobody among Israel got hurt or died, because he fought alone.

But when Samson was about to die, nobody wanted to help him. In the time of prophets, it was a harsh world without human sympathy and a conscious national sentiment. Samson withstood the suffering of prison life, grinding a heavy millstone with his name forgotten and left for dead in the enemy's land where no one could help him. He was the most solitude and lonely leader among the entire prophets.

We do not know how long he grinded in prison. He had to spend the most miserable days in the enemy's prison as well as be harassed with heavy labor. He was forgotten. His super heroic legend became just a past story. Now nobody praises him. Nobody is afraid of him. Even little kids could hit him, making fun of him.

But the story of Samson does not end here. How

thankful it is! If Samson died as a blind man, grinding a millstone, it would be a tragic story. If it were his ending, we would not be able to have enough courage to call on God even if the trap was caused by our own doing, but instead just simply be afraid of God. Thankfully, the story of Samson continues with a new script. That is the fact when no one cared about Samson, God still did and listened to his suffering and moaning. The God of Samson is the God of exodus.

“The Lord said, ‘I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.”  
(Exodus 3:7-8)

People who forced him to grind were his enemies. But God used their millstone as a whip to train and refine Samson. God allowed the millstone. However, God has compassion to those who grind. As He had compassion to the Israel people and saved them out of Egypt, salvation towards Samson in the plan of God's mercy was on the way.

### Samson's Hair Was Growing

The head of Samson was the symbol of a Nazirite. He had never put a knife on his head since his birth.

His head symbolized God's presence in his life. His head represents being set apart holy for God. (Judges 13:5) Only his head could prove God's calling. But that head was all shaved. He came back to become a regular person. He was not a super powerful hero anymore. Suppose there was a lion without any teeth. Without sharp teeth, which are a lion's strong point, its life is finished because of the inability to hunt. A lion without teeth would soon die shortly thereafter. And like this, Samson's fearless courage became useless after being shaved.

The Philistines mocked him as much as they could and wanted. But Samson could not do anything. Where does the power that killed the lion with bare hands disappear to? (Judges 14:5-6) Where does the super power that killed the thousand people with a jawbone evaporate to? (Judges 15:15) Where does the power that made the ropes seem like burned thread dropping off his hands go away to? (Judges 15:14) Where is his amazing power that took hold of the city gate doors, together with the two posts? (Judges 16:3)

Samson grinded while being chained down. He who once used to be a great strong man had to grind hard as a slave. There was nothing left in his appearance that resembled a hero. There were no more magnificent muscles and rotund voice. He became ill-shaped and looked flabby. As a large man and robust frame, you could no longer find his fierce looks. You will end up being like this if you hand over your gift and power from God to self-satisfaction and lowly worldly love.

We can only be strong when we devote our true

love to God, disregarding our sensory level of lust and love. Delilah's conquetish conduct and flattering words will only dry our source of power. The Philistines could not be happier when watching God's people being lured by their bait, losing their power, and doing miserable work. God's people and soldiers who had fallen down to sin has brought a banquet of great joy to the dark force.

But Samson's difficulties were his blessings. In the revised bible, in Judges 16:22, the conjunction 'but' is missing. This is an important word. "But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved." (Judges 16:22) The word 'but' points out the turning- point of his situation. It became reversed and the tragedy of Samson became changed into a blessing. This is the time when a complete disaster became a complete blessing.

The meaning of his hair beginning to grow wasn't mentioned to point out that his hair was the source of his power, nor was it mentioned to show that nature was simply taking its course. His long hair was an external symbol. The real meaning of mentioning that his hair was beginning to grow was that the promise of the vow, which was broken by Samson, was being restored.

Being refined brought sorrow. Samson had to grind hard without eyes, and be mocked at by people everyday. When God refines the wanderers, it could be a real hardship for them. But sorrow to the point of death finds a true confession. There was God's mighty hand to train behind the bronze shackles of the Philistines. But when the time God has set comes, He

changes the suffering of the refinement into an experience of great power.

God's light started to shine into Samson's empty pupil. Samson began to see the light of God with eyes without any pupils. Therefore, it is important to patiently wait for the right time of grace to come when you are being trained. God never forgets His children. God did not forget Samson grinding in the dark prison of the Philistines, and He does not forget us either. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

What Happens After if God's Servants or Children Have Fallen?

If people who belong to God fall down, it can give the enemy a perfect opportunity to despise and disgrace the name of the Lord. Samson as a slave was the glory of Dagon, their god. The Philistines praised and worshiped their idols with joy because they kept Samson as a captive. (Judges 16:24) How would Samson's heart be when he heard people praising Dagon, celebrating and offering a great sacrifice to Dagon.

The present time is also the same. If people who belong to God fall down, the world laughs at them. Even Christians laugh at their own brothers of leaders when they fall. And people conclude everybody is the same. All the hard work that has accumulated during your entire lifetime could be wasted because of one or two mistakes. The Bible says, "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

(Romans 2:24) Our sins are not only disgracing the name of the Lord, but also our reputation. Worshippers for Dagon had enough reason to celebrate after gouging out Samson's eyes and putting him into prison.

When our heads are shaved, enemies will praise their gods. As Christians, if we lose our dignity, it will result in being made fun of by the world. If we act carelessly with our gifts from God, we also will be treated carelessly. Therefore it is written, "Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place but rather thanksgiving." (Ephesians 5:4)

#### What Would Samson Think Grinding the Millstone

Samson went against the Holy Spirit by letting his head, which is a symbol of his calling, be shaved. But he did not realize it at first. (Judges 16:20) God left him alone for a while, taking back his super powerful gift that He had given him. When he was tied by bronze shackles and his eyes were gouged out, he acutely felt from the bottom of his heart what had happened to him. (Judges 16:20) Samson must bitterly repent from his foolishness while grinding the millstone. He learned advice given from grinding the millstone for sure. Finally the exodus of Samson was being prepared. This passage shows that distinctively, "But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved." (Judges 16:22) This is clear evidence of God's grace. His hair disappearing meant the evaporation of his power. Therefore the meaning of

his hair beginning to grow was great hope towards a chance to start over no matter how small it is. Hair grows again. God made his hair begin go grow again. Samson might touch his head as often as he could. God did not let him be bald. His hair began to grow after everything was shaved.

Everybody's hair grows after it has been cut. There is no wander at all. Normally people do not praise God because their hair grows back after going to the beauty shop. But people who used to be bald and if their hair begins to grow, they will praise the Lord. Things that God meant to give will have special meaning for them even if that is a natural phenomenon. Samson's hair was a symbol of a Nazirite who was set apart and holy for God. The reason his hair began to grow was because he learned the advice from the millstone and it was evidence that he came to be set apart again. God does not let people grind unnecessarily even for one minute. God's millstone grinded slowly. That was the only way God could break the things that should be thoroughly broken into pieces. But God's millstone also knows when to stop exactly.

Do not let yourself get down when God gives you a millstone. Do not be sad when your dream brakes and your future looks covered in shadows. Grinding a millstone is one of the ways of love to refine us. In fact, this might be the only way that God can heal our deep-rooted diseases.

“For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing



comes in the morning.” (Psalms 30:5)

We let ourselves fall into depression after realizing all hairs were shaved off. A lot of times in darkness, oppressed hearts may lay heavily on our spirits. We sob alone in fear at night without lights, holding on to our shaved heads. But one morning, we will realize our hair is beginning to grow. When the morning of God’s mercy comes, depression and the sigh from our lips will drop away. At that moment we will know the fact.



## 5. A Boy Held Samson's Hand. (Judges 16:25~26)

“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, 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’.” (Judges 16:25~26)

Once the life of Samson was perfect, the Philistines were terrified at him. Remember when Samson appeared, thousands of people and numerous property was damaged. Samson hung out in the land of the Philistines and did whatever he wanted to do, but nobody could dare to be against him. He always went to Philistine alone. He did not have any guards to protect him nor any weapons to carry. He traveled around with bare hands. But he performed supernatural power like defeating men with one hand. As long as there was Samson, Israel people did not have to worry about the Philistines. Samson was considered as a savior of his nation and he ruled for over 20 years as a prophet.

However, he had a miserable end. His eyes were gauged out and he grinded in a Philistine prison. The last scene of Samson was really a matter of regret. In the temple of Dagon, the leaders of the Philistines gathered a lot of people and celebrated that Samson was being handed over to their gods. After the sacrifice ceremony giving offering to Dagon, they dragged Samson out to the temple yard. Blind Samson

had to perform, reeling to and fro, hearing laughter and banter. (Judges 16:23~25)

The last prayer of Samson was, “O sovereign Lord, remember me” (Judges 16:28) makes us feel sad. Who would remember him? Who could he appeal to about his misery when he got all kinds of insults and banter? There was no one who could think of him in the Dagon temple. Everybody insulted him. They felt thrilled about what they had done to Samson. But how despairing it would be if the story of Samson ended here. We would not want to read the Bible again. However God saved Samson. God listened to his prayer. And, God showed His amazing power of Salvation. Therefore, we cannot help but go back to this story repeatedly.

A Guide From a Little Hand



How did God use Samson? Did God bring his eyes back again? There is a hymn in Korea, 417 ‘Of Jesus love that sought me’. It’s originally title is ‘sweeter as the years go by’. This song’s writer is named L.N. Morris. He had a hard time to compose this song due to his poor eyesight. In the beginning, he used large music notes, but later he went blind and lived in darkness for about 15 years. But during that time, he composed great songs like hymn 417. Even though he had to live in darkness, God let him know His grace is sweeter as the years goes by.

“He trod in old Judea. Life’s pathway long ago. The people thronged about Him. His saving grace to know.

He healed the broken-hearted. And caused the blind to see. And still His great heart yearneth. In love for even me. Sweeter as the years go by. Sweeter as the years go by. Richer, fuller. deeper, Jesus' love is sweeter, sweeter as the years go by." (Hymn 417)

Nobody could expect the way God used Samson. One day the Philistines with its leaders, celebrated the victory in the Dagon temple. (Judges 16:23~24) Samson was brought out of prison to perform in front of audiences who were gathered in the Dagon temple. But who led him? It was a little boy.

"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.'" (Judges 16:26)

Hands that can help Samson were not big and great hands. Just a little boy's hands were enough. Samson was led on his way, solely depending on a little boy's hand. The person who led Samson was not a sturdy built Philistine or a commando Israel soldier, but an unknown boy. This boy was a servant as well. He was not a child of a noble, but one of a lower class. What did this boy do? He listened to what Samson asked for. If he did not lead Samson to the pillars of the Dagon temple, nothing would have happened on that day. A guide from a little hand played an important role to destroy the Dagon temple. Jesus said, 'He will praise and give a reward for that kind of hand.' (Matthew 25:34~36)

“The king will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brother of mine, you did for me’. (Matthew 25:40)

Samson, whose eyes were gauged out and had to perform in front of his enemies, was at that time the least. But still he was the ‘brother’ of Jesus. Everybody in the Dagon temple was mocking him. Only a little boy who held Samson’s hand was on his side. But how great a work did God do with that little boy’s hand. God made the destined countdown of the destruction of the Dagon temple when the love of the little boy’s hand was joined with Samson’s.

Naaman, who was a commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a leper. (2Kings 5:10) But who led him to go to the prophet Elisha, so that he could be healed? It was an unknown Israel girl who was captive and served Naaman’s wife.

“She said to her mistress, ‘if only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy’.” (2Kings 5:3)

Naaman could experience an amazing miracle, which healed his horrible disease by God’s grace because he accepted a little girl’s favor. As the result, he could confess saying, “Now I know that there is not God in all the world except in Israel.” (2Kings 5:15) A little girl’s testimony brought God’s miracle, which healed leprosy for the first time, except for Miriam’s case in the old testament. Throw out your hand with love to those without eyes. Come closer to those grinding the

millstone of God. God accomplished great historical work through the encounter of Samson and the boy. God destroyed the Dagon temple and crushed the Philistines to death. And He punished them who worshipped idols and oppressed Israel, like Naaman's confession. (2Kings 5:15) He revealed to the whole world there is no God in all the world except in Israel.

When your hand becomes Samson's eyes, God will work out amazing tasks. Who is your Samson? Hold his hands. You will experience God's amazing power. Do you want God to work through your life? Then look for those who have had their eyes taken. And throw out your hand. Today Jesus is still working through those kinds of encounters. God is always faithful to those who put trust on God's help and mercy until the end, in spite of their weaknesses and failures. God was preparing a little boy who could be Samson's eyes while he was grinding in the darkness with his eyes taken. (Judges 16:26)

God fills up the parts which were lost because of a disciplinary punishment. There was a mission that God gave Samson earlier. Samson was supposed to be a person who was to start to deliver Israel out of Philistine power. (Judges 13:5) For this task, God prepared a little boy and made him a guide in a crucial moment and let the Dagon temple be destroyed.

We might complain like this, 'how could I destroy the Dagon temple without my eyes or how could God use me without eyes'? There are lots of things we do not have. We feel a great lacking to do God's work. But those who put trust on God until the end will know there are 'boys or guides' from God. The Dagon

temple was the gentile's temple. This is an evil place which is crowded by the gentiles. But God prepared a little boy who could be Samson's eyes among these people. God could make us meet a friend, even being captive in an enemies land. The Lord shall provide. (Genesis 22:8,14)

### God's Grace And Sovereignty

God used Samson greatly. He had a lot of weaknesses. Most of all, he could not keep his thought under control in front of the girl he fell in love with. He wanted to marry a gentile girl from the beginning. He did not hesitate to go to the prostitute in Gaza. He became a captive while lying on Delilah's lap. He considered her nagging to know the secret of his power just has harmless fun without knowing her real evil intentions. He did not realize her lips were those of an adulteress.

"The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; he who is under the Lord's wrath will fall into it." (Proverb 22:14)

One of the weakest parts of Samson was that he could not control his anger. He was extremely hot tempered. He had to pay back what he had taken for sure. Moreover, he was used to revenge. (Judges 16:26) He spent his whole life for revenge. Even when he died, he prayed, "Please strengthen me just one more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." (Judges 16:26)

Another of his weaknesses was that he loved to boast and bet. It was not just bragging, because he

had that huge power, but he was over proud believing in his supernatural power as if he could do anything with it. He was stubborn so that he did not listen to his parents and loved to play for fun, which brought unnecessary violence.

God gave him annihilating power when the Spirit of God came upon him becoming like superman. But he was over confident in his abilities so that he exposed himself to his enemies with ease and indulged in sexual desire. Despite that, he fought with the Philistines well. But he as always defeated in the battle against himself. He was strong outwardly but weak inwardly. He was brave for his official task but delicate for his private matters and failed in self-management. How could this kind of badly flawed person be a prophet of a nation? He was too immoral and disrespectful to do God's holy work. How could he, who went to a prostitute, become a leader of a nation of theocracy under the holy law? Today, who would want him as a leader of the church?

But God specially appointed him as a servant, and worked through him. That does not mean God tolerated what he had done. God hates sin. But we have to remember God is sovereign in everything. There is nothing God cannot do. God can use even our sins for His holy purpose. God accomplished His good will that He had planned, controlling Samson's misconduct and bad behavior under His providence. This is why we are happy in this tragic story. Because we are living with our own flaws which make tragic mistakes and foolish weaknesses, we can put our hope on God who led Samson with His sovereign providence.



Samson lived with serious weaknesses. He repeated to make the same mistakes over and over again until he got caught as a captive in Delilah's house. Weaknesses do not get covered with ease. They are related to character. If you want to change your character, a lot of time and effort will be needed. People with great faith in the Bible have a lot of weaknesses. Our common weakness is that we all repeat the same mistakes.

We can often see this in the history of redemption in the Bible. Abraham also repeated the same mistakes as Samson did. (Genesis 20:1~18) Abraham stayed in Gerar after Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. In this place he lied again saying his wife was his sister. Sarah was placed into a situation in which any man could sleep with her. In the past, Abraham lied to the king, the pharaoh of Egypt and handed her over to him. (Genesis 12:12.13) But his bad habit did not disappear even after time went by. He was the person with a high level of faith, who used to pray as a mediator for Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 18:16~33) Regardless of that he did the same thing to Sarah as he did several years ago.

Our weaknesses cannot be easily covered. We repeat the same mistakes. Our spirituality having good faith cannot make them disappear. This is the common blind spot of corrupted human beings. Abraham fell down by the same mistakes even though he received a huge revelation from God and prayed as a mediator having a high and powerful level of faith. But we can be encouraged in the view of the sovereign grace of God.

Surprisingly God appeared and warned Abimelech in Gerar in a dream, who was about to sleep with Sarah. God delivered an important message to him. God described Abraham as a prophet. (Genesis 20:7) This is a really amazing message because God is calling the man a prophet who gave him Abraham's wife, making him believe she was a sister. At least this moment is not appropriate for Abraham to deserve to be called a prophet. More surprisingly God said that this cowardly prophet would bless Abimelech. Again the amazing thing is God proved Abraham to be a prophet when He answered what Abraham asked for. This is the sovereign grace. What do you think of God's sovereign grace? Do you think it is fair? Don't you think it is fairer if God deprived his prophet rights or at least put him on some sort of good behavior? Maybe it will be hard for you to understand God who recommends the cowardly Abraham who repeated sins to the king. What if this kind of situation happened in our church or home? How would you handle it? We might not follow God's way.

However, who of us were not saved by God's grace? It is all thanks to God's mercy and grace if we were called. There is no person who could be a prophet, minister, elder, or God's children only because they want to be. God called Abraham 'a prophet'. God did not hesitate to let Abraham be known to the world as a prophet when he was in the most shameful situation. In God's eyes, he was 'a prophet', whether he was righteous or unrighteous.

God does not easily degrade or demote His children who were declared as righteousness. In this

regard, maybe we and God are not similar to each other. God wants to support even if there is a falling of dignity. Of course God disciplines His children who have swayed from the right path. But our Father in heaven will always protect us with mercy.

### Build Up and Encourage People Who Have Weaknesses

We are all imperfect sinners with flaws. But we are declared as righteousness by God by believing in the cross of Christ and having our sins and flaws peeled off. Therefore, God does not feel shameful about us in front of the world. Though we make mistakes, and commit stupid sins, God says we are His children openly calling our names.

God healed Abimelech's wife and her servants so that they could have babies through Abraham's prayer. (Genesis 20:17) At that time, what Abraham had done was not honorable. He was a real coward for a husband who was ready to sacrifice his wife for his life, by lying and saying she was his sister. Despite that, God used him as a prophet.

You will remember "The message of the cross is to us who are being saved by the power of God," (1Corinthians 1:18) and "God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe." (1Corinthians 1:21) In the 1<sup>st</sup> century the cross was a disgusting punishment devise. So the gospel that Jesus was crucified on that very symbol as a savior was foolishness to the world. But God let that hatred cross save sinners forever.

By the way, who was it that spread the gospel of

the cross? From the world standard, most the disciples were not educated with poor family backgrounds and nothing to show off. (1Corinthians 1:26~27) That is why the Bible says, “He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things, and the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.”(1Corinthians 1:28~29) God let the world experience His blessing through our weak service and mission with flaws and mistakes. This is God’s sovereign power and His wisdom. Even Peter who denied Jesus three times received a new mission of, “When you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22:32) Maybe we would tell him ‘repent! And never step forward for the work of God’. But God says the reverse. Jesus said to Peter to repent and stand up again learning from this and strengthen other people. Jesus is saying the same message to us all.

Who serves God? Who spreads the gospel? Who becomes a missionary? All are those who fall. All are foolish and people with a lot of flaws. All have no power and wisdom.

Who became God’s disciples? They were thoroughly rotten sinners. But Jesus called them to the cross and made them into heavenly children of the Father. And in many situations, He forgave us, as when Peter betrayed Jesus three times and lifted us up to serve Him again.

But we are not trying to apply what Jesus had done for us to either our selves or others. Why? Why can’t you believe God forgave us and does not remember what we had done? Why can’t you apply

this truth to other sinners? If God does not judge them, shouldn't we do the same? Children should take after their fathers. Our father is willing to forgive and give the opportunity to stand up again because He wants forgiven sinners to serve Him more with passionate hearts. You might remember Paul confessed he was the worst among sinners because he persecuted the churches before he met Jesus. He felt guilty deep inside. But he did his best to witness the gospel for all of us because he was forgiven and freed from oppression and guiltiness. (1 Timothy 1:15) We should learn this attitude from Paul.

Abraham, Moses, David, prophet Jona, Peter, and Paul all had a lot of flaws. If we judge them in our own way, they are unacceptable criminals to do God's work. But God forgave them all and used them in a great way. Therefore, we should have faith in God's forgiveness about our sins, and no matter how big other people's sins are we should treat them in accordance with God's mercy and forgiveness.

### If We Believe God's Sovereignty, We Will Not Be Tied By Our Flaws

Samson was overconfident, immoral, stubborn, and forcible. So we might think he is not qualified to be used for the kingdom of God. But God used him. Samson thought his death would bring about a better result for encouraging Israel rather than living longer as a blind person. A heroic death of a leader gives a new courage to the followers.

Samson believed he could serve God best through

his death. He was looking beyond his death. He was looking at the future in which Israel will be relived by the Philistines after the Dagon temple was destroyed.

Samson seems to realize many things while grinding in the prison. Most of all, he had a different view about his weaknesses. He came to believe God uses him for His plan by His sovereignty even though he made mistakes, which he was not supposed to do, like pursuing his lust. Looking back, the fact that he broke the vow as a Nazirite and became a captive could fit God's plan. If not, Samson would not be able to hold the pillars of the Dagon temple without any interruption in the place where all the leaders of the Philistines gathered and watched Samson. The Dagon temple was the gentile's temple, which was full of idol worshippers. He was cruelly treated like a toy, suffering insults and all kinds of swear words in front of over 3,000 Philistines while being dragged to the stage from the prison. But God turned the most shameful moment into the best accomplishment. The Philistine's leaders praised their gods for handing over Samson to them. (Judges 16:23~24) But in fact it was Jehovah that handed Samson over to them. To destroy gods and their worshippers, God let them catch Samson as a captive. God works until His children's weaknesses contribute to good purposes. God is not affected by what we committed, then why should we care about bettering our weaknesses? God uses our weaknesses for His good purpose by using them sovereignly with His holy power and wisdom. God works until our weak points become good. If you believe this, you will have a positive attitude in how God sees our weaknesses and

uses them. How did God make Samson overcome his weaknesses? God made him realize there was God's providence on his weaknesses, putting him to grind in prison. He believed what he could do for God at last because he found out there was God's good will even after his stupid acts.

In the period of prophets, the basic problem in Israel was that they were attracted to the gentile's gods. (Judges 2:10~13) The best contribution of Samson was showing the Lord was superior to all, and the evil spirits of the gentile god's were useless. How did Samson accomplish this great task? It was possible because he believed God's gracious sovereignty concerning his weaknesses. He endured firmly waiting for God's right time until his weaknesses were turned to good.



Until It Works For The Good

Samson lost his love and freedom. He lost power and reputation as well. But to those who have trust on God, all things work for the good. Samson ended up entering the Dagon temple due to Delilah's betrayal. Enjoying a game with Delilah was foolish and a suicide trap. But Samson, being caught in a trap, set a snare for the Philistines and its leaders in the Dagon temple and showed fearful power in destroying his enemies who gauged out his eyes.

God uses in reverse the enemies trap and millstone. And God makes that suffering become tools and weapons of victory for His people. Samson revenged with the strongest power he had ever had

before. Delilah had never won in this game. Under the amazing providence of God, her trick became the gate, which brought a great victory that accomplished Samson's mission more dramatically. God let the evil things be, to put an end to the evil. Those who love God will know He works for the good. Samson's life was actual proof of the word of God, spoken in Romans 8:28. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." In the passage, 'in all things', it includes everything, like the word itself. It includes my sins and flaws. Believe this passage and entrust your shameful and regretful past to God's hand. And expect God will make even your darkest sins in the past become good. Believe in God's perfect forgiveness. Trust you are cleaned by the blood of the cross, and stand up, setting a new goal to serve Jesus.

Samson finished his mission with faith and patience. God works for the good in all things when His children go forth into the way they should with faith, and trusting steadily. (Philippians 3:13~16)



## 6. The Last Prayer of Samson (Judges 16:28)

“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’.” (Judges 16:28)

Samson used to behave irrationally and could not control his private life. He was not careful of relationships with women and disdained everybody. He was over confident. He felt thrilled to take care of dangerous situations by force. So he tried to do God’s work, putting himself into risk on purpose. He acted by his temper. Samson was trying to deal with an official mission as a prophet, but by going his own way in accordance with his temper.

But his personal relationship which was not sincere made Samson crash head on with the Philistines. This resulted in the attacking of the Philistines for his mission. Jehovah made Samson accomplish his mission, by letting him live by his own way. Samson lived by the way he wanted to live without any control. But God led his life sovereignly toward his purpose, which was meant to save Israel out of the hands of the Philistines. So Samson’s life is a very real example of how God accomplishes His will by sovereign providence in spite of many human flaws.

### The Faith of Samson

Samson grinded in prison without any eyes. He put himself in trouble by his sinful stupidity. He tasted

the bitterness of shame and failure. He was full of ignominious defeat. He lost his eyes and power. He had nothing left.

But God told his mother that he would save Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. However, he became the blind. How could God use Samson who was not able to see again? Considering his super power in the past, doesn't he look too miserable? He was a prisoner engaged in heavy labor dragging chains. He was not a hero anymore. His life looked like a wasteland.

What can we expect from that kind of person? But Samson was described as a hero of faith in Hebrews. (Hebrews 11:32) With what standard was Samson judged like this? Judging Samson by his outward appearance, he seemed like he had a lack of faith not a hero of faith. How could he be a hero without power and eyes?

Samson ruined his life for himself. God took the power from him. (Judges 16:20) He lost his hair which was a symbol of a Nazirite. But at this point in time he showed the greatest faith he had ever had. Even though he lost his symbol and authority as a prophet, he was still a heroic faithful person. He was tough, but trusted God firmly. He made a definite promise to himself that he would accomplish his mission whatever it costs. And he was assured that God could still use him. This is why Samson was included to the lists of those with faith in Hebrews.

God Does His Best

We are easily disappointed at our mistakes even if it is only once. If we do the same thing twice, we lose courage completely. At the third time, we give up as if everything has ended. But this is not good faith. Who decided after a third time of trying that it is done? God has never made that kind of rule. These are human laws made by people. Nobody would survive if God dealt with us according to these rules. Sins from his children drew deep sighs of grief from God. Sometimes God punishes them.

Israel was God's vineyard. God dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. Then He looked for a cup of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. God became furious and made Israel become captives of Babylon. (Isaiah 5:1~7) But the history of Israel did not finish here. 'Those who are left' put their hope in the future God promised for Israel under evil sins. (Isaiah 4: 1 ~ 10)

God asked Israel, "What more could have been done for my vineyard?" (Isaiah 5:4) God fully committed Himself to Israel. Therefore they should have believed God would do His best for the recovery of Israel. Samson believed this. He believed God would heal him for sure after refining him. He had faith on God who would give him a new power, and as much as he had before. This is good faith.

God always does His best. He does not leave things that could have been done. He is the perfect savior who does His best all the time. Samson believed in God's perfect power. He expected a new day having faith in God's love and power bringing strength to the bottom of despair which seems like an

unrecoverable situation. God always listens to people like him and is pleased with those who have this kind of faith. Because this is what He wants from those who fall. How do you deal with your sins or flaws? How do you treat other people's sins or flaws? You should think what God wants. God is really sad about our sins. Whenever we are against God's will, we grieve the Holy Spirit of God. (Ephesians 4:30) But God is not a pessimist. He is not negative either. God has the most constructive and active plan for our sins. God knows we will commit sins. In spite of that, He loved us so much that He decided to kill His only son for our sins. In fact the Lamb was slain from the creation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

Therefore our sins will make God sad but not make Him shocked. God remains calm in front of our sins, because it is not unexpected or something that cannot be known. God prepared a solution for our sins in advance even before we were born. That is why He sent Jesus to this world. It was for going to the cross to carry our sins that He came. No matter how big our sins or flaws are, nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God. (Romans 8:35,39) Samson knew this is God's love and sacrifice. Therefore he could beg God to remember him once more.

He reached the top of faith on his last day of life. This is because he expected God would work and use him in a great way still having faith in Him despite the tragedy of being handed over to the Philistines due to Delilah's betrayal and all kinds of his stupid actions. This is great faith.

He did not ask God to take his life like Jona and

Elijah did. He begged God to use him believing God's great power under the worst situation which even couldn't be made any worse than it was. How many people who showed great faith like Samson under the worst situation were in the Old Testament? It is not just coincidence that Samson's name is with people of great faith in Hebrews.

### The Prayer of Faith

The last prayer of Samson is a powerful prayer that appeals to God's character. God responded to his entire prayer without delaying or changing His way. "The Lord will respond to the payer of the destitute; He will not despise their plea." (Psalms 102:17) Samson prayed sincerely leaning against the pillars of the Dagon temple.

"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'." (Judges 16:28)

The Philistines considered his hair as the source of magical powers. So they shaved off his head. But he did not forget his calling as a Nazirite. He did not give up his faith even if he ended up being blind and deceived by Delilah's trap. While grinding, he was constantly only thinking of destroying the Philistines.

Previously he entrusted himself to God. So God gave him the strength he needed. Therefore there was no reason for Samson to think God would never

use him again ending his life. He believed in the healing from God. He was sure God would use him again. He did not think he had suffered from everything for nothing. There will always be hope if we consider our suffering is for refining us. There is God's will in the hardship God presents. Samson sought God's good will under his trials. In the past, at a crisis, he always cried out to God. (Judges 15:18) Samson was a person who prayed. Then how did he pray? Samson usually did not distinguish private affairs from official ones. He did God's work and enjoyed his lust at the same time, like having his cake and eating it too. Actually in his last prayer, he mixed private matters with his official mission. He wanted to revenge his eyes. At the same time he cried out to God for his holy mission to save Israel from the Philistines. His prayer makes us think about our prayer.

#### The Prayer That Can Be Answered.

Firstly, a prayer that can be answered does not always mean it is a good prayer. Generally, in the guide books for prayer, the emphasis is always on the 'right prayer'. For example it says we have to pray for things that fit God's will or the prayer should not be selfish or it should not be for revenge.

Then, God will only listen to right and exemplary prayers? What about Samson's last prayer? In view of the 'right prayer', it does not seem to be a good prayer, because it is about revenge. He prayed to God to revenge his enemies for his eyes whole heartedly.

But his prayer was answered.

Then is prayer for revenge justifiable? The more important thing in this passage of Samson is destroying and not loving, our enemies. The truth is God can use revengeful thoughts by us as a tool of sovereign providence when God has to punish. Samson's prayer came from his personal motives. But his revengeful thought was mingled with passion for his calling and spirit. Jeremiah was a prophet who used to pray to God for revenge.

“You understand, O Lord; remember me and care for me. Avenge me on my persecutors. You are long-suffering, do not take me away; think of how I suffer reproach for you sake.” (Jeremiah 15:15)

“Let my persecutors be put to shame, but keep me from shame; let them be terrified, but keep me from terror. Bring on them the day of disaster; destroy them with double destruction.” (Jeremiah 17:18)

“Listen to me, O Lord; hear what my accusers are saying. Should good be repaid with evil? Yet they have dug a pit for me. Remember that I stood before you and spoke in their behalf to turn your wrath away from them. So give their children over to famine; hand them over to the power of the sword. Let their wives be made childless and widows; let their men be put to death, their young men slain by the sword in battle. Let a cry be heard from their houses when you suddenly bring invaders against them, for they have dug a pit to capture me and have hidden snares for my

feet. But you know, O Lord, all their plots to kill me. Do not forgive their crimes or blot out their sins from your sight. Let them be overthrown before you; deal with them in the time of your anger.” (Jeremiah 18:19~23)

He looks like he wants to survive for revenge and not being ready to risk his life like a martyr. Jeremiah is well known as a prophet of tears. But he also shed his tears for revenge. Isn't this kind of prayer against the word of Jesus, which says we should love and pray for our enemies? But God did not rebuke him. Why? Because his prayer suited God's will, which tried to punish Judea. People of Judea who persecuted Jeremiah were zealous idol worshippers. God had a plan to kick them out of Canaan. That is why God answered, telling him He would punish all of Jeremiah's enemies. (Jeremiah 20:1~5)

Samson's prayer is for personal revenge. He wanted to revenge the Philistines who took his eyes. In the case of Jeremiah, he also begged God to revenge for how his enemies dug a pit for him. Therefore, both of them prayed for personal revenge. Maybe revengeful thought itself is not desirable, but their prayers fitted with God's purposeful plan of punishment toward the Philistines and the idol worshippers in Judea. That is why God answered the prayer of Jeremiah and punished Judea. And so He did to Samson.

The prayer of Samson might not be ideal or exemplary. But we should focus on the fact that his imperfection did not nullify his calling as a prophet. Samson was on an important start line to save Israel



from the Philistines as a prophet. God did not take his calling for the reason that he made moral mistakes or ask for revenge in prayer.

Secondly, the key of a prayer that can be answered is the relationship with God. The prayer of Samson was not answered because it was perfect and flawless. His prayer was about personal revenge. But the important thing is where the relationship with God lied in his life. Samson was a praying person. That does not mean he was godly. But he sought God whole heartedly whenever he was in a crisis and firmly believed his super power came from a special relationship with God. He was tough and wild and had serious moral flaws. But he thought of himself as a Nazirite with God's mission and a person to serve God. Therefore, even though he was grinding in the enemies prison, he put his hope on God and prayed. He believed the following prayer.

“I will exalt you, O Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me.”  
(Psalms 30:1)

God considered Samson's spiritual attitude valuable. Samson hated the Philistines more because of his personal disaster. But God answered his revenge prayer and took it as an important opportunity to prove who the real God is to the Philistines.

And also an answered prayer does not mean that it fits God's will perfectly. Both right prayer and contents are important. But most of all, personal relationship with God is more important. Though you

do not know theological knowledge or the Bible well, God thinks prayer with firm faith is valuable.

We easily tend to judge others prayer's negatively. But we might have had an experience in which we were surprised of how God responded well to someone who did not seem to know God and the Bible. Even the prayer might have seemed unpleasant to the ear. It is more important that you have a faithful relationship with God than whether you are doing the right prayer or not.

Thirdly, praying will be a difficult job if you want to pray perfectly and exactly. It would be difficult to express naturally and honestly in front of God if you prayed always checking if it is right or biblical. The prayer is different from writing down the answer on an exam. If you only try to focus on the right answer, the prayer will be cold and 'textbookish'. Powerful prayer does not always mean exact prayer. We should think over to ourselves about a right prayer of course. We should avoid praying murmuring without a sincere heart and a prayer, which runs counter to the spirit of God. Amid building experiences of a personal relationship with God, our prayer will get better and better.

God called him as a Nazirite and set him as a starter for saving Israel from the Philistines. Samson fought bravely with the Philistines for his entire life. He firmly believed God's help and power even though his life was not like an ideal prophet. Therefore he prayed whole-heartedly. God does not only listen to flawless and clean prayer.

Though his prayer was not exemplary, God listened to him and made his mission successful,

because he believed in the hope of God's power and salvation against all hope. In this regard, he followed Abraham's faith, "Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed." (Romans 4:18)

Once Joshua prayed undesirably. He complained to God after trying to attack Ai and failed. (Joshua 7:6~9) He wondered why God brought out these people, and if only they had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan. (Joshua 7:7) His behavior meant he saw the conquest of Canaan itself negatively and despised God's plan and grieved about his hard circumstance. Joshua emphasized the result of the defeat more than the defeat itself. He blamed God instead of witnessing the people's sins. But God listened to his prayer, because basically he focused on God's honor. He said, "What then will you do for your own great name?" (Joshua 7:9)

Joshua asked God bravely and honestly what the problem was before the Ark of the Lord with the elders. This shows Joshua had a close spiritual relationship with God like the prayer of Samson. Even though he blamed God, but that proves they were that much closer to each other. He fell face down to the ground and remained there until evening, and speaking out his sorrows. That was not just a grumble. While he complained, he was concerned about God's glory. God respects this sort of prayer. God is not likely to listen only because prayer is theological and right in every way.

Fourthly, God watches the center of the heart. Though our prayer is not perfect, when our heart is toward the kingdom of God and it's righteousness, God

takes care of our prayers. He listens to our prayer when we fall down to the ground before Him with a sincere heart in spite of our distorted appearance due to defeat. Are you maintaining a close relationship with God enough to appeal to Him for the kingdom and its righteousness though still complaining and blaming something?

God is pleased with those kinds of people, in spite of nonsense requests and grumbles. Who can pray perfectly? Only Jesus Christ prayed perfectly according to God's will, and even now He is giving flawless prayer for us to God. (Romans 8:34)

Why does Jesus have to pray for us now? One of the reasons is our prayer is imperfect. Nobody could pray perfectly in accordance with God's will. God is well aware of this. He is happy when we trust in Him so that we can continuously pray with faith though we are imperfect and full of flaws.

Fifthly, there is a real devotion in the prayer of Samson. Samson appealed to God to remember him when he said, "O sovereign Lord, remember me." (Judges 16:26) This is Samson's confession. He realized his sins blocked his relationship with God. Before praying he grinded in the prison. He must of quietly shed a lot of tears from his closed eyes. When grinding, he grinded his heart as well. Like the millstone refines crops into the powder, Samson refined the sins in his heart. He regretted his foolishness and deplored wasted time that he could no longer offer to God.

Not long ago, he took God's presence for granted. That is why he did not know that the Lord had left him.

(Judges 16:20) When his head was shaved off and Delilah betrayed him, he thought God's power was always with him. Therefore he spoke out, "I'll go out as I did before and shake myself free." (Judges 16:20) But after the lesson from the millstone, he did not take God's power for granted. Since then he started to beg God to remember him to receive the power once again. 'Remember me' does not mean simply remembrance. This is begging God to deliver His salvation. (Genesis 8:1; 19:29; 2:24) Why should God remember him? How could Samson face God asking a favor? Was it because of his faith, or courage, or loneliness?

Samson broke the vow as a Nazirite by sleeping with a prostitute. He was not faithful as a prophet. He disgraced God tremendously by being a captive of the gentile due to his stupidity and sins. Then why should God care about such a man?

If we start to judge people this way, there is no one who could deserve to ask God for salvation, because all of us are unfaithful and break the promise with God and have experiences against God's will. If God punishes us according to what we have done, who could bear that kind of punishment? The most thankful and amazing truth is that God does not treat us in that way.

"He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him."(Psalms 103:8)

If you fall down and get to see the depth of your

sins, pray to God putting your hope on His mercy and have patience like Samson. Our prayer is the expression of our belief in God's mercy. God wants us to pray for what we want in truth and call on Him through faith.

“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.” (Judges 16:28)

Samson had a super natural power for a long time. Therefore he might feel it was his own body parts. But he realized that his power was entirely a gift from God after committing sins. In the story of Samson, one thing that was focused on was how repeatedly God's spirit came upon him. (Judges 13:25; 14:6; 19; 15:14) God's gift of grace is the gift given once at a time. This means to receive God's grace every time, we have to rely on God. Nobody can take God's gifts for granted. God is the provider of all grace. But no one can receive God's grace at one time. God gives enough gifts to those who ask and love His grace every time.

We can easily forget the truth that we should live by the daily bread that God provides and everything that comes from God. We must remember this. (1Corinthians 4:7, 1Chronicles 29:14, Deuteronomy 6:10~12; 8:18)

For example, Hezekiah, a king of Judah was a great figure. He was miraculously healed by God and managed to survive from a deadly illness. But, 'he did not respond to the kindness shown him'. (2Chronicles 32:25) Therefore the Lord's wrath was on him. When

he was without a guard and not depending on God in every matter taking God's presence for granted, 'God left him to test him and to know everything that was in his heart'. (2Chronicles 32:31)

Samson got to newly realize that every time he had to depend on God in his daily life through the training of the millstone. God delights with prayer from people who realize the truth. Samson prayed 'once more' for power. He knew he was going to die. So he offered his last prayer perfectly depending of God on the peak of the last final moment. He knew what he needed and who provided for that as well. What he needed was super natural power to destroy the Dagon temple. This can be only provided by God.



## 7. Destruction of the Dagon Temple

“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, Samson said, ‘Let me die with the Philistines!’ Then he pushed with all 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.”(Judges 16:29~30)

The Dagon temple was the symbol of evil. The Dagon temple means all evil forces against God and His people. This force is spiritual darkness and not flesh and blood. (Ephesians 6:12) We have our own Dagon temples to destroy. But this temple could only be destroyed by holy super power from God.

Do you pray everyday for strengthening you once more before the Dagon temple blocks your way? Do you offer Samson’s prayer as if it is your last prayer? The Dagon temple should be destroyed. It is our mission to be against the devil’s schemes, not giving the devil a foothold. (Ephesians 4:27; 6:11, Peter 5:8~9)

Samson was in the Dagon temple. But where is the Dagon temple? The devil’s Dagon temple is close to our daily lives all the time. So whenever it has a chance, it makes wicked acts infiltrate into our faithful minds. If we do not destroy the Dagon temple, it destroys us for sure. If Samson did not destroy the Dagon temple, he would be a toy for the Dagon temple and a miserable sacrifice in prison.



How will the Dagon temple destroy me? Paul said, not giving the devil a foothold, “Each of you must speak truthfully to his neighbor, get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, along with every form of malice and be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”(Ephesians 4:25~32) If we do not act this way as saints, devils get the foothold and the Dagon temple destroys us.

The important thing is the Dagon temple was destroyed powerless in front of the prayer of Samson. Mighty God listened to Samson’s prayer. We also can destroy our Dagon temples if we ask God as if it is our last prayer. Be against devils with the prayer of Samson. Then the power of the devil will disappear.

“Let me die with the Philistines.” (Judges 16:30)



What would Samson expect by his death? Once, Samson cried out to the Lord for dying of thirst after killing a thousand men with a jaw bone in Lehi. (Judges 15:18) At that time God opened up the spring. Why didn’t he pray like this way in this time for his life? Wouldn’t it have been better to live than to die? If all leaders of the Philistines die due to the destruction of the Dagon temple, Israel can be free from them and Samson can be honored as a national hero and spend the rest of his life peacefully.

But he said, ‘Let me die with them’? This was great determination. This is one of the features of hero’s of faith who are willing to risk their lives for the kingdom of God. Apostle Paul said, “I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the

name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 21:13) The reason Samson wanted to die was not because he became blind but that he wanted to have a much bigger purpose.

He would think of God who was the source of his power whenever they flipped a whip on his back since his tired arms could not grind properly. He would weep remembering how he spent all his energy. He wasted his time and energy on reckless adventures with Delilah and prostitutes. But this time was different for him. Samson learned how to be humble in the prison without Delilah and prostitutes, and he became determined to go back to his holy calling from God and his real purpose in life. There was nothing left for Samson to do but die. But even death can be a powerful tool for the kingdom of God.

Risking his life, Samson hoped for God's last calling. Samson must grind, repeating 'once more'. (Judges 16:20) Samson cried out severely for his last prayer, hoping God would give him power 'once more'. By doing this, he could join ranks of the faithful heroes in the Bible. God's people always risked their lives.

“I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me, the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.” (Acts 20:24)

In spite of many flaws, he finished his life with the best prayer. This story seemingly sounds like petition for his personal revenge, but his soul was completely depending on God. Samson planned to complete the task of a prophet, which delivers Israel from the

Philistines by revenge. The destruction of the Dagon temple represented that only the Lord is the real God in the world and it proved it to the world.

Samson considered his life worth nothing like Paul. (Acts 20:24) He was willing to volunteer being a useful instrument for the kingdom of God until the end. In the last task, Samson followed what Jesus did. Jesus accomplished the biggest task of salvation by being crucified on the cross for sinners than he did when he was alive.

“He too snared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.” (Hebrews 2:14~16)



### Samson is the Messenger of Jesus

Samson was the messenger before Jesus despite his weaknesses. If it is necessary, we should be ready to risk our lives for Jesus. Jesus told all Christians, “Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” (Matthew 10:39)

He continuously depended on God whenever he faced crises. Until the last moment he believed in God. God respects that faith. And with grace He repays it to those who are always faithful even when they are moaning under the bottom of sins and failures. God helps those who put their hopes on God with faith in spite of their weaknesses to accomplish valuable things

for the righteousness of the kingdom of God.

“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make you hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.” (Hebrews 6:11~12)

God does amazing things for those who through faith and patience hold the promise to the very end under a hopeless situation. So this is described as the works of the Lord being great (Psalms 111:22; 126:2,3) or praiseworthy deeds of the Lord. (Psalms 78:4, 32; 89:5; 107:24)

“What god is so great as our God? You are the God who performs miracles.” (Psalms 77:13~14)

“Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does miraculous deeds. Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen. Amen.” (Psalms 72:18~19)

God makes things people even never dream of happen. God sees things nobody sees. The Philistines did not consider Samson as dangerous since they put him into prison grinding while being chained. They saw Samson was having a difficult time. But no one could see his hair was growing little by little. And nobody realized it or thought about its meaning. He looked like he had lost his entire power just like in the past. He was a blind person who could not see an inch ahead

of him self. He did not have even the eyeballs them self. He could not be a dangerous man to them. They thought there was nothing left for Samson to do but perform. Then, God let his hair grow. But Samson did not feel super power from God until that time. He was dragged to the Dagon temple powerless. But he was changed. He was not on the lap of Delilah any more. He was standing in the Dagon temple as a man trained and refined by the lesson of the millstone. Men trained by the millstone lesson are the most dangerous people to their enemies, because they have the holy prayer power of destruction to destroy the Dagon temple. He was like a walking time bomb in the Dagon temple.

Samson held pillars of the temple. His hands were devoted to God. His arms were holy separated as a Nazirite. He was not a stupid rough powerful man playing foolish games like he did in the past any more.

Samson had happy last moments. A repenting hero died serving Israel best. He died a heroic death as a real soldier of God. Samson got an honorable funeral and was buried in the tomb of Manoah, his father. (Judges 16:31) Despite his big flaws he completed his task. He drew a large line in Israel's history. His name was written in the history of salvation as a faithful person who contributed greatly for the development of the kingdom of God. (Hebrews 11:32)

Samson's legendary story displayed that only the Lord is the real living God to many countries and gentiles. The destruction of the Dagon temple was the best gospel he could deliver. The reason he asked

God of all power to destroy the Dagon temple was not simply for his personal revenge about his eyes. His last asking was to let the gentiles know the Lord is a real God by saving Israel out of the Philistines, which was his calling over his personal issue of revenge. (Judges 16:28)

Samson's last prayer reminds us of the prayer of Hezekiah in the temple after getting threatened from the king of Assyria.

“O Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone are God.” (Isaiah 37:20)

“To hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death so the name of the Lord will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem.” (Psalms 102:20~21)

Even today God is doing miraculous work for those who through faith and patience believe in God to the very end. This is not just a simple story which happened a long time ago in the past. Though Samson does not live here any more, God is still working for His people. God who gave great power to Samson and let him have the last victory does give us the power of the resurrection of Christ and lets us overcome the force of the devil in this wicked world.

“Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

(Ephesians 6:13)

## Feeling Of Guiltiness And Service

The story of Samson gives us a very practical lesson. What could be interruptions to accomplish something for God? That could be a feeling of inferiority, pride, or immaturity. But most of all, the hardest thing to overcome is the feeling of guiltiness. That is your conscience feeling uncomfortable about sins or mistakes in the past. You cannot perform God's work well if you have something on your conscience. If you are reminded of sins in the past, you will suddenly feel powerless, even if working for God.

Paul took Stephen's death for granted, sending a lot of people into prison persecuting the churches before he was converted. (Acts 8:1) After being a Christian, he felt the pangs of conscience, thinking of what he had done in the past. That is why he confessed, "of sinners I am the worst." (1 Timothy 1:15) So we are impressed by his honesty and confession.

But what we have to remember is, though Paul suffered from sins in the past, he did not dwell on grievances about his shameful sins saying he did not deserve to do anything. On the contrary, he threw himself to death risking his life, amazed by God's love that had forgiven the worst like him. Therefore he experienced God's amazing power. His writings in Romans 8:28, are famous truth telling of his experiences.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good

of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans8:28)

Peter might fully agree with this passage. He denied Jesus three times. How could he dare face people to spread the Gospel as Christ’s Apostle. If he did not trust God it wouldn’t be possible. He believed the love of God would not be changed even to those who fall like him. He experienced his flaws work for the good in His providence. He tasted God is good. (1Peter 2:3) So he encouraged people saying, “Do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ.” (1Peter 4:12~13) Peter was also martyred for Jesus.

Once Joshua made a big mistake. He made a treaty with the Gibeonite in the name of the Lord without investigating about it. The Gibeonite was a people of Canaan living near Gilgal which was the head-quarter of Israel. But they deceived Joshua pretending they came from far away so that they wanted to make a peace treaty. Joshua was deceived and decided to make a treaty even without inquiring to God. This was a real big mistake.

But Joshua did not kill the Gibeonite as he promised in the name of the Lord. So five kings near around this area were allied and attacked Gibeon, after hearing it had made peace with the Israelites. Then the Gibeonites sent word to Joshua and he made a surprise attack to kill the five kings and had a great victory to occupy their land. And the Gibeonites became wood-cutters and water carriers for Israel so



that they had the chance to hear the gospel. (Joshua 9:21, 23) God used Joshua's mistake for the good and made it a blessing for Israel. (Joshua 9:1~10)

### God Used Samson Again

The best part in Samson's story encouraging us is the fact that God used him again. He did not torment himself in deep feelings of guiltiness, grasping his head. God shows sympathy to that kind of person. God wants sinners to believe in God's mercy and forgiveness and to have a determined and faithful attitude for being ready to go for the next opportunity. In this regard, we should learn from him.

Samson was in prison. His eyes were gauged out. He did not have any power. He was a mere normal and disabled prisoner. But he could still perform God's great miracle, because he believed God is faithful, overcoming his feeling of guiltiness. He would not be able to do anything if he only suffered from feeling the guiltiness everyday. He did not double prison life by being caught by feelings of guilt. Feeling guilty is the biggest enemy to serve God.

Do you feel any uncomfortable guiltiness? We should believe in the healing of the love of God. Come to the cross. It says, "You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you." (Psalms 86:5)

Try to complete the race believing God who does his best for us quickly letting go of your burden of sins under the cross.

Any kinds of our sins or mistakes could be used

for the good under God's providence. No matter how big the mistakes are that we made, we should believe in God to remove them all. Then God will work for making our flaws be good. Show your constant faith putting trust on Him who works until disaster becomes a blessing. Then before long God will let you experience 'His wonders' (Psalms 89:5) which connect us from sins and flaws to blessings.



## 8. Lesson From The Millstone

“Then the Philistines seized him, gauged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in the prison.” (Judges 16:21)

“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.” (Judges 16:31)

What will be the most solemn word in this story? That can be ‘millstone’. It is shocking enough that his eyes were gauged out but he was also grinding in prison everyday in the enemies country as a blind person creating solemn fear. In the history of Israel, this tragic scene of a person who had a splendid career like Samson caught by the enemy and ended up grinding has never happened before. Though several kings had been captive or had their eyes gauged out, because they were idolaters. We should think carefully about this part before we wrap up the story of Samson. Then how can we learn the lesson from the millstone?

When You Grind, You Should Learn Something From It.

Firstly, when God allows us to grind, we should believe there has to be a good purpose. If you do not believe this, all suffering of yours is meaningless. We

cannot find out God's entire plan from the beginning. Despite that, we should trust Him doing something good through that suffering. When you are afflicted at first, everything looks confusing and strange. Imagine when Samson was forced to grind at first! How unbelievable and absurd to him! And think about how afraid he would be everyday doing the same heavy labor over and over again.

Who could praise God grinding in prison from in the first place. Grinding is one of the hardest of heavy work. In this spot, there are grieves, complaints, and hatred. But you should believe there is God's good purpose. God does not refine His children for nothing. God always leads His children to grind in prison. In the hands of a good shepherd, there are only good plans. If you want to learn when you grind you should believe there must be God's good plan and after suffering, you should expect more great blessings.

Secondly, you should admit your eyes are taken. Samson did not have eyes anymore. If he did not become blind, maybe his ego would need more time to be trained. He hated to lose and did everything by himself like an isolated man. Therefore if he did not lose his eyes, which was fatal damage, he would try to change his destiny in several ways.

But he could easily give up on himself because he could not see any more. To have your eyes gauged out by itself is a disaster. But from the view of God's good plan, it is the way of healing that cleans your soul and makes you do great work of God. God is happy to use our disaster to assist His grace.

When we grind, we should admit we are disabled

and give up depending on ourselves. If you think you have more power to use, the work of grinding will get only tougher. Then you will hate to grind, and you will just blame the world and only grieve about your hard luck. Then you would not be able to get out of the swamp of despair. But if you think you have nothing left, you can accept the trial of the millstone obediently. If you accept your reality that your eyes are taken, the millstone will be your partner and not your enemy. So you do not have to put your effort to grind hard, rather if you cooperate with the millstone, it will get easier. To grind is never easy work. However, you will feel comfortable because you will humble your self not resisting in front of the millstone if you realize you do not have any more power left from your fatally destroyed ego.

Thirdly, you should remember there is Jesus right next to the millstone. There is no prison of trial without the presence of Jesus. What would you do if Jesus was next to you? Wouldn't you ask God to remember you as Samson did? (Judges 16:28) Certainly you would do that. Do you think he just prayed once in the Dagon temple saying 'remember me' once? He might pray tons of times while grinding. His prayer was simple but he prayed with his entire heart.

If Jesus watches over our suffering right next to us grinding, wouldn't we have to explain all our situations like some kind of massive grumble? We do not have to be fluent speakers or good writers to give God touching prayer. Pray simply and sincerely like Samson. That is proper prayer for those grinding.

Their circumstances as a disabled will not allow them to explain in long-winded detail. Touching and formal prayers are not appropriate. You'd better pray simply and sincerely everyday than try hard to pray properly under a circumstance in which you cannot even pray. God would not be tired of even repeating appeal if you pray by your heart.

Fourthly, you should know the number of times of grinding is limited. If you go to the prison of grinding, the very first thing that occurs to you is wondering 'how long should I stay here'? In dark prison when you grind putting up with mocking, laughter, and contempt, you will be seized with fear and lonely sorrow, which you are completely left alone with. However, you should know the grinding of God's millstone will stop. God gets u out of prison when the number of times of grinding is filled.

Therefore you should calm your self, calling out the name of Jesus every moment patiently with hope. God's millstone will be good for us for sure. We will realize the millstone that gave us suffering the most was the tool that helped our recovery. God will listen to our prayer at last and make the Dagon temple be destroyed.

You should learn a lesson from grinding. That is the only way you can endure. Jesus is next to our millstone. We should believe God's good plan is set behind the millstone in advance. And then we should admit we are disabled and have no power any more. After that we should wait, believing it will stop and pray simply and sincerely to Jesus who is next to us everyday.

Then you will learn many things while grinding. The lessons you learn will turn you into a totally different person with different levels of faith. You will serve God with a new spirit. You will love God more, knowing that your spiritual height grew surprisingly.

### Those Who Came Out Of Grinding In Prison Will See The New Heaven

Samson was standing in the Dagon temple. But the eyes of his spirit were looking at the real God's temple in heaven. When his muscles moved to destroy the pillars of the Dagon temple, he was already looking at the real ever lasting temple and real God over the things in the world. Though he did not have eyes of the body, he was looking at the essence of the holy world.

Like Stephen, he might also see an opening in the heavens and the Son of God standing. When he was stoned to death, he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." (Acts 7:56) Jesus was listening to what Stephen witnessed in front of the Sanhedrin. Jesus stood up to encourage and support Stephen as audiences stand up to cheer their teams from their seats. Jesus could not help standing up watching His servant witnessing the gospel of the cross in front of the wicked people.

Stephen was about to be martyred. Jesus had already stood up to encourage his testimony and to welcome the first martyr for the beginning of the church.

When Samson gave his life for Israel bracing the

pillars of the Dagon temple, he might see, 'the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world', (Revelation 13:8) welcoming and encouraging him from heaven. The Dagon temple was destroyed with a roaring sound. Numerous idolaters died screaming. But Samson only could hear applauses like thunder coming from heaven. That was the compliment and applause received the moment he entered into his home in heaven for completing his race. At last Samson completed his task, and his name is on the honorable list of recorded heroes of faith. (Hebrews 11:32~40)

God did not let Samson die ignobly in a gentile's prison, covered with shame and sins. Samson accomplished his last mission and came back to Jesus with no regret.

Those who came out of the prison of millstone look at a new heaven. Those who were refined by God get spiritual eye sight that nobody can take away though they have no physical eyes. God did not give Samson physical eyes. But God let him see an everlasting kingdom. Samson's sight was not worldly anymore. What he saw was a new life in everlasting heaven transcending death.

You cannot see a new heaven and land with physical eyes. But after all had disappeared of "The cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he had and does," (1John 2:16) you will see Jesus next to the right hand of God welcoming you. Both Samson and Stephen experienced that. God will do the same thing to us. If we are grinding having faith of God's mercy and power of salvation like that of Samson, we will see a new life for Jesus



recovered for sure.

### Was Samson's Death Suicide?

Some people interpret negatively his death as suicide for killing as many people as he could. Maybe he could do better work for God if he did not die with the Philistines in the Dagon temple. But that view is not the point of this story. What matters are how Samson reacted and what God did in the circumstance which happened. It is not useful for us at all to think about what if I did not, in the past. It is really important how you act after mistakes and failures. The main point of the last part of this story is focused on how God healed Samson after his eyes were taken and how and with what attitude Samson prayed in prison and the Dagon temple.

Samson did not have any games to play. He was not blinded by Delilah's love any more. He only focused on one thing. Surely he died as a Nazirite. He finished his life gloriously as a hero of faith, not committing suicide. The Bible did not describe Samson's last as a tragedy of suicide. It tells us he died as a hero of faith.

The life of Samson shows us that though it looked like a tragic life, in Jesus Christ, he could have the victory of death. When you die for Christ righteously, it will cover all the misdeeds of the past. Having the last seconds of your life with faith covers the life of yesterday, which was not faithful.

Only those who repent their foolish lives of the past can bring a moment of faith to the final part of

your life. He realized he made mistakes. And he was forgiven. And then he completed the last moment of his life with prayer in faith. And it was answered. That answer made his unaccomplished task completed in seconds. Our missed time can be filled by Jesus Christ. With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. (2Peter 3:8)

### God Who Fills Out Our Missing Time

God can pay for our wasted time in the past in a moment. People usually say passed time never comes back. Of course the dawn of the day can never come again, but God can recover even wasted time. The time spent wasted can be newly filled by the works of God in a moment. When the last prayer of Samson was answered, he could finish his task instantly, which had not been done during his entire lifetime.

Have you wasted your time? Haven't you spent more time idly on accusing yourself about your wasted time with sins and entertainment again and again? Maybe you are facing the bare fruits of your wicked time in the past. You might be afraid of the counting age of putting on years unnoticed with wrinkles on the face and hands. So you do not want to see a mirror and forget your birthday? Then you need the word of God from Joel.

“I'll repay you for the years the locusts have eaten, the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm, my great army that I sent among you. You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you

will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed.” (Joel 2:25~26)

What did God promise from this passage? Did He say the dawn of the day will never come the same twice? No! He said He will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten. Your deep wounds that were cut by locusts can be all healed. And He will repay all your shames, and you will have plenty to eat, which you had not had before.

God promised He would do ‘amazing miracles’ for us. How did God do this for Samson? Do you believe in Samson’s God? Then pray like Samson did. Ask God to ‘strengthen me once more’ with your heart. Risking everything that you have, step forward to God. God repaid Samson for his enemies the moment Samson prayed. God healed everything in Samson. Samson finished his entire task; all that he could not do in the past. His powerless life was filled with God’s power again and his tired life could have a definite purpose and will. God repaid the life of Samson for the years the locusts had taken.

God can work out thousands of things with one opportunity. God can accomplish what Joel the prophet witnessed to you. The light of the morning never came twice for sure. But the morning twilight of yesterday could be filled with our new morning by a brighter light. When God, who is merciful and mighty, performs miracles (Psalms 77:14) He makes His face shine upon us and passed light of the morning will be revived seven times more.

“The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seen seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the Lord binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted.” (Isaiah 30:26)

“Light is shed upon the righteous and joy on the upright in heart.” (Psalms 97:11)

Have you ever grinded in your life? Do not feel sad about those days. Do not feel sorrow for shames or for your eyes that have been taken. Samson was all repaid in the last day. He was free from grinding which looked as if there was no ending and witnessed the destruction of the Philistines with his eyes that did not have any pupils.

Amid everybody watching him, he thoroughly destroyed the Dagon temple. He was standing bravely on the spot and ‘all leaders and people of the Philistines’ gathered as a hero of faith. What could Samson hope for that was more than this? What could Jesus hope from Samson that was more than this?

### The Last Of Delilah And The Victory Of Samson

God gave Samson the last victory. Delilah who made Samson fall might sit somewhere in the Dagon temple. Maybe she would have been invited as a VIP to see Samson performing like in a circus, because she had received a great reward for cooperating with the Philistines. Or when they praise Dagon for handing over Samson to them, Delilah might be introduced as

the meritorious retainer. But what was her destiny when the Dagon temple was destroyed with all the leaders and huge audience? All evil people are touched by a disaster in terms of a fearful punishment from God. Where is the value of a reward which was received for handing over Samson?

Jesus told the disciples about the rich who planned to stack the wealth and wanted to live comfortably for the rest of their lives.

“You fool! This very night your life might be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?” (Luke 12:20)

Meanwhile, Samson ruled over Israel for 20 years. He killed many more people in his last moment alive than while he lived. He rendered more remarkable services when he died than he would do for his entire lifetime.

“Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.” (Judges 16:30)

Grinding in the prison was not for nothing to Samson. It was precious time to train his mind. The dark prison of the Philistines was his spiritual refinery. He was dragged into prison, but God knew the purpose and meaning of the place where he went.

“But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I will come forth as gold.” (Job 23:10)

God refined Samson with a millstone. And then God carried out His decree against Samson. (Job 23:14) Samson spent his power and time on wrong doings during his lifetime. Many times he failed to be faithful to his gift and calling. But Samson came forth as gold after receiving the millstone lesson. God's power comes upon this kind of person and His will is always carried out. There were many wasted days Samson lost because of his sins and stupidity, but they were compacted into seconds on God's table and He completed completely all unfinished tasks. This is God's wisdom and power.

Do you have days of regret? Have you focused on other things ignoring your 'gift' from God? Have you spent time meaninglessly neglecting God's calling? Then you must have prison training which God will allow. You must have the millstone to grind everyday under suffering.

God's millstone is not for crops but for the grinding of the self. Your foolish ego will be grinded when it goes round. You will cry out for God's name so eagerly under the millstone. And you will ask God for forgiveness with tears and regret. Then, you will look up to God with a hope of recovery. Your prison is dark. And you do not have any eyes. You will beg God to make you see the light. Your millstone will make you have a new determination with confession that will destroy the old you moment by moment. And you will pray repeatedly like Samson.

"O sovereign Lord, remember me, please strengthen me just once more." (Judges 16:28)

You will cry out, 'once more please just once more'! Do you know why God makes you grind? It is because, He wants you to pray like this, and also, to answer your prayer. Zechariah, who was a priest and a father of John the Baptist was punished to be mute for not believing what the angel told him about his son's birth. (Luke 1:20) It was the time of grinding for him and for 10 months he could not speak. But at last when he got out of the prison of grinding, he was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, praising God like a priest. (Luke 1:67~79)

Sometimes God takes us to the refinery of the millstone. But after trials, we become completely a different person. When Samson go out of prison, he decided to die with the Philistines and had a plan to destroy the Dagon temple, which represented the symbol of the nation.

Zechariah the priest opened his mouth after confession and meditation for a long time. And he performed amazing works that declared God's sovereign salvation. The refinery of the millstone plants a new heart and dream in our hearts. The prison of the millstone drives us to dream valuable things for God. Most of all, when we get out, God answers our prayers, so our new hope toward God is accomplished.

If you should say, 'Amen' after reading the prayer of Samson, then you will experience unspeakable victories by Jesus Christ's grace and power.

Build Up The Fall

You can be very weak in the place where you feel strong. People say, 'a monkey could fall from the tree'. This is not just about a possibility of mistake. What made a monkey fall was its confidence that it would never fall from the tree. But the important thing is a monkey that fell once loses its trust and confidence. (1Corinthians 10:12) Character flaws or mistakes make people lose their trust.

In this regard, God is different from us. God raises those who fall up to the tree again, and teaches them how not to ever fall again. This is the difference between God's method and ours. God's purpose is to give a second chance to those who should live on the tree. God is not stingy in this work. God forgives sins of His people paid by the sacrifice of the cross easily forgetting their sins. And He also easily gives another chance too.

But why couldn't Christians do the same as this? Because we are too cold about another's flaws and mistakes, extremely obsessed about how we, ourselves, are hurt. This is not the spirit of the gospel. That kind of attitude is a waste of time leading to self-righteousness and stiffened moralism.

God answered Samson's prayer. He gave him another chance. And He allowed Samson to victoriously accomplish his task with a second chance even though he could not be faithful and could not complete his task due to his flaws and mistakes. At last God accomplished His good purpose by giving him a second chance.



## Training Of Millstone Is For The Second Chance

We also should give a second chance to people who pray like Samson. That is the practice of forgiveness and God is pleased with it. God calls each one of us. Though everybody wants to live by their own callings, we repeatedly expose our flaws and make mistakes. Some hurt their knees, some are not able to work, or some are fatally damaged in their eyes like Samson. To make matters worse, they end up grinding. God's train, sometimes, is cruel. But it is for a second chance. You should remember what would happen if God did not give you a second chance and forgive you generously at that time of having an honest heart. Think about the second chance He gave you. Remember God covered you unnoticeably when you committed sins unnoticeably. Remember when you did shameful things behind people's eyes pretending you are righteous in front of everyone. Remember you committed all kinds of sins in your heart though you look holy on the outside. You know well God accepted who you are with generosity when you are supposed to be punished. You should not forget how generous God was about your sins and mistakes that nobody knows about.

Then wouldn't it be right to pray for other people grinding, expecting a recovery and second chance from God? Maybe you are the person supposed to grind again like them. Thinking in this way, is the only way you can be generous to those who disappoint you or hurt you with the love of Christ. Jesus always treats you in this way and prays for us. We should take after

this personality of Jesus.

Israel needed Samson. We need Samson too. For that, we should give Samson a second chance. Show love and generosity to Samson. Let God's great work occur through our hands of grace. We need the last mission of Samson to destroy the Dagon temple. For this big task, lead Samson to the pillars of the temple holding his hands. You will witness the amazing power of God being revealed there.

### Revival Of Used Life

Samson was an isolated man. He thought and decided things by himself. Though it looks harmless and not dangerous, he did not listen to his parents (Judges 14:2~4) and he was irresponsible to his elders and friends. (Judges 15:7~13) But he became a captive, his head was shaved, and his eyes gauged out. He did not look useful at all.

God weakens us to lead us to a new level of faith enabling us to pray 'just one more time strengthen me', depending completely on God. It says God's power is made perfect in weaknesses. (1Corinthians 12:9) Apostle Paul knew this truth well.

"That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak then I am strong." (2Corinthians 12:10)

When you feel you have nothing good from your life, God will inform you with amazing new lives. When

Samson and Paul felt the sentence of death and despair of life, (2Corinthians 1:8~9) which was far beyond their ability to endure, they experienced God's merciful salvation, and did not rely on themselves but on God, who raises the dead. (2Corinthians 1:9)

God uses us in spite of our weaknesses. If we are not enough, He wants to fill us even using a millstone. God is a manager of reproduction. He puts useless used broken parts into the factory of reproduction and rebuilds them. God wants to give a second chance to the sick in life and full of failure. God is the chief rehabilitator. He gathers troublemakers and makes them reborn. God is the Lord of recreation. He recreates sinners who became ruined from the first creation. God is looking for people who were derailed from the main route everyday. God becomes the road to those who have lost the way and becomes food to those who do not have any food. God always wants us to recover. God knows we would not survive if He did not give us a second forgiveness, a second love, a second care, and a second chance. So, He is approaching everyone with a second chance. God saves us by a second grace. All of us who refused the first grace need desperately to receive the second grace that is given to us again.

Because there is God's second grace, there is the prison of the millstone and there is a 'once more' prayer waiting. We would have nothing left if there was not God's second chance. God knows how to revive and reuse us. That is to give us the chance to grind and make us pray the last prayer. That is why we could praise God under suffering. No matter how

deeply we fall, God reuses us again. We can expect God to revive and give us a new life in any circumstances. This is God's good will and He delights in that.

God is a manager of reproduction. God is proud of this. God knows this is the best work for valuable salvation, so He is looking for those who have a used and useless life. He takes us to the recycling factory and makes us into a new creation.

The problem is we block the chance from God to ourselves and to others. But God's will is to raise the fallen back up again. It was God's aspiration to give Samson, who had deeply fallen, a new strength. When Samson gets his second chance, the kingdom of God is strengthened. We should do our best to help the business of reproduction for God and work well according to His will. For this purpose, we should show our mercy and generosity to those who have fallen.

Samson destroyed the Philistines. Israel was free from their oppression. Samson achieved the success by one last moment, which he could not have achieved over the previous 20 years of being a prophet. How could this happen? It was because God gave him a second chance. In fact, it was God's grace for Samson to grind. Finally, he could stand on the Dagon temple after suffering in the prison. His last prayer was the end of all prayers that he had prayed, grinding in prison.

### The Meaning Of Grinding Time

Samson called out in the name of the Lord

dreaming of a glorious ending to his mission, putting up with his shames and suffering under the millstone train. The time of suffering the millstone was preparation for his last honorable mission. The Philistines were very happy to see Samson grinding, considering it as restitution to their enemy. But this time was the precious second chance for Samson to destroy God's enemies.

Samson's hair began to grow while grinding. He did not have to grind until his hair grew long again. It was enough to begin to grow a little bit. That was just the symbol that God would give him a new strength and get rid of the shames from the Philistines. Despite the grinding, if you can realize your hair is starting to grow, that is enough. Then you can endure the suffering of the grinding, because you can hear God's calling coming closer. We also should know how to end our lives as well. We must prepare for it while grinding. It is for the second chance!

Are you grinding? This work looks shameful and despairing. This is the Philistine's view, but you should not look at it this way. The story of Samson is not all that pitiful and miserable. God greatly used Samson who was rough, intemperate, and lustful.

All Christians are people who are forgiven by the cross. All Christians have their roles to be in charge of and callings for the kingdom of God. God wants each of us to serve Him in His palace. In spite of our weaknesses and flaws, He is delighted in using us for His kingdom and the gospel. Jesus said, 'seek, and you shall find'. Ask God with Samson's prayer. Then you will receive. Samson's God is our God. The God who

answered his prayer will answer our prayer as well. Let your hope and God's will be accomplished through Samson's prayer.

### Samson's Tombstone

Samson who met his honorable last moment by destroying the Dagon temple was moved to his home town and buried in the tomb of Manoah, his father, by the whole family. (Judges 16:31) What would you write if could write an epitaph. In David's lament for Saul and Jonathan, he mourned saying, "How the mighty have fallen!" (2Samuel 1:19, 25) Should we mourn for Samson like this?

Samson is not the mighty who was sadly killed in a battle. Though once he was defeated, he arose again and had a great victory. When the mighty who have fallen rise up again, it is because of the mighty God. Though he was sadly crushed, he did not fall down completely and he rose up. He was a hero of faith who 'strengthened his feeble arms and weak knees'. (Hebrews 12:12) Therefore the tombstone of Samson should be written like, 'how the mighty have risen again!' and not 'how the mighty have fallen'.

In Hebrews, it mentions the heroes of faith of Israel. There is the name of Samson, too. (Hebrews 11:32) As a prophet of Israel, Samson was buried as a hero of faith, and his name is still being shined by the word of God.

What do you think of Samson? How could you have known who he was? Do you agree with how the Bible described him? If you can see him as a hero of

faith, you saw correctly how God's grace was in his life. Then, though we have lots of weaknesses and flaws, we also can glorify God, following 'heroes of faith' under God's grace of providence. Whenever you fall down, rise up again looking for God who works until your 'weaknesses become good'.



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