

Samson #3 - a Lonely Struggle

by Andrew Foster

Samson's life teaches us that being a servant of God requires us to stand for God, even when it's difficult, and that we will face opposition from within and outside the church.

Duration: 1:09:35

Scripture: Judges 2:18, Judges 15:9, Daniel 10:21, Matthew 6:33, 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:22

Topics: "Samson"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of standing for what is right, even when one is alone. He references Judges 2:18, which states that when the Lord raised up judges, He was with them. The preacher then focuses on the story of Samson in Judges 15, where the Philistines come against him. The men of Judah question the Philistines' motives, and they respond that they want to bind Samson as he had done to them. The preacher highlights the significance of Samson's encounter with a rock, where water flows out and he drinks from it, becoming a channel of blessing.

Transcript

Can I ask you to turn, please, in the Word of God to the book of Judges and the chapter 15. Coming back again to this passage of God's Word and to continue a little further in our study in the life of Samson, a man whom God used greatly and yet a man whose life is marred by carnality and sin. Samson is one of those enigmas in Scripture.

It's easy to jump to conclusions one way or the other about his work, his life, and yet there is always something in God's Word to put a check on that and to cause us to think carefully about what God has recorded of this man. On one hand, we see the blemishes, the weakness, the flaws of a man polluted with sin. On the other, we see a man on occasion filled with the mighty power of God whose name is recorded among the heroes of the faith in Hebrews chapter 11.

I think one of the things we need to bear in mind as we look at the life of Samson, as the Lord reflects these two very different and contrasting aspects of his character, is that in one sense this is a reflection of every servant of God. Because every child of God that has ever been truly born of God knows the leading and the guidance and to some measure the power of the Holy Ghost. But conversely, every saint of God, like the Apostle Paul, knows what it is to wrestle against sin.

There are those times when sin has the victory. Contrary to the prompting of the Spirit, we know what it is to fall into sin. There are occasions when we have known that grace from heaven to obey God, to do it right, to follow the leading of the Spirit, to see the Lord step in and do something for us and through us.

When really that's just what we're seeing in the life of Samson. He's not that different from you or me at all. In reality when you sit down and think about it.

There are many things that we could take time to learn from the record here and being a little pressed for time and trying to condense some of the things that we want to say, there will be things we're just going to have to touch on and move away from onto something else. And I'd like for us to begin our Bible reading today at Judges 15 and to verse 9. Personally speaking, I am a firm believer in the use of God's Word in the house of God. I believe that a Christian should not only carry a Bible to church, they should use their Bible in church.

And so if you find me making reference to a verse, please understand that it is my desire and invitation and intent that you look at that. Do not accept what I say at face value. Never ever do that.

It's one of the glorious treasures of biblical Protestantism is the priesthood of the individual believer. You check what the preacher says. It doesn't matter who he is.

Even the Apostle Paul in Acts 17 commends the Berean believers for taking what he said and they took it to the scriptures to see if those things were so. If they needed to test Paul, please be sure you need to test what I say. I'll not be offended.

I'll be encouraged if you show that spirit of the Bereans. And it should be your desire. Don't just say the word, preacher.

Show it to me in the book. I want to see it for myself. I want to make sure it's there.

Because that's one of the great dangers of the age. God's people being led astray by men who say something that sounds just a little like what the Bible says. But often there are such important differences.

And God's people miss them because they don't turn to look at what the book itself says. We want to do that. Judges 15, we want to take the time to read through from verse 9 to the end of the chapter.

Let's hear the word of God together. Then the Philistines went up and pitched in Judah and spread themselves in Lehi. The men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? They answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us.

Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rocky Tam and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that thou hast done unto us? He said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. Samson said unto them, Swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.

And they spake unto him, saying, No, but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand. But surely we will not kill thee. How comforting that must be.

And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock. And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him.

And the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and went and put forth his hand, and took it and slew a thousand men therewith. And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called the place Ramoth-Lehi. And he was sore of thirst, and called on the Lord, and said, I have given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant, and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But God cleave a hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout. And when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived.

Wherefore he called the name thereof, Enhachore, which is in Lehi unto this day. And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years. Amen.

May God add his blessing to our Bible reading. And with our Bibles open before us, and do keep them open, we're going to pray and ask for the help of God. Our gracious Father in heaven, we acknowledge today the blindness of our hearts.

We acknowledge the dullness and the stupidity of our minds when it comes to understanding the things that are written. But our Father, we come to the word of God with the absolute assurance given to us by the word itself, that God himself, by his Spirit, for Jesus' sake, will be our teacher. We pray, O God, for something of that blessed promise that was given to Daniel to be fulfilled in us, where God commissioned Gabriel to go to him and say, I will show thee that which is noted in the Scriptures of truth.

O God, we have in our hand that book that Daniel had. And more besides, the Scriptures of truth. O Lord, we need thee to teach us.

We thank thee that we have a better instructor, even than the archangel. For we have the instruction of the Holy Ghost himself. God, teach us today.

Mark our hearts by thy word. We ask for Jesus' sake. Pour out the power of heaven for the preaching and the hearing, but more than that, the practice of the truth of God.

For Jesus' sake. Amen. We left off last time with really too brief a view of the first victory that Samson enjoyed.

Recorded in the previous verses of chapter 15. How God had in mercy, in spite of Samson's falling, God had set him and given him a victory over the Philistines. We read in the verse here that he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter.

And he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock, E-town. Now following that strike against the Philistines, by Samson under the power of the Holy Ghost, we read that the Philistines invaded Judah. The enemies of God never take such a strike lying down.

They will strike back. The battle for truth and righteousness, and we're thinking of Samson as really an illustration of that desire and burden for revival, to see restoration, to see God's people shake off the shackles of powerlessness and helplessness. That was the purpose of God for Samson.

And to that end and to that measure, He gave him on occasion the Holy Ghost to know something of that victory. But when the cause of God took a step forward, as it did here when Samson enjoyed that victory over the Philistines, the devil's crowd struck back. The devil's crowd struck back.

Please be sure, dear Christian, that the cause of revival requires more than one battle. It will require more than one victory. It requires a continual victory over the enemies of God and of our souls and of the church of Jesus Christ.

The Philistines invade Judah as we discover here in the verse 9. They come up, obviously, to teach the people a lesson and to discourage them from supporting Samson. The world and the devil will make it patently obvious to the Christian who has a burden for revival and who is prepared to take a stand for God, it's going to cost you. It's going to cost.

We're going to see that, develop that theme as we look at this episode in Samson's life. Here was a lonely struggle, a lonely stand, a lonely stand indeed as he sought to do something to advance the cause of God among his own people. The words of the men of Judah in the verse 11 are very instructive as we see their response to the invasion of the Philistines.

They seek out Samson and they come to him in his hiding place and they say, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that thou hast done unto us? It's obvious from those words that the men of Judah especially, and we'll look at this a little later, but the men of Judah especially were doing all in their power to avoid offending the Philistines. That was their mission in life, just to live at peace with the enemy. Now that's very obvious.

You don't have to think too hard to see that that was in fact utterly foreign to the direction and the thinking and purpose of God the Holy Ghost, whose mission was seen in the life of Samson. It was to attack the enemy, to rise up to shake off the enemy's influence, and once more to know victory and power as God intended for his people. They were in this mess we saw last time because of sin, because of their departure from God.

But it is ever the purpose of God for his people to recover themselves out of the mess that they've got themselves into. That was the revealed will of God especially seen in Samson's life and the power of the Holy Ghost given to accomplish that purpose, to begin that purpose in Samson's life and through him in the life of the nation. But look at the words of the men of Judah.

They didn't see Samson as a deliverer. They didn't see him as one who was advancing their cause. Rather, they see him as a troublemaker, one who has rocked the boat and made things awkward for them.

What hast thou done unto us? Oh, how instructive it is to read those words. They're more instructive, I think, than the men of Judah realized when they first spoke them. I think their intention was to impress upon Samson, Samson, you haven't done us any good.

You've harmed us. You've done this to us. But stop and think of the implication of that statement.

When Samson attacked the Philistines unto the direction of God, the Holy Ghost, the men of Judah felt that he had attacked them. What does that imply? They were on the side of the Philistines. They were on the side of the Philistines at heart.

They felt no hostility. They had utterly subjected themselves to the oppressive rule and the idolatrous, wicked, abominable rule of the Philistines in the land. They were going along with that.

Do we not see that today among the people of God? Do we not have to lament so much of that same spirit in our own hearts? Brethren and sisters, as we look into... Well, there's no sisters here. Well, there are a couple right here. Most of them are gone.

But child of God, do you not recognize in your own heart with a lament that I am so ready to go along with the agenda of the enemies of God? That was the spirit of the men of Judah here and no doubt representative of a vast majority of the people of God at that time. That the man who was under God going to stand up on his own and try to do something was rejected as a troublemaker. And I want you to understand today that if you have a burden for revival, if you have a burden for the restoration of the cause of God in these days, and I trust you do, but if you're going to do anything about that burden, and if you're going to take a stand for God and seek to shake off the evil influence of the world and the devil's crowd upon the church, then you're going to face opposition.

Not just from the enemies of God, but from within the ranks of God's people themselves. Those who wish to be comfortable. Those who wish just to keep their head down and not cause any awkwardness with the enemy.

That's what the men of Judah were. And they stood here against Thompson. It's easy in a situation like this among the saints of God and knowing something of the blessedness of fellowship together, it's easy to be assertive and dogmatic that I'm going to go through with God.

That's a good resolution. But I want you to understand the minute you start to follow that resolution through, you're going to have the Philistines against you and you're going to have the men of Judah against you too. Let me point out first of all the loneliness and rejection that was Samson's lot as a servant of God.

You don't have to dig too deep in these verses to see that Samson was a rejected man. He didn't enjoy celebrity status among the people of God. Even though he had just accomplished a great victory, the first victory that Israel had known over the Philistines for some years at this point, for more years than Samson was old at this point, because the Philistine oppression had begun just before his birth.

Let's say Samson was 18 years of age at this point. He may have been. For more than 18 years, the Philistines had had the upper hand and then suddenly under the power of God there's a setback.

But the man that God used is treated as an outcast. You would think he would be welcomed as a hero. You would think that there would be a crowding to him, recognition.

Here's the man that God has raised up to be a helper and a champion. No. He's dismissed as a troublemaker.

We don't want your type around here. Thank you very much. We're comfortable with the Philistines.

Don't rock the boat. Let me just quickly point out some of the things here that highlight this rejection. Look at where he was living.

Verse 8, we're told that he went down to the top of the rock Etam. There is a suggestion that this may even be that famous rock, the Masada. Just a suggestion.

But it's obvious, I think, reading between the lines of the passage here, that it was some kind of natural fortress, some kind of natural safe place. We're not told why he went there initially. Why would he go there? I don't think it's suggesting too much that he was even at that point, immediately after the battle, he was aware.

People don't want this. Why else would he go to such an out-of-the-way place? The name Etam, sort of we expand the literal sense of it, it just means a lair of wild beasts. It's a connection with predators, with the hideout of wild animals.

I don't think it's going too far to say that was the view of Samson that was held by many in the nation at that time. The way you would treat a wild animal, I understand in this country there's not too many that are real threatening predators. But you can understand how you would feel if you were to encounter some of the more frightening species of animal in the world.

The way you might treat a deadly snake or some other deadly creature. Don't want anything to do with it. Don't want to encroach on its territory.

Keep it at a distance. It's alright to go and look at it in a zoo when it's behind bars. And that of course is how the men of Judah wanted Samson.

We'll bind him hand and foot and get rid of him to the Philistines. If you're going to live your life as a child of God seeking for the power of the Spirit of God to work through you to work in the church of Christ to take it back today as a power and victory you better be sure that's how you're going to be treated. You're going to become a pariah.

He's living in the wilds. There's a suggestion here and I think it's more than a suggestion but it's at least that. He was in the territory of Judah but his home tribe was down.

Again, there is just that little suggestion. Not welcome at home. He's in a wild place.

In the territory of another tribe among predators. You wonder why he found the jawbone of an ass so convenient in this place? Because there was something in that part of the world where he was living that had eaten the ass. That's where he was.

Look at how widespread the nature of this rejection is. Three thousand men of Judah. Three thousand men of Judah.

They weren't prepared to face the Philistines but they were going to face the one man they regarded as a troublemaker. Three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Eton. Let me turn you back, please, to the first chapter of the book of Judges.

We're going back some centuries now. The first verse of the book. Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first to fight against them? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up.

Behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. Oh, it's significant that Judah comes to deal with Samson. Judah was the royal tribe.

Judah was the tribe that God singled out in the wake of Joshua's death and in the mop-up campaign, the local battles that followed on from the major victories of Joshua's life. Judah was to lead the charge against the enemies of God. At God's command.

What did we find Judah doing? Leading the charge. Against God's man. Oh, how things have turned around.

Oh, how things are so out of God's order here at this point. When those who ought to be leading the charge are in fact turning upon God's man. Treating him as an outcast.

Coming to imprison him. Coming to make sure that he knows we don't want anything to do with what you represent. You think that's a strange thing? It's not strange.

I can invite you to put it to the test and you'll find that it's not a strange thing. You get before God's Word and get before God in prayer and say, Lord, what would You have me to do to turn things around in my home, my church, my community, and the church of Christ generally as far as I have any influence? What do You want me to do? What do You require of me? What must I do from the Scriptures? You find that out and start to do it and you see what you're on to. And it'll not be the Philistines that you need to be most afraid of.

It'll be those within the ranks of God's people who come rushing to you to say, sit down, be quiet, stop doing those things, quit rocking the boat. Let's just be comfortable without power, without victory, and importing those things of the Philistines into the territory that belongs to God. Openly and boldly they tell Samson, Samson, we're here to bind you, but you're not going to kill me yourselves.

No, no, we're not going to kill you. We're just going to tie you up good and tight and hand you to the Philistines and let them do it. They wanted him dead.

I mean, what else was going to be the conclusion here? You hand a bound man, betrayed by his own people into the hands of the enemy. What are they going to do with him? And from a human perspective, that's what they desired. They wanted him dead.

Now that's rejection. But it gets worse than that, you know. Because you will see here in the verses that God stepped in.

What a wonderful thing it is to encourage the servant of God who wants to do what's right. And I was so blessed by those words that were sung earlier in the day. I'm going to have to paraphrase it.

Do right though you're all alone. When there's no one else to stand, stand. But here's Samson, lonely, rejected.

He's now bound and about to be handed over to the enemies. And glory to God, the Lord steps in. We're going to develop that in the second part of our message.

But for now, I want you just to notice this. That even when the tide turned in Samson's favor on this occasion, the men of Judah still didn't side with him. Even when it became obvious from the heavens that God was on Samson's side, that the Holy Ghost was on this man in power.

Verse 14, the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him. And there was that public vindication. God is on Samson's side.

You'd think that the men of Judah, had they an ounce of sense between their ears, would have said, if God's on Samson's side, then what in the world are we doing pleasing the Philistines? That's what you'd hope they would think. But such was the hardness and blindness of their hearts, though the men of Judah, the professing people of God, that even when God Himself showed I'm on Samson's side, or more accurately, He's on my side, they said we still want nothing to do with it. Even when the tide turned, still nobody joined them.

Do you see that? I hope it shatters any false illusions you may have about what lies ahead if you are pursuing a course in which you desire to see revival come to the church. Do not for a moment indulge the false delusion that it will be easy, that it will be the popular thing. You will have those represented here by the men of Judah, men who in the past, as far as their tribe was concerned, were champions for God.

As they led in those early days the campaign in Canaan, where are they now? On the enemy's side, fighting God and fighting God's man. You don't have to stretch your thinking too far to make an application to our modern situation. All around us, there are organizations, there are churches, in many instances there are individuals who in former days were champions.

But now, now, where someone to stand up in their ranks and even in the power of the Holy Ghost to preach the truth of God and to say, men and women, this is the way back to blessing, this is the way back to victory, this is the way back to fellowship with God, that lynched them. Even when the tide turned, Samson was left alone. It gets worse yet.

Immediately there is a battle. Samson has to take the Philistines on alone. Even when, and I use the words deliberately, when all the power of hell turned on Samson had to deal with it.

There wasn't an ounce of sympathy in the men of Judah that said, look at Samson, God is on his side and all of the Philistines are against him. He's on his own. Can't we do something? There wasn't anything of human kindness.

There wasn't anything of that brotherly support and connection that we might have expected between brotherly brethren in Israel. They let him stand on his own. Outnumbered, at least from a human perspective.

Heavily outnumbered. Impossibly outnumbered. Samson took them on on his own.

But look at this yet again and see something else. Even when Samson had destroyed the Philistine army on this occasion single-handed in the power of God, the men of Judah still deserted him. He's still alone.

Look at him. I think, to be honest, it's one of the most pathetic, truly pathetic pictures in the Bible. Verse 18 and following.

You have a man who has poured out his soul under God to deliver the very men who betrayed him from the power of the Philistines. Couldn't you in the flesh have understood if Samson had looked at the men of Judah and looked at the men of the Philistines and said, you know what? You fellows in Judah, you have no use for what God wants to do. I'm packing my bags and going home and you Philistines just deal with them.

You just do what you like with them. I'm done. I couldn't understand that reaction.

It's a natural reaction. It's one I have to fight. It's one every faithful servant of God has to fight.

Look, I'm here to help. I'm here to set before you. And you know this in your own personal witness for God.

In the Gospel I have the answer to the need of your soul. But you don't want it and the tendency is to say, well, you don't want it. That's good.

I'm out of here. Not Samson. He took on the Philistines even though the chief beneficiaries of what he does here, not himself, but the man who had betrayed him after the battle, when he's given himself, when he's at the point of death.

Look at what he says. I'm sore athirst and now shall I die for thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised. He's still in danger.

He's worn to nothing. He's dying of thirst, exposed and vulnerable in so many ways apart from God, but naturally, humanly speaking. And there's not a man to give him so much as a drink of water.

You think about that. Remember how the Lord Jesus said in Mark 9.41 about that little act of service and He presents it in such terms as it being the very least that anybody can do in the work of God. Even if it's only a cup of water given in the name of a disciple or in the Savior's name.

Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name because you belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. And the context there would say this is the very least. But even when you do such a little thing, be sure that God will reward that service.

There wasn't a man, not one, to give him so much as a drink of water. The idea of it being a popular thing to be faithful to God is a fallacy. You be faithful to God and the more wicked the world is and the more wicked the age is and the more compromised the church is, the more you will be hated for standing for truth.

Do what's right, the world will mock you, the devil will attack you and the compromised among God's people will join them and defy you and withdraw from you even the very means of life if they could. Samson, I'm dying for thirst. Such is the loneliness of the struggle of one who labors for revival.

He will often have to live alone, stand alone, fight alone. This is not just something that was Samson's lot. Let me show you one other example I think is a very instructive example in God's Word, Exodus chapter 5, verse 20.

We come now to look here at the life of Moses, an exemplary servant of God in so many ways that Samson wasn't. And yet Moses faced the same thing exactly. He has to deal with Pharaoh here in the context and endure the wrath of Pharaoh and endure the opposition of the whole Egyptian system.

But as it comes out from the presence of Pharaoh in Exodus chapter 5, we read in the verse 20, they, and it's the elders of Israel, they met, they confronted Moses and Aaron who stood in the way as they came forth from Pharaoh. And they said unto them, The Lord look upon you and judge because ye have made our safer to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants to put a sword in their hand to slay us. Now get the sense of what these men are saying.

They're saying more than you're a troublemaker. Yes, they're intending that, but they're saying much more. They are invoking the power and the justice of God to strike at Moses for the trouble that he's

caused.

Will there be Christians that will pray against you if you take a stand for God to pursue revival? You better believe it. Can I understand that? No, but there's an explanation for it and it's simply the worldliness and carnality of the hearts of those people that are so spiritually blind that when God's work is being done they're prepared to condemn it as the work of the devil. Can a Christian get to that place? Oh, yes they can.

The church of Jesus is Christ, generally speaking. I'm not speaking of every individual, but generally speaking in the visible church today. That's where the church is.

The work of the devil is embraced as the work of God. The ways of the world are embraced as being wonderful things. And the glorious truths of the gospel itself and of every part of divine revelation are condemned.

Condemned. Do right though you're all alone and there's none else to stand with you, for it'll be a lonely stand. But we're just halfway through.

He was alone and yet not alone. Judges chapter 2 and the verse 18. Judges 2 18.

It's one of those passages at the introduction of the book that really must be applied at every stage in the history of the judges. And when the Lord raised them up judges, notice the words, then the Lord was with the judge. Hallelujah.

When God raised Samson, though there wasn't a man to stand with him, the Lord, Jehovah, the unchanging eternal one, ever present, was with him. The Lord was with him. Perhaps you have thought of those words of the Lord Jesus in John chapter 16, the verse 32.

Spoken in the hours before he went to the cross. When in many ways the Savior entered into the loneliest, most forsaken experience. We know those words.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? There's a mystery in those words. Somehow in a way I cannot explain. God withdrew the conscious sense of his presence from the human consciousness of Jesus Christ.

But the Bible makes it abundantly clear that even in that hour he was still being upheld by the hand of the Father. Even at that point where he cries, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Bear in mind the words of the prophet Isaiah. Behold my servant, mine elect, whom I uphold.

John 16, 32. The hour cometh yea, and now is that ye shall be scattered, and every man to his own and shall leave me alone. And yet I am not, because the Father is with me.

And that is the experience of everyone who is joined with Christ. The one who is our great Emmanuel. If God raises you up, dear Christian, to stand where he has put you and to say, Lord, I'm going to pursue a course in which I will strive for revival and a returning of the church to days of blessing and power and liberty.

Though none go with you, the Lord will be. On this point, I want to mention two things. First is this.

There was a very public display here of God's power that was indisputable, undeniable proof Samson was not on his own. Look at the words of verse 14. When he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him.

God came in a public display of his power in the life of Samson. Though he's standing alone as far as human support is concerned, he's not entirely alone, for God is with him. How do we know the Holy Ghost came? Just when it seemed that all was lost, the enemy, you see them? They're shouting.

They're celebrating already. They're congratulating themselves, singing the praise of their gods, no doubt. Oh, we've got him.

Look at him. Bound hand and foot by his own people, rejected, cast out. He's all on his own.

We have a measure of him. He's in the bag, as it were. And God came.

It may be a lonely stand if you're going to stand on the Lord's side. But be sure of this. If you stand on the Lord's side, you're standing at the Lord's side.

Let us go forth unto him, outside the camp. Whatever you have to leave behind, whatever you have to turn your back on, whatever you have to sacrifice and jettison to be faithful to God, be sure of this. And there's a definition of biblical separation.

Separation is so much more than what you leave behind. That's only the second half of what separation is. The first half is unto him.

On Jesus' side, on the Lord's side, and where there's a man prepared to stand on God's side, the Lord will be there. And he manifests that by the power of the Holy Ghost. This is what is so badly needed in the Church of Christ today.

A real demonstration of the power of the Holy Ghost. It's already been suggested to us in some of the comments and thoughts that have been sent before us already that God's people are scared to consider the doctrine of the Holy Ghost today because of the perversion of the charismatic movement. There is such a thing as the power of the Holy Ghost.

Don't ever be scared to pray for the fullness of the Holy Ghost. I remember one time opening in prayer in one of our services and praying for the power of the Holy Ghost. Somebody said to me afterwards about them being scared, I was going to start speaking in tongues.

Because that's the common conception. Holy Ghost equals tongues, equals charismatic chaos and confusion. That, to use the language of the Apostle, is not the Holy Ghost.

That is an other spirit. That is an alien spirit. It's not a God.

God, the Holy Ghost, came upon Samson here. The real demonstration of the Holy Ghost's power among God's people is the proof that we do not labor alone. That's really the only evidence that we are in fact laborers together with God.

And not off away somewhere left, fiend out on our own someplace, pursuing our own lunatic ideas. We need the power of the Holy Spirit. We do.

That is the evidence that we're not alone. Only then will the evidence be made clear that we do not labor for ourselves, by ourselves, in our own strength, according to our own agenda. But that we are in fact, as Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 3.9, we are laborers together with God.

This is what gives the lie to the theories of the men of Judah. Samson could have argued with them until he was blue in the face, until the cows come home. Oh no, you're wrong.

You've got it wrong. Don't think that about me. I've gone down a whole list of philosophical reasons why they should side with him.

He didn't. Because all that's a waste of time. There's one answer to the charge that is leveled against the faithful servant of God.

You're going off on a solo run, away out there into the lunatic territory, insisting on obeying the Bible and getting back to the days of blessing and power. God's not in it. How do you answer that? The only way to answer it is for you and for me to have the experience that is shown here.

The power of God. After that, there's no argument. The men of Judah can say what they like at this point, but they're arguing against the visible evidence of God's presence.

And is that not the harsh reality we have to confront today? We say we're Bible believers. We want to do it right. But the proof that we are on God's side is sadly lacking.

It is. And we find ourselves having to resort to all kinds of intricate arguments and debates and point scoring to try to say, yes, but we are on God's side. The Church of Christ today needs to come to the place where it is vindicated by God, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Look at what happens here when the Spirit of God comes. The restraints that had been put upon Samson by his rejection of men were nothing when God came. His hands were tied while he was rejected by the men of Judah.

We use that expression, do we not? Sometimes do you not find yourself in the cause of God saying, I wish I could do this or I wish we could do the other thing, but our hands are tied. If God, the Holy Ghost, were to come, our hands would be untied. I love the language of verse 14.

The cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire. And his bands literally, and you might even have this alternative in the margin of your Bible, his bands melted off his hands. The fire of God came and every bond that had been placed upon him because of the rejection of Samson by the men of Judah melted and evaporated.

And man, he was free to do something. That's what the Holy Ghost does. The Holy Ghost will liberate us from the restrictions that are placed upon us by the opinions of those who are like the men of Judah.

Don't rock the boat. And sometimes we feel our hands tied by that pressure. Don't upset the Philistines.

Don't preach against false religion. Don't preach against the world. Don't deal with these things.

And we feel the pressure. We feel the restraint. Oh dear, if I preach like that, well, this church, that church, the other church, this society or the other will be breathing fire down my neck.

I don't. I can't. But if God, the Holy Ghost, the bonds will be burnt.

It will be liberty from fear of what man thinks or says or does. The lack of support was as nothing when the power of God came. But Lord, we've nobody to stand with us.

So what? You've got the Holy Ghost. But Lord, it would be nice to have the 3,000 men of Judah at my back acknowledging me as a commander. You don't need them.

You've got the Holy Ghost. You're going to be still alone. But you've got the Holy Ghost.

There's a beautiful passage in 1 Samuel chapter 14. We're a man you might not think of immediately as being a great champion of the faith as brought to our attention, Jonathan, the son of Saul, who's not without his faults to be sure. But in 1 Samuel 14, he's going out at a much later time again to deal with these same enemies.

And in chapter 14, and it's the verse 6, he says to his armor bearer, there wasn't another being in Israel who was going to do anything. Saul, his father, was king. He's sitting under a tree enjoying the shade with the army of Israel all around him.

Not going to do anything. Not going to do anything. Jonathan can wait no longer and he says to his armor bearer, come and let us go over onto the garrison of these uncircumcised.

He's looking at this from a spiritual perspective. That's always the implication. Where the enemies of God are referred to as the uncircumcised.

It may be that the Lord will work for us, for there's no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few. It's just two of us. And Jonathan, the only one with a sword.

Just two. Did he pray, Lord, stir up the army of Israel to come? No. He says, Lord, even if I'm going to be in this on my own, it's nothing to God.

Nothing to God to use one or two. Don't think you need to have great crowds to exercise an influence for God. One man, power of the Holy Ghost, took on the armies of the Philistines.

And the simplest of weapons became an effective means in his hand of routing the enemy. The jawbone of an ass. Not a sword.

The jawbone of an ass. I don't know what it was like to use that as a weapon. I'm sure it wasn't the most comfortable thing to use.

And it would have been perhaps in a measure of desperation that he picked the thing up. It was the only thing that came to his hand. But you see, God doesn't need polished swords with jeweled hilts.

The power of the Holy Ghost, the jawbone of an ass. Lord, I'm not polished. I'm not skilled.

I'm not clever. I have no abilities. Take it a step further.

You might be able to say, Lord, I'm just like that old jawbone of the ass because I feel myself just to be the scraps that have been left after the wolves have fed on me. The past years have been consumed. The most of my energy has been consumed by foolish things and worldly things and by sin and by the devil.

And I'm just about as useful as that bone that's left as a scrap from a carcass. But under the power of the Holy Ghost he slew a thousand men. You just think what a difference it would make in this community and far beyond this community if God the Holy Ghost were to come upon us and each of us were to influence a thousand men.

If each of us were to see that measure of deliverance from the power of the enemy and the driving back of the influence of the Philistines, a thousand men at a time multiplied by the number of individuals that are here. What if you could see in the power of the Holy Ghost that you could see, that I could see a thousand liars and false prophets silenced? Think of the effect that the lying, Bible denying, false prophets of the day have on the church. If you had the power of God in your life to the degree that you were able to silence a thousand of them, don't you think that would make a difference in this country? A notable victory.

But in conclusion, I'm going to finish on time today. In conclusion, that was the public evidence that Samson wasn't alone. That's necessary.

But I cannot point you to the private evidence, evidence enjoyed by Samson himself privately, that he wasn't alone. Where do we see that but in verses 18 and 19, when as a man who is utterly exhausted on his own, drained by the battle, dying of thirst, but God. Here's a private experience.

He called on the Lord, verse 18 and verse 19, God, cleave and hollow place that was in the jaw. Now, let's clear up a little difficulty here. The jaw.

That's not the jawbone of the ass. Translators of our Bible here face something of a dilemma. There's a word that's repeated through here, and it's used in two different ways.

One, it's used of the jaw of the ass. Two, it's transliterated, and that is just to take the Hebrew letters and write them in English rather than to translate them. Translated, it means jaw.

Transliterated, it's the word Lehi, which is the name of the place. And so we can read, and again, this is something that our translators have included in the margins of the Bible, just to indicate that there's this dual sense in the word. But read it this way.

God cleave and hollow place that was in Lehi. God broke the rock in Lehi, and out of that rock there came water, and that water revived Samson. A private experience of the power of God in the cause of revival and restoration in the church of Jesus Christ.

You and I need to learn this vital lesson. We must learn to draw that nourishing strength that we need from God in the private place. Samson learns it here.

Oh God, I need restored. I need revived. I'm done.

I'm finished. I can do no more unless I meet God, and God does something to restore my soul and restore my life. Standing for God is very draining, spiritually and physically.

It will take a toll. It's not an easy thing to do. You can only do it if you have discovered that there is in the private place of communion with God a fountain that is opened in the rock that has been cleaved that will nourish you.

We must learn the secret of obtaining that living water from God that will restore our souls and enable us to go on when there's nobody to stand with us. It's a beautiful thing to be encouraged and to be supported

and strengthened by our brethren. It is an encouragement.

It is a means of support. But it's not enough. It's not enough.

What about when you have to stand on your own? And if you're relying on human support, you will fall. Less like Samson you learn that God broke the rock of eternities, even as Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10.4 as he writes of how God opened the rock in the wilderness for Israel. Look at the words.

That rock was Christ. Symbolic of the Savior. Smitten by the rod of divine justice.

Opened, and in Him opened a fountain. You know that the living water that the Savior spoke of in John chapter 7 was used by Him there as an illustration of the power of the Holy Ghost. John 7 37, in the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, I'm an imam first.

Let Him come unto me. Oh, that applies to the Christian as well as the sinner. If you're out of Christ today, it applies to you.

There's life in Christ. You can come and drink and see. But dear Christian, there's a supply in Christ you need to constantly drink into your soul.

Let Him come unto me and let Him drink. I tell you, what the church of Christ needs today is not seminars on principles of Christian living. It's not seminars on this, how to do this, that, or the other thing.

The church of Jesus Christ needs today to have set before it Christ. Come unto me and let Him drink. I'm an imam first.

He that believeth on me as the Scripture has said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this speak ye of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive. Here's the Holy Ghost seen again.

You drink of Christ. You draw into your being the power and fullness of the Holy Ghost, and then out of your being will flow rivers of living water to benefit those that are around you. You'll become a channel of blessing.

That's exactly what happened for Samson here. Look at it. You have it all here in picture.

God opened the rock. The water flowed. Samson drunk.

And look at what it's written there. He called the name thereof Enhachoreh unto this day. You know what that means? The well of the one who cried.

God made a well. God just didn't give him a cup of water. There was a well, and everybody that passed that way ever after benefited from Samson's experience with God in that private place of need.

It's Enhachoreh unto this day. He cried. He called.

God heard. Open the rock. Give him a well.

Oh, that God would in our private experience make us to be the means of providing wells of living water to those that are around us. John 14, 16. I want to read the verses, and we're done.

The Lord Jesus here is speaking of the Holy Ghost. I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of truth from the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him.

But ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you.

You may be alone, but not alone while the Comforter is there. I will come, the Savior says. The Holy Ghost makes the presence of Christ real.

I will come to you. God comes to His people through the Holy Spirit. That's what the church needs today, just as Samson needed it.

Alone, but not alone. May God pour out His Spirit upon us for Jesus' sake.

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