

Message Notes: July 7, 2024

Title: What A Mess: Cleaned Up In Christ

Text: Judges 16

Intro: OJ Simson. Lance Armstrong. Bill Clinton. The U.S. Samson. Your worst self and Jesus.

I. Who was Samson?

- A. Nazarite judge of Israel.
 - 1. Numbers 6:1-8
 - 2. Meant to liberate Israel from the Philistines.
- B. Great strength—unique
 - 1. Judges 16:1-2
 - 2. Removes gates from Gaza City.
- C. Not even Israelites liked him much.
 - 1. Reigned 20 years.
 - 2. Rash, arrogant, disrespectful, and prone to fits of anger.
 - 3. Had an eye for Philistine prostitutes.
- D. The Lord never removed his authority or his strength just because he was a fool.
 - 1. Pull the plank out of our own eyes--We imagine how we might have handled Samson.
 - 2. Use of our own God given authority....
 - 3. The Lord's use of His authority is never withdrawn from us.
 - 4. God's power made perfect in our weakness.

II. Samson's sin and Delilah (The apple of his eye).

- A. By Judges 16 Samson has fallen far.
 - 1. Doesn't give God credit for his victories.
 - 2. Samson has had a failed marriage.
 - 3. Given up on institution of marriage altogether.
 - 4. Samson is not even living in Israel but in Philistine lands.
 - 5. In arrogance, Samson feels invincible.
- B. Samson "loves" Delilah.

- 1. Love is not love again—wrong object with sinful results.
 - 2. Philistine leaders make a deal with Delilah.
 - 3. She puts on the moves—not subtle about objective.
 - 4. Motivated not by love but by greed.
 - 5. Samson too arrogant for his own good.
 - 6. "He did not even realize that the Lord had left Him."
- C. Similarities with the Prodigal of Luke 15.
- 1. Forsook his father.
 - 2. Forsook his authority and position.
 - 3. Squandered gifts.
 - 4. Very selfish.
 - 5. Lost and didn't realize it.
 - 6. Dead.
 - 7. "When he finally came to his senses"
 - 8. Chasing his own version of happiness over what is godly or right.
 - 9. The mess made--The Lord was with him, but he was not with the Lord.
- D. The Lord is with us, but we are not always with the Lord.
- 1. The pursuit of happiness over holiness.
 - 2. Social justice euphoria.
 - 3. Delilah made him feel good while out to destroy Samson.
 - 4. Embodiment of a life imagined over reality.
- E. The Simple things are where we win.
- 1. 1 Cor 10:31
 - 2. Doesn't get more basic than eating or drinking.
 - 3. Making the bed has purpose.
 - 4. Acknowledging God in the smallest things amplifies the bigger gifts.
 - 5. Avoid the slide.

III. “But the hair on his head began to grow...”

- A. Samson arrested.
 - 1. Gauged out his eyes.
 - 2. Didn't kill him after all.
 - 3. The grinding mill.
 - 4. Time to think and repent.
- B. The Dagon temple of doom...for the Philistines.
 - 1. All the most powerful gathered to gloat.
 - 2. V. 26 Samson requests to be set between the pillars—He's got a plan.
 - 3. Samson's only recorded prayer.
 - 4. Brings down the house.
 - 5. Wipes out the entire Philistine government.
 - 6. Saves Israel in his death.
 - 7. Hebrews 11:32
- C. “But his hair began to grow...” is a phrase of hope.
- D. God gives us all strength as well...especially between the pillars.
 - 1. Many examples.
 - 2. Never to underestimate what God has given or what may be accomplished.
 - 3. God can work with messy people, messy lives, and still accomplish his will through any of us.

Conclusion: Hello, I'm Matt and I'm a mess. A quote from C.S. Lewis. Strength in God not our hair or anywhere in this world. We make a mess of ourselves. Jesus has never stopped fighting our sin no matter how many times we have surrendered to it. In Jesus we are truly strong when we are weak. And finally, we are never so far from the Lord in the messes we make of ourselves that Jesus can't reach us and clean us up again. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Taking it Home

- 1. Think of an example of a mess made in your life that you were grateful that the Lord helped clean up? What was restored that you thought lost?
- 2. List some little blessings in your life that are easily overlooked because they are 'small.' Example: being able to make your bed. Or having a nice bed to sleep in.
- 3. What is at least one thing you may do better this week that would glorify the Lord above yourself? How might this bless someone else?

Consider Reading Romans 8