

Stained Heroes: SAMSON

The Judges Cycle

"The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD;... The anger of the LORD burned against Israel... But when they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer... The Spirit of the LORD came on him, so that he became Israel's judge." Judges 3:7-10 (TNIV)

Episode 1: Pride Defies Authority

"Samson said to his father, "Get her for me. She's the right one for me." ⁴ (His parents did not know that this was from the LORD, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.) ⁵ Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. ⁶ The Spirit of the LORD came on him in power so that he 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. ⁷ Then he went down and talked with the woman, and he liked her. ⁸ Some time later, when he went back to marry her, he turned aside to look at the lion's carcass, and in it he saw a swarm of bees and some honey. ⁹ He scooped out the honey with his hands and ate as he went along. When he rejoined his parents, he gave them some, and they too ate it. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the lion's carcass." Judges 14:3-9 (TNIV)

We are either doing what is right in our eyes or God's eyes.

Episode 2: Pride Breeds Revenge

See Judges 14:9-15:20

If you're the hero in your own story, you always have to defend yourself. If God's the hero, he will defend you.

Episode 3: Pride Betrays Desire

See Judges 16:1-20

"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 (NIV)

What we love or desire, has the power to betray us.

Episode 4: Pride Squanders the Blessing

"Samson said, 'Let me die with the Philistines!' Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived." Judges 16:30 (NIV)

We all have potential, and the potential to live a squandered life.

- a religious pedigree
- a spiritual upbringing
- blessing
- influence

Small Group Questions

1. What is your overall reaction to the story of Samson? Do you see him as a hero, a failure, or something else?
2. In the sermon, we discussed Samson's stain of pride. Review in your own study time or with your group where you see Samson's pride in his story. (reference Judges 13-16)
3. In the same passages, see if you can identify where God's grace is evident, almost in spite of Samson.
4. Which of the four effects of pride do you most identify with (defies authority, breeds retaliation, betrays desire, squanders blessing)? Why?
5. We shared four examples of the ways in which we can all live a squandered life (religious pedigree, spiritual upbringing, blessing or influence) – which one is the most realistic possibility for you?