

Theological Focus: That Christians should accept and live out the call and mission of their lives from God.

Sermon Focus: That TBF would recognize and live in light of their calling.

Key Question: Are you on mission?

INTRODUCTION:

1. [Image] Thanks for prayers for Grant. We have felt them and are so grateful. Mission Impossible. "Your Mission should you choose to accept it." We read the story of someone who gets a mission, but they don't want it.
2. [Need] We need to see our own mission and how to live in light of it.
3. [Subject] Samson and His call.
4. [Text] Judges 13-14

Point number one **We have been given a call and mission from God. We have been given a call and mission from God.**

The story of Samson is unusual compared to the other Judges. He is the last judge that we will study. But his story starts with his parents. The Angel of the Lord visits Samson's parents to tell them about their unexpected baby. And how that child is being given a special mission from God. So all of chapter 13 is about this call and mission.

What you notice right away is Samson's mission and calling come before he is born. Before he has done a thing. Before he has drawn a breath. Before his mother even has an idea that she could be pregnant. Samson gets a mission.

And the Angel of the LORD appears to Samson's mother. You notice throughout the entire story of Samson that her name is never mentioned. Smason's dad is named Manoah. But his wife gets nothing. That's intentional. The Bible does this not because she doesn't matter, but to point out how the world views her. Verse 2 **"his wife was barren and had no children."** Barren women are looked down upon. They are viewed as cursed and forgotten by God. But God sees this woman. We might not know her name, but God did. And the angle appears to her. Not to

anyone else. The angel doesn't show up to her husband and her. Her alone.

And the Angel of the LORD tells not just that she will have a son. But verse 5 **"you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines."** He is going to be the next Judge. He will save her nation from her oppressors. But he is not only a Judge, but a Nazirite.

A Nazirite is someone who is set apart from birth. He will live in a particular way. He not only keeps the law, like other Israelites. But he goes above and beyond it. He can never have any alcohol. And he can never touch anything unclean. And he should never cut his hair. The hair is so that everyone who looks at him should know that he is a Nazirite. Someone set apart on a mission from God.

Samson's wife tells her husband, but he has a hard time believing at first. But he responds rightly by praying for the angel to come back and give more instructions. And the Angel does come again, but he comes to the wife a second time. And she has to go and get her husband. And his question is a good one in 13:12 **"what is to be the child's manner of life, and what is his mission?"** What is his calling? How should he live? And the angel just repeats what he has already said.

But Samson gets a special calling and mission. His is to be a Nazirite and the savior of his people. From birth he has been called by God to do this.

Did you have expectations when you were born? Maybe someone hoped you would go into the family business? Maybe you hoped that they really wouldn't go into the family business. But Samson's is not a family calling or mission, it is a Divine one.

We too have been given a divine calling. We have also been given a mission from God. And your calling also came from before you were born. Every single believer has been chosen by God. Before any of us were born Jesus came down to earth to purchase your salvation.

Our calling is to sons and daughters of the King. We have also been given a mission from God. As Christians we are ambassadors of the

Kingdom of God. Our lives are centered not around ourselves, but around the King. This mission is best explained in the Great Commission. Another event that happened before anyone in this room was born. We are called to go into the world and make disciples. We invite people to follow Jesus with us and teach them what it means. That is our calling and our mission.

Every single Christian has this mission. This is not just for pastors like Rob and me. This is not just for elders. This is for men and women. This is for all our children in the back who knows Jesus. This calling is for every single believer.

[transition] But how will Samson respond to his mission? And how we will respond?

Point number 2 **We can follow God's mission, or our own. We can follow God's mission, or our own.**

In chapter 14 we get to see Samson as a grown man. And our first time reading the story you might expect him to be doing great! But let me summarize what happens here and then we will dive into it more. Basically Samson is actively not living out God's mission. He is just interested in doing his own thing. He violates his Nazirite vows and wants to have a foreign wife who worships other gods. His parents are against it and at the wedding he starts a bet with his Philistine neighbors. They cheat the bet and he gets so angry that he goes on a murder rampage. That's our hero today.

So let's start by looking at how Samson decides to not follow God's mission. He decides first by continually violating his Nazirite vow. Right away in verse 1 we learn that he is always going down to **"Timnah"** Which is a Canaanite town. So he is going to hang out in places where he shouldn't be. Especially as someone who is meant to be a Judge and savior of God's people.

And we get an early hint of why Samson is going to this Canaanite town. Because he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines. This is a common thread and only the first woman who Samson uses and abuses for his own desires. And he sees this woman and wants her as his wife. And he asks his parents to make it happen for him. He acts like a child. This

doesn't appear to be a good son submitting to his Middle Eastern Parents. This is like a spoiled child asking get that for me.

It's parent subject rightly because they are not supposed to marry people from the other nations. Not because there's anything wrong with the other nations, but because there is something wrong with their gods. They can marry foreigners who enter into the nation of Israel and choose to abandon their gods and instead worship Yahweh. The send for them to marry Idol worshippers. This is an even greater sin for someone who is supposed to be a Nazarite. Consecrated and set apart for God like Samson.

Samson doesn't want to follow God's mission for his life. And he says this explicitly in verse 3 **"get her for me, for she is right in my eyes."** Is there common phrase that we've heard over and over every week is we read this book? We've heard it was **"evil in the sight of the Lord."** your Saints and says might be evil on God's sight but in my sight it's good. I don't care about God's Mission my care about mine. And he says his again in verse 7 just in case we missed it **"she was right in Samson's eyes."**

Yet despite not really caring about God's Mission got a still with him. In verse five when he's on his way to the vineyard at Young lion comes out to attack him. And God gives Samson Supernatural strength and allows him to kill the lion with his bare hands. It's interesting how he responds in verse 6 **" he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done."** We would ask why not? Well the reason is because natural rights are not supposed to touch unclean things. And a dead body is unclean. Samson is just violated his Nazarite vow. Now was a moment of necessity to kill a lion with his bare hands it's all I had. But his response afterwards reveals how much he cares about God's Mission and God's calling. He doesn't tell his parents. He doesn't want to make sacrifices to God. He doesn't want to go through the motions of what he would have to do to be made clean.

And it's not enough that he did this and then lied about it. And then later in verse 8 on his way back he turns aside to see the carcass the lion. He wants to go look at the dead body. Again this is something that he

should not be doing. Dead bodies are unclean. But he goes out of his way to go and look at it. And he finds somehow in this Lion's body Bees and Honey. Really Samson finds what all of us do. When you go looking for Temptation you often find it. When you go looking for an opportunity to sin you will find something that looks delicious and sinful. So Samson touches the dead body again. And eats the food out of it.

And it shows us how laxidasical Samson Notes about violating the vows and mission of God. "He scraped it out of the Sands and went on eating as he went." he's just walking on and snacking eating something. And he knows is wrong because he gives something to his parents and doesn't tell them where it came from. Samson is portrayed to us very clearly as someone does not care about following God's mission. And he reveals that he knows it's wrong because he repeatedly does not tell his parents about what he's doing. Tells us that he knows that he is sitting. But he does not care.

So Samson prepares a wedding Feast. Seven days and he does it in the way that the Philistines would do. Doesn't say so explicitly but we can assume that wedding Feast have wine. It's not much of a feast without it and it would be there. Again Samson this violating part of his vows to God. I know we get into this long back and forth all about riddles.

Samson tells his guests that he's going to give them a riddle though if they can't guess it they're going to owe him 30 fine Linens. And he does this cuz you sure they won't be able to figure it out. What appears to be happening in this riddle. Least in Samson's mind is that he is greatly trying to get riches. Especially in the ancient world. No one man needs 30 pairs of clothes. But Samson wants it. In his riddle has to do with the honey that came out of the lion that no one knows about.

The Philistines are upset they can't figure it out until they pressure his wife to find out the answer. I don't just pressure her they threatened her. They tell her that they'll murder her and her family with fire if she doesn't give them the answer. I don't think we should be too hard on her in this chapter. She's acting like many of us would do if there was an armed band of people around us who threatened to burn our family on fire. So he tells her the riddle she tells the Philistines and they tell Samson the answer.

And he responds to them by saying **"if you had not plowed with my heifer you wouldn't have found out my riddle."** That's just as insulting and demeaning in Hebrew as it is in English. He reveals His character once more.

So now Samson has to pay. And he responds by verse 19 **"he went down to Ashkelon and struck down 30 men the town and took their spoil and gave their garments to those with whom he told the riddle. And hot anger he went back to his father's house."** He goes and kills 30 random Philistine men and takes their clothes. And that's how he pays these Philistines that he owes.

Throughout this chapter and really throughout the next two chapters we're going to see how Samson does not really care about God's mission. Samson does not kill the oppressors of Israel because he's trying to follow God. He isn't trying to say this real at all. He kills them out of anger at a personal anger. He kills them because of his own mission not God's mission. Directions from the story will see that he really is just out for himself. He's not interested in what God has called him to do he is just interested in doing whatever is right in his own eyes.

We have the same problem today don't we? We've all been given a mission by God to make disciples. Go into the nation's. To go into our neighborhoods. To love our neighbors as we love ourselves. And to invite them to love the God who loves them. We are commanded to take up our cross and to suffer in this life as those who have hope in the next.

But like Samson we very frequently are distracted off mission. We hear what God wants us to do when we say no thank you. We see this very often even just when it comes to church. It's hard being in a new community. You move to a new area and one of the things you try and do to try and find a church that you can plug into. In a community like ours is no exception to where we are close to a hundred churches. Which is a tremendous blessing. The downside we can be tempted to start Church shopping. And we can start looking and evaluating the communities of God based off of what they have to offer us. We start to ask well what do they have for me? What programs do they have to offer me? What great events do they have that all enjoy going to? We can be tempted to ask

questions not do these people love Jesus are they trying to fulfill the mission of God? Are they going to help me to fulfill God's mission? We can just ask is this church going to entertain me? Is it going to give me what I want? Is this church right in my eyes?

That's just one small way that we can get off mission. We can get off Mission we start caring more about the politics the world that we care about the mission of the Kingdom. We can get off Mission we start caring about being comfortable and happy in this life than about fulfilling the mission of God. We can get off Mission when we care more about being served than we do about serving. There's really no end to the stuff that gets us off mission.

[III] I can tend to be a distracted driver. Brianna will tell you this. I don't like to drive and I get easily bored. So when I'm driving down the road especially in a place that's new I can just start looking all around me for something interesting. And sometimes that means I can start reading every sign that I can find. And I'll read it out loud and tell Brianna about it. Or I'll look to see if I see people walking out there and interesting house over there or anything at all that I can see. As you can imagine this gets me in trouble. When you're driving your mission shouldn't be to be entertained, it should be to drive safely. And so often these distractions can make me word. Or start to drift out of my Lane into somewhere dangerous. Life is often like that. We are driving down the road on the mission of God. But our eyes start to wander as we see everything else around us that we'd rather do.

[Transition] But there is good news for those who get off mission.

Point number 3 **God's plan does not depend on you staying on mission. God's plan does not depend on you staying on mission.**

Several years ago it probably would have been my last point. I would've ended the sermon with a strong application and maybe even found in the Pulpit a little bit. I would have said you need to stay on Mission. And it's true. We do need to stay on Mission. That should be our response. But I want you to see how God uses Samson.

Look at 14:4. This verse is one of the key verses and understanding the entire story of Samson. **"His father and mother did not know that it**

was from the Lord, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines." Samson to spending his entire time being off mission. He's doing whatever he wants. Is doing whatever seems right in his own eyes. He's not living out his calling from God. And he is continually engaging and sinful Behavior. Yet here we find this verse.

As first is confusing and there's a couple different ways to understand it. I don't think this is saying that God was giving Samson a sinful desire to marry women who worship idols. Because God was hoping that it would go horribly and then Samson would have to kill everyone. No. Because God doesn't cause us to sin. God is not the author of sin. What does does mean. Is that even when Samson is actively trying to avoid living out his mission God's Mission still gets accomplished. God is able to use even Samson's simple desires to bring about God's purposes.

God's plan doesn't depend on our obedience. It doesn't depend on us staying on Mission. Samson goes off Mission almost his entire story. He never raises up an army to fight with him. He never tries to save Israel and deliver them from the Philistines. And yet God uses him anyway. God can use even our sin to bring him glory.

We've been studying this in our men's bible studies we looked at the life of Joseph. Joseph's life is one who is often at the mercy of others. Because of the sin of his brother she sold into slavery. Because of the sin of Potepher's wife he is thrown into prison. Because he's wrongly forgotten by the cup-bearer he's left to rot. Yet despite all of the Sin done to Joseph God uses all of it to accomplish his will. And Joseph at the end of his brother says you meant it for evil but God uses it for good.

The cross is one of the great examples. As Jesus was hanging there being executed the Pharisees felt like they won. Jesus's disciples felt like it was all lost. That's why many of them abandoned him. I'm here was too scared to even admit that he knew Jesus. Satan himself may have even felt like he was Victorious. Yeah that the cross Jesus one. His death was actually a victory. The evil and unrighteous acts being done to him by human beings perfectly flat steel to God's plan to die Hazard substitutionary sacrifice to purchase salvation for us. And all of us in this

room can have eternal life partially through the evil acts of evil men who tried to stop God's plan.

God does not need you to be the most righteous person that has ever lived in order to accomplish great things for him. Has a mission and he has a call for you and we are invited to participate with him. Samson ignores the mission and get the mission is still accomplished. Judas tries to sabotage the mission and so the mission is accomplished. Peter tries to deny the mission and your Jesus brings him back in. The Apostle Paul tries to kill everyone who is on Mission and you Jesus changes him and invites him to help lead it.

If you can't stop God's Mission even by actively fighting it, And you definitely cannot stop it through your imperfect obedience. So the application is be on mission. About the calling to which we have been called. Live like you have been called and invited to go on Mission with God. And be encouraged that this mission is going to be accomplished. It's not on your shoulders is on the shoulders of Jesus. Yet we are all invited to participate with him. To go to work with our heavenly father in his remaking of the world.

CONCLUSION:

1. [Summary] We have been given a call and mission from God. We can follow God's mission, or our own. God's plan does not depend on you being on mission.
2. [Challenge] The reality is the God's mission is going to be accomplished. It will either be accomplished with you working alongside Jesus, or it will be accomplished in spite of you. You'll get to help make it happen or it'll happen even as you try to stop it. The choice is yours on what you want to do. We can be like Samson, for we can be like Jesus. Who would you rather be like?