

Title: Blind, but now I see – Part 2  
Text: Judges 16.4-31  
Theme: Regret, repentance and grace  
Series: Judges  
Prop Stmtnt: Samson ended his life in an act of faith-driven sacrifice that was itself a gift to him and others from God.

Read Text:

If you are going to run through a drive thru after church today, you do not have to make detailed plans. But, if you are going to have a wedding and invite 500 people, or if you are going to remodel your home, or buy a house, or go on a 6-month vacation to Europe, or go out of state to college, you need to get ready for these things because they take an enormous amount of planning. Think of this: The ultimate event in the history of our world was the advent of Christ. God planned history around this event. Everything he did was in preparation for this because of how singularly important this event was and forever will be. Therefore (big therefore) everything that we read in the OT is in preparation for this. You need to read the OT by looking up and seeing the cross. God was ordering events that way and we need to see them that way and therefore, I need to preach it that way. At the end of this sermon, I want you appreciate Jesus more, love him more, and trust him more.

Consistently, the biggest obstacle that hinders people from trusting in Christ is realizing how much they need Christ. We are all hardwired to think that we can do this. Therefore, the OT is full of stories of saviors (little “s”) who cannot save like we need to be saved. This is the story of Samson and the story of the Judges. There was no king in Israel. Everyone was trying to do his own thing, make his own laws and the result was chaos. And the leaders, like Samson who arose, look just like many of the leaders in our day. You see talent. You see gifting. You see potential. You see opportunity. And then over and over you see how that talent is wasted. Samson possessed a God-given strength that could have rescued a nation. However, the savior couldn’t save himself. He had more than an “I” problem, he had an eye problem. When we went down to Timnah – he saw a girl and had to have her, which was a complete train wreck. When he went down to Gaza, he saw a prostitute and he had to have her, which set in motion another series of disastrous events. Now, not having learned anything, Samson reveals just how weak he really is.

## I. **Blind** (16.4-21)

### A. **Blind to the nature of my sin.**

The story of Samson and Delilah is the longest of the stories within the larger account of Samson. Samson had not learned his lesson nor heeded the warnings of God from his previous encounters with women he had no business being with. But he always got away with it. He was always able to talk his way out of getting the ticket, or getting the teacher to pass him, or getting his mom to give in. He could always bend the rules – right? I can play with fire and not get burned because I am the exception. I am the most gifted. I get what I want. So, in one of the most classic cases of “sin causes brain damage” Samson absolutely does the inexplicable. He not only goes after another Philistine girl, but he tells Delilah the “secret” to his strength. It unfolds in

stages. Delilah has been ordered by the Philistine leaders to seduce Samson into revealing the source of his strength. Samson has never demonstrated much of an ability to say “no.” He, like most of us does not realize the true nature of sin. Sin is not your friend. Sin will destroy you. You cannot love your sin and love Christ. You have to choose. If you think that you can love your sin and still love Christ, it is only because your love for sin has deceived you into thinking that you still love Christ. Love for Christ does not betray him for another love.

### **B. Blind to the danger I am in.**

In four head-shaking scenes, Samson takes four very short steps that complete his journey to the dark side. Samson is already flying too close to the flame. He is not only in the land of the enemy; he is in her bedroom. His capacity for clear thinking is gone. Seven fresh bowstrings? Bowstrings were made from the tendons of animal and if they were fresh and not dried, then the animal would have been freshly slaughtered, and once again, Samson was violating his Nazarite vow. The Philistines deliver the bowstrings; Delilah binds Samson with them, while she has the enemy soldiers hiding in her bedroom. She springs the trap, but Samson breaks the trap. It wasn't bowstrings.

She is angry. He mocked her. He embarrassed her. He lied to her. He is trying to use her to get what he wants and she is trying to use him to get what she wants. This relationship is only good for trouble. Instead of just walking away, Samson is in too deep. He thinks he can play the game and win, but just thinking that he can play the game, means that he has already lost. So she pesters him again and this time he tells her to use fresh rope. And the same thing happened. She tied him up with the rope, she sprang the trap and he broke it again.

I think that we can assume that Delilah is in danger from the Philistines. They have probably lost a few good men in these first two attempts. But, she is persistent and Samson now almost gives it away when he tells her that if she just ties up the 7 locks of his hair that he will be weak. Well, she does it. The fact that she used a loom, a pin and even formed a web with his hair gives you an idea of just how long and thick his hair really was.

Now, keep this in mind. Each time she asked him what it was, and he made something up, she tested to see if it was really true. Men were literally hiding in her bedroom in order to kill Samson and yet, after she tormented him day after day, he not only kept going back to her, he actually told her the secret to his strength. Samson underestimated his enemy because he underestimated his own heart. That moment was the final step of a long dark journey and we are fools to think that our journeys won't take us to the same dark place.

Delilah knew that he had told her the truth and she set her plan in motion. She had his hair cut, and when he awoke, the reality of his enslavement became known. The Philistines did not kill him. He was more valuable alive. They seized him, gouged out his eyes and brought him one last time down to Gaza. Remember all that wheat he burned up? Now he is grinding it at a mill every day, just walking in circles.

What do you want so badly, that you will just flat out sin in order to get it? What do you love so much that you just don't care what the consequences are, you are going to do it, anyway? What

is it? What is it that you keep going back to over and over? Hold it up in your mind. Think of all of the times it has made promises to you and think of all of the times you have given in. What has that done for you? What do you have to show for it? For Samson, it was his lust. Over and over “he saw” and he wanted what he saw. But what he saw and what he wanted was blinding to his heart and he was blind to how serious of a problem he really had. He lived as if he could get out of the problem. But, you cannot rescue yourself from sin. The very nature of sin causes a dullness to your heart so that you are no longer alarmed.

### **C. Blind to what I am giving away.**

Did Samson have any idea of the impact he could have had for his own people? When Delilah told the Philistine lords that she had discovered the secret to his strength, they brought her the money they promised. V. 5 says that they each promised to contribute 1,100 pieces of silver (5,500 in total) to Delilah if she could find out what the secret of his strength is. 5,500 pieces of silver is an enormous amount of money! You could buy a slave for 30. When David bought the threshing floor for the site of the temple, he paid the large sum of 50. If these lords were willing to pay her 5,500 pieces of silver, that tells you how much of a threat Samson was to them. These lords were desperate and Delilah was about to be crazy rich.

Here was, by all accounts, a leader who could have rallied a nation and finished the mission of occupying the land that the Lord had given Israel. Did he not realize what he could have done? Did he not realize the impact he could have had? Instead he squandered it. He wasted it. He knew that God had given him something special. V.17 is very telling. On the one hand, Samson knows his calling, but on the other hand, he doesn't treasure it. He is willing to forfeit what is truly divine for what is altogether so worthless. V. 18 says that he told her all his heart. Look at who he gave the secrets of his heart to. Look at what she did with them. There is nothing in this text to indicate that Delilah cared about Samson at all. Here is the low point of the story. Samson trusts Delilah but he won't trust God. Look at v.20, “I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.” I'll do whatever I want. I'm Samson. I make my own rules. No one boxes me in. No one tells me what to do. But without God, he isn't special, at all. And neither are you, or me.

This is more than a honey trap story where a government official is seduced into giving away top secret info. This is the tragic account of a person, even a nation, that has a treasure, a calling, a purpose, a mission from God and is willing to give away what is truly holy for what is so destructive. Consider who you are. Consider what God has called you to be. Consider your opportunities, your relationships, your influence, your family. What is that worth? Can you put a price tag on having your son or daughter say to you, I am so proud of you? Is there any sin that is worth you squandering your influence as a follower of Christ for?

Delilah gets what she wants and Samson gets what he deserves. God let him have what he wanted and the result was tragic. What do you want? What if God let you actually have it? His hair is shaved, and this man, oblivious to the fact that the LORD will not be toyed with, is now to be toyed with. The Philistines probably wanted to kill him. But, he was worth more to them alive than dead. They gouge out his eyes and enslave him. He goes down to Gaza again. This time it is not for a girl, but to grind the mill in the prison.

The ironies are tragically displayed. The man who was called to save Israel, did not know that the LORD had left him. Samson was a picture of his own nation. He traded the favor of God for pleasure and that pleasure betrayed him. Now, instead of rescuing Israel from those who held them captive, Samson is being held captive. Instead of plowing his own field and taking care of his own people, Samson is the grinding the grain of another. The man who mocked others is now mocked. This is his life. He cannot see. He is completely at the mercy of others. He looks like he is “proof” that God is not legitimate and his life is now the occasion for others to praise Dagon. But now, the worst thing that could have happened is actually the best. Samson’s capture was the mercy of God and became the occasion for Samson to turn to God.

## II. **Blind, but now I see.** (22-31)

Samson’s life now appears to be a tragedy. Day after day, he is tied to millstone and doing what animals normally do. How humiliating. This is where sin leads you. You will live like an animal. You don’t have to have eyes to do this job. Every day you wake up and you grind the mill. You obey your orders. You are abused, taunted, and tormented. Day after day, going in a circle for hours on end gives one a lot of time to think. Samson was blind, long before he had his eyes gouged out; now Samson had to be blinded in order to finally see. He had to be weakened in order to finally know where his strength was. Samson’s eyes got him into a lot of trouble. It was therefore, a judgement and a mercy for him to have his eyes gouged out. I wonder if Jesus had this event in mind when he told his disciples that if your eye causes you to sin, that it would be better to pluck it out, than to allow what you desire to take you to hell.

Let me ask you something. Are the things that you see causing you to be blind? The old excuses of, “It doesn’t affect me” or “I watch it for the acting” or “I hear it all the time” only reveal how little light you can discern. If your eye offends you. If what you see causes you to sin, get radical. You can live without a smart phone, but you can’t live without Jesus and you cannot love Jesus and love sin.

What happened to Samson is what happened to Israel and then to Judah. They were lead to another nation where they were enslaved to do the bidding of others and even worse, to be used as evidence that Yahweh is a fraud.

If the story ended here, it would be a classic moralistic tale, like an Aesop fable only bigger. And the obvious moral of it would be – don’t be like Samson. And obviously, there is a lot about Samson that we should want to avoid. Therefore, it would not surprise us if Samson went to the Philistine prison, where he ground mill until he was too old, and then he died. But God loves to surprise us with mercy. And here in the prison, where Samson is now full of regret and has no option but to grind mill, God does the amazing. In fact, v.22 says that the hair of his head began to grow again. And we think, hmmm; what is that about? And we are about to see that Samson who was blind, now finally sees, at least a little bit This is unbelievable! God, who has every reason to be so done with Samson is not done with Samson. Somehow, someday Samson still has a part to play, but he won’t play that part until he turns to God. And now, he finally does, again, at least in part.

His capture became the occasion for the Philistines to praise their god, Dagon. And they do. They gather for an enormous, national celebration. The Philistines were a people who came from the Aegean area and had planned on attacking and taking over Egypt. They were stymied by the Egyptians and ended up in the Gaza region, where they lived in the land that was organized by 5 city-states. The kings or governors of each city cooperated together for their national interests and it was in their national interest to get rid of Samson. Now that he had been neutralized, they wanted to praise Dagon and prove to their people and themselves that Dagon was really the superior god. At the height of their feasting and partying, they decide to bring out their trophy so they could see for themselves that he really was captured and that he was no longer a threat.

It had to be hilarious for them to see a boy, a lad, leading out, by the hand, this enemy of the state, this menace, this one who terrified them, who was now blind, bound and subdued. Was Delilah there? I would think so. If there were 3,000 men and women in the upper level, how many more were in the lower level? And there, Samson stood in their midst. He asked to be positioned between two pillars that helped hold up the upper structure. And standing there, the Philistines praised Dagon, while Samson prayed to Yahweh. I would like to tell you that in his final moment Samson finally realized what he had been blind to and that he turned from his self-reliance and turned from his self-centeredness and was grieved by the fact that his life was the reason why these people were praising Dagon instead of Yahweh. I would like to tell you that Samson, full of remorse over his wasted opportunities, had one final chance to bring relief to his people, and there, with longings for the freedom of his people and with a heart that now beat for the glory of God, that Samson offered up his life for others. I would love to tell you that. But, the text will not allow me to do so. When you look at his prayer, it is about him and about revenge. Let me die with the Philistines and the Lord did. In the end, his brothers are sifting through the rubble in order to find the body of their brother. They take it back to Israel where he is buried.

Samson was the kind of leader that we tend to idolize. He was the kind of person that we would be impressed with if he attended here. We would be tempted to think that we were pretty impressive if a person this impressive came here. We would really be something. He is a loner. He will not make long-term commitments. He will not be boxed in. He comes and goes as he pleases. He makes his own rules. But what are the results? In the end, there is a lot of carnage, but no real change. The truth is, we don't need Samson's. We don't need guys who think they can go it alone. We need guys who know they can't and who know they need Christ.

Samson's life points to the fact that we need a different kind of a Savior. And in Christ, and only in Christ, we have Him. He makes long-term commitments and promises that he keeps. He laid down his life for our good and his death resulted in our life. He is worth living for. He is worth believing in. He is worth hating your sin for. He is worth everything.

This morning we are observing the Lord's Table. This ordinance was instituted by Christ and he commanded that we do this until he comes because it keeps before us, the most important and significant event in the history of the world, which is the life, death, burial and resurrection of Christ. And the reason why this has such enormous weight is because you were made by God in order to live with him and enjoy him forever. But like the rest of the human race, you rebelled against God's ownership and authority and have attempted to live according to your own rules. But, your rebellion has betrayed you and it has left you with guilt, shame and condemnation and

you cannot fix this on your own. You have sinned against an infinitely holy God and you owe a debt that you cannot either in quantity or in quality. All things being equal – you have no hope because you are not, nor could ever be good enough. So, God sent Christ to come to this world. He was God, who became man so that he could live the life that we could not live and die the death that we could not die and by living an infinitely perfect righteous life in our place he himself became the all-sufficient payment for our sin, that he offered up, in our place when he died on the cross. The death of Christ paid in full for the sins of every single person who would ever believe on him. Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord, will be saved. That means that whoever turns from their sin and turns from trusting in anything or anyone else and believes in Christ as the only One who can save them, will be forgiven of their sin, and will be credited with the righteousness of Christ. Therefore, everyone who is declared righteous by the Father is declared righteous because they have been credited with the righteousness of Christ. That means that the Father now views you and treats you and accepts you and enjoys you and loves you and treasures you as he does his own Son, Jesus! This is the gospel; this is the most important news you could ever know, and it is eternally urgent that you know it, agree with it, and fully embrace it. This message is so important that God spent several thousand years preparing the world for Christ to come. We look back on the cross because it was so important. We observe the Lord's Table because we do not want to forget what happened, but we don't want to forget the weight of it.