

Samson - Part 3

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 June 2024

Preacher: Cory Brock

[0 : 00] Alright, we're going to read from Judges chapter 16. This is the very last part of the story of Samson. And we'll read verses 4 to 30.

This is God's word. And we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver.

So, Delilah said to Samson, please tell me where your great strength lies and how you might be bound that one could subdue you. Samson said to her, if they bind me with seven fresh bow strings that have not been dried, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.

Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bow strings that had not been dried, and she bound him with them. Now she had men lying in ambush in an inner chamber.

And she said to him, the Philistines are upon you, Samson, but he snapped the bow strings as a thread of flax snaps when it touches the fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

[1 : 23] Then Delilah said to Samson, behold, you have mocked me and told me lies. Please tell me how you might be bound. And he said to her, if they bind me with new ropes that have not been used, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.

So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them. And said to him, the Philistines are upon you, Samson. And the men lying in ambush were in an inner chamber, but he snapped the ropes off his arms like a thread.

Then Delilah said to Samson, until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me how you might be bound. And he said to her, if you weave the seven locks of my head with the web and fasten it tight with the pin, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.

So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his head and wove them into the web. And she made them tight with the pin and said to him, the Philistines are upon you, Samson.

But he awoke from his sleep. And he pulled away the pin, the loom and the web. And she said to him, how can you say I love you when your heart is not with me? You've mocked me these three times and you've not told me where your great strength lies.

[2 : 27] And when she pressed him hard with her words day after day and urged him, his soul was vexed to death. And he told her all this heart. And he said to her, a razor has never come upon my head for, I've been a Nazarite to God from my mother's womb.

If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me and I will become weak and I'll be like any other man. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent, she called the Lords of the Philistines saying, come up again for he has told me all his heart.

And the Lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in her hands. And she made him sleep on her knees. And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head.

And then she began to torment him and his strength left him. And she said, the Philistines are upon you, Samson. And he awoke from his sleep and he said, I will go out as at other times and I'll shake myself free.

But he did not know that the Lord had left him. And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles. And he ground at the mill in the prison.

[3 : 34] But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved. Now the Lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice today, God and their God and to rejoice and they said, our God has given Samson to our enemy, our enemy into our hand.

And when the people saw him, they praised their God. For they said, our God has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country who has killed many of us. And when their hearts were merry, they said, call Samson that he may entertain us.

So they called Samson out of the prison and he entertained them and they made him stand between the pillars. And Samson said to the young man who held him by the hand, let me fill the pillars on which the house rest that I may lean against them.

Now the house was full of men and women. All the Lords of the Philistines were there and on the roof there were about 3,000 men and women who looked on while Samson entertained. Then Samson called to the Lord and said, oh Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once.

Oh God, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested. He leaned his weight against them, his right hand on the one, his left hand on the other.

[4 : 44] And Samson said, let me die with the Philistines. Then he bowed with all his strength and the house fell upon the Lords and upon all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life.

This is God's holy word. We are working our way, if you've been around St. Caesar in the evenings, we're working our way through the book of Judges. And this is the very last judge, the very last story of the last judge, the 12th of the 12 judges.

This is like one of, this is a storybook story. You know, this is one of the stories that everybody knows that people talk about even outside who haven't been raised in the church or anything like that. They know about the Samson story quite often.

Samson and Delilah, a number of songs written about this. Samson is very famous because he's so strong and he's so powerful and he's so mighty. And many people have talked about how he's like one of the, he's an original superhero of some kind.

He grabs honey out of beehives, doesn't care about getting stung. He fights people with an animal jawbone. He catches foxes by the tail, ties the tails together, burns down crops.

[5 : 55] He rips just before the beginning of 16, he rips city gates up out of the ground and brings down an entire city wall. He pushes over an enormous temple at the end of his life and his hair is kryptonite, right?

So he's an original superhero. And he is a hero. As many others before me have pointed out, he's technically a hero.

In the sense that he's a judge, he's a redeemer. Heroes save people. And in this story, Israel is captured by the Philistines. They're under the oppression of the Philistines and Samson saves them.

He is their hero. That's what a judge is in the book of Judges. A judge is a warrior hero, a redeemer. Not a person who sits on a bench and gives out sentences or something like that.

A judge in Hebrew is a person who redeems. So more like a warrior king than anything else. And Samson's definitely that. He's a hero, but he is not a traditional hero.

[6 : 55] Traditional heroes are people who save people and they play by the rules. They're good, they're morally upright. Samson is the epitome of an anti-hero.

Anti-heroes are people who save and redeem, but they do it in all the wrong ways. He is an absolute mess of a human being throughout all of these stories.

He is a womanizer. He is motivated by revenge. He is bloodthirsty. And every single week we've looked at him, we've seen another level that Samson goes down into of being publicly depraved in some new way.

He redeems and yet he's the definition of an anti-hero. I've given this list before of anti-heroes. People who save, but they do it selfishly. They do it full of bankruptcy.

They do it badly. I think we gave this list a couple of months ago and another sermon, but the classic anti-heroes of our time are Iron Man, Wolverine, James Bond, Scarlet O'Hara, Severus Snape, Jack Sparrow, Sherlock Holmes.

[8 : 00] All heroes, all save people. But they all do it in a way that's motivated by selfishness somehow. And that's Samson. And Hebrews chapter 11 lists Samson in the heroes of the faith.

And in Hebrews chapter 11, verse 32, it says Samson is an example of faith. He's listed amongst Gideon and Barak and others. And so how do we put those things together?

An example of the faith. And you read these stories and say, Samson, Samson's so bankrupt. What is going on here? Two things I think we can learn from this final story to make sense of it.

Samson is a type. Samson is a shadow of something much better. And we learn here that his story is to point us to a much bigger story in the Bible.

And that's a story of a cosmic battle, a cosmic war, one that is very lopsided. But that's ultimately what the Samson story is about. And then secondly, he is an example. And Hebrews tells us exactly how that he's an example in the final moments of his life because he was made strong in the midst of his weakness.

[9 : 09] So let's look at those two things. He's a type and a shadow, and he's an example. And you've got to see both to understand how he could be an example. All right, so first, Samson teaches us that the Bible, world history, everything that God is up to is about something very big.

And that's a cosmic war, a lopsided cosmic war. And so in this story, Samson, Judges 16, he loves Delilah. He's fallen in love, quote unquote, with many women throughout these stories.

And he loves Delilah. And she entices him to tell his secret about how he's so strong. And she is paid off by the Philistine King, 1100 pieces of silver to figure out how Samson can be destroyed. And so it couldn't be more obvious what she's up to every time, Samson, if you really love me, you will tell me the secret to your strength. So it's very obvious. It's obvious to us, obvious to him, four different times what she's up to.

And so he says, if you bind me with fresh bow strings, that's the secret. They do it, it doesn't work. Brand new ropes that have just been woven, doesn't work.

[10 : 22] Brade my hair, put a pin through it, she does it. It does not work. And she comes to him and says, come on, if you really love me, never a good start, whatever's coming after that.

If you really loved me, you would, and that's what she says. And he gives up, he tells her the truth. It says he was vexed in his heart and soul.

He was weighed down. He's clearly a person really struggling internally, deep down in his soul. And so he says, if you cut my hair, I'm a Nazarite. I've made a vow before the Lord that I would never cut my hair.

And so if my hair is cut, I've broken that vow and the Lord will dispossess me of my strength. So he tells her that. So he's asleep and that's what happens. And we learn that Samson has his head shaved like a man condemned to die.

And he is betrayed by a person who apparently, he thinks loves him. And he's betrayed for many pieces of silver. And when that happens, he's taken into prison and they gouge out his eyes and he's bald and he's blind.

[11 : 30] And he's weak and he's wounded for the first time. And in the prison actually, it's that we learned that he's made to grind the mill in the way that would have probably worked is that it would have been a circular grinder where you would have pushed a stone that would have rotated the mill and ground the wheat, the grain in the middle.

And that's very important to know because what we figured out just after that in verse 23 is that the pinnacle of the Samson story is when the Philistines gather in their temple and they say thanks be to Dagon for delivering Samson to us.

So the pinnacle story is that they are ultimately worshiping the God of Philistia, Dagon, this evil God in the Old Testament. We see Dagon again in the David's story when the Philistines are still worshiping Dagon and in the temple of Dagon, the Ark of the Covenant goes and Dagon keeps falling flat on his face before the Ark.

Same idea, same God, same people group. And they have a God, that God is Dagon. And we learned that ultimately this story in the end is about the fact that they believe their God Dagon is greater than the God of Israel.

So they say look at what Dagon has done, he has captured the Redeemer of Israel, the judge, the Lord's man, Samson. Just like when David goes to battle Goliath, David represents Israel and represents God as God's man.

[12 : 50] Goliath represents Dagon and Philistia and whoever wins is the true power, that's the way they see it. And the same thing here, Samson, God's man, the holy man of Israel, he's been captured, he's been destroyed.

Our God is the great God, they're ultimately saying. It's Dagon they think that has prevailed over the Lord, the God of Israel. And you see what you learn is that this story, the Samson story and really the whole book of judges is about a cosmic war.

It's about something much bigger than we imagine. And it's about the question of who is the real God, who is the true God? And at the end of this story, the Philistines say, our God's the true God because we've defeated Samson, the Lord's man, the holy man.

And he was betrayed by the woman he loved with silver and his eyes are gouged and he's grinding the mill. And the reason that's so important is because Dagon, we learn from extra biblical sources, is the God of grain and wheat, the God of crop fertility.

And so what's happening here is Samson is grinding the wheat, meaning they've made him into the blind servant of Dagon. He's grinding Dagon's wheat, Dagon's mill, he's at the will, they're mocking him.

[14:02] They're making fun of him, they're making fun of his God, they're making fun of Israel. And that's what's happening here at the end of the passage. He's an object of humiliation and there's a cosmic battle going on.

What can we say? What we can say is that the point of the story is that they think that the God of darkness, Dagon, has won because the Lord's anointed, the Redeemer, has been defeated and slayed.

This man, this judge, he was betrayed by pieces of silver. He was given into the hands of his enemies. He was taken into prison, he was delivered to be executed.

And everybody shouted, the God of darkness has won, the God of victory. And in the midst of that, we learn the grand irony of redemption that God saves, that God saves by losing.

That God defeats the darkness in the most unlikely way by entering into it, by looking like he's been defeated by it, by being betrayed by pieces of silver and entering into death and yet he brings life.

[15:10] And we realize very quickly when you read this that Samson is an anti-hero, he is not a good man, in so many ways, what can you do with a story like this? And all what you can do is you can say, he points a straight to a better Redeemer.

To one who was betrayed by someone he loved through silver who was delivered over, beaten, mocked, humiliated, who was put in prison, who was delivered to be executed.

And everybody said, the powers of darkness, Dagon himself, who was a God of darkness, who was Satan himself, said, look at victory.

And it was by losing, by losing, by going down that he brought victory. It was by going down, the powers of darkness thought they had won, but oh, it was about a cosmic battle and he won, the Redeemer won in the most ironic of ways.

And so Samson teaches us that salvation means victory through a way we would have never expected by the Redeemer going down into the pit, down into the darkness, in a way that we would never have thought.

[16:14] When you talk about salvation, there's lots of different dimensions. This morning in Ephesians, we saw that the gospel and the church are like a multifaceted diamond.

That's what Paul told us in Ephesians three, that there's so many dimensions to it, you shine light through a diamond and there's thousands of ways it shines through. Thousands of sides to it. The gospel is the same way.

It has so many dimensions, so many aspects to it, that we could never even plumb the depths of.

And so we talk about the gospel and we say, Jesus Christ, the better Redeemer, the true judge, he went down into the darkness of death and he was our vicarious satisfaction.

He took our place. Our sins were put upon him so that we might go free, so that we might be guilt free. That's an aspect of the gospel, a beautiful aspect, our forgiveness.

But there are many, many more aspects of the gospel. And one of the aspects of the gospel that we don't talk about enough that often, and the Bible actually does quite often, is that when Jesus died on the cross and rose again, he defeated the powers of darkness.

[17:22] And so we talk about Christ our Savior, our Redeemer, Christ our forgiveness, and the theologians talk about Christ the victor, Christ the victorious one. And in this passage, Samson goes down into the darkness.

He's defeated and the powers of darkness think they've won and instead he brings judgment upon them and saves his people. And one of the aspects of the gospel that we receive by faith is that Jesus Christ truly has by going down into death, defeated Satan, defeated the principalities and powers.

We see here Christ the victor pointed towards Christ, the one who would bring victory over all the gods, Satan and his minions, the demons. That's a real feature of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The cross does so much. It brings forgiveness and it brings victory over their principalities and powers of darkness. Just a couple of examples of this in the New Testament.

It's all over the place. John chapter 12, when Jesus is looking at the cross, he says, now is the time for the world to be judged. What is he saying?

[18:30] Now is the time where the sins of the world will be judged in my body. That's vicarious satisfaction. That's him bearing our guilt in our place so that we might be forgiven.

And then the next line, and now the ruler of this world, the devil will be thrown out. Jesus said this to show how he would die. You see those two things together? He said, the sins of the world will be condemned to my body when I go to the cross and the ruler of this world will be destroyed and thrown out.

So Christ our satisfaction, Christ our victor, Christ the one who became our sin for us, Christ the one who defeated the powers of Satan, principalities and darkness for us at the very same time. Colossians 1.13, he, Jesus, has delivered us from the domain of darkness. He's brought us into the kingdom of God. How? Chapter two, verse 15 in Colossians.

Christ disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities by putting them to shame on the cross. When Jesus Christ went to the cross, the rulers and the authorities of darkness, Satan himself, Dagon, who's represented here, they said, oh, we've put the redeemer to shame.

[19:39] And Paul comes and says, no, no, not at all. Christ put the powers and principalities of darkness to shame when he went to the cross. He won by losing. He saved us in the most ironic of ways.

And Samson goes down into his death here and he redeems his people by going into the darkness, by going into death. He brings judgment upon Dagon and upon the principalities and powers of darkness.

Well, one of the early church fathers, second century Irenaeus, he says, the devil cannot be allowed to have any rights over men. He's a robber, a rebel, a tyrant, a usurper, unjustly laying his hands on that which does not belong to him and Christ has spoiled him and annihilated him.

He's annihilated Satan and death, Christ the victorious. Now, let's move on, but let me say this.

Paul says, if you're a Christian tonight, one reason, one of the things that Paul says to apply this to us is he says that when you believe on Christ, when you receive the victory that Christ has accomplished over sin, over the principalities of death, over Satan himself, he says in Ephesians 6, now we are to put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil, for you no longer wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers and authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness.

Paul says, if you're a Christian tonight, you've entered into that very same battle that Christ is the victorious one over the principalities and powers and darkness and Satan imaged here in the life of Samson over Dagon.

[21:16] And he says, and that's your life too, that putting on the whole armor of Christ, living out of the gospel, you fight against the powers and schemes of the evil one, who Christ has ultimately conquered and we in our lives push back the darkness day in and day out when we live in the light, live in the way that he's called us to live.

So the way we live, we're being told here, is so serious, the gospel is so big, it's about a cosmic war and God in Christ and the cross has defeated the principalities and powers of darkness.

What does the New Testament say? Jesus Christ has now bound the strong man. Samson is a type, he's a shadow of a much better redemption. Secondly, finally, he's also an example.

Hebrews 11 says that Samson is an example of faith and verse 32 in Hebrews 11, he's listed amongst a number of people like Gideon and Barak and Jephthah.

And it says that these people are examples to us of walking in faith. How could it be? How could we say that? I think the way that you can get at this is to see the structure of the Samson story.

[22:25] Samson was committed from birth to be a Nazarite. He had taken a Nazarite vow from his parents forward. What is a Nazarite? What is a Nazarite vow?

A Nazarite vow is the vow where you promise never to drink alcohol, to cut your hair, or to touch anything unclean by the ceremonial law in the Old Testament.

What is a Nazarite? A Nazarite is basically a non-Levite priest warrior, priest king in the Old Testament. It's very rare, it's an office, it's not one we see very often.

Like a priest, God's holy man, and like a warrior at the same time, who will never cut their hair, never drink alcohol, and never touch anything unclean in their lives. That's the Nazarite vow.

Samson had made the Nazarite vow. In chapter 14, Samson touches the dead body of a lion, very first story. In chapter 14, Samson throws a seven-day party.

[23 : 25] And we're not told very explicitly that he drank alcohol, but it was a seven-day party. So we can safely assume that he did. In chapter 15, he takes the jawbone of a donkey, out of a donkey, in order to fight people.

He touches an unclean animal, a dead body. In chapter 16, he cuts his hair. Now, what's a Nazarite? A Nazarite is a person who vows to never touch an unclean thing, especially a dead body, to never eat from an unclean thing.

By the way, he eats honey out of a dead animal carcass, that promises never to drink alcohol, and then never cut their hair. And every single story is about how Samson broke his vow at every single level, every single turn.

I think that, you see, I think that when you come to chapter 16, and you look at the story with him and Delilah, you see something. Why in the world would Samson tell Delilah, four times, she comes and says, oh please, tell me your secret.

And he tells her, and he's ambushed. Of course, he knows what Delilah's up to. Why would he give his secret away? And I think when you look at chapter 14, and 15, and 16, and see how much he broke his vow, it's very clear, he wants out.

[24 : 35] He does not want to be a Nazarite. He does not want to be God's man. He does not want to be God's judge. He does not want to be the Redeemer. He's reluctant. He's been called by God, but he's incredibly reluctant.

And he doesn't want to do what he's been given. And I think there's a lesson there. If there is any human being so far in the book of Judges that we would be tempted to say, that person is not a true believer, it would be Samson.

We look at his life and we see how reluctant he was. And we say, he doesn't want to follow the Lord. Not at all. And he's listed in Hebrews 11, 32, the man of faith, the example.

And I think one of the things that has to say to us is that we've got to be really careful and be very slow to make pronouncements about who is and is not part of God's people.

About who does have salvation and who doesn't have salvation. If there has ever been a person that you would feel comfortable to say, I'm not sure that he's truly a believer.

[25 : 43] It looks like Samson to me. And yet he was a man of faith. And he was God's man, God's holy man that he used to redeem the people.

We have no access to the names written in the book of life. And we do not know what God is up to in the hearts of people. Only God knows who God's people are.

And so I think this calls us to be really reluctant. There's a rendition of Psalm 15, a paraphrase of Psalm 15 that we sing sometimes. And it says, Who will stand, O Lord, on your holy hill?

Who will dwell on your holy hill? He who walks with integrity, he whose works are righteousness, he who speaks the truth deep within his heart, one who does not slander with his lips, one who loves all of his neighbors well, one who does no wrong unto his friends.

Who shall dwell on God's holy hill? The one who is honest in everything they do. And the only answer that you can give when you read a list like that is say, that is not me, that is nobody.

[26 : 45] Who will stand on the holy hill of the Lord? And that's certainly not Samson. And it's not me either. And I think the Psalm of Samson and our Psalm is more like Psalm 130, one of my favorite paraphrases of Psalm 130 from the depths of woe, a hymn, hopefully we'll sing it at some point.

It says, if you keep a mark of my secret sins and misdeeds dark, oh, who shall stand before thee? If you keep the mark of my secret sins and misdeeds dark, oh, who shall stand before thee?

Nobody, not Samson, not me, not us. And so he didn't wanna be God's man. He didn't desire God. And boy, can we count the minutes of the times we don't desire God.

And that means I think we're being called here to be slow to say who's in and who's out. I love what Ralph Davis says, one of the great commentators on this book. He says, for if God's grace was given, only when we prayed for it.

If God's grace was given to us, only when we wanted it, only when we asked for it, only when we desired it, only when we had sense enough to seek it, what paupers and orphans we would all be. [27 : 55] Now the final thing, how can Samson be listed in Hebrews 11, 32? And the final thing is this, sometimes you read stories in the Old Testament, David, Moses, Samson, and people want to say, tell all the kids, kids, be like David, kids, be like Moses, be like Samson.

How can you go to the Old Testament and look at these examples, men and women, and say be like this person? And you read Samson's story, you say the last thing we ever wanna say is kids, be like Samson, adults, be like Samson.

No, don't be like Samson, look to a better redeemer than that, right? And yet at the same time, Hebrews 11 says a man of faith. And so if you look at Hebrews 11, it lists Samson, Gideon, Jephthah, David, and then it lists all these little synopses of their accomplishments.

And it says, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness was made strong, became mighty in war, and put foreign armies to flight.

So if you go to Hebrews 11, you can look at the list of names, and then you can associate one of those little clauses with every person from their specific story. And I think the one that's meant by the author of Hebrews is that Samson, which one is he?

[29 : 14] From weakness, he was made strong. That's what Hebrews 11 says. So it says he's a great man of faith, how? Because only in the final moment of his life, when he became ultimately weak, was he finally strong.

You see, the great thing about Samson, the reason that his story is so well known, the reason that people of all stripes know the Samson story, is because of his great strength.

He's a superhero. He was so powerful. Samson's strength, his whole life was his strength, his power, his might, it's what he rested in. He knew it was the one thing that made him enough that he could always count on.

And in the end, he lost that. And what we learn is that his whole life, his strength was his strength, and that was his problem. He rested in his strength.

It was his idol, it was his God. And Hebrews 11 says, the reason you can look at Samson and see an example is because in the final moments of his life, he became ultimately weak.

[30 : 14] He gave up. He had always tried to be his own man. He didn't wanna be the Lord's man. He was reluctant. He didn't wanna obey the Nazarite vow. He didn't want any part of it.

And then in the final moment of his life, he let go. And he said, oh Lord, for just one moment, he really, he woke up. He had to lose his eyes in order to see that in his weakness, he could finally be strong.

And letting go and letting the Lord be his master, becoming, as we saw this morning, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, we might say, in the New Covenant. Could he finally have strength, the strength of the Lord?

In his life. And his great example of faith to us is that he finally learned humility. The most unlikely man in the book of Judges to be humble finally was humbled.

And in his humility, God used him in a really powerful way. This morning, we'll close with this. This morning we saw Paul make up a Greek word if you were here. In Ephesians 3, he said, I am the leastest or the smallestest of the saints.

[31 : 21] We say it in a way that doesn't make sense in English, doesn't work, though we all understand that, because that's how Paul said it in Greek. It didn't make sense in Greek either. Paul three times does that in his letters.

He says, I am the least of the apostles, the leastest. I am the smallest of the saints, the least deserving. And then the third time he says, and I am the chief of sinners.

It's as if, as Paul was growing and growing and growing, as somebody mentioned to me this morning, he was becoming more and more humble. And we learned from Samson that the great example of his faith is he finally learned humility.

Humility, the bedrock of Christian growth. Humility, and Jesus Christ, before he was crucified, remember what he did? He got down on his knees, he took a towel and wrapped it around his waist, and he washed dirty feet.

The God of the world, the God who made the people, he got down on his knees, he washed their feet. We see that Jesus was so humble. Jesus Christ is your hope, your redeemer.

[32 : 23] He defeated Satan. He truly is the victorious one. And he's also your example. He's only your example if he's first your redeemer.

But when you look at him as your redeemer, the better judge, the great judge, he can then show you that the path of humility is the path of real Christian growth. He can become your example. That means don't be like Samson, except for at the very end when he points us to Jesus.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you for this great story, the 12th judge. And we just thank you, Lord, that your word is so whole.

It's holistic that you show us Christ in the Old Testament. So we ask that you would point us and direct our hearts to our better redeemer tonight than Samson, Jesus.

And we thank you, Lord Jesus, that you defeated the powers of darkness. We thank you that you have bound the strong man so that the gospel would go forward to the nations. We thank you that Dagon and all the false gods are no gods at all, and that Satan himself has been subdued in the irony of your cross.

[33 : 35] So we look again tonight for hope in that moment, and we ask tonight that you would give us humility, that we know, oh boy, we couldn't save ourselves, we couldn't defeat the enemy within and without, unless we have your redemption.

So Lord, guide us tonight, teach us humility. Let us learn only that from Samson tonight, and be pointed again to Christ. So we pray for these hearts, and we pray, Lord, that you would send us into this week, humble people, and people confident as well in our salvation.

We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.