



Our Next Guest – Samson
Sermon Discussion Questions – July 31st, 2022

Scripture Passages:

Judges 13:1

Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

Judges 13:5

You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines.”

Judges 13:24-25

The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the Lord blessed him, 25 and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Judges 14:2

When he returned, he said to his father and mother, “I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife.”

Judges 14:14

He replied, “Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet.” For three days they could not give the answer.

Judges 15:11

Then three thousand men from Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, “Don’t you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? What have you done to us?” He answered, “I merely did to them what they did to me.”

Judges 16:4

Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah.

Judges 16:28

Then Samson prayed to the Lord, "Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes."

Judges 16:30

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.

Warm Up

1. August is coming up and it's one of the hottest months of the year. What are some fun activities you do to help beat the heat while you still enjoy the last bit of summer?
2. We are on the second to last sermon in our Next Guest series, we have read and learned a lot about different people from the Bible. What person and story has been your favorite from this series? If you have another favorite person from the Bible, who is it and what do you like about their story?

Discussion

1. Dr. Mike Tapper begins with recalling the classic show of Seinfeld. If you have seen Seinfeld before what are some of your favorite moments or phrases?
2. Dr. Tapper points out how Seinfeld actually points to society's tendency to not care about the significant things and obsess over the little things, which is apathy. He also explains apathy lurks in the shadows, hidden behind the busyness of life.
Do you feel like your schedule is busy? What might you be missing from the busyness of your schedule?
3. Dr. Tapper asks if we are feeling spiritually flat. He also explains that we know what we should be caring about, but we might trade this for fleeting things that matter less.
Have you been feeling spiritually "Meh" lately? Why is this do you think?
4. We learned some context about Samson and really the Judges as a whole from today's message. We found out that there is a similar pattern found in Judges that is this sin cycle. The people abandon God. Go into bondage. Cry out. God delivers.
Have you found yourself in a sin cycle before? What have you learned about God as He has delivered you?
5. We walked through Samson's story this weekend. What do you remember about Samson's story? Dr. Tapper explains how Samson is a classic example of someone who had apathy, someone who was anointed but lived indifferent towards the things that mattered most. What role do you think one's heart has towards how they live? How does one cultivate empathy in their life?

6. Mike Tapper poses this question at the end of Samson's tragic story, "Who is the hero in this story?" He points to God as the hero in Samson's story, the patient and faithful covenant-keeper. How have you missed God working in your life? Do you see your story a part of God's grand narrative? What do you think that means to see your story as a part of God's story?
7. Mike Tapper gives us four initial habits to overcoming spiritual apathy. They are choosing to spend time with passionate, godly people; take silence and sabbath more seriously; fast from Amazon; and finish what you start. How might you build these practices and habits into your life? Which one sounds the most helpful to you and why?
8. There is also another practical thing Mike Tapper says we can do. He says, "A starting point to overcome your own spiritual meh is tethering your story to the hero's story." God wants a personal relationship with each of us, the gospel story is one compelled by God's love for us and for us to communion with Him. How might we respond to God's invitation to cultivate a deeper relationship with Him?

Next Steps:

Ask God to open your eyes this week as you reflect on these questions.

1. What area or areas in your life are you prone to be apathetic? Is it at the office? At home? In your community? Toward the world?
2. What practices can you implement this week to cultivate more empathy in this area or areas?
3. How might you respond and tether your story to God's invitation to His grand narrative?

A spiritual practice you could try this week is examine. Take five minutes before bed, quiet your spirit, examine how God has/is working and speaking to you throughout the day. Then pray to God about your day. This could be thanking God for certain aspects; it could be asking God to open your eyes and ears to see and hear Him; it could be praying to have more empathy towards someone; or really anything. More than anything God wants a relationship with us, he has already been inviting you to have a conversation with Him, there is no wrong way to talk to God.