

SAMSON

When I was a kid there was an old SNL sketch with some guys from Chicago sitting in their den or man-cave or something. Called *BILL SWERSKI'S SUPER FANS*. They had a tag-line..."DA BEARS!" They were supposed to be the greatest fans of the Chicago Bears and super fans of Coach Mike Ditka, the one who had led the '85 Bears to the Super Bowl.

In one episode in the early 90s they had Michael Jordan on. I was a HUGE Michael Jordan fan as a kid, which who wouldn't be??? But because I was a huge Jordan fan, I found out about him hosting SNL that night, so my mom let me watch it. I was 6 years old. BTW, parents, you want to be a good parent? Don't let your 6 year old watch SNL, but anyways, on this episode MJ came on Bill Swerski's Super Fans, and Bill's brother Bob Swerski asks the rest of the guys, "Ditka or a Hurricane, who would win?"

They all respond, "Ditka! Ditka! Ditka!"

Bob says, "Hold on, hold on, the hurricane is Hurricane Ditka..."

They go, "hmmmm..." and the sketch goes on...

Now this is the ONLY thing I knew growing up about Mike Ditka...I never saw him play, but the image I had of him as a child was being strong enough to win in a fight with a hurricane. He was a man's man...walrus mustache...very hard man back then. He has since come to faith in Christ and is a very different man today, but another thing he is famous for is his great quotes...he had some wonderful ones. One of my favorites is this..."Sometimes our mouths and reactions operate before our brains get synchronized. That happens to me a lot!"

THAT HAPPENS TO ME A LOT! It's true isn't it? Sometimes we act or react without thinking. What strikes me about this quote is the last two words: A LOT! This series we are in is a series about a man or about strong men but it isn't a series just FOR men. It's for all of us...for (Adamah) mankind. This happens a lot says Ditka. And it's very true about Samson's story.

One of the parts of Samson's story that I have always found bewildering is how stupid he is. At least that's my assessment. He must have been an idiot to fall victim to the trap over and over and over and over again. Here I'll show you. Flip to **Judges 16**.

While you are flipping I'm recapping. Samson was born and given a Nazirite vow from birth to death. Few stipulations (Numbers 6):

- No cutting hair until the vow was completed
- No alcohol...at all
- No contact with dead stuff (unclean).

Samson's life was a total fail of this vow. Up to where we are, he's murdered tons of people. Killed a lion with his bare hands. Came back a few days later to the rotting corpse filled with bees making honey. Took the honey and ate it and gave some to his parents (also a sin). Threw a party where alcohol was the feature of the whole thing, married some shady Philistine girl who tries to sell him out to save her own neck. She ends up getting burned alive a few verses later and then within half a page he's sleeping with another prostitute.

DUDE IS A TRAINWRECK!

He's "set apart" for God, doesn't love the Lord, is constantly following sensual desires and willingly embraces his sin over and over.

This is Samson. We will pick up in **16:4**.

Read 4-21

Ok, so when I read this passage, the first thing that strikes me is Samson must not be mentally firing on all cylinders. He's the definition of all brawn, no brains right?

- Seriously though. Fool me once, shame on you. Twice, shame on me. Thrice, I deserve whatever happens...
- I'm like, "I would never..." But that's not true. That's lying to myself.
- Here's why I think Samson fell into this over and over and why I think you and I are the same.
 - Samson's sin didn't immediately result in lasting consequence. "That was close" but at the end of the day, no lasting effect. So he goes back to it...and eventually it destroys him.
 - Think about the man or woman having an affair, or addicted to pornography, or a pastor who leans on the bottle, or [name your nagging sin]...odds are that you have returned and returned and returned because at the end of the day, it was a close call but no one really found out, so no lasting consequences.
 - You want a path that leads to eventual destruction? There ya go.
 - Sinkholes
- And listen, if you are anything like me, that's not what you *want* but it's the game of roulette that you're playing.

So here's kind of the main point of today: ***Strong men tend to repeat the same mistakes.*** Just like Ditka said. Just like Samson here. And they're not the only ones. The Apostle Paul echoes this idea in **Romans 7**. This is where we will camp out for the rest of our morning.

Romans 7:15

What we read here I know I'm not alone in. And it should in the end, help us to realize that we aren't alone here.

15-23

Look at this. Even the apostle Paul is with us on this. "God, I don't want to. Deep down all I want to do is honor you. That's my deepest desire. But it isn't my reality. My reality is failure. It's doing what I hate."

- I think we can identify with that. Some truths from this, though, I want us to see.

1) Sin is still present.

- a. Paul's been radically saved. His life is forever altered, but he isn't free from the presence of sin in his life.
- b. There's some wack theology out there that says when you become a Christian, you are no longer a sinner and can no longer sin. But that's not the reality of my life. And I take comfort from what the Bible says, not what some Bible teachers say.
 - i. What I see in the Bible is that Christians are already righteous in Christ, but are not yet perfected. Christians are freed from the power of sin in their life, but not from the presence of sin in their lives.
 - ii. So here's some theological terms you need to know and rejoice in.

1. Justification

- a. This is the moment of salvation (Ephesians 2, "BUT GOD!") "I was dead, Christ made me alive!"

2. Sanctification

- a. This is what Paul is talking about.
- b. I'm saved but my life is still moments of victory in Jesus and failures in sin.
- c. But the failures have conviction in them; not callousness.

3. Glorification

a. One day Christ will return, or I will die, and no more of this struggle with sin. That's a day I greatly look forward to.

c. So SIN IS STILL PRESENT, BUT!!!!

2) YOUR SIN ISN'T YOUR IDENTITY

- a. I want you to see this. In **vs. 17** Paul separates himself from his sin.
- i. Paul isn't absolving himself from responsibility, but rather is emphasizing the power of sin.
 - ii. But notice, He is not His sin. It is not His identity.

So here's what we see.

Sin is still present, but your sin isn't your identity.

How can this be? The answer is the Cross!

This next passage is one of my favorites.

Vs 24-25a

Oh my sin. Oh this body of death, plagued with sin. What hope is there? I can't do right! I need rescue from this! Who can save me?

PRAISE GOD! THERE'S JESUS!

*My sin oh the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, praise the Lord...oh my soul!*

Listen, **THE LIVING PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM OF SIN IN ONE'S LIFE!**

- Because of the work of Jesus on the Cross, we have not just hope against sin but guaranteed victory.
- I heard this quote and did a series before Easter with the students. This is it.
 - By the Cross, I *HAVE BEEN SAVED* from sin's penalty, *AM BEING SAVED* from sin's power, and *WILL BE SAVED* from sin's presence.
- All because of the living presence of the risen Christ in my life. In your life. And in Samson's life.

See to tie it back to where we started. Samson's problem was a faith one. He was never devoted to God, trusted in God, until sin destroyed Him.

SAMSON WAS SAMSON'S GOD. SAMSON TRUSTED IN SAMSON.

What hope does Brooks have trusting in Brooks? I can tell you where that ends..."oh wretched man that I am...who will rescue me from this body of Death? Thank you God...for Jesus!"