

Delilah with the Scissors

Next Steps

July 18, 2021

Judges 16:4-21

OPENING PRAYER:

O God, you know that we cannot withstand the dangers which surround us. Strengthen us in body and spirit so that, with your help, we may be able to overcome the weakness that our sin has brought upon us; through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord. Amen.

BREAKING THE ICE:

- What did you agree/disagree with the sermon this week?
- What's been your craziest haircut? Which hairstyle is your most embarrassing to describe?
- What 'movie title' would you give to the Samson and Delilah story?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:¹

Read Judges 16:4-21.

- Gaza was a Philistine city, so why would Samson venture anywhere near such a place: Death wish? Tempting fate? Cockiness? Carelessness?
- What actions led to Samson's downfall?
- What do you see as the saddest part of this story?
- What did Delilah and Samson have going for them as a couple? What was working against them?
- How is this story and Samson's action a microcosm of the story of the Israelites in the book of Judges?
- Every strength has its flip side. While Samson had obvious physical strength, what strength was he lacking? What strength are you lacking? Where do you feel like Samson – bound and hoping your hair is growing back?

TAKING THE SCRIPTURE INTO YOUR LIFE:

- What is the secret of your spiritual strength?
- Which of Samson's problems can you relate to? How can the group support you?
- When do you feel weakest against temptation?
- What has been nagging at you lately and wearing you down?
- Where in your life would you like to have more self-control?

MORE TO PONDER:

In modern life we have become too busy with our daily affairs and thoughts that we have forgotten this essential art of taking time to converse with our heart. When we ask it about our current path, we must look at the values we have chosen to live by. Where do we put our time, our strength, our creativity, our love? We must look at our life without sentimentality, exaggeration, or idealism. Does what we are choosing reflect what we most deeply value?

Jack Kornfield, *A Path with Heart*

If we take seriously the word of the risen Christ, 'Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.' (Matthew 28:20), we should expect that He will be actively present in our lives. If our faith is alive and luminous, we will be alert to moments, events, and occasions when the power of resurrection is brought to bear on our lives. Self-absorbed and inattentive, we fail to notice the subtle ways in which Jesus is snagging our attention.

Manning, *Abba's Child*

- What strikes you in either of these readings?
- What are you choosing right now that reflects one of your inner values? What do you want to stop choosing?

- Samson struggled with his personal demons and pride. His clear self-absorption affected all of his relationships. Where are you struggling with similar issues?

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Lord, let the pattern of my life, the course of my days, be inexplicable apart from the intervention of the Risen One. Let Jesus Christ be the sole justification for my life.

-- Michel Bouttier, Prayers For My Village

¹Adapted from *The Serendipity Bible* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1998)