

Computer Generated Transcript - We're going to continue on this morning with our series on Samson we gotten started two weeks ago and we've been talking about Santa we've been talking specifically about a lot of the ways that are easy to relate to Sampson and as we go into today I really think that this might be one of those messages that that most of us if not all of us at some point in time can relate to dealing with what Sampson is going to deal with today all right as you kind of go through and as you look at these things and I'm some guys you couple of questions before we get into this we're going to be in Judges Chapter fifteen that's what we're going to start today so if you want to look ahead that's what will be judges Chapter fifteen but I want to ask a couple questions. You ever had a moment you wish you could take back if you ever had something in your life that was kind of a defining moment for a bunch of bad stuff that followed that moment if you ever had an addiction that you really wanted out of but you could you kept taking steps toward that addiction even though you knew that it was not what you wanted to be ever had an addiction that you broke. And then went back after some time no one plans on being twenty thousand dollars in credit card debt. Right no one plans on being an addict no one sits there is a little child and hopes maybe by thirty I can be divorced nobody makes those kind of plans but what happens is as we all take little steps sometimes in our life that aren't what's best and rather than turn we just keep taking those little steps toward things I've never met somebody who is a newlywed who thought you know someday I hope I can destroy this new family by having an affair. Never had that come up before on a wedding day. And yet it happens because we take little steps and then we take the next little step and we take the next little step and it's always these little steps. That can be good if they're point in the right direction or can lead to all kinds of things we never wanted to go towards if they're headed in the wrong direction and that's really the story that we're going to talk about in Sampson today we're going to pick up where we left off last week OK. Judges Chapter fifteen we're going to start in verse fourteen and we're going to talk through this thing now we talked a little bit about this it was kind of how we ended yesterday we were talking or last week we were talking about how emotional Sampson was about how how he made all of these horrible decisions out of emotion that led him right down to this this this bad path and we see him coming and it talks about Chapter fifteen verse fourteen as Sampson arrived at Lehigh the Philistines came shouting in triumph but the spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon Samson and he snapped the ropes on his arms as if they were burnt strands of flax and they fell from his wrists then he found the job own of a recently killed donkey he picked it up and he killed a thousand Philistines with it so we talked about that last week a week and went into a little bit more detail than we're going to go into today this is a remake of a bone OK this is a plaster cast that was painted Mike did an awesome job I know it looks real but it's not OK. But that's his weapon OK he picks up a job alone. And he kills a thousand people with a job own. When the spirit of Lord comes mightily upon him like that that's worth a movie right I mean that's that's worth a story or two that's something that is amazing right but we talked about this last week and as we go into this again I want you to pay attention because Sampson does this stuff when the spirit of the Lord comes upon him and he never really gives credit to God. We never really see him ask God for direction we never see him do those kind of things he just does this amazing stuff and then you can see what's the next thing that happens in verse sixteen then Samson said with the job own of a donkey I piled them in heaps with the job of donkeys I've killed a thousand men now lest you think that this is just Samson telling the story you see is heart in verse seventeen when he finished his. Boasting this is pride this isn't just a story that he's telling this is Samson in all of his proud pride saying I did all this OK which there is no explanation for outside of a miracle let's just we talked about that before last week again we talked about how one dude in the middle of a field with a job alone is no match for a thousand soldiers OK The only explanation for this outcome is God and yet Sampson takes all the credit but what happens next he throws the job on away right the place is named job on hill and then verse eighteen Sampson's just been in this giant fight in an arid climate and he gets thirsty. And Sampson didn't really plan on being in the giant fight in this area country he just planned out he didn't really plan anything other than don't kill me right and take me to them. And he gets thirsty. Like thirsty so thirsty he's thinks he's going to die. It's not the great

victory that brought him to a point where he finally acknowledges God it's a need it's not this giant triumph of killing the thousand people with a job and that turned Sampson's face toward God it's being thirsty. It's having a need in his life that he can't fulfill and so finally in verse eighteen Samson was not very first thirsty and he cried out to the Lord you have accomplished this great victory see how the tone just changed from I have just done all this awesome stuff to you have done all this awesome stuff you have accomplished this great victory by the strength of your servant must die now die of thirst in fall into the hands of these pagans so God caused water to gush out of a hollow in the ground at Lehigh. And Samson was revived as he drank then he named that place the spring of the one who cried out and it is still at least to this day it's amazing isn't it how when you talk to people about their story it's a little different sometimes with kids who are born and raised in the church the stories look and sound different and they should. Because hopefully they get stuff poured into them at a young age and they don't have to go through all the crap that some of us did as children I just said that in the microphone sorry. But some people really make a lot of bad decisions and have you ever noticed how when you meet somebody who becomes a Christian as adult most of the time it's not out of their greatest victory. It's almost always out of a place of pain. It's almost always out of place of desperation when they're finally like we're just not smart sometimes human beings and it's not one knock that causes us to turn to God It's like when our face is finally on the ground and somebody is stepping on the back of our head we're like oh maybe there is a better way and Sampson gets to a point finally where there is a need that his muscles can't solve and finally for the first time in this story if you've been paying attention if you've been reading for the very first time in this story Sampson finally had knowledge of God and asked him for anything. There isn't a point in this story before this where this happens it's just Sampson doing a thing now the spirit of the of God is the one that allowed him to do all that stuff but he never gives credit until there is a need. And finally at this point of need Sampson cries out to God and even names this spring. The one who cried out right I mean it's it's finally he acknowledges it he finally turns face to God and there's a spot in this that I've never noticed OK I mean I I've heard this story one hundred times I've read it a bunch more times and there's a little verse that happened here that I've noticed at the very end of Sampson's story but I've never noticed right here all right maybe you have maybe I'm just dense and that is definitely true sometimes but. But verse twenty Sampson judged Israel for twenty years during the period when the Philistines dominated the land I never noticed that before I noticed at the end it said twenty years but I never noticed that in between Delilah and the job own there's twenty years there's twenty years where this man who finally looks to God and says God I need you or he rules this people group as judge for twenty years Sampson's do in right as judge. Maybe you all paid attention to that and you saw that before I never have. If you talk about Sampson right and if you talk about the stories the two when we talked about this a couple of weeks we talked about Sampson we asked what you think about when you think about Sampson three things were mentioned first his hair Delilah and a donkey's job own. Those are the first three things that everybody mentions he was a judge for twenty years between two of those three things. He was the spiritual and economic and political leader of this region of God's people for twenty years I've never taught that in a Sunday school. That anybody ever bring that up for you I don't know maybe they do maybe I'm the only one that thought this was amazing. But for twenty years. Sampson doesn't write. By all accounts but we just. Skip over that and the next story is another one of his failings for twenty years though Sampson's the judge of the Nation of Israel look at Chapter sixteen one day and if you bring in a second but I want stop right there one day one day Sampson makes a decision that starts on a negative path sound familiar. You relate to Sampson right there one day things were going good and then one day I made a stupid decision. Things were going good then one day something dumb happened. These were going fine and then one day the rug got pulled out from underneath my feet. Things worse just sliding along and then one day. How many of your stories are like that one day some familiar at all I mean if you look at the Old Testament does it sound at all does it model David that all. David was a king and things were going good and then one day in the time when the Kings were supposed to be off at war David stayed home and he walked around on a roof and he saw a hot

lady in a bath tub. And you know the rest of the story one day Sampson was doing it right for twenty years. And then one day. He makes a decision. One day he decides. That he's going to go to Gaza. OK Now that might not mean to you much to you now except maybe you've heard about the Gaza Strip right I mean most people have heard about some conflict in the Middle East that has something to do with the Gaza Strip OK but Gaza was the name of a city OK this is the name of a city this is not just any city Gaza is one of the chief cities of the Philistines one of the five centers of power in the Philistine country Gaza was that town now Sampson is the guy who's been fighting these people for twenty years Samson is the guy who is kind of known as the leader of the opposition this is not a smart move. OK Can we just say that the you being the leader of a town walking into enemy territory all by yourself cyst not real smart. It's not really this great idea that we see one day Samson went to the Philistine town of Gaza sixteen one and spent the night with a prostitute probably not his best decision correct. Verse to work soon spread that Samson was there so the men of Gaza gathered together and waited all night at the town gates they kept quiet during the night saying to themselves when the light of morning comes we will kill him but Samson stayed in bed only till midnight and he got up took hold of the doors of the town gate including the two posts and lifted them up bar and all he put them on his shoulders and carried them all the way to the top of the hill across Hebron Samson goes to Gaza. OK Now Sam's Gaza is about twenty five miles from Sampson's hometown. OK twenty five miles Sampson didn't fly there didn't drive there he walked there. He walks to Gaza twenty five miles for an average man that's about fifty six thousand two hundred fifty steps for an average man fifty six thousand two hundred fifty chances to say this is dumb fifty six thousand chances to say you know what I'm going to see a prostitute's probably not my best play fifty six thousand chances to change the story. And yet one by one Samson takes those steps. Toward destruction. And this might seem like a victory when you look at the end of the story but it's not this is the beginning of the end of Samson This is the story that points him to death. This is the beginning of the story where he goes and he meets with the Laila and then eventually he dies and we're going to go into the I'm way more detail next week but this is the beginning of that story and he had fifty six thousand chance is to change this story. But he didn't and lest you be like what a moron sound familiar. How many chances in some of these situations that you're like man if I could only change one thing. If I could take that one thing back. How many chances did you have to change that so I'm not talking about something that happened to you talking about that one thing that you did that you wish you could take back how many chances were there to change that story also be like none until we actually were honest about it and then we'd say there were lots of chances for me to change that story. And if we were honest with Scripture we would say that God says that he will provide in the scheme. When the temptation comes it doesn't say that God's going to remove the temptation it says he will provide a path of escape he will give you an opportunity to go a different direction but for fifty six thousand steps Samson continued towards destruction after ruling Israel. For twenty years as judge shouldn't say ruling judging Israel for twenty years. After twenty years of good. He takes fifty six thousand steps toward toward destruction one day and I want you to hear that today because for a lot of us we can relate to that. Either in the past or some of you maybe can relate to it right now and this is one of those warnings in your fifty six thousand steps. To warn you to turn around and go the other way. Because you're headed toward a path right now that just leads to destruction and you know it but Samson continues to walk. And I want to talk about what God does room right and he goes and spends an hour with a prostitute never a good thing in Scripture never a good decision. They know he's there and he goes so we only stays in bed till midnight he gets up and he rips the gates out of the wall and just carries them to a hill OK now I want to talk about that for a second first of all have you ever had that that thing like I mean if you ever got to be occasion came back with a souvenir. Right like you go and you buy a T. shirt you know maybe some of you collect spoons I don't my grandma loves spoons like she gets a spoon from everywhere she went well decorative spoon I don't know maybe you're into that maybe not we all collect something right there some souvenir we go somewhere my kids have stuff from places they've never been because I buy him something to bring him back. Samson souvenirs the city gates strips him out of the wall and

thinks this will make a good thing to hang on my wall now. We know where the city is you know if you actually study it out there's a spot where they think they actually know the gate that he ripped out because the wall is still a little broken around that they still think that they found this archaeologically Now I'm not saying that's true a lot happens in four thousand years OK but if they ripped out the mains if he ripped out the main city gates of this city you're talking two to four tons of weight. If you ripped out one of the side gates of this city which is what I believe otherwise he would have to fight through a whole army to get out to OK but if you rip out the side gates of the city seven hundred to seven hundred fifty pounds. How many lifters do we have does anybody lift in here I know I know some of you probably have what's the most weight you have ever lifted regardless of any whatever lift it is like I don't care we're not talking about you like the most weight you've ever left that lifted in any single lift. Twenty pounds OK three hundred fifty pounds. Brody's lift at five hundred how. Deadlift you bet seven fifty. Right now deadlift is funny because deadlift is like how much you can lift right before you die OK like that's that's the idea of deadlift if you lift one more pound you're dead. Could you have carried that for any amount of time no I mean you just get up seven hundred fifty pounds what was that lift your legs like a leg press could you just you know continue to do that for another you know maybe five miles. You die the next day OK that's that makes sense so no matter what this weight is I want you to know that there's no way in any sort of human since somebody takes even on the lower end of this takes a seven hundred to seven hundred fifty pound gate rips it out of a stone wall and then just walks away with it. It's not human it's divine. With God Anything can happen. God allows us to do these kind of things God God is bigger than we are so divinely Sampson does a so I don't care if it's two or four tons or seven hundred fifty pounds is both a miracle to me. He just walks out on the strength of God But wouldn't it be nice in this story if just once one of Sampson's great victories was in a sign that Samson did something stupid every one of the victories that Sampson has is the result of Samson doing something dumb. Now we talked about this for the last two weeks God uses anyone if we had to wait for God to use a perfect vessel the only one God would have ever used in all of history is Jesus. Because every single person in the Bible and every single person today is amiss is we're mistake ridden we're not perfect we sin we fall short I'm not saying you're a failure Don't mistake what I'm saying. But we make mistakes we are not perfect and we never will be and God uses us in spite of that. And he continues to work and he continues to do amazing things and he continues to do this kind of stuff but first Samson his victories are always on the heels of a failure and wouldn't it be nice if we had one that wasn't that way we don't even we talk about it next week Sampson's greatest victory was on the heels of his greatest failure but this is the beginning of the end of Samson This is the beginning of the end of his story when we talk next week we're going to pick up right here where we left off but I want you to hear. That Sampson's need drove me to God and it seems so often with a lot of us our need does one of two things It drives us from God because we blame him. Or drives us to God where he can do something about it and I would challenge you to allow needs in your life to draw you to drive you. To God to find your answers there in for twenty years he seems to have it figured out seems to have beaten this week wilderness that we've talked about that he was a strong man but had a weak will for twenty years it seems like he's got it right until one day to fifty thousand and some steps into the capital of his enemy such as a prostitute there's a lot of different things I could say as we close this out there's a lot of different angles we could look at there's a lot of different things it's a lot of different places when you talk about this where you can go but I really want to just say a couple things again really want to say. But you need driving to Jesus some of you are in that place right now there is a dramatic substantial need in your life right now I don't want to drive you away from the cross but I drive you to it and some of you are in that vein right now where things have been all right but you are walking down a path you know you should you stop and you allow God to fix this thing and rather than continuing to walk toward the thing that's wreck and everything around you turn around and walk the other way so just talk about how this happens. Nobody says one morning right nobody just decides at today I'm going to fare. Right people start a process where they see somebody they're attracted to and they allow a thought this to linger. Right I'm not saying this is this

exact path is what happens but they see somebody they're attracted to that's not their spouse and a lot of thought linger. Then maybe they start. Flirting a little bit in the office. And then maybe a touch that wouldn't have happened six months ago happens. Then you go out to lunch. And you start confiding in each other things that you should be confiding in and your spouse and then one night you're in bed it doesn't start there it started months ago for most people and a small set of compromises that leads them to a place that they never want to go it's kind of the same thing in debt right nobody thinks Man I really hope that by the end of today I can have two hundred thousand dollars in consumer debt but we just start to make small. Decisions that are bad right now we can't afford that. Put on the car how can afford that one either. Put on the car. In my truck broke down can buy a five thousand dollar truck and a forty thousand dollar truck I don't have any money because I still can't pay my credit card bill let's go get a loan right and all of a sudden we're so far in Dad we can't even see what it looks like to not be wondering where the next payment is going to come doesn't start at the end of the story it starts with that one thing at the beginning I'm not trying to say getting a loan for a car's going to send you to hell don't don't take what I'm saying and run to the ends of the earth with it what I'm saying is a lot of us take these small little steps and they lead us to a place where we never intended on going and most of us don't relate necessarily the Samson you know walking twenty five miles to visit a prostitute but most of us can relate at some point time in our life to making small compromises along the way that led us to a decision we wish we could take back a lot of you need to drive you to Jesus a liar you need to drive you to Jesus and away from me. And some of you are in the middle of a compromise situation right now where you know what is not leading you where you want to go and starting. To turn the other way and stop making those bad decisions it's not going to be easy it's not it absolutely will not be easy but it will be worth it. We're in the story in this time together and next week we're going to finish the story of Sampson we're in the story today and a very very similar way we do every week Jesus Christ came to this earth two thousand years ago. He lived and he taught you perform miracles and ultimately he went to a cross and died. For us and it's not our own strength that will allow us to turn around on this road is because Jesus has already won the fight for us. When we allow our need to drive us to Him He will fight those battles and help us to turn the other way. You provide a way of escape is the way it says in Scripture some of you in here maybe have never accepted the forgiveness of Jesus and we're going to be a chance to do that in just a moment some of you are in here you're relating more to Sampson this morning and you want to I'm not I'm going to give you a chance to come up here if you want I'm always here to pray for you if you want and I'm not going to call you up here this morning. Right I want to pray with you if that's you. Because it's a big deal Sampson Like I said this might seem like a victory if you stopped reading right here if you stopped reading the story right at this point it might seem like Sampson was somehow able to win this day and he did win this day but he lost the war. As a result of this moment. It was prophesied before he was ever born that he would begin to liberate the Israel lights from the Philistines instead of he would deliver them as had happened before he didn't see the end result of all this stuff because this decision right here set him on a path that he didn't turn away from. And ultimately it led to his death and there are some who I don't want to lead you it like leave you with this hopeless despair because that's not how the story ends either but the consequences were very very real. So when I ask you about your heads when I ask you close your eyes I want you to honor this moment all right maybe you're in here and you've never chosen this morning I know this is heavy I know this is this is a lot. But it's where we're at in the story where we're at in scripture this morning maybe you're in here and you've never you've never had needed Jesus before you've never asked for that forgiveness this is this is new to you you have never done this before in this morning you like to just mourn you'd like to say Jesus I need you I need you to forgive me and it's the first time that's ever happened if that's you I'm not going to call you up here and embarrass you I already said that if want you to raise your hand I want to pray with you is there anybody in here you've never never done this before and you want to and we're not going to wait long. Is there anybody in here you need Jesus is all right we're going to move to the second part of this then maybe you're in here and like we talked about you you can relate to this

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moment of Sampson right now where you're at. You are on the path of compromise and you know it you know it's leading somewhere you never intended to go never wanted to go but you're in the middle of it and you don't know how to get out of there right now. Maybe just really never wanted to get out of it right now until this morning when God began to and I ask you with every had about every eye closed if that's you you know the decisions you're making right now aren't lead you anywhere good but this morning you want to turn to Jesus and tell a different story I'd like you to raise your hand is there anybody in here that's I just want to pray thank you for your honesty is there anybody else all right I'll give it just another moment so anybody else in here that that's you I'm going to pray I'm not going to do the repeat after me thing this morning some of you are used to that. But I'm going to pray for you. Some of you in here it's nerve wracking to raise your hand I get it. I might be praying for you too. I want to prejudice morning to pray when I'm done praying with this don't get up and go because I have a few more instructions for you OK. I don't pray Jesus you're good thank you for the honesty in this room. And such a heavy topic and such a hard thing to deal with we no one is above the one day. No one is above that moment where we make a bad decision we're never going to be at a place where we're so spiritual We're never tempted again I thank you for the honesty of those who raise their hands morning and I pray God that you speak clearly into their lives. That you help them know. What best practices are in this situation God help them to confide in to a confidant help them to tell somebody what's going on God so that they can get some accountability and help with these kind of things get I pray that you speak and help them to know your voice for what next step should be that will lead to the right end of the story. Sort of on Iranian to this God leading guide in ways that only you can trust you a man.