

Computer Generated Transcript - We're going to be closer now to our series here on Samson for the last three weeks we've been going through this series we've been talking about Samson his life going through the different things I could've spent a lot more time in some of these different areas kind of diving a little deeper but that wasn't really my intention was just kind of taken an overview of his life and Sampson as as we've been saying from the first week and I'm quoting when I say this. But he says that Sampson's life can be summarized in one saying that he was an incredibly strong man with an incredibly weak will all right and as we've gone through this series I think that we've probably seen that and we're going to be continuing to see it today as we go through these things but Sampson and I want to talk to you a little bit and kind of point to this Sampson story isn't just one of tragedy to me Sampson story is a story of hope and that's kind of the no we're going to end on today and I just want to I want to kind of prepare you for where we're headed today but we saw Samson is set apart in the womb right in Angel of the Lord appears to his mom and dad. He tells his mom you need to you know you need to start this whole Nazarite vow thing in the womb while he's still in there we don't want you to eat grapes we don't want you to do any of those kind of things he's going to be set apart as a Nazarite for his life he does that he sets up his vow and then we see Samson as a young man make a bad decision and ignoring good advice he goes and he marries or goes to marry somebody that he's he's not supposed to marry God uses it anyway because God can work in spite of us he's used imperfect people as long as there have been people because there has never been a perfect person right and he will continue to use imperfect people like you and like me because there will never be a perfect person and Samson is probably the best proof of that in all. All of scripture I mean this guy is up and down and all around where he should be marry somebody shouldn't marry he gets all proud and he starts to he takes on this bet in this wager with these men he winds up killing a bunch of people over it and then when they get upset about that he winds up killing a bunch more people about it and we see this huge spiral of bad decisions that Samson makes out of emotion as as his life just continues to spiral out of control and then to the point where he finally winds up being brought before a Philistine army he picks up a donkey's job own right I'm pretty happy because so far through this whole series almost every time I talk about Samson and particularly the donkey's job own I say junkie dob own it just comes out that way and I've made it through this entire series so far without saying it on accident so I'm pretty happy but he picks up a donkey's job on something just like this right only his was made out of real bone not plaster and he starts wail on people in a thousand people he kills in that thing and then he brags about it right as if any of this is possible because Sampson is awesome he starts to brag about what he just did and completely ignores God until he's thirsty right and then all of a sudden he's thirsty and he doesn't know what to do about it so he finally at that point I'm not because of the great strengths not because of all of the things that he's doing because the need drives him to God He finally looks to God and says Please send water and God sins water to Samson and he drinks and then we talked about this last year for or last week for twenty years Samson rules as a judge in this window for twenty years he's a judge in between all of the crazy at the BE ing and all of the crazy at the end there's a twenty year period where Samson is judging the nation of Israel and as far as we know at that point time he's judging the nation of Israel well OK And so he's judging them at this point and then we see in this is what we talked about last week one day he takes fifty thousand some steps the wrong direction in spite of all of those chances he has to turn around he goes and he visits a prostitute and he starts this chain of events that's about to happen right and we talked about that last week it looks like it ins on a high note they set up this trap to take him and instead of instead of trapping him he just rips the gates out of the wall and he carries them up on top of the hill and that's where we left off last week it seems like a victory but really Sampson has just started a path that that he was out of right and there's so much about Sampson that is relatable we talked about this a little bit last week but have you ever had one of those battles in your life where you just struggled with something it could be anything it could be an addiction it could be you know self-doubt it could be wondering whether or not God is who he says he is it could be anything right it could be a battle with pride it could be a battle with whatever it is maybe your battle is like Samson's battle and you

struggle with inappropriate affection toward the opposite gender right and I don't I don't know what your struggle is but you have a struggle and you're seemingly through it right like you fight and you get help and counsel and God helps you through it and you finally get over the hurdle of what this thing is and for twenty years it seems good and then one day you make a bad decision and you're right back where you didn't want to be where you had to fight so hard to get out of it. And then you're right back into that stupid thing that you didn't want to be doing in the first place and most of us can probably relate to that in some way most of us can probably imagine that struggle we have within us this constant battle Paul says it like this I'm into everything I hate that's my paraphrase of what he says so I know I'm not supposed to like that but it's what I want we wrestle with these struggles and most of us have I would go so far as say all of us have wrestled with struggle throughout the course of our life something that was just difficult to get over and Sampson is no different His is just written down in the Bible for ALSO us all to look out for the last four thousand years or so but we look at Samson so many times as a failure and that's not really where he's in but listen his struggle is a struggle that most of us face every day most of us will never know what it's like to stand in front of an enemy army all by ourselves with a hunk of bone to defend ourselves most of us will never relate to that most of us will never relate to having God given like physical strength that allows us to rip Gates out of a wall and just carry on we talked about that last week at the least those gates probably weighed between seven hundred seven hundred fifty pounds and he just rips them out of the wall and carries them up the hill like it's no big deal right most of us will never be able to relate to that part of Sampson story but his struggle most of us can relate to and he starts down this path that he hasn't been on in twenty years right something awoke inside of him again that we haven't seen any sign of in twenty years it's such a small little bursts in the Bible at the end of Chapter fifteen judges fifteen that we just read over and he ruled as a judge for twenty years. We just skip that it doesn't pop but twenty years we don't have any more details of his failing and then one day he goes and he does that so we're going to talk today about probably the most famous story of Samson's and we're not going to I'm not going to dive into it the way that some people probably think I'm going to but we're going to talk about Samson and though I love. Where we're going there this morning I'm not going to land Hugh John on this story because I kind of want to get past a story to talk about the end. But this is a huge deal this is if you only know one story of Samson in the Bible this is the one you know right I mean if you know more than one that's probably all you probably you know no more but but if you only know one story about Sam said you know Samson and Delilah that's the way that this thing usually goes people have heard it even if you don't know anything about the story of Samson and Delilah you've probably heard those two names together if this is your very first time in church ever and you're completely unfamiliar with the Bible you've probably heard the name Samson and Delilah go together because it's just such a permeation part of our culture that those two things are kind of inextricably linked to Laila I mean I would say she's the kind of the final straw but Delilah is just one of a number of women in Samson string though right I mean we make a big deal about it because she's the last one but really Sampson's failing has been women from the very beginning that we start this story to the very in Delilah is I'm not trying to like run her down I'm just saying she's not a unique failing of sanctions she's the same failing of Samson and different skin. Right I mean his his weakness that we see over and over is is women and so we see it judges Chapter sixteen verse four is where we're going to be out this morning if you've got your Bible you can turn there are going to read out of the New Living Translation If you've got your own favorite That's fine but judge is Chapter sixteen verse for Joshua Judges Ruth if you're if you're in your Bible that's where you that's where we're at it's right in that little spot of history books. And toward the beginning but Joshua Judges Ruth judges Chapter sixteen verse four it says some time later we don't know how long that was OK Some time between one what we just read last week where we talk about he goes and visits a prostitute and and and tears that get out and now some time later Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah verse four who lives in the valley of Sorich the valley of Sorich is Philistine country OK he is in the land of the Philistines again fallen in love with ladies again everything he's not supposed to be doing he's doing again OK verse five the

rulers of the Philistines went to her and said so I want to stop right there this is not a secret affair the rulers of his enemies know where he's at and who he's with OK this is not some secret that Sampson happening Samson is soul either dumb or proud that he doesn't care who knows who is with and where he's at even though he's in the middle of enemy territory OK I'm not saying Sampson's dumb I'm not trying to say he's proud I'm just saying we don't know but this is not wisdom in here right I mean most of us would look at this and be like this is not smartest and you could be doing so either he hasn't thought it through which is very possible when you're in love right most of our brains don't work fully when we first fall in love or he just doesn't care that anyone knows because he's sure he's going to be able to do his thing no matter who knows OK the rules of the Philistines went to her and said entice Sampson to tell you what makes him so strong and how he can be overpowered and tie you tied up securely then each of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver or your bible might say eleven hundred shekels of silver OK I. Went and did some math that's roughly twenty eight pounds of silver per ruler OK if they're each going to give eleven hundred shekels of silver right so that that would mean. Either five or seven of them you know are going to give twenty eight pounds of silver to her today's current prices of silver I checked while it was last night so I don't think the market changes on a Saturday night but last night depending on who you went through to sell silver by the ounce that would mean silver is worth between two hundred four and two hundred sixty five dollars per pound so if you do the math that's between fifty seven hundred and seventy five hundred dollars per person now multiply that between there are multiple rulers right that came and we can see this is a pretty big chunk of change to a pretty big deal. I would like to say that if you're genuinely in love with somebody most of us would say there's no amount of money that would make me want to be trade my person this way but for her she's like all money I'll trade Sampson for that OK especially that amount of money so Delilah verse six said the Sampson please tell me what makes you so strong and what it would take to tell you up securely now he lies two or three times in a row right I mean if you look at this story she asks him to tell him what. Makes you so strong and he lies right I mean if you turn this or if you tie me up in this way or if you bind my hair up this way or if you do this three times he lies two or three times when he lies to her he wakes up with the very thing he mentioned having been done to him again either Samson is incredibly unintelligent he is so Twitter pated he cannot see the truth of what's going on because he's so in love with the lie like he's like I don't care if you take away my strength or again he's just convinced that it doesn't really matter there's only a couple of explanations I mean this lady is obviously trying to figure out what his secret is and do it to him right I mean there's no she's not even trying to be secret about it he wakes up he's done the exact thing that he mentions and he still tells her the next time he lies three times and then in verse fifteen we can see if you drop down a verse fifteen then Delilah pouted says one of my favorite verses in Scripture OK then Delilah pouted because she hasn't got her way and then we see this this whole conversation how can you tell me you love me now if you just read this like you read everything else it doesn't sound as bad as it is she's pouting right she got to read this in a whiny voice she's pouting you can't just read this like how can you tell me she's pouting OK how can you tell me you love me right. When you don't share your secrets with me you've made fun of me three times in a row now and you still haven't told me what makes you so strong tear right for Delilah she tormented him with her nagging day after day until he was sick to death of it that's in the Bible I didn't make that up that's like what my bible says verse sixteen Does that sound familiar if you remember back to the for I'm not asking you about your marriage some of you just about gone big trouble don't don't answer that out loud if you remember back to the first week this exact same thing happens he sets up a riddle and the Philistines go to his bride to be and they say we're going to kill you your father and everything in your house we're going to set it on fire if you don't find out this riddle so she nags him to the point where he is so frustrated that he tells her the riddle Sampson's an incredibly strong man with an incredibly weak will she nags the secret to his strength out of him OK now I said this is the first week and I'm going to say it again if you're looking for good solid marriage advice Sampson is not the place to look OK don't don't look at this story and be like a hobbit if I did that in my marriage I could get my way to Sabbath idea OK

there's nothing that's going to be really beneficial to your marriage by taking the tips you read out of the story of Sampson OK She torments him with her nagging day after day until he was sick to death of it seventeen finally Samson shared his secret with her my hair is never been cut he confessed for I was dedicated to God as a Nazarite from birth if my head were shaved my strength would leave me and I would become as weak as anybody else there is something in this verse that I think is important. It's like for just a moment in the middle of all of this stuff after after the prostitute with the lady he's not supposed to be with for just a moment he remembers who he was supposed to be from before my birth I was dedicated to be a Nazarite this is who I was meant to be this is this is who I'm supposed to be I'm supposed to be this man dedicated to God above all else leading my people to victory for just a moment he remembers why he is the way he is and he actually acknowledges where his strength comes from we talk about the first thing is his hair where is strength come from now oh god is where it comes from the hair is just the symbol the hair is the symbol that he's dedicated to God right I don't care how great your hair looks you can grow it out as long as you want you're not going to be able to pull city gates out of the wall and carry them up a hill doesn't matter how great your locks look as they are grown out doesn't matter it's not about his hair it's about being dedicated to God and His hair is the visible symbol of that and he remembers who he's supposed to be for just a minute I've been a Nazarite from birth I was dedicated to God if you shave my head it's all that whole vowels all done and I'll be just like anyone else and verse eighteen with no surprises she's done this thing three times in a row already Delilah realized he finally told her the truth so she sent for the Philistine rulers come back one more time she said for his finally told me a secret she knows she knows this time it's different she's got him so the Philistine rulers return with the money in their hands the law to load Samson to sleep with his head in her lap I mean this is so twisted I mean this incredibly intimate loving way that she can lol him to sleep with his head in your lap. And she betrays everything to live alone send him to sleep with a head in her lap and then she called in a man to shave off the seven locks of his hair and this way she began to bring him down and his strength left him this is what I was talking about last time that moment one day when he walks to the wrong place and he starts this path again he made a decision with all of these steps that he could to turn back from that lead right to this point that same old desire for women woke up inside of him and it leads him to this place where his value has been violated and everything he hoped to accomplish everything he was set up part for is now in somebody else's hands then she cried out in verse twenty Samson the Philistines of come to capture you this probably isn't whiny she is no longer nagging she shouts and when he woke up he thought I will do as before and shake myself free and this is probably the saddest verse in the Bible to me but he didn't realize the Lord had left him listen I want to talk about that for just a second the reason I don't think Sampson knew that the Lord left him is because I don't think Sampson knew the Lord nearly as well as he should of Sampson's been doing the whole Nazarite vow thing he's been leading the people of Israel as far as we know fairly well but we're not given any real indication throughout this whole thing that Sampson's got a really great relationship with God. That he really knows who he is he's still dependent on his hair he thinks he's just going to get up and all of this strength is still going to be there and he's going to be able to do everything he's done in the past you were all of all of the in physis is he thinks he can do what he's done not he thinks God's going to do what God's done but he thinks he's still got it in him it's not about god for Samson it's about him and he doesn't know that the spirit of the Lord has left him and that is an incredibly sad verse to me and my prayer for you is that you know God you can know Him you can come to know him you you can can't can be a person that knows God and I hope you are in verse eighteen or I'm sorry verse twenty one so the Philistines captured him and gouged out his eyes. It's descriptive right I mean you can look at the Hebrew and see that they probably used fire to do that but that doesn't really make it any more horror or any less horrible right they ripped his eyes from his head and they took him to Gaza sound familiar Where do you take all those steps to Gaza where he was bound with Bron Bron's chains and forced to grind grain in prison if this was the end of the story would be really set right like if this is the end of the story of Samson this would be a major tragedy that this man who had been born with so much

promise and so much so much for telling in his life. INS in this way it would be incredibly sad but but that's not where it is but but this does bring about a point of choice and this is where I really want you to to pay attention and grab on of this story because we all have times in our life where we've done something that we know we shouldn't of done we all have times in our life where we have shows I'm not talking about things that have been done to you I'm talking about you made a decision that you know was not a good decision you made a decision that you know took you away from being who you are supposed to be in God you made a decision that changed the course of where your life was headed and now the weight of that decision has been realized it might still be secret but you know house how bad it is it might be out and you know how bad it is and now you're left with a decision and I'm going to sit in wallowing in guilt or am I going to repent and step forward and Grace we're all left with this decision when we screw up we're all left we can sit in guilt in our chains we can do those things we can allow a decision and we can lie around full of remorse and guilt and allow that decision to derail everything that was supposed to happen in our life everywhere we were headed it can completely be we can choose that we can choose remorse and guilt and I will tell you that I have said this before I'll say it again I do not believe guilt is an emotion that God puts in US I see God put conviction in us that leads to change those are different things and when we're sitting in the dark knowing we messed up knowing we did something we shouldn't do we're left with a decision and allow this decision to define me or my going to repent and allow grace to continue through my story and that's where Sampson's out right now and I see this amazing verse verse twenty two that's easy to just read over but before long his hair began to grow back the sign of his covenant is coming back just because we make a mistake doesn't mean we have to be done just because we've thrown away a lot of good things I mean Samson again he could be a poster boy for bad decisions right but in that cell forced to encounter the reality of his bad decisions God's grace shows up and he's left with the decision verse twenty three The Philistine rulers held a great festival offering sacrifices and praises and praising their god a gun they said our God has given us victory over our enemies Sampson you need to understand what's happening. This is a contest of gods not just a contest of people in their mind right they're saying Our God is bigger than their god this idol that we've made a god he is stronger than the God of Sampson because he's just a blind guy in a cell now they're calling out Jova they're calling out ya way then because they don't have a J's out there saying you're nothing compared to our God first twenty four when the people saw him they praise their God saying our God has delivered our enemy to us the one who killed so many of us is now in our power half drunk by now the people demanded bring out Samson so he can amuse us this guy who's killed us by the thousand with a bone bring out the blind guy's so we can watch him fumble around and be a lame excuse in a for a shell of his former self bring out the clown right so he was brought from the prison to amuse them and they had him stand between the pillars supporting the roof Samson said to the young servant who was leading him by the hand placed my hands against the pillars that hold up the temple I want to rest against him now the temple was completely filled with people all the Philistine rulers were there. Everybody who had paid to bring him there and even some who hadn't their all at this festival and there were about three thousand men and women on the roof or watching his Samson amuse them verse twenty eight we see really the first gut wrenching honest prayer recorded by Samson in Scripture OK I mean he calls out to God when he's thirsty but he prayer prays a gut level honest prayer here Sovereign Lord remember me again oh god please strengthen me just one more time he's finally given credit where credit is due what it took having his eyes plucked out and being made a clown. But he finally acknowledges God with one blow let me pay back the Philistines for the loss of my two then Sampson put his hands on the two center pillars that held up the temple pushing against them with both hands he prayed let me die with the Philistines and the temple crashed down on the Philistine rulers and all the people so we killed more people when he died than he had during his entire lifetime when I read one of my commentary says about this moment OK And there's some big words and here's a brace yourself OK is penitence like sorrowful I'm sorry penitent and powerful prayer spirit seems clearly to indicate that this meditated act was not of a vindictive suicide and that he regarded himself as putting forth

his strength and his capacity of a public magistrate he must be he must be considered in fact is dying for his country's cause his death was not designed or sought except it might be an eval an evitable consequence of his great effort I've heard a lot of people call this you know assisted suicide and all those kind of things and I'm not going to sit here and try to make a huge case you're going to take this how you want to take it but the way I look at this is an act of war I look at this is the same way as when a soldier sees a grenade coming in the middle of the bunker and one of them throws themselves on top of that grenade to save all their brothers that's what I see I don't see Samson seeking suicide here I see Samson seeking a way to spin the Philistines out of control through an act of war and I see him push down these pillars and he goes down with it an act of war this is the general of his people sacrificing himself so that his people will be free all right that's my take on this I'm not trying to tell you that's one hundred percent correct I'm just telling you that's how I view this story. All right when I look at this and I read this story I don't see a man that's just seeking death I see a man given an opportunity that he knows will cost him his life and he's willing to walk through it all right but what I honestly see with Samson and all of this what I honestly get out of this prayer that Samson prays is sitting in that cell faced with every consequence of every bad decision he's ever made he didn't just let those bad decisions cost him for the rest of his life he didn't stop there and just be Sampson the man who failed he became Samson the man who failed but who genuinely sought out God again and was filled and used by God one more time to do the greatest thing he'd ever done for his people I know that you can look at this store and you can be like really killing people was the greatest thing ever done this is a time of war his people were being held captive by the Philistines they were an occupied country and he was able to spin out you can actually see if you read the very end of this story his family just comes and gets his body from the middle of enemy territory and takes it back home there are so out of sorts with what just happened and they're probably so overawed because this was our God is greater than your god kind of a day and then all of a sudden they realize their God is nothing in the face of yah way that they don't even stop his family from coming in getting his body and taking it away there's nothing to hang on a pike there's no there's no we finally got him you know what I mean there's no William Wallace cutting his pieces himself into pieces and sending him to the four corners of the Empire there's none of that they let his family come and get his body because what they just saw is overwhelming because God you Sampson one more time to strike the greatest blow against their enemy that they've ever seen because a man was willing to not let failure define him in a cell but instead he repented and allowed God to change the track of his life. And I want you to take that home out of this whole series I mean I know Samson did some crazy stuff I know it's fun to talk about Job own as in you know you if you hadn't plowed with my head for you know and stuff like that I mean those things are those things are funny and it's easy to take those things but what I want you to take away from this whole series is Sampson in that cell not allowing his bad decisions to define the rest of his life but he brought them to got sought repentance and he allowed God to use them again you are going to make another mistake in your life it's going to happen at some point in time I mean maybe if you die between now and when you get home maybe that won't happen for you I don't know maybe Jesus returns before I'm done preaching I should say so definitively but if time continues on you'll make another mistake you'll make a bad decision you'll make a compromise you know better than the make We're humans we fail and do we allow those moments then to define us or are we defined by God's grace are we defined by our failures or we defined by what God does in us through grace and forgiveness and it's a decision that we have to make every time and it's one I'm very grateful that Samson made soon the last time Samson the mission mentioned in Scripture would like you to turn to Hebrews chapter eleven Hebrews chapter eleven is in the New Testament toward the end he was Chapter eleven is known as the Hall of faith right this is the chapter in the church world that we call the hall of faith where so many great people through the history of serving the way of serving Jesus there are mentioned here OK It's where that verse because of the Such a great cloud of witnesses let them spur you on to love and good deeds that that's where this is but it's this is the Hall of faith and Hebrews chapter eleven verse thirty two says how much more do I need to say it would take too long

to recount the stories of the faith the faith. The faith of Gideon the rock Sampson Jepson David Samuel and all the prophets by faith these people overthrew kingdoms ruled with justice and received what God had promised them they shut the mouths of lions quenched the flames of fire and escaped death by the edge of the sword their weakness was turned to strength they became strong in battle and put whole armies so flight I mean those last couple of parts of that so that that thing could summarize the story of Samson really easy right but Samson in the New Testament is not remembered as a failure he is remembered as a man of faith and that is why I absolutely believe that in that jail cell it was faith that defined him and not failure and that brings me great hope personally that I don't have to be viewed in defined by my failings but I can be defined by my faith in spite of my failings I don't have to pretend to be perfect I can just be who I am and allow God to grow in me and do his thing in me and as long as I continue to trust and that if I make him on another mistake as long as I turn back to Jesus I can still be remembered as a man of faith not just a man of failure and that is a promise for each one of us Samson is not defined by a moment of failure or a lifetime of failure Samson is defined by a moment of repentance and he's remembered as a man of faith if you don't take anything else away from the series that's what I want you to grab that's what I want you to remember when you think of Samson I hope that we can detach Samson and just Delilah and I hope the first thing that pops into your mind when you hear the name Samson isn't just Delilah anymore it's repentance and faith because that's how Scripture defines him yes he made lots of real public mistakes but he's remembered by God in Scripture as a man of faith and I'm grateful for that when I asked worshipping to come back up we're going to end this series with this song on the song a couple of different times we've been going through it some of you right now are kind of stuck in the moment of the failure and instead of allowing God to bring about repentance and forgiveness and I want to encourage you. To let that change this morning I want to encourage you to allow God to turn that tide in your life we are so much more than the sum of our failures we are a people forgiven by God and it's where we really really need to land is by what God wants to do in our lives not just what we've done maybe some of you are like you're in the dark cell right now you feel like the walls are crashing in and there's not hope. I love the words of the song. Hold on to your hope he's in the waiting I want to encourage some of you that God is still there even if sometimes you can't feel him or hear him he's still there. So we're going to sing the song as a declaration at the end of the service if you need to come forward and you need to pray to get some things out before God come and pray it's awesome if you just need to sing a song. And go that's OK. I want to encourage you to allow God to work in your really want to encourage you to allow God to speak to you and do what he needs to do this morning in your life some of you might need the words of the song some of you my not. So we're going to and I want to pray we're saying I want to courage you these alters are all going if you want to come pray come. If you're ready to go you can go. Jesus you're great I thank you for times like this I thank you. That in the middle of our darkest times you have not abandoned us. No matter how greatly. I screw up. There's hope. For those who might be feeling the weight of a situation right now I pray that you speak to them and help them turn it over to you to not let. Life just kind of. Go on in this way would seek your repentance to see your. Presence. Your forgiveness. Your good. We can trust in their. Man.