

Dealing with trouble and keeping your sanity

Opening text: Judges 15:14-20

Samson was someone sealed from his mothers' womb to do great things for God. An angel spoke a great word over his life: he was to live separated unto God because he was going to deliver Israel from the oppression of its enemies. What an amazing thing that must have been for his parents, that their son had been chosen by God for such great purpose.

Judges 13:24-25 says that "*the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. ²⁵And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him*" ...

Not only he carried a great word over his life but he was blessed and the Holy Spirit was moving upon him. However, for someone who started out with such a great word of God over his life, Samson faced a lot of trouble.

When I think of his life, I think of the words of Job: "*man is born to trouble,...*" (**Job 5:7**)

From the life of Samson, I want to share how on how to deal with trouble and keep your sanity:

1. We need to learn how to deal with trouble.

In this world, we will face trouble:

Jesus said in **John 16:33** - *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*"

1 Peter 4:12 : *Beloved, do not consider it strange regarding the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;*

a) **The fact is that we live in a fallen world, and trouble will come**

Samson's life faced the constant conflict: one came from the enemies around him (the Philistines). Some came from his friends:

At one stage, even men of the tribe of Judah came against him. They tied his hands to give him to the Philistines. Betrayal is probably one of the hardest things to deal with. Jesus experienced that: **Zechariah 13:6** ... "*I was wounded in the house of my friends.*"

Some conflict came from Samson himself. Some trouble comes from the outside but at times, we also generate our own trouble. Some of the suffering Samson went through was self-inflicted: he had areas in his life that were undealt with and got him into trouble repeatedly: pride, lust, anger, restlessness

b) **God has 'unusual' weapons of warfare**

The jawbone of a donkey was not a conventional weapon. It was unusual. It didn't make sense in the natural.

God gives us unusual weapons, but they work. For instance, love works, forgiveness works, humility works, tithing works. When we do things God's way, they always work – even if they don't make sense to the natural mind.

2. We need to learn how to deal with triumph.

We don't hear much about how to deal with "triumph". But we need to know how to deal with success when it comes, just as much as when we struggle.

In **verse 16** Samson sang a triumphant song:

¹⁶ Then Samson said: "With the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!"

Samson was in such a triumphant mood that he composed a song about his victory. We can say that he decided to "blow his own trumpet". He spoke about him but God is never mentioned.

We need to give God the glory for every victory in our lives!

One of Samson's problems was his overconfidence (in himself). His inability to deal with success was his downfall. Later on, he tried to fight in his own strength and it didn't work:

Judges 16:20 - *And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.*

3. We need to learn how to deal our own soul

In the verses that followed, something in Solomon's state of mind changed.

He went from being in quite a triumphant mood to suddenly feeling physically and emotionally depleted. He went from singing a triumphant song to praying a grumpy prayer to God.

V.17-18 - *¹⁷ And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi. ¹⁸ Then he became very thirsty; so, he cried out to the Lord and said, "You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?"*

a) Samson's emotional backbone was not nearly as strong as the jawbone he used

Fighting battles, even when you win them, can be physically and emotional debilitating. If we neglect our soul and body, we can easily find ourselves exhausted, spent, drained, worn out and consumed.

While relying on God for our victories, we cannot neglect our physical condition and our soul (mind, will and emotions).

- Even a giant of the faith like Samson experienced some sort of physical and emotional breakdown.

- Elijah, was another giant in the faith and he experienced the same deep sense of discouragement after a battle.

We cannot neglect the physical side of us, as well as our souls. Elijah needed food, rest and time off. In that story, we see the angel feeding him and encouraging him.

- Paul also experienced something similar. We read in **2 Corinthians 7:5**

5 For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.

Here's 3 things you need to do with your soul:

1. Realize

We need to realize the danger of a mismanaged or neglected soul

2. Repair

Paul said in **2 Corinthians 4:8** that he was "*hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed*". We may need to allow time to repair cracks that come from pressure.

3. Replenish

V.19 - *So God split the hollow place that is in Lehi, and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore, he called its name En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day.*

Fighting all these battles in this world can take a toll. However, God reveals Himself in this passage as the One who replenishes us, Who opens a spring of water in dry land and rivers in the desert. From this whole story, this is something you need to retain: God wants to lead us beside still waters and restore our soul. God wants our spirit to return and be revived.

Maybe you've been fighting battles on every side and now you are only praying grumpy prayers, maybe you feel exhausted and depleted.

Sometimes you just need to stop and run to God's presence:

2 Corinthians 4:16 - *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*

Matthew 11:28-29 - *²⁸ Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

John 4:14 - *but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."*

John 7:37-38 - *"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."*

