Murray Baptist Church – 12/15/20 – Bible Study Outline – Judges

**Judges 14-15 – Subthemes from the life of Sampson**

There are several things that readers will note when it comes to Judges 14,15 and 16. Although we’ll only go through chapters 14 and 15 this session, some of the same themes will run through 16 as well. It is through the lenses of these subtopics that we’ll approach our study for today. We have high expectations about Sampson because of the interaction between the Angel of God and Sampson’s parents in Judges 13. We can assume they followed the Angels instructions for his childhood, but we move from his birth to meeting him as an adult and we do not get a very good first impression. As the saying goes, “You can never make a second first impression.”

Subtheme #1 – Sampson’s failings help us to focus on God’s faithfulness

* Sampson has a lot to say to everyone but God (his parents, the Philistines, his “women”)
* God uses Sampson’s selfishness and temper as a tool for impacting the Philistines

Subtheme #2 – Samson is willing to share his secrets to win the approval of women, rather than focus on living like he’s approved by God.

Subtheme #3 – In spite of what happens in our lives, God is still able to bless this “mess.”

Judges 14:1-4

* We are introduced to an adult Sampson who is intent on marrying the woman he wants who is a Philistine and he doesn’t want to discuss it.
  + From a religious culture perspective in regard to marriage, Jews were to follow the direction of Deuteronomy 7:3-4. What was God’s biggest objection to intermarrying with those who were not Jewish?
  + He went against the direction of his parents (Do you think he was honoring them?)
* Verse 4 reminds us that God will leverage Sampson’s desire. Proverbs 19:21 reminds us that many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails. God is going to use these circumstances to further his plan against the Philistines.

Judges 14:5-7

* In the midst of Sampson doing what he wants to do, something that displeases God, The Spirit of the Lord shows up. Advice: Let us not confuse a moment of God’s Spirit in our lives as confirmation that God approves of our lives and our attitudes.

Judges 14:8-17

* As Sampson and his parents head toward Timnah (he is going to marry the woman from Timnah), they get separated from each other for an unspecified period of time.
* Sampson goes past the carcass of the lion he killed in verse 6. He sees a swarm of bees and they have produced honey and he eats and when he rejoins his parents he shares some with them.
* At the pre-marriage celebration, Sampson decides to tell a riddle that only he knows the answer to. If no one guesses the riddle within 7 days, Sampson gets a nice wedding present, if someone guesses the answer, he must provide gifts to 30 men (this was Sampson’s idea).
* After 3 days, no one has an answer to the riddle and the Philistine put pressure on Samson’s fiancée to get the answer or she and her father’s household will be burned to death.
* Samson’s wife begs emotionally for Sampson to tell her the answer and she explained he riddle to the Philistines.

Judges 14:18-20 – The Confrontation

* Before the deadline of the seventh day, the Philistines give Samson the answer to the riddle and he understands that his wife was the reason they knew – “If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle.”
* Then the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him.
  + Went to Ashkelon, one of five large Philistine stronghold cities.
  + He killed 30 men, took their garments to those who solved the riddle
  + Even after getting his vengeance on the Philistines, Samson’s **anger still burned** within him and he went back to live with his father and as a result, his wife was given to another man, presumably one of his 30 Philistine attendants.
* God was using Samson despite his failings rather than blessing Sampson for his faithfulness
* Samson was anointed from birth but took his consecration as a title rather than an approach.

Judges 15:1a

* Samson returns to his wife’s house during the wheat harvest. He’s been gone for a while and wants to see his wife and presumably consummate their marriage. He brings her a goat as a peace offering.

Judges 15:1b-8 – Samson’s Vengeance on the Philistines

* Her father would not let Samson see her. He has given he to another man because he thought Sampson hated her. Samson was offered her younger sister.
* Samson expressed his “right’ to “get even” with the Philistines
* He caught 300 foxes and tied their tails together, fastened a torch to their tails, lit them and set them loose in the grain fields of the Philistines, the vineyards and the olive groves. This act would be both short-term in causing significant damage to the food supplies and long-term because it would take a while for the crops to regrow in the charred land.
* The Philistines Retaliate by taking Samson’s wife and her father and burning them to death.
* Samson used the murdering of his wife as justification for continued retaliations against the Philistine and swore “his” revenge on them.
* Samson says a lot to many people but does not say much to or about God. Samson continued to attack and slaughter the Philistines.

Judges 15:9-17 – The Consequences of Samson’s action on the Israelites

* The Philistines camp in Judah because they want to take Samson prisoner and punish him for his action
* 3000 men from Judah go to the cave Samson is hiding in to get him to turn himself in
* They promise not to kill him and tie him up to take him to the Philistines
* As they approached the Philistines in Lehi, the Philistines came shouting and “the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him.”
* Sampson’s ropes broke and he picked up a jawbone of a donkey and used it to fight and kill 1000 men.
* Samson continues to run his mouth and creates an impromptu poem about his success.

Judges 15:18-20 – The Place of Dependence

* Samson finally acknowledges that God has given him victory but appeals to God to not let him die of thirst and fall into the hands of the Philistines.
* God created an opening for Samson to get water in Lehi and his strength returned and he was revived.
* God was gracious to Samson and allowed samson to led Israel for twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

Note: We regard Samson as this man of superhuman strength yet in only one case (chapter 16) did Samson show strength that wasn’t directly attributed to the presence of the Holy Spirit.