

"A Miraculous Beginning" - Judges 13:1-25

We now deal with the life of Samson and he would be the 13th judge. There were twelve men and one woman, Deborah, and he is now going to be the last of the judges before it ends. It covers a period of about 350 years, the book of Judges, and we're going to find how Samuel comes in and says some wonderful things. It begins to tie in everything as you begin to look at the chronological order.

But one of the tragic things about this story, as you know it probably better than any other judge, is that Samson is that one that you often remember is the one who pulled down the pillars and brought down the house at the very end. But the tragic thing is that he wasted his life. And the bible declares that what he did at the very end, that in probably four or five seconds of obedience when he surrendered his life, he was blinded and he was bound and he was grinding and finally they released him and he said, "Lord, give me revenge for my eyes." And basically the Lord said, "No." He said, "Lord let me avenge Your name." He said, "Fine." And so he pulled the pillars, you remember the story, and over 3,000 were killed. And the bible says, towards the very end of his life, that which he did at the very end was more than he did in his whole lifetime. And the one thing that I pray that God really ministers in this next four or five weeks as we look at these chapters, is that God called him probably more gifted than anybody in the bible. A great family, a great calling upon his life, great spiritual strength and yet every single chapter he chases women. And so in the life of Samson, there was a slow-burning lust and that lust finally destroyed his life. And he wasted his life, and so over his epitaph you could write, "Here lies a wasted life". And I believe sometimes God gives to us tremendous abilities and strength and we begin to make horrible mistakes. And we find that chapters 13-16, four chapters, are now given to

this judge, which is one-fifth of the book of Judges. The book ends with, every man does that which is right in his own eye.

Samson is born in Zorah, which is a city of Dan, smallest of the tribe, and the most wicked of all the tribes up in the north, so we've been in the south and now we're moving up towards the north. And he judges Israel for twenty years. And they were under the oppression of the Philistines for forty years, and it's kind of interesting how the whole thing happens. You remember Ehud, he was the one who stuck the blade into the king who was fat and he was so fat, you remember the bible says that the blade was sucked in and he couldn't get it back out. And so he took off, but during that time, you remember that the land rested 80 years.

And then under Deborah's rule, when she was done the land rested 40 years. And then under Gideon, just a couple judges before, the land rested 40 years. But under Samson, there was no rest. And I think the great thing is that living in carnality, you will never find rest. And that's the great thing that I think I want to share with you more than anything else. If you're longing for peace, longing for that joy within your heart, then you're going to have to surrender your life to the Lordship of Christ because the bible says that the rebellious dwell in the wilderness and there's nothing worse than carnality or compromising because it brings that guilt and that consciousness within our own hearts that we're not right with God. And God has placed that eternity within my heart, constantly probing.

And so he knew what God wanted. He knew exactly that he was called to be a Nazarene, or Nazareth. He took the vow of the Nazzerite. His mother took the very same vow. She would not eat or drink anything that was unpleasing to the Lord. So she sanctified her body, she gave birth; he was sanctified to the Lord. And we find that in all the different areas, he broke every single covenant with God. Finally to the cutting of his hair and finally his strength was destroyed. And this is the man, you

remember, that was able to catch 300 foxes, actually jackals, and tied their tails together and put torches and torched the fields of the Philistines. And he was able to carry the gates of Gaza, you remember, on his back for some 38 miles up a hill and stick them because he had an attitude with the city. They locked him in, so he took the gates and these gates were about 40 feet high and about 20 feet wide.

This is the guy that killed a 1,000 men with a jawbone of an ass and there he just wiped them out and killed them. And this is the same man, you remember, that just did havoc with the Philistines, and yet we find him just constantly over hanging out. And so he was unpredictable and because he was unpredictable, he was undependable. And so we find that in this life, kind of sad, six things kind of ministered to my heart, and we'll just kind of read these and then we'll jump into the story.

He dishonored his parents. And we're going to look at this over the next four weeks. He dishonored his parents and he deserted the promises of God. He left the promises of God. And then number three he distorted his purpose. In other words, he distorted by being distracted from what God really wanted. And then number four he defiled his purity. He was sleeping with concubines and sleeping with harlots, and going to bed with Delilah, and yet he was defiling his purity. And he disinherited his power. You remember when he stood up; he knew not that the spirit of God had descended. And sixthly, one of the sad things, he disgraced his profession. In other words, as a judge, as one who was to be called to serve and to deliver the people of Israel, he didn't do it. And what a tragic thing, **"Now all these things happened unto them for example: that they are written for our admonishment, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he stand take heed lest he fall."** (1 Corinthians 10:11) and so the importance.

And so we dive into chapter 13. We take a look at verse one and we see, really, Israel's wickedness. And then we're going to take a look at verses 2-23, and we're

going to find God's gracefulness. And then in verses 24 and 25, we're going to see the Spirit's power in verses 23-25. But in verse 1, Israel's wickedness.

The bible declares, here in verse 1, "**And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines forty years**" (Judges 13:1). So, notice again this is now the seventh time, the seventh cycle of sin. And underline the words "the children of Israel did evil". Every time God delivered them, then all of a sudden God blessed them, and then they took their eyes off of the Lord, and then they begin to go astray and the two things that always stood out; they forsook the Lord and they did not follow the Lord. In other words, they forsook Him, they did not remember Him. But one of the things you're going to find interesting is that it says that they did not seek the Lord. Now all the other times, it says that Israel repented. And even, you remember a couple of chapters back with Jephthah, it says that they repented and they turned and they forsook their ways, and they tore down the idols and they said to God, "Whatever you desire, we'll do." But here they didn't even repent. And this is the danger about compromise; is that you learn to live in oppression. You learn to live in that compromising attitude and you begin to lower your standard and you begin to change the very image of who God is so you can live your life. And instead of repenting and saying, "God, this is not what You desire. You desire that I would walk in the Spirit, in the power of the Holy Spirit.", we come to learn to live in, really the flesh, under bondage.

And the children of Israel did this so well. They saw the manna, and they saw the Shekinah glory, and they saw the power of God, and yet they were living in the wilderness and they were dying off. And though God was faithful, they had no heart, no desire to get out of the wilderness and go into the promise land. And I think one of the most difficult things there is, if I had to say one thing that is the most difficult thing for God to do - which nothing is difficult for God to do - but one of the most difficult things I believe that God has to deal in my life or in your life is to convince me that this

lifestyle, this compromising, this wilderness, is not His perfect will. And so God can open the doors, and God can even remove the door, but you need to come out of prison and realize there's a whole new life. And when you've been captive, or all of a sudden, like you look at Iraq and you see how people have been in bondage for so long, that they are so gripped by fear that it's difficult for them to even turn. It's going to take years if it ever happens. But the same thing, you've been in sin, God forgives you, He wants you out, and all of a sudden you want to come out, but you're not really sure. And so the great thing is to realize that God has quickened you and God desires, but here they came to a point that they were content to live under the bondage of the Philistines and once again it wasn't too bad, but again it wasn't God's perfect will.

And so we find that others were seeking, but they were no longer seeking. So, this is the end. It's horrible what was happening. And the Philistines, just a little bit of information, out of all the enemies of Israel, these were the worst. You remember, they were there with Jephthah a little bit. They were also there with Abimelech, they came and they hassled him. And then, you remember, they came strongly here. They came from the area of Greece. They came from that area of Mesopotamia, they were attacking Egypt and Ramsey III came against them and threw them out of their own country and so they landed in this area of Canaan. And so they were a sea people that now had moved, but they were a brilliant people. They were people that understood how to make iron. And so during the days of Samuel, it says that there was no iron in all of Israel. In other words, they took everything, so they were able to mine, find the iron, they were able to build chariots of iron, and they were a very brilliant people; Very powerful people.

And then, you remember, finally at the very end of the book of Samuel, Samuel put them down. And then we find, once again, they came back during the days of Saul. And then we find eventually they came back during the days of David because Goliath was from the Philistines. He was a Philistine and he was taunting the nation of Israel.

So here is the message, the Philistines never ever gave up on Israel and Satan is never going to give up on you. No matter how often you attack him; come against him with the blood of Jesus Christ, he's going to come back and get you again. He's constantly for the rest of your life going to look at you, he's going to stalk you, he's going to be that roaring lion, and though he's been defeated, he's going to seek to take you down. So the bible says that we need to be aware, very aware, of our enemy. That **greater is He that's in you, than he that's in the world.** (I John 4:4) And you need to keep your eyes and be vigilant, stand having done all, stand against the wiles of the devil. And Satan is going to seek to try to get you to fall. And it says in the days of David, Philistines were there. And so the Philistines are always seeking to come against the children of Israel. And so they did for forty years and this was the longest time Israel was held under bondage. And so Samuel, or I should say Samson, was born half way through this captivity, so he's about twenty years old. There's about twenty years left of the forty years and this is where we kind of pick up the story. It's kind of an interesting story. Shamgar dealt with them, Abimelech dealt with them, Saul dealt with them, David dealt with them, and Samson was defeated by them.

And then we pick up in verse two God's gracefulness, all the way through twenty-three and this is kind of fun just to take a look at it, a unique birth. **"And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not"** (Judges 13:2). So, Zorah was about seventeen miles west of Jerusalem. It kind of bordered Dan and Judah. Manoah, his name means "rest" and so it's kind of an interesting name, and what is really fascinating, that his wife is not even named. She's named "the woman", which you're going to find out she was in charge - she's the woman. And so it's not such a bad thing, but he's husband, and so he was the father of Samson and of course he was married to this woman. And in verse three, there was a unique visitor. **"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and barest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son"**

(Judges 13:3) So this is none other than, we believe, Jesus Christ. This is what we call theophinese. He rebuilt Himself to Gideon, and He said to Gideon, "Do you remember I am the Lord?" And Gideon said, "Hey, stay here, tarry till I go get a sacrifice." And the Lord was patient, willing to put up with Gideon, him running around, but again the angel of the Lord and you're going to find something kind of interesting. He reveals himself here. And then he says, "Thou art barren". And I find it interesting that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, all their wives were barren. You remember Sarah, she was barren. Rebecca, Isaac's wife, she was barren. Rachel, Jacob's wife, was barren. Hannah, you remember in the Old Testament, she was barren and she bore Samuel. And then we find that Elizabeth, who had John the Baptist, she was barren. And I believe very simply, that God can take something out of deadness and by His supernatural work, make it alive. So we were once dead, and now we're alive. And so no matter where we are, God can breathe upon you; And so the bareness of your life. "God, it's never going to change". It can. If He breathes upon you, or if He strengthens your life, the bible says the voice of the Lord will shatter the wilderness and the trees of Lebanon. His voice will change everything. And so if you're barren, or you're in this desert, or you're in this wilderness, all you need is the voice of God. And that voice of God is the word of God and if you want to hear His voice, then read the bible out loud and you will hear the voice of God. That authority will break the wilderness and it will begin to feed your spiritual life. But the rebellion, often times, is Satan doesn't want you in the word because the moment you get in the word, God's going to remove the barrenness. He's going to plant you by the water. You're going to be a tree that never withers. So you have a choice and I have a choice. Either I'm going to live in the desert or I'm going to live by the rivers of water. If I live by the rivers of water, my leaves will never wither, whatever I do is going to prosper, and so the importance of being baptized in the spirit of God. And so the barrenness, and God saw that.

And then the uniqueness of his life style in verse four and five: **"Now therefore beware (now this is cool) beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not anything unclean: For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel** (Underline the words "shall begin") **to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines"** (Judges 13:4-5). Now it's sad that he began but he never finished. Though God gave him the gift, he never finished it. And so Pastor Chuck has an interesting saying to the pastors, he says, "May we finish well. May we finish this fight." Paul said, "I have finished the fight." And so many today are giving up. Paul said, you remember, in Galatia, "you did run what has now hindered you. You did so well, what hindered you." In other words, you were running in the power, in the strength of the Holy Spirit. What detoured you? What took you off the track? And so he says to her, he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Now, this vow is found in Numbers 6, you can look it up later on. But there were kind of four important things about it and let me give you these four things, and there were three rules about this.

Number one, it had to be voluntarily. In other words, it had to be from your heart. It is something that you could not be forced. It was something that out of your own personal conviction, you wanted to make this vow. And it was usually for about thirty to about ninety days and that was about it.

Secondly, it was for a purpose. It was for a purpose. In other words, it was to dedicate your life to the Lord. And so we read in Numbers - and you don't need to turn there, but we'll just give you these - in Numbers 6:2, he dedicated himself to the Lord. And then in Numbers 6:5, he separated himself unto the Lord. And then in Numbers 6:7 he separated himself unto the Lord. And then in verse 8, he separated himself unto his God. So, the purpose of this vow was to dedicate your life to the Lord.

And then number three it was to be symbolic. It was to be symbolic. In other words, nothing from wine; nothing from the vineyard. You couldn't have raisins, you couldn't have grapes. I love grapes, no grapes. You couldn't have anything and the reason why is because wine makes you giddy, makes you happy. And basically, the joy that had to fill your heart had to come from the Spirit of the living God and not from something else.

And so the two boys that were killed, you remember Aaron's two boys, it says that they offered a strange fire. We believe that they were drunk and they brought in a strange fire before God and God snuffed them. And so it's important that your emotions and your ability are not influenced by everything else. If you go crazy with caffeine, like I do sometimes because I'm allergic to it. Sometimes I drink it and I get really weird. I shouldn't drink it because it makes me do crazy things. And so it's important not to alter your behavior, do things that are going to cause a problem. And so the wine once again, was forbidden by the priest and here, forbidden by this vow. Why? Because their joy had to be the joy of the Lord. They had to get their joy and their substance from the Lord.

And then also, they were not only to abstain from drinking, but they were to abstain from shaving their head. In other words, this is the reason why. We always used this as hippies. When we got saved in 1970, we would always quote this one scripture. We're Nazarenes, you know, we made a vow. We had long hair down to our waist and our parents would say cut it. And we'd say we couldn't. And so we would think that the strength was in Samson's hair. Well, it's not. It's not in the strength of his hair nor is it in the strength of his back. It's in the strength of the commitment or the vow that he made before God. And by cutting his hair, he went against the vow and that's it. Some people say no, the strength was in his hair. No, it was in the commitment before God. And by cutting it, he broke the commitment. By flirting with women, he broke the commitment. By touching the dead animals, he broke the commitment. So you

say, well, how did he do this? All the way along his life he broke each of the commandments and we'll see that as we go. And so we find very simply, that lastly he was not to touch any dead bodies and so he couldn't go to any funerals or anything like that. So, this is the covenant for the rest of his life. And so we find kind of an interesting covenant.

And then in verse five, the very end, his ministry was going to be unique. He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines. But then in verse six and seven, you have this unique woman. And she is unique, I'll tell you. It says, **"Then the woman (I like that) then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told me his name: But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death"** (Judges 13:6-7)

Now check this out. This is so exciting. The woman didn't add to the story, nor did she take away from story. She was honest with her husband. I think the greatness of this woman is that she was able to communicate exactly what God said without adding or taking away, and that's a difficult thing to do in today's society. We are based on, often times, lying or not telling the truth, or a half truth, or kind of sharing, or I'm going to be here, or I'm going to be there, but we would never ever lay the whole truth out because if we did often times we would get the big "no". And so we have learned through our lifestyle, growing up, never to be honest; never to be honest with your boss or with your friends, or with your family, or with your wife, or even with your children because there's this double standard. And I believe that because we don't tell the truth, we have a double standard and that's where Satan gets you, every single time. It's not that you're really sinning, but you're living here and you're living here,

and Satan's attacking here and you've got just a little bit of truth. In other words, a little bit of a white lie. What in the world's a white lie? It's still a lie. It's still from the heart of Lucifer. And so the bible says, speak the truth and lie not. It says the truth will set you free. But when God spoke to her, she was able to share with her husband exactly what took place.

So, to me a marriage is communication and sharing the truth, and is learning how to say exactly what is on your heart and not to say anything more or anything less. If you're going to get in a fight, at least keep it where it's at. Don't go back a hundred years, you know? And don't say it twenty five times. Just say, this is what hurts me, this is what you did, and this really offends me. And I think if we could learn just to be honest, we would really grow in the grace and the knowledge. But we are afraid that if we tell the truth, we're going to be rejected. You might be rejected by man, but you're going to be accepted by God. And God's going to vindicate you, and God's going to do a work. And God will get rid of everybody else and put you in charge if that's what He wants to do. But if you lie, you're like everybody else and that's not what God wants. He wants those who are willing to speak the truth and do the truth and so it stops you. And so she was able to speak the word of God. It really ministered to my heart and she did not add nor did she keep away.

And then a unique husband, verse eight: **"Then Manoah entreated the Lord,** (this is so cool) **and said, my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born"** (Judges 13:8) So he cries out, now Lord, if it's ok with you, would you bring that guy back? And here's the exciting thing. He didn't challenge her, he didn't question her; what did he do? He went right to God and prayed. In other words, he trusted what his wife said. He took what she said at face value. He believed in her spirituality.

You don't see that today. What are you really trying to say? What do you really want? You know, why do you really want to go there? Why do you want to do that? It's always negative, negative, and so you almost set each other up because you want something so bad. And here, the moment he heard, he went to God and said, "God, bring this guy back." And here's why. That You might instruct us that we might raise this kid the way You really want to do it.

And so you have a couple who are now seeking to know how to raise their kid. You have a husband that's willing to pray. God give me wisdom. You've got a wife that's just blessed out of her mind that God's going to take away the barrenness and the reproach. And so Manoah entreats the Lord for further instruction. And we don't want to make a mistake, we need more information. And I would encourage you to bug God. I would encourage you. God we don't want to make a mistake at work, and we don't want to make a mistake in the ministry, Lord are we doing it the right way? Come on back here Holy Spirit, show me, teach me, God I'm open, help, come back, come back. And I think it's a wonderful thing when you seek the Lord.

You remember what it says of Asa, I just remembered this for a second, it says, "**And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said Lord it is nothing with thee to help whether with many or with them that have no power. Help us, O Lord, our God; for we rest on thee and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail against thee**" (2 Chronicles 14:11). And so we find here Manoah is now beginning to seek the Lord, and so a very unique man.

And then in verse nine, a very unique God, all the way down through verse twenty-three. Notice, number one, God is listening: "**And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah;** (in other words, God listens to you) and **the angel of God came again unto the woman and as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was**

not with her" (Judges 13:9). So, Manoah didn't say come to me, just come back, so he went back to the woman again. And notice in verse ten, the woman is running. **"And the woman made haste, and ran, and showed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day"** (Judges 13:10). And then notice in verse eleven and twelve, a husband is rising. In other words he's off the couch, he put down the remote control, he's now ready to go see what God wants to do. Now this is exciting: you've got God listening, you've got a woman running, you've got a guy rising. I mean, things are happening in this couple's life. It's not that they come home, "Oh wow," you know, "where's the potato chips and the couch?" And, you know, "what a drag," you know, "how's your day?" I mean God is dropping in on them and He's listening and they're talking. You don't find that today in marriages. Marriages don't talk. They fight or they walk around or they're concerned when you can talk to a single person or to a couple or to your children. If you can talk to people, let me tell you, you're going to make tremendous headway in your life. You need to learn to talk to people. You need to learn to talk to God.

And the moment God spoke to her, she communicated. The moment he heard it, he communicated to God. The moment God heard it, He communicated back to them. She heard, she goes running. All of a sudden he hears, he rises up, in verse eleven. **"And Manoah arose, and went after his wife and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man the (it's kind of cool) that speaketh unto the woman?** (I don't know why that makes me...you know, what's her name? And "the woman", you know) and **he said, I am"** (Judges 13:11). **And Manoah said, now let thy words come to pass.** (In other words, these are great words, let them come to pass) **How shall we order the child?** (Judges 13:12). That's a good word for those of you that have children. How should we raise the children and how shall we do unto him? In other words, what do you want us to do?

And then in verse 13-14, the angel speaks. **“And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, of all that I said unto the woman let her beware** (In others words, listen, this is a warning). **She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat unclean things: all that I command her, let her observe”** (Judges 13:13-14). In other words, if you really want to be obedient, make sure you’re wife stays obedient the way I told her. And when you have a husband - and those of you that are not married, I’m not slanting you right now - when you have a husband, or if you’re dating, you have a guy that their whole life is being obedient, you have a winner because he fears God. He says, “what do you want me to do?” “I want you to listen and I want you to help your wife.” Be obedient to the call of God upon my life.

And so in verse 13-15: **“And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, (now underline this) thou must offer it unto the Lord. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the Lord”** (Judges 13:15-16). Now this is kind of an insight that I see for my own personal life. I believe that Manoah was a wonderful man, but I believe the woman, his wife, was together, as she was more sensitive. And I believe that she was probably more God fearing. You say, well, how do you know that? He was ready to make an offering to a man and the angel said listen, do not do it to man, but do it to the Lord. And I think it’s an insight that once again he was overwhelmed and he was doing this and it was a burnt offering, it was to be a consecration offering.

And then in verse 17, this is kind of cute, the husband begins to talk too much. **“And Manoah said unto the angel, Lord, What is thy name, and when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? And the angel of the Lord said unto him, why askest thou... (Judges 13:17-18)** Now I imagine his wife is saying, “Shut

up, shut up, I want this child", you know? "Just be quiet", you know, "you're always talking! Just..." and that's what happens with guys. "Now wait a second, how is this going to work? Get this man back here, and let's talk" because we're so logical. And she says, "I don't care. I want to have a baby", you know? And, "let's talk about this". "No, be quiet and listen and accept the baby." "No, no, no." "What's your name?" I mean, I can see this whole thing, and I imagine the woman is saying, "I'm going to deal with you because if I lose this baby, I'm going to...I'm going to kill you tonight. So, you know, just be quiet."

And all of a sudden, **"And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, what is thy name? And when the saying came to pass we may do the honour And the angel of the Lord said unto him, why ask thou thus after my name, seeing it is a secret?"** (Judges 13:17-18). Now the word in the Hebrew, now check this out, means "wonderful". Same word as in Isaiah 9:7. You shall be called what? Wonderful Counselor. My name is Wonderful. Wonderful.

"So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord: and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. And it came to pass, when the flames went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flames of the altar. And Manoah and his wife (this is so cool) **looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground.** (Judges 13:19-20) In other words, this couple was now worshipping God together. They were sucking dirt. They were saying, boy, this is really cool. I mean, you know, we've heard from God, we've seen God, we've talked to God, we've come together and the thing that stands out to me of all the years I've been married, in 33 years, and all the things we've done together, when we have come together as a husband and wife and we have dealt disciplining our children, that is the greatest moment we have seen the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Now, Gail can correct the kids, and I can correct the kids. And our kids are gone. I mean, Nathan's thirty-two, Heather's

thirty-one. I mean, our kids are old, but when we were young, I would correct them and she would correct them and that's what you have to do. But there were times that we came together and when we came together to talk to them, it was like my gift and her gift were being used and God saw right through them and God did the greatest work with the kids. Now what am I saying?

I think when a husband and wife come together and seek God, fire's going to happen in your life. And God's going to say that these two are reconciled by the blood of Jesus Christ. So you can pray for the ministry, he can pray for the ministry, you can pray for this, he can pray for that, but when you start praying together for the ministry, and you start praying together for your children, and you start praying together for everything else in this situation, of being one accord, then God begins to move. When they were of one accord in the temple, then Pentecost happened. And so the bible says, come together lest your prayers be hindered. So when you come together, you're going to find tremendous work. They came together, they were talking, they were praying and all of a sudden, this fire ascends and the angel goes and they hit the ground.

And then in verse 21, 22, this husband, this great man of God. **"But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew..."** (Judges 13:21) see, underline it, then Manoah knew. I mean, it took a long time for him to believe. She believed instantly. Hey man, the angel of the Lord came and spoke to my heart. Uhhhh, ok, what'd he say? He said this, exactly. Ok. Man of God come back. I'm back. What's your name? Ok. What are you saying? Ok. How do you want us to raise...? Ok. What can we do to honor you? Well, don't honor me, honor God. Well, I want to sacrifice to you. No, sacrifice. Be careful. Sacrifice. So you being in the way, God will lead you even when you make a mistake. God will stop you and make sure you do the right thing. That's all that God wants.

It's like Abimilech, when he was ready to kill or to rape, you remember, Abraham's wife. Right before he did, he fell asleep, bless his heart, and God gave him

a dream. And this is the dream: you are a dead man. He woke up and, "Whoa, what was that all about?" The woman that's next to you is not your wife and she's married to Abraham. And he said, "I didn't know". And this is what God said: "Because of the integrity of your heart and because of the sincerity of your heart, I have kept you from sin." So, God said that to a heathen. How much more is God going to honor you if you're in God's will, seeking God's direction? You begin to go off a little bit, God will correct you. God will bring you back. Paul says if you be thus otherwise minded, God's going to show you. So, even the things you say, well, this is horrible, nothing is in vain. Everything's going to work out for His good and His glory.

And so we find that again: **"Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord. And Manoah said to his wife, We shall die** (we're going to die, we're going to die, and then his practical wife, bless her heart) **"But his wife said unto him, (now honey) If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shown us all these things, nor would he have told us such things as these"** (Judges 13:21-23). In other words, Honey, um...if He was going to kill us, we can't have a relationship. If we can't have a relationship we can't have this kid. You're just kind of going crazy on me. Calm down. And so you kind of see that sometimes. Wives are kind of, real practical. Well, how's it going to work? Don't worry. No, how's it going to work? No, we're just going to do it. How're we going to do it? We're going to pay for it. How're we going to pay for it? Don't worry about it. And the wife has gone ballistic. Sometimes it's vice a versa, so she's practical.

And lastly in verse 24-25, the Spirit's faithfulness: **"And the woman bared a son, and called his name Samson:** (and the word Samson means, once again, to be called "sunny". Sunny, or sunshine, sunny. The son is born.) **"And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him"** (Judges 13:24). That's so cool. And so he was a light in chapter 13. In chapter

14, the light began to flicker. In chapter 15, the light began to fade. And then in chapter 16 the light goes out. And then in verse 25, here's the key: **"And the spirit of the Lord began to move on him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol"** (Judges 13:25). And so we find that the spirit of the Lord begins to move. And that's the key very simply because it says four times the spirit came upon him. In chapter 13:25, the Spirit began to move. And then later on we'll see in chapter 14:6, and chapter 15, the Spirit came upon him mightily. And then of course, the Spirit came upon him in a powerful way.

And in closing I just think that, I wrote this down, "the high cost of low living". It just kind of ministered to my heart. The high cost of low living. When I desire to live a sub-normal Christian life, in other words, this is the standard, it's just kind of like in the world and kind of in Christ, and when I decide to live at that standard, it's going to cost me so much. I have so much of Christ, but I have the world in me, too, at the same time. And so I make bad decisions and when I look at Samson and the wonderful thing is you can't ask for a better thing. Here was a couple that loved God with all their heart. Here's a man who was entreating God and seeking God for direction. Here was a woman that was obedient to everything that God wanted, but they had this man named Samson and his whole life was perverted in sex. But here you have a spiritual family, with a perverted son. What happened? We're going to get to that next week. Sometimes it's not your parents; it's our choices. And sometimes you can have horrible parents. Horrible parents, like Ahab, and then you have a wonderful son like Hezekiah. So you think, how does this work? His choices were devastating because we find very simply, he was born for a purpose, but he wasted his life. For twenty years all he did was chase women. And he used his gifts and he prostituted the gift of God. And finally we find that his eyes were plucked out, the Spirit of God leaves him, he's bound, they shave his head, he's at the very end of his life, he's beaten up, they mock him, making fun of him, and the one verse that I love so much, and his hair, (I wish I could quote this) and his hair began to grow. And while he was grinding and binding, oh God I

repent, God I do this. He said, oh Lord, let me avenge my eyes and God says no. It's all about you. The two prayers he prayed was about himself, me, I, and my. Then he turns and Lord, let me avenge you and his hair began to grow and the covenant began to grow at the very end he pulled it down. And all that he did, at that moment was more than he did in a lifetime.

So, here's the catch. Five minutes of obedience is better than twenty years of disobedience. He wasted his life. The greatest gift, the greatest calling was God.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we ask tonight that, Lord, You would teach us by Your word. And Lord, just a little bit of an introduction about this man Samson, and I'm looking so much and so forward to seeing the wonderful things You have to teach us and how I need to learn that, God, that You've given us strength and You've given us ability and we're not to abuse the strength nor the ability but Lord, we are to surrender that. And what a tragic thing to realize that all the different judges delivered Israel, but that which he begun, he was not able to finish because he lived for himself and not for the people of God. He was not able to deliver the people because of himself. Lord, help us in Jesus name, Amen.