

“Lust at First Sight” –Judges 14:1-20

Well, shall we turn in our Bibles to Judges 14:1-20, and we want to title it: Lust at First Sight. So you kind of know where I'm going to go. If you had a problem this week with lusting, you're going to be in serious trouble tonight. But I believe that the book of Judges has become one of the fun books. I have to honestly say that it has gone beyond Nehemiah, and beyond anything that I have done in my life. I've always felt that Nehemiah was probably a book that I taught. Don McClure said that he taught Nehemiah better than Nehemiah wrote it. I won't go that far. But the book of Judges, I really had a difficult time getting started. And I thought, Lord, there's nothing in this book. Well, I have repented and there are all kinds of sin, and there are all kinds of rebellion, and it's been a good thing, constantly to keep it before my face, of the power of sin and the power of the Holy Ghost. And that God blesses and God anoints, but we have a choice. And I want to talk to you tonight about choices because it's your choice how you want to live your life. And according to Hebrews, you remember in 11:32, Samson was a man of faith. It says, **“And what shall I more say? For the time should fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, also Samuel the prophet.”** And though he was a man of faith, he was not a faithful man. And that's important that you would understand. There were moments in his life that he had tremendous faith, and he did great exploits for God. But when it came to his commitment to God, and his commitment to his parents, and his commitment to the people, he was not faithful. And I think that's a revelation in our lives tonight: that it's possible to have the gift of God, to be inspired by God, to even have certain gifts and talents and not be faithful to God. And the Bible says that His gifts are without repentance. And so we find that Samson wasn't faithful to the vows that he made before God. He broke every one of them. And he was not faithful as a son because he would not listen

to his mom and dad. He was rebellious. And he wasn't even faithful with the people that God placed over him or around him to lead them and to guide them. He never did anything with anybody at all. It was all Samson. There were no armies. There was no one going with him. He went everywhere by himself. And even when it came to this marriage, we're going to find he didn't even have a best friend. He had to take 30 of the Philistines to stand in for the wedding. It's a tragic story. And really whatever success Samson had, whatever greatness he had was because in chapter 13, look at it with me, in verses 24 and 25. **"And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and (underline) the Lord blessed him.** There's the key: the Lord blessed him. And then in verse 25: **"the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at that time in the camp of Dan..."** And so two things are said in verse 24: #1, the Lord blessed him, and #2, the Spirit of the Lord began to move. And so anything that you read about the greatness of Samson was the work of the Holy Spirit. Everything that you read about how his carnality dominated his life and wasted his life was given because of his own selfish desires. And so I believe, often times, we take way too much credit. We think that we have done this, or we're able to do this, or we have put this together, or we have built this church, or we're doing something right. I think what's happening here is just simply a sovereign work of God and God very simply could take and go down the street and do it again and decide that we would not grow. So to say that we're growing because of this, or we're growing because of that, or God is blessing our ministry is not true. God is blessing because of the Spirit of the Living God, and we cannot take any credit for our marriage, for our single lives, for our work, whatever we do. We need to learn to give glory to God. And you're going to find something very fascinating that I've never seen before tonight. You're going to see why the Holy Spirit came upon him in power. And I believe it was not for any other reason but to save his life, and to keep him in the calling, and to bring him back to God because this man was out of control. And so in the moments when the Spirit of God came upon him, they were the worst moments of his life.

And I think that that's kind of interesting of the grace of God. That if all of sudden, I begin to go down this road, and I'm having a horrible time and I'm falling apart, don't be surprised if God one day just comes and fills you with the power of the Holy Spirit, and he rescues you and brings you back because, now listen, because God's not done with you, and because God has a purpose in your life, and because God's not going to give up on you. But it takes the power of God to get your attention. And every moment we find the Spirit coming upon this man; it was to bring him back to where he is. And yet in this horrible disobedience, God used it. And you're going to find something very unique, what goes on in your life. How can I, all of a sudden, be so wrong and things be right, and how can I be so right and things go wrong. You're going to see how the Spirit of God is able to make even my mistakes be used for the glory of God. So Pilate was able to say, I don't know this man. I wash my hands of Jesus Christ. He didn't stop the determined counsel of God. God gave him a chance to be great. He chose not to be great, but it didn't hinder the work of God. So no matter what I do, it's not going to hinder the work of God. God will raise somebody up, or I'll be able to go out, but God's work is going to continue. And so it's God that did the work.

Now between chapters 13 and 14, 20 years have taken place. So he was a child in chapter 13. Now we're going to see him about 20-21 years old. And between chapters 13 and 14, the very first step he takes as a man, the very first act that he does, and the tragic thing is it's downward. And this is a book, especially chapter 14, I want you to take a look at verse one: He went down. And then notice in verse 5: he went down. And then in verse 7: he went down. And then in verse 10: he went down. And then in verse 19: he went what? Down. The very first step he took as a man was down. All of the raising that he had as a child, all of the education that his mom and dad did, everything that prepared him for this moment, he chose to walk away from it. And so you're going to see that this chapter, his light begins to flicker and then next week his light goes out.

And it's a tragic story but once again it's kind of exciting. I think it's a wonderful chapter. As we look at verses 1-4, down to Timnah. And so he's down, going down. The very first words, "**Samson went down...**" Boy what a testimony of his life. And when I walk away from God, I begin to do my own things like Jonah. He went down. He went down to Tarshish; he went down to the ship; he went down to the bottom of the ship; he went down to the belly of the whale; he went down to the bottom of the ocean. In other words, that man was going down because he turned on God. And Samson went down to Timnah and he saw a woman in Timnah, the daughter of the Philistines. And so the tribe of Dan was next to the city of the Philistines. And there's the problem, often times that we get too close to sin. Dan was a wicked tribe of the children of Israel and they lived next to the Philistines. And often times, we begin to mingle, or we begin to look and see what the Philistines have. We see the worship that we do is kind of this way, and we see the worship that they do, it's mingled with orgies and everything else and it looks so much more exciting. We see this one that we have, this God that we have the word of God and the oracles of God and over here they can do everything they want. Over here, there are really no rules, and here, there is God leading. And so we find that when you begin to live close to evil, often times you mingle with it, and that's the danger of mixed relationships. And Jesus said once again, don't be unequally yoked and the danger of worshipping other gods. And Paul mentioned in 2 Corinthians 6:14, "**Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness?**" In other words, there's none. But notice in verse 1, it says that he saw. In other words, he's looking. He's not only in the wrong country; he's not in Israel, he's in the area of the Philistine country, which he was the governor, or the judge of all of Israel. He had no business being here. Now he's checking out the babes, looking at the women and all of a sudden he is looking. And what's he looking at? He's looking at the women. He's looking at the possibility of marrying one of these women. So right off the bat, he is breaking

the vow of the Nazirite. He is now beginning to mingle himself. He's not being separate from the Lord. He is now in a place he shouldn't be. He's looking at things he shouldn't be looking at. Does that sound like us? In other words, why are you here and what are you doing? And sometimes we end up in parties. And sometimes we end up at movies. And sometimes we end up where we ought not to be. And we are taking a downward step. And that's what needs to register in your mind. When all of a sudden, the Holy Spirit says to you: What are you doing here? That means you have walked off of the course, you're no longer walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. And God is putting that check within your heart. And once again, he's no longer living by faith. He's living by sight. And then in verse 2, **"And he came up, and told his father and his mother..."** (14:2) And that's interesting to me: he came up. In other words, when he was away from his mom and dad, he went down. When he came back to this couple who were righteous before God, he came up. And that's all he did: up and down, up and down. **"And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnah, a daughter of the Philistines: now, therefore, get her for me."** (14:2-3) Would you underline that: "Go out and get her for me." So he doesn't say anything to his dad but hey, you go and get her for me. And I imagine at that moment, Samson's parents were brokenhearted. Samson, are you sure? Do you understand what you're about ready to do? Don't you know that we raised you this way? Don't you remember we told you that the angel of God Himself came and said that this is going to be a child and that your mother had to sanctify herself and purify herself and she had to take this vow, and we had to make a covenant before God that we could never ever cut your hair for the rest of your life, no raisins or grapes or wine would ever be given to you, and you would never be able to mess around with anything that's dead. We have done that for you. And then we have seen God's hand upon your life, and the goodness of God, and the power of God. What are you doing, son? And all of a sudden, we begin to realize: choice. He did not want what his parents had. He did not want

what God wanted for him. His mind was set in these women, and doing what he wanted to do. And what happened is he, in his mind, knew that he was special, knew that he had power, and knew that there was something different about him. And in his mind he thought that gave him a license to live any way he wanted. And what is so sad is that because God didn't deal with him, he interpreted that it was okay. But it wasn't okay. He was going to pay a price, and what he should have said is the reason that God isn't judging me is He's giving me a chance to repent, but if I won't repent, God's going to deal in my life. And that is what happened in a very sad way. And Samson, how could you do this? It broke his mom and dad's heart. To honor God, to walk away from everything you are. And then what was his counsel? Listen get her right now. And the revelation of his heart is so important to realize. In other words, he didn't want to submit to authority. He didn't want the authority of God; did not want the authority of his parents; did not want anyone telling him what to do. And that's what happens when people walk away from God. That's what happens when your children walk away from God. What they are saying, very simply, is they do not want your God, nor do they want the authority over their life. And so he rejected his parents. He rejected his God, and he had no heart. Now that's key, he had no heart to listen to their counsel. And then in verse 3, **"Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among my people, that thou goest to take a wife of an uncircumcised Philistine? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me."** (14:3) Dad, don't mess around. Why? She pleases me. In other words, every man is doing that which is right in his own eyes. In other words, it feels good. Dad, she's great looking. Grab her as quickly as you can. Now he hasn't even talked to her. He just saw her. So he is basically saying to dad and mom: Go down and work this deal out because I want this girl in my life. And his father, in verse 4 said (and his mother), **'Know not that it was of the Lord, that He sought an occasion against the Philistines for at that time the Philistines had (dominant over) domain**

over Israel”. (14:4) Now, don't misunderstand what he's saying. It's not saying that Samson was in the will of God. It is saying that Samson was out of the will of God, but even though he was out of the will of God, God was not going to lose Samson. So even though he was doing evil, God was going to turn the table, and use even the evil that Samson was doing for the glory of God. It says even evil is going to praise God. So that's an interesting thing, if all of a sudden, I'm doing so badly and God begins to bless me. So I'm ... I guess I'm okay. Not at all, it is God sending a message that He's alive and well and He wants to turn you around, not that He's endorsing what you're doing. And I believe that many people are going down this road thinking that it's okay to live in sin because, hey, we're sleeping together. Hey, my parents gave us a new car. God's blessing us. And we're, you know, we're sleeping together and you know the bank just decided to pay off our bills. Well, you need to remember Satan can also provide. And you understand that according to God's word, he is now in total violation. He has no business being in the Philistines. He has no business looking at this woman. He has no business intermingling. And all of a sudden, he's doing everything he really shouldn't do. And so it says, in verse four: He knew not. In other words right and wrong blended; a very confusing but the wicked choice. Pilate made that wicked choice, and God used it anyway. And God is going to work, and plan to help him, and God's going to destroy the enemy. God's going to break the Philistines. And God's going to get the glory once again. And God is going to use this to do a work. And from this moment on we find Samson killing 30 men. And then we find him catching 300 jackals or foxes together, tying their tails together and putting torches in and torching the fields of the Philistines. And then we find killing 1,000 men with a jawbone of an ass. And we'll see that next week. But God is able to use even this rebellion, once again, for His glory. So God never allowed it. The marriage never happened.

It was it says in verse 16, that they were married, but they were going through the process of getting married. Not like today. In other words, they would have

to, they had no sex, and they had nothing. They had to wait for seven days and then they could have sex. And it's interesting that God killed or this woman, his bride-to-be was killed, and so God did not allow the wedding to go through which tells me that if Samson would have married this gal, the calling of God would have been off in his life. In other words, God could not afford to do this. So things happen in Samson's life that really hurt him, but God had a call upon his life. And I want to challenge you tonight, that when you are getting so rebellious with God, you're fighting against God. And God is going to work, and turn and change, and you're going to find yourself butting into walls constantly and things are going to fall apart in your life. And God's going to do things and you're going to be so: What in the world's going on? In other words, what happened here is Samson got so mad, he went back and lived with his mom and dad. That's a good thing. So God saved him because God had a work to do. But God, but Samson got himself in a mess. So in verses 1-4, basically he went down to a wrong place to live. And then in verses 5 and 6, he went down to a vineyard. He didn't learn his lesson. He's in, not only, in the wrong place, but he's in the wrong area. In verse 5, **"Then went Samson down, (again underline the word 'down') and his father and his mother, to Timnah, and came to a vineyard (underline 'vineyard') in Timnah: and, behold, a young lion roared against him."** (14:5) Now, #1, why was the lion there? And #2, as a Nazirite who made the vow - the vow was you are never to drink wine, you are never to eat raisins, and you are never to have grapes. So why in the world is he walking among the wine area or the vineyards? In other words, that's like taking a guy who has lust and say: Hey, let's go over to Hugh Hefner's house and see what's going. I mean, why would you do that? In other words, he is now tempting. He is now flirting. He is now playing. Now listen to me. This is what happens: I can handle it. I can walk down this vineyard. I'm not going to touch a grape. I'm not going to. What are you doing there? In other words, you've already violated the very vow that is in your heart that you're there. In other words, you're going to go down. He was there. He shouldn't be. So what

did God do? He sent a lion. And what's kind of interesting is I find when we are disobedient, and out of God's will, Satan beats you to death. Satan comes after those who are disobedient. And the more disobedient you are, the louder his roar becomes. And God wanted to turn this man away from the vineyard. What are you doing there? And to me that tells me, there's a roadblock. Something's happening that stops you dead in your tracks. Something tells you: You better not do that. Something stops you and it's - you can't jump over it. And God has these lions all over the place warning us and stopping us and checking our hearts, but often times we don't listen. And so all of a sudden, there was a lion and he was to, you remember, be separated but he's now hanging out in the vineyards. And, once again he begins to break one of these vows each time. And so you look at Samson and you say: How could he walk away from God? And you say to yourself: How can this brother walk away from God? And you say: How can this pastor walk away from God? Or how can this woman walk away from God? I'll tell you how. You break one vow at a time. You break one commandment at a time. You go and you play here and then you play here and you play there and you do things, and you are places you ought not to be. You shouldn't be on the Internet. You shouldn't be there, but you're there. And that's the danger because in your heart, you are defying God. You are saying: Listen, I know what you want but I'm not going to give it to you. I appreciate how you want to bless me, but I'm not going to go any further. And God sends roadblocks, and God brings lions. And all of a sudden, Samson is in the wrong place. He's at the wrong people. Everything is wrong within his life. And the young lion roars, and God is giving him plenty of opportunities. And I think that roar is saying: What are you doing in this Philistine country? And what are you doing with that woman? And what are you doing in the vineyard? And Satan begins to roar. And then we see once again, his father and mother went down with him. In verse 6, **"And the Spirit of the Lord came down upon him mightily."** (14:6) I think it had to, to protect him so he wouldn't get killed by this lion. **"The Spirit of God came upon him. He ripped it as he would**

have rent a kid.” (14:6) Now, I like that phrase. I underlined: ‘rent a kid.’ I think if we could start renting kids, we’d have a lot of things going on right here. You wouldn’t have to have all these kids, you could rent one, see if you like it. But just kind of fun. I saw that. That’s a kind of neat little thing rent a kid here. You know, don’t have grandchildren, you want a kid? Hey, we’ll rent a kid to you. You can enjoy this kid for a day, you know. Well anyway that’s just a little thing here, to rent a kid. **“Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily.”** (14:6) I’ll get letters on that one. Oh, you don’t like kids. I love kids.) **“And he rent his... (And he ripped him apart, like a kid), and he had nothing in his hands: but he told not his father or his mother what he did.”** (14:6) Now listen, why didn’t he tell his mom and dad? Because mom and dad would say: What are you doing down in Philistines? And then mom and dad would say: What are you doing, looking at that woman? And then mom and dad would say: What are you doing in the vineyard? So you don’t say anything to people. And so we begin to live a secret life. We begin to have secret things. We begin to have double standards because we can’t afford for anybody to know what really is going on. And this became a very private, sinful moment in his life. He couldn’t look in his mom and dad’s eyes and say to them, I am violating God. In other words, he couldn’t do it. And then he went back a second time. He couldn’t tell them a second time. And you know that the lion is unclean. So he had no possibility and, this is so cool, he had no possibility to get out of it. He had to deal with it because the lion was coming. He was in the wrong place. He had to deal with the sin. He was now unclean because he touched the lion. But then we’re going to find, in just a few moments, he went back a second time, to look at what he did. He didn’t have to do that. And there are moments in my life, I make mistakes, and God deals in my life, and there’s no way out of it but for me to get involved and get out of it. But to go back and do it again is rebellion. And that’s what he did. And the Spirit of the Lord, and I see it in my life today, the Spirit of God came upon him to deliver him, not to rip the lion apart, but to deliver him. And it’s like, if I could do a movie, oh, Samson’s in

trouble, the lion's coming. I sent the lion to scare him, but now he wants to tackle him. We better save him because if he dies, we're not going to be able to use this guy. And God just graciously protects him. Now has God ever done that for you? And what does God get? Nothing. We go out bragging. Did you see what I did? See how tough I am. I'm tough. I'm one tough puppy, stay away. I ripped a lion apart. Hey, why did you rip it apart? Well I, that's not important. Yes. What were you doing in the vineyard? That's not important. I ripped this lion apart. Who helped you? I did it. No, God did it because you were in sin. You were in the wrong place and what are you doing messing with lions anyway? You see we're not honest. All we do is boast about how powerful we are. It was God's grace that got you out of it. And because of the lack of humility, guess what? You haven't learned your lesson. And here he says, here: **"And he told not his mom and dad."** Notice in verse 6: Did not tell them. Notice in verse 9: Did not tell them. And then in verses 7-9, he went down to talk to this gal. This guy is going down; the wrong person for God. And he went down and talked with the woman. Now this is how he's going to say, would you marry me? **"And she pleased Samson well."** Okay great, he went down. He went down to invite her to marry him, and he went down like Jonah. **"After a time, he returned to take her."** Now underline: **"He turned aside,** (this is so sad) **to see the carcass of the lion and behold there was a swarm of bee and honey in the carcass of the lion."** (14:8) Now, this is what really is sad. First of all, God got him out of that problem. But he was constantly thinking about the power that came upon him, and about what he did. So there's no doubt every night, every morning, every waking hour, he's thinking about going back. You see the sin is drawing him back. He has to see. In other words, he can't walk away from it. He has to go back. There's this tremendous pull going back towards evil. Satan is pushing him. Go back and look at this dead animal. A Nazirite is not to have anything to do with an animal. Don't go back into the vineyard. God got you out of the vineyard. I have to go back. I have to see. I have to do it. And there's this tremendous pull in your life. You

have to go to the Internet. You have to push one more button. You have to look at one more picture. Bam! They have you. I have to take that one little joint, just one more little hit, just one more little drink. They have you. And you shouldn't even be there, but the power in your mind: I have to go back. And God needs to cleanse your mind, and God needs to cleanse your heart. And you need to understand: That is wickedness and forbidden by God. That is rebellion. That is Satanic. You don't want to go back there. I want to go back there because I took out a lion, because I am God's man. And so we read in verse 8, he turned and went back aside, and he was disobedient, and he defiled himself. And the first time, he had to fight the lion. The second time, it was his own choice. And he went back to the sinfulness of his own life. He went back to the cleanliness. He went back to the path of sin. He chose to go back and see. In other words, I have to have it. I have to see it. I have to touch it. And that's what happens when you begin to get in sin. I have to touch it. I have to see it. I have to have it. God isn't doing anything for me. The Holy Spirit isn't real. Jesus Christ isn't coming. But I can see sin. I can touch it. I can grab it. I can have it.

And then there is honey the sweetest thing inside the deadness. And this is so sad. It says here in verse 9, and he took, therefore, his hand and he went and thrust his hand into the wickedness of sin. He's going deeper in sin. He had to kill that lion. Now, he puts his hand inside a filthy, dead carcass and takes out the honey. And he has defiled himself. What a tragic thing. You see sin is that sweetness but it kills you. It defiles you. And it says here that he violated his vow. He touched it. **"But he told them not."** So he didn't tell them. And then in verses 10-18, he went down to a feast. This was going to be his feast, and he was with the wrong friends. In verse 10, **"So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast;"** (14:10) And the word feast here in the Hebrew is a party. It was a Philistine party. There was drinking and no doubt he was drinking and there was all kinds of things going on: a seven day

drunken party. **“For they used the young man to do...”** (14:10) In other words, he didn't have any friends. He had to have his own people around him. He went down to the woman, and once again, it's a tragic thing what's happening in his life. And the young men, they picked him out. In other words, the Philistines are now standing by his side. What a tragic thing. He's with the wrong woman, in the wrong place. He's been given 30 guys that he doesn't even know. These are going to be your friends. **“And it came to pass, when they saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him.”** (14:11) In other words, they picked out his friends. And that's what happens every time in the world.

And then verse 12: **“And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: (This is the one we know so well.) if ye can certainly declare it with me seven days (before seven days of the feast) find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments; but if you cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him; Put forth thy riddle unto me so we can hear it. And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth the meat, and out of the strong came forth the sweet. And they could not in three days explain the riddle.”** (14:12-14) Well, if they were in their right minds, they possibly are able to do it. In other words, they were looking for an eater; they were looking for something that would eat. And what was the fiercest thing that they had that could eat? It was a lion. And then they were looking for something sweet. And what is the sweetest thing that they had in the nation of Israel? It was honey. So if they weren't drunk there'd be a good possibility. But they couldn't figure it out. And verse 15, **“And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he might declare.** (14:15) Now, the word wife does not mean legally married, it means that they were in the process of getting married, but once again **that they may declare unto the riddle.”** (14:15) And the reason

why: **"If you don't we're going burn you and your father's house. (14:15)** These are nice guys. Good best men. **Have ye called to take that we have it?" (14:15)** In other words, we're going to burn you. We're going to destroy you. Verse 16: **"And Samson's wife wept before him, (and here is an incredible thing) and said, Thou does hate me and loveth me not." (14:16)** So this is a woman thing, kind of, all of a sudden she's now pouring it on. This is that gift that they have, the ability, once again, to kind of blackmail you. You know, hey, if you love me you'd do it. If you, how can you do it? On and on and on, and Samson just couldn't handle it. And all of sudden, **"Thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people and thou hast told it unto me. And said unto her, behold I have not told it unto my father nor my mother and shall I tell it to you? And she wept before him seven days." (14: 16-17)** This ought to be the happiest days of their lives. She's one weeping bride, seven days weeping, **"while their feast lasted: it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she laid scorn upon him." (14:17)** I mean she was throwing herself on him, weeping, **"and she told the riddle to the children of her people." (14:17)** All of a sudden we find this horrible almost-marriage; two people that can't talk; two people that are playing games; Two people that are lying to each other. There's no spirituality whatsoever in it. And this is what happens when I go down this road.

And then in verse 18, **"the man of the city said unto him, on the seventh day, before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey and what is stronger than a lion? And he said, (this is one of the great verses), and he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer." (14:18)** In other words, you know, he calls his wife a heifer. If you would not have been messing with my heifer, you would not have got this. Now, this is kind of interesting. I got into this. It means, if you had not been sleeping with her. So she didn't tell Samson that her life was threatened, and they were going to kill her, and kill mom and dad. So there's no communication there. And he

assumes that she had been sleeping with them so there was no communication there at all.

And then lastly, in 19-20 (I'll wrap it up): Down in anger. They're down a tremendous thing. **"And then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him,"** (14:19) He went down because he was mad. In other words, things were falling apart. **"And he slew thirty men of them, took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house."** (14:19) Now underline "he went up to his father's house." In other words, he was out of control. Nothing's gone right. He's angry. He's killing people. He's throwing these bloody garments at these people. He wants to kill a bunch of people. And finally he ends up at his Father's house. That's where you want to go tonight. Whatever it takes to get you to the Father's house. Whatever it gets to have you understand that everything that's happening to your whole life is to get you to the Father's house. All the disappointments, all the agony, all the times that we've been caught in doing certain things, or we've been busted or people are been after our case, or we've been fired, or we've been moved around here, it's all to get you to the Father's house. Now God has a plan, believe it or not He has a plan for your life. And left to yourself, you're going to blow it. God sends His Spirit to rescue us out of the hands of the enemy so we might be able to do the work that God wants us to do. This man, God had His hands full. And the tragic story is that he never really did anything for God. Everything he did, God had to save him, and so at the very end of his life, his life was wasted. In other words, instead of him and God fighting together, he was fighting God the whole way. And sometimes we think we're fighting for God, but in reality we're really fighting against God. And sometimes we say: God you don't really care, and all you do is take things away from me, but in reality it's God protecting you, and God loving you. So in my mind, when I see this tremendous fish going after Jonah, I can write over the top Jonah: Great has been my rebellion but greater

still Thy faithfulness. And so to me, this incredible fish that rescued Jonah from the storm, they threw him over the side of the ship, but God was there to catch him because God had a work to do in Jonah's life. Now it didn't bother God, but I tell you what, Jonah paid a price. And God doesn't mind wrestling with you, and God doesn't mind listening to you, and God doesn't mind fighting with you, but there comes a time that all of the energy God that gave you to use to be a leader, you're using to justify and work and it's just hard being a Christian. And if it's hard being a Christian, it's because you're not doing what God wants you to do. He's asked you to pray, you won't pray. He's asked you to stay in the word, don't want to be in the word. He's asked you to get involved, don't want to get involved. But I want to go here, and I want to do this, and we see everybody doing that which is right in their own eyes. Well I believe the Bible says that God called you, and God predestined you, and God made you to be to the praise of His glory. So the first thing you should do is: Lord, what is your will? Sanctify me spiritually, soul and body. In other words, show me what you want me to do.

And then he says in verse 19: **"He went down."** And then in verse 20: **"And Samson's wife was given to his best man whom he had used as a friend."** (14:20) And it goes on to say, that they were killed and so the whole thing ended up, and we find in a very simple way, and I think, for me, the application is that sometimes you can raise your children in a godly way, and sometimes you can do leadership in a very godly way, but you have to make a choice. And sometimes kids, and sometimes leaders and sometimes pastors, they love sin more. And sin entices them. And sin draws them. And sin is calling them. And though they know what is right, they do not want to listen anymore. Because in their mind, they know what's right. And they are so far from God it's unbelievable. And just the fact that Samson would go back, and look at the sin, and reach his hand inside of that sin, and then boast about his own strength. He was mocking God.

And then I want to end by saying this: The riddle. Wow! That's a great riddle. Let me tell you about this riddle, how I see it. This riddle is a very open revelation of his heart. First of all, what he did in that vineyard was sinful. What he did was disobedient. What he did was unheard of. He violated the Nazarene vow, broke the very thing that God wanted, caused this entire thing to happen on him, and now he has the audacity to stand before people and make it a riddle. He didn't care about his sin. And when all of a sudden you gloat in the things you're doing, or boast in the things you're doing, and you make riddles. That's not what God wants. That riddle should never have been said because that was a very shameful moment in his life, but he turned it and used it, and boasted, and he mocked God, and he mocked his parents, and he mocked the call of God upon his life, and he went down. So that's what happens. Well Steve, how did this happen? How did I get here? You violate this. Didn't turn here. You misread God here. You didn't pay attention here. You took advantage here. You didn't understand what the Holy Spirit was doing here. And all of a sudden, you end up here. And seeing the sweetness and you're playing with this perverse, dead carcass full of maggots, and you're reaching a hand in and saying: Man, this is so cool. But you can't tell your mom and you can't tell your dad, and you can't tell anybody else because it's that wicked.

Closing Prayer: Well, Father, we ask tonight that Lord, these are good things to ponder. I, in my own heart, I look at this man. Lord, as a pastor, that God, had the unique calling upon his life to do something great and that, Lord, others taught him, and raised him, but when it came time for the very first act, the very first step as a man, he went down. It was already in his heart. He already made the choice. He didn't want to be like his parents; didn't want to live under this vow; didn't want to deliver these people. And he prostituted the gift that You gave him. And all he did was, Lord, use the strength for selfish ambitions. Lord, these are good lessons for us that, Lord, You have rescued us from our sin. We

know it but, Lord, we have not given You credit or praise and we like to say tonight: Thank you, Lord, that you are a God that rescues, and You are a God that sends Your Holy Spirit. And God, You will send Your Spirit and You will quicken us. And the reason why is because You have called us, and there's a purpose, and there's a destiny, and God you want to lead us and guide us. And, Father, You need to come and rescue us tonight. So God, by Your powerful hand of salvation, would You pull us out of the miry clay? And God, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, would you break that bondage, and that curse in our life? And God, when we begin to go backwards and want to take a look at what we've done, may we just feel so shameful, and God, turn. Help us never find our self mocking You, or making riddles about our own sin. But God, tonight, I see Your grace more than I've ever seen before: that You rescued this man by the power of Your Holy Spirit because you wanted him to do something. And I pray for us tonight. I pray that we would heed the warning of God, and that we would say: Jesus, thank you. What would You have me to do?

And, Lord, while our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed, maybe some tonight would say: Steve, you know, I'm like Samson. I've been living for myself, and I don't even know if I know Jesus Christ. Or maybe tonight, you would say, that you've been going down to the vineyard. You know you shouldn't be those places but for some reason, you're just drawn towards sin. And tonight we want to pray for you that you would come to know Christ or rededicate your life. If you like me to pray with you, would you simply lift your hand that I might pray for you tonight? And lift them high, that I might pray for you. Oh, don't hesitate. This is between you and God. God is asking you to stop the way you're going and turn around and start heading towards the kingdom of God, to go to the Father's house tonight. Father, we thank You and God, that is my heart, forever in this book, he went to the Father's house. Lord, would you bring us tonight to the Father's house. That's what it's all about. All this stuff we're going through is to get us to the kingdom of God. So help us not

get mad at You. You're the only One that can help us. God, forgive us for looking at each other. Lord, You have to change our hearts. And we will thank You, in Jesus' name. Amen.