



## **The Prayer At The Pillar**

*Rev. Philip Harrelson*

***Judges 16:25-30 KJV** And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars. [26] And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. [27] Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. [28] And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. [29] And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. [30] And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.*

### **I. INTRODUCTION -- THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMEBACKS**

- There is something about people, maybe just Americans who like comebacks. We like to hear of men who were once down and others make it big. We like to hear of men who become destitute financially and then strike it rich. Why is that??? Because we like the underdog. The man who is not supposed to win and does it anyway.

### **II. THE LIFE OF SAMSON**

#### ***A. His Birth***

- If there was something promising about the life of Samson it would have to be the company that he came from. He came from a group of men who angels came and announced their births. Isaac's birth was preceded by an angelic messenger. John the Baptist's birth was preceded by a visit from Gabriel. Gabriel visited Mary before the birth of Jesus. Manoah was visited by an angel before the birth of Samson.
- It was clear from the outset that this small baby named Samson was going to have a profound impact on the lives of Israel.

#### ***B. Samson's Victories***

- Samson became a Nazarite. By the vows of the Nazarite, the razor was to never touch his hair. He was never to have any strong drink to inebriate his mind. It was to be a life of commitment. Because he was set aside for God, God endowed him with a great strength.
- The accomplishments in the life of Samson are many:
- He had the ability to slay lions with his bare hands.
- He then took honey from the beast.
- He caught three hundred foxes and attached firebrands to them so that the Philistines fields and vineyards were consumed by the flames.
- Another time he "smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter" at Etam.
- At Lehi, he took the jawbone of a donkey and slew one thousand men with the instrument. He found a refreshing drink of water in the same weapon at a future point.
- He carried off the gates of the city of Gaza.

#### ***C. Samson's Failures***

- But even with all of the great victories associated with life of Samson, he had a deficiency in his character. Men

have deficiencies in their lives and if the Spirit of God is not in control there will be that failure every single time. No man can afford to drift from the doctrine once delivered to the saints.

- Samson found a pretty young Philistine that took his breath away. His time and energies were consumed by the passion of Delilah. He found himself being wooed into a web of trickery and deceit when Delilah started questioning him about the source of his great strength.
- When the devil begins to question you about your own strength, you better forget about it being your strength. It is the power of God that has the ability to keep us aligned in the proper relationship with God.

- **1. The Source of Satan's Power**

- When we begin to investigate biblically from where the devil gains his power, it leads to an interesting conclusion.
- From Isaiah 14, when the devil asserted the five "I wills", he was cast from heaven. So before creation ever began he had been thrown from heaven and God had effectively destroyed his power in heaven.
- In Genesis 3, after the fall of man, one finds that the power of the devil has been removed and he is forced again to understand his submission to God.
- In Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John after the event at Calvary, one finds again that the devil has his power removed from him, for he no longer controls death, hell, or the grave.
- So the question now arises, "Where does the devil get his power from?" The devil can only control those whom allow him to. A Spirit-filled man has power over the devil and his imps.
- So to those who believe that the devil can give them power, they are fooling themselves. The devil cannot bring power to any man's life. The paradox is that the man gives the devil the power to destroy everything active, positive, and alive in his life.

- **2. The Strength of the Spirit**

- The key to successful Christian living is found in the letter to the Colossians.
  - *Colossians 3:2-4 KJV Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. [3] For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. [4] When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*
- Your life is hid with Christ in God. This strength is not some obligation to morals, it is not strict discipline that keeps one from sin, it is not my righteousness. It is the power of God that keeps me from the life of sin.
- Samson kept putting his head in the lap of the world.
  - He kept getting closer and closer to the failure.
  - He started talking about being bound with seven green vines.
  - Then he progressed to being bound with new ropes.
  - Then he progressed to the weaving of his locks of hair.
  - Finally, there was nothing left to withhold from Delilah. "My great strength lies in my hair. If it is cut then I will be as weak as any other man."
- When Delilah had his head shaved, she awoke him with the silky voice, "Samson, the Philistines be upon thee." He arose to shake himself as he had done in times past and found that his strength had deserted him. He fell like the timber under the woodman's axe when the Philistines jumped him.
  - *Judges 16:20 KJV . . . And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.*
- Samson soon found himself at the grindstone.
  - His eyes had been burned out with hot irons.
  - He was bound in chains of brass.
  - His head was shaved.
  - His strength was gone.
  - Here the great judge of Israel was grinding corn for the Philistines in the prison house.
- It is full of irony how that the devil will reduce your life to nothing. He will allow all of the spiritual victories that you can handle but then in the end he wants you to be a failure. For quite some time, it looked as if Samson would just rot in some Philistine prison. But God still has the power in reserve for those who are willing to be a comeback.

### **III. THE PRAYER AT THE PILLAR**

- A day came to the kingdom of Philistia for a grand party. It was a wild, drunken affair where everything wicked

was embraced.

- After a while, one of the Philistine governors, perhaps decides that it is time to bring out the great Israelite champion, Samson. The Bible very clearly distinguishes the setting for us.
  - *Judges 16:23-25 KJV Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. [24] And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. [25] And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.*

#### *A. The Sport Made of Samson*

- The Philistines began to laugh and chant at the champion. The Bible says that they made sport of him.
- They laughed at him with derision and disgust. They hurled their sarcasm at him. They insulted him. They laughed him to scorn.

#### *B. The Sport Made of the Church*

- There are some who may feel that the Church has lost some of her former glory. I am not here to argue that because due to the timing of my birth I am confined to this generation. Satan has stood long enough and made sport of the Church long enough.
- The areas of the sport that Satan uses:
  - He has said that there is such a thing as safe immorality and some have fallen for it.
  - He has given us the concept that abortion is a political and social issue and not a moral issue.
  - He has given us the concept that homosexuality is a political and social issue and not a moral issue.
    - Since 1963 violent crime has increased over 500%.
    - Since 1963 illegitimate births have increased over 400%.
    - Since 1963 divorces have increased over 400%.
    - Since 1963 children living in single-parent homes have increased 300%.
    - Since 1963 teenage suicide has increased 200%.
    - Since 1963 SAT scores have dropped almost 80 points, despite huge increases in support for education.
    - Since 1976, child abuse has increased 340%.
  - There are 58% of America's children who do not live with a father in the home.
  - The radical views of MTV is opening the way for everything abnormal to be accepted as normal.
    - Some might say that this is too political. This is more than political, this is spiritual warfare that everybody seemed to be concerned about a few years ago.
    - But there are even more specifics to this sport that the devil has with the Church.
- **1. Fear**
  - Gideon is a classic study of fear. God called him to do a job but he was too scared of the Midianites. There is enough power that God can give us that will push us beyond our fears.
  - I'm scared that I cannot witness. I am afraid of what people might think. I am afraid of what people might say. I am not living for people, I am living for God.
  - So the meanwhile, here we stand in the midst of a hell-bound world. The devil is using our fear to make sport of us. All it might take is one prayer meeting. One last and final commitment to push you beyond your limit. In fact it could be in this service right now, that you make a conscious choice to begin to change into the image that God desires for you to be.
  - God took Gideon and a straggly band of three-hundred men and went and created a nightmare in the camp of the enemy.
  - I am talking about asking somebody to lead you to the pillar. In the middle of the howling sarcasm of the spirit world, I am still praying for a revival to sweep America.
- **2. Rejection**
  - The devil often uses rejection to make sport of us. A classic study of rejection would be the life of Jeremiah. He was a man called to preach and Israel never heard a word or heeded to a word that he said. They totally rejected him.
  - He still preached. They still laughed. He still wept. They still ignored him. But inside of him, God had started a bonfire. It was such a fire that Jeremiah said, it's like a fire shut up in my bones.
  - Regardless if I am rejected by my countrymen, by my city, by my church, I have a fire that is shut up in my bones. It does not matter that you have been rejected in the past, the present, or certainly in

- the future, God still has a plan for your life.
- I am convinced that even though the devil used rejection to attempt to stymie the ministry of Jeremiah, Jeremiah still saw some things. His revelation was not like that of John in the last book but God still honored him enough to let him see over into the other side.
  - **3. Inadequacies**
    - Moses was the man who said that he could not do it. Let my people go, it sounds great but I can't talk. So Moses kicked in with his excuses.
    - God said enough of the excuses.
      - Throw your rod down, it turned into a snake.
      - Pick it up, it become a rod again. Hold your hand out, it was leperous.
      - Put it under your coat, it became clean.
    - On a side-note, one will notice that God promised Moses to send along his brother, Aaron, as his mouth piece. However, when you look at all the dialogue with the Pharoah you will never find Aaron addressing the Pharoah, it is always Moses. I believe that much of the excuses that I use with God has more to do with "creature" comfort than with a real deficit in the spiritual realm.
    - I have got to get with the program. There are a thousand talents hidden in my life if I would just let God get in the mode with me. You don't have to engineer it yourself, let God take care of the difficulties.
  - **4. Doubt**
    - The devil takes his doubt and sits it right on our shoulder. You will never do anything for God.
    - The devil chats up to us during times of weariness, distress, and discouragement.
    - The party swells around us. The talk of the devil inflames us and deteriorates our faith. But there were two men who did not see them as giants. Joshua and Caleb were convinced that God could bring them to the Promised Land.
    - Caleb's greatest desire was to get a mountain. He got it too!!! Doubt has got to go. Our efforts toward Saturday night is not just a program. Our weekly fasting is not just to lose weight. It is the sound of the abundance of rain. There is a trembling in the mulberry bushes.

### C. The Prayer At The Pillar

- Samson shimmies up to the pillars. Not just any pillar but the pillars "whereupon the house standeth." Here is the champion of Israel, blind, chained, and being made fun of. He does not stand a chance. There is but a sprinkling of the hair that once was his glory.
- Some of you sit here tonight in the same shape. You have been blinded by your past mistakes. Your hair is gone from the commitment that you lost. You are being scorned by the devil and by the world. The only thing that you have left is like Samson, a prayer at the pillar. A maybe.
  - *Judges 16:28 KJV And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.*
- It just may be the day that I am avenged of my eyes.
  - *1 Samuel 14:6 KJV And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.*
- Jonathon and his armor bearer were facing the odds of being defeated and all they had was a maybe. But God saw them through.
  - *Matthew 20:30-34 KJV And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. [31] And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. [32] And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? [33] They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. [34] So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.*
- The two blind men just had a maybe. Maybe this is the day that Jesus will heal us.
  - *Mark 5:22-23 KJV And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, [23] And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.*
- All that Jairus had was a maybe that the Lord would heal his daughter.
- Samson and his prayer at the pillar was enough for God to move things out of his way. More died in that single day than any that Samson had every accomplished. You say, "Yeah but he died in the rubble." In Acts great recognition is given to those men who have hazarded their lives for the cause of the Gospel.
- This is our day. The day that the Church is going to flex her muscles. The devil has made sport of the Church and of you for long enough.

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

***Genesis 49:19** KJV Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.*

- A troop may have overcome you, but you shall overcome at the last. Get a hold of the pillar and begin to pray. The fears that have defeated you in the past is about to be a past chapter in your life.
  - ***Micah 7:8** KJV Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.*
  - ***Psalms 37:17** KJV For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.*
  - ***Psalms 34:17-20** KJV The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. [18] The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. [19] Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. [20] He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.*
  - ***Psalms 41:11-12** KJV By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me. [12] And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.*
  - ***Isaiah 41:9-10** KJV Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. [10] Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*
  - ***Proverbs 10:2-3** KJV Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death. [3] The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.*
  - ***Psalms 37:25-29** KJV I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. [26] He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed. [27] Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. [28] For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. [29] The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*