

**The Parenting Partnership
Judges 13**

Notes

God is at work in your life even when you don't see it, or deserve it

INTRODUCTION

One rainy night in high school my brother and I were driving home from school after practice. It was storming bad, so bad I could hardly see to drive. We were headed down the highway just about to top Buzzard's Hill, the highest hill in a series of hills between Gloster and Crosby, Mississippi. As we went down the hill, we saw a man standing outside his car. We thought this was strange, so we looked harder and saw the man was trying to change a tire.

We went down the hill and turned around in the middle of the next hill. We made it back up to the man.

This man was not from our area. He was in a nice suit, and he had a brand-new BMW. He had no idea how to change a tire, heck the tire was still on the car and the spare was not even ready.

Well, my brother and I had never changed a tire on a luxury vehicle in the dark, but we tried.

About 20 minutes into the ordeal another truck pulled up. As the person walked up my brother and I heard a familiar voice ask, "Y'all need some help?" It was our best friend, Shane Perritt.

We worked for a while trying to jack that car up, get the tire on, and get everything put back in the trunk.

The man was so appreciative. He tried to pay us, but we all refused payment.

When he asked why we told him, "God had done way more for us in Jesus, changing a tire wasn't nothing."

The man just stood there for a minute bewildered, thanked us profusely and then got in his car and left.

You see, this is God's grace. God's grace comes in your life when you don't expect it, think about it, and when you have not deserved it.

God's grace cannot be earned, it can only be given.

Grace, by nature, is unmerited; meaning unearned.

As we have worked through the Book of Judges, we have seen the young nation of Israel go from bad to worse and each time we have seen God display his grace.

As we approach Judges 13, we come to the last judge in the cycle of Judges, Samson.

In Samson's story, which will cover several chapters and several messages, we will see the continued display of God's grace in the life of a man who is underserving and toward a nation who is underserving.

But what we find lacking in Samson, we will find fulfilled in Jesus.

You see, God uses flawed men to partially rescue his people, pointing to the need for the perfect man, Christ, to come and fully rescue the world.

Grace has been given to you through Jesus. You cannot earn it; you can only accept it. Have you accepted the grace of God in your life?

God has shown his grace in the cross and he has given you the free gift of grace in Christ. Our response to his grace is to freely receive with humility, gratitude, and devotion.

GOD DOES NOT NEED PERFECT CIRCUMSTANCES TO WORK (1-7)

Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, so that the Lord gave them into the hands of the Philistines forty years.

² There was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had borne no children.³ Then the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, "Behold now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and give birth to a son. ⁴ Now therefore, be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing. ⁵ For behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and no razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines."⁶ Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A man of God came to me and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome. And I did not ask him where he came from, nor did he tell me his name."⁷ But he said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and now you shall not drink wine or strong drink nor eat any unclean thing, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.'"

As we open Chapter 13, we read a familiar line in verse one. Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

What was the result of their sin? Punishment. Sin has a consequence. No matter how crafty you think you are; no matter how slick you think you can be; no matter how small or insignificant you consider your sin to be, sin, by its very nature, exacts a cost from the sinner.

Israel's punishment was being placed under the rule and reign of the Philistines for 40 years.

The Philistines were a ferocious people who migrated into the territory from the Aegean with an initial desire to overtake Egypt, but when Ramesses III turned them back, they settled for what would later be known as Israel.

God then uses the Philistines to punish his people for their sin, their idolatry, their adopting of the pagan nation's culture and false gods.

As we will see throughout the story of Samson, Israel has fully capitulated to the rule, reign, and life of living under and alongside the sinful culture of the day.

And in verse 2 we are shown a seemingly normal family living in Israel under this rule. The author tells us the name of the husband, but not the wife.

But what will be shown throughout the chapter is the unnamed wife is much more wise and graceful than her foolish and absent-minded husband.

The author tells us the wife is barren. Now barrenness during this time was understood to be a curse from God because of personal sin. So, this unnamed woman would have been looked on with shame by those around her.

Verse 1 shows us the state of the nation. Verse 2 shows us the state of a family, but then in verse 3 we are introduced to a new character.

Out of nowhere an angel appears to the unnamed wife and tells her she will no longer be barren but will be with child and a will have a son!

And this son shall not only be a blessing to the woman and her husband, but also to the entire nation.

Along with the announcement, the angel informs the woman of something quite strange.

This child shall be a Nazarite from birth, but not only from birth, from before conception.

The Nazarite vow was a voluntary vow taken for a short period of time by devout young Jews. The vow said the person could not drink wine, nor any product of the vine, and could not touch a dead body, and the hair could not be cut until the vow was fulfilled.

But what is interesting here in this story is that the young deliverer is not taking the vow, the vow is being given to him.

Now we have seen with Jeremiah and John the Baptist, God calling these individuals to special service while in the mother's womb, but God is calling out Samson, before his birth.

How? Why?

If you notice in the text something is missing. We usually read after Israel has been under rule they cry out to the Lord, but that line is missing here.

Israel is content to live in sin and under the rule of sinful people.

But God has other plans. He invades their situation with grace. And with this we see a biblical principle on display.

God doesn't need your permission to act in your life.

This is the means of grace. Grace is not your doing; it is by God's doing.

God's grace in your life is never deserved or earned, it is supplied to you based on his love for you and Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

God's grace shows up in your life in many ways, some ways you may think are not gracious at all, but his grace works out his will in your life for your good and his glory.

One of the best things about being God is that you don't need permission from anyone to act in your creation.

Why is this important to know? Because of grace.

God's grace is given to us without permission and without our earning it.

This unnamed woman nor her husband, and not the nation of Israel had done anything to earn God's grace, yet he invades their life with grace.

God is full of grace and desires to pour his grace on you despite your sin.

You may think God's grace cannot cover your sin, but you would be wrong.

Christ died without your permission and without your earning salvation so he could provide you the means of grace.

How many gallons of water are in the ocean?

Answer: 3.612×10^{21} gallons of sea water in the ocean. That is 3.612×1 with 21 zeros.

How many stars are in the known universe?

Answer: 70 sextillion (7 followed by 22 zeros) was calculated by a team of stargazers based at the Australian National University.

How many grains of sand are in the world?

Answer: 7,500,000,000,000,000,000, or seven quintillion five hundred quadrillion grains of sand.

Even if these answers are incorrect, here is my point: God's grace is bigger than all these numbers!

How might God be working grace in your life right now? Are you in need of God's grace? Are you in need of God to show up and change things?

God doesn't need perfect circumstances to enact grace in your life.

Please do not think you need to "get right with God" before you get right with God. Allow God to work in your heart, your life, your family through his compassionate grace.

I recently heard a song titled, "Come Home" and it was a beautiful song about a person struggling to get right in order to come to Jesus. Jesus is telling the person to "come home."

While this song is pretty it does not paint the full picture of the grace of Jesus.

While Jesus wants you to come to him, he is not some passive friend who is waiting on your phone call or visit.

Jesus is actively coming to rescue you from your sin.

That is what this chapter is all about. If God were to wait for the Israelites to come to him, to get right, to be wise enough to realize their sin they would have died in their sin.

Instead, God sends a rescuer in Samson, an imperfect man, to rescue his children, from themselves.

Samson is a foreshadow to what was to come, Jesus.

Jesus desires a relationship with you so much he did the one thing you could not do, satisfy the requirement for the payment of your sin.

And as if that were not enough, the Holy Spirit is poured out in the world convicting the world of sin and drawing you to the Father through the Son.

God may be gracefully working in your life right now. He may be working in your heart, the heart of your spouse, your child, your mom, dad, or even your coworkers.

God may be working in your job, your school, or in any number of ways in your life right now.

God is pouring out his grace to you so that you may be brought near to him.

Beloved, don't run from the grace of God. Run to God's grace. Don't hide in your sin. Don't pretend you don't need grace.

STRIVE TO BRING YOUR FAMILY BEFORE JESUS (8-11)

⁸ Then Manoah entreated the Lord and said, "O Lord, please let the man of God whom You have sent come to us again that he may teach us what to do for the boy who is to be born." ⁹ God listened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again to the woman as she was sitting in the field, but Manoah her husband was not with her. ¹⁰ So the woman ran quickly and told her husband, "Behold, the man who came the other day has appeared to me." ¹¹ Then Manoah arose and followed his wife, and when he came to the man he said to him, "Are you the man who spoke to the woman?" And he said, "I am."

So, this unnamed woman, was visited by an angel and told of a miracle that would happen to her. She, being unable to bear children, would be blessed with a son.

She does not ask questions of the angelic messenger but runs to her husband and tells him everything.

Her husband, Manoah, wanting to know more, prays and asks God to come to them again so they can understand just what they are needing to do for the soon to be son.

God answers his prayer and sends the angel. But interestingly, the angel never comes to Manoah, only to his wife.

She runs to get her husband and brings him to the angel.

Now, this may technically be called a sub point in the text, but I believe it is important for us to hear this morning.

If you have a family, strive to bring your family before Jesus.

This unnamed wife did not have all the answers, but she knew one thing, she needed to get her husband to the Lord.

God created the natural family and when I say natural, I mean the biblically established means for a family whether by birth of a child between a man and woman or adoption.

The cultural onslaught and war against the natural family is growing more prevalent each week it seems.

There is a war for the minds of our families, especially our children.

The national education initiatives, the plots and dynamics of movies and televisions, the outright deplorability of the content of much of social media is aimed at children and teens and is specifically designed to indoctrinate them against the biblical family.

The need and drive to get our families to the Lord is greater now than it has ever been.

Here is the deal. Just like this unnamed bride, you do not need to have all the answers.

So, what do you do? What does it look like practically to bring your family, or yourself to Jesus?

- Pray for your family
- Pray with your family
- Spend time in the word yourself
- Spend time in the word with your family
- Talk about the things of God regularly
- Run all decisions through a biblical worldview

These simple, yet deeply important steps can assist you in bringing your family before the Lord.

Why is this so important? As parents we are charged with the spiritual upbringing of our children.

As husbands, we are charged with the spiritual health of our wives.

I ask this question often: If we were to all see Jesus today, would my family be more like Jesus because of my influence in their lives?

Some days I hang my head because the answer is “no.” Other days seem like more of a win.

Are you striving to bring your family to Jesus?

We will have failures and we will come up short. The main thing is consistency. Be consistent in your love for Christ and displaying that love to your family.

STRIVE TO TRUST AND OBEY THE LORD (12-14, 24)

¹² Manoah said, “Now when your words come to pass, what shall be the boy’s mode of life and his vocation?” ¹³ So the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, “Let the woman pay

attention to all that I said. ¹⁴ She should not eat anything that comes from the vine nor drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; let her observe all that I commanded.”

²⁴ Then the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson; and the child grew up and the Lord blessed him. ²⁵ And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Here we see something that is all too familiar to us. We know what is expected of us, but instead of doing what we know to do, we try to figure out ways around what we are supposed to be doing.

Manoah, was already told what he was supposed to be doing as a father to this son. Yet, he was insistent on finding a loophole to his duties.

The angel simply replies, “observe all that I have commanded.”

Beloved, it is easy to sin. It is easy to allow our flesh to control our lives. It is easy to let the culture around us dictate our thinking, behavior, and morals.

Let us strive to trust God’s word and plan and strive to obey what he has told us.

Don’t try to find little cut outs in the Bible. “I know the Bible says this, but what about this?”

Let us be a people who are so astonished by the grace of God that we strive to be intimate with Jesus and we strive to trust and obey Jesus.

CONCLUSION

As we come to a close this morning, I want to encourage you to see the fullness of the grace of God.

God has been more than gracious to us in our sin. He has given us life instead of death. He has granted us freedom instead of enslavement. He has rewarded us instead of punishing us.

God’s grace has come to invade your life and show you the freedom that is in Christ.

You may be here this morning and you are trapped in sin. Jesus is pursuing you right now. He is calling to you at this moment to turn and give your life to him.

This is true for the believer and the unbeliever.

In just a moment I am going to pray and I want to ask you to join our team as we sing together. Sing with joy. Sing with purpose. Sing to Jesus.

If God is calling you to salvation, repent of your sin and place your faith in Christ. Step out and come share this glorious news with us.

If you are in need of prayer, we would love to pray with you.