

Keeping Your Sanity in Crazy Times

The promise of a sound mind is of great value in the world we are living right now. One of our greatest assets and one of the advantages of being a believer in Jesus is the assurance that God *has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind* (2 Timothy 1:7).

Opening text: Judges 15:14-20

Samson was someone sealed from his mother's womb to do great things for God. An angel spoke a great word over his life: he was to live separated to God because he was going to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. What an amazing thing that must have been for his parents, that their son had been chosen by God for such a great purpose.

Judges 13:24-25 – *So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord bless him. 25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him at Mahaneh Daen between Zorah and Eshtaol.*

Not only he carried a great word over his life, but he was blessed, and the Holy Spirit was moving upon him. However, for someone who started out with such a great word of God over his life, Samson faced a lot of trouble. Life can be like that sometimes. The words of **Job 3:7** come to mind: *“man is born for trouble”*.

From the life of Samson, I want to share a few thoughts with you that will help you deal with trouble and keep your sanity.

1. We need to acknowledge that trouble will come.

- a) We don't need to be fatalistic like Job but adversity, pain and trouble comes to all of us. Maybe if you and I understand that we don't have the exclusivity of pain, in other words, that we are not the only ones going through something – it will help us keep a sound mind.

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”*

1 Peter 4:12 – *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;*

1 Peter 5:9 – *Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.*

- b) Samson faced trouble from different sources:
 - Some came **from his enemies**, the Philistines.

V.20 - ...”and he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines”- 20 years! The Philistines seemed like a plague they couldn’t shake off. That is a long time to have to put up with something. The woman with the issue of blood was in that condition 12 years; the man by the pool of Bethesda 38 years. At least Job’s trouble was only a few months (Job 7:3).

- Some of Samson’s trouble came **from his own friends**.

The verses that precede our opening text show us a mob of Samson’s own people coming to arrest him and take him to the enemy.

Betrayal is probably one of the hardest things to deal with. Jesus experienced that!
Zechariah 13:6 - ...”I was wounded in the house of my friends”

- Some of Samson’s trouble was **self – inflicted**

Trouble can come from the outside, but at times, we can also generate our own trouble. Some of the sufferings Samson went through were self-inflicted: he had areas in his life that he never dealt with and that got him into trouble repeatedly: pride, lust, anger, restlessness.

2. We should never doubt what God said about us or the reality of the blessing of God in our lives, just because we encounter trouble.

- a) Samson had a great word over his life, he had the blessing of God and he had the Holy Spirit – in spite of also having his troubles.

Trouble doesn’t mean that God has left you and you’re on your own.

No. The blessing, the Word and the Holy Spirit hadn’t left him – in fact, they were the very things that gave him advantage over his enemies.

- b) And God topped that with the jawbone of a donkey!

The jawbone of a donkey was not a conventional weapon. It was unusual. It didn’t make sense in the natural. God will sometimes give you and I unusual weapons. They’re may look unusual, but they work.

Can you imagine, Samson approaching those warriors not with a spear or a sword but a jawbone of a donkey? I am sure they must have laughed...however, in the end they were defeated. God has weapons and strategies you’ve never thought of and they will work!

When we go through some things it is easy to focus on what we don’t have. However, we need to acknowledge what we do have.

As I have been saying over the past few weeks, **you have it in you! You have the advantage.**

So, we should never doubt what God said about us or the blessing of God in our lives, just because we encounter trouble!

3. We need to acknowledge the battle inside our minds

Verses 16 and 17: *Then Samson said: “With the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men! “17And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramah Lehi.*

After his victory, Samson was on a high! He called that place Ramah Lehi, which means “Jawbone height”. He had reached the heights of success. Samson was in a triumphant mood. He even composed a song, and we could say that he blew his own trumpet!

However, something happened just as quickly. The verses that followed show how Samson’s state of mind changed. He went from a great high to a great low:

Verse 18 – *Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the Lord and said, “You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?”*

He suddenly felt physically and emotionally depleted. He went from singing a triumphant song to praying a grumpy prayer to God. Samson’s mental and emotional backbone was not nearly as strong as the jawbone he used!

Fighting battles even when you win them, can be physically and emotionally debilitating. That happened to great heroes of the faith like Sampson and also Elijah (when he defeated the 450 prophets of Baal).

Because of all the battles we fight, we can easily find ourselves mentally exhausted, spent, drained, worn out and consumed – especially, when those battles drag on (Samson still had to put up with the Philistines 20 years).

Here’s a recap of some of the things we need to remember in order to keep our sanity in times like these:

1. God hasn’t left you just because you are going through this. God’s promises still apply, God’s blessings are still yours and the Holy Spirit is still in you! You still have the advantage.
2. God sometimes uses unusual tools to lead us into triumph. He used a donkey’s jawbone, He can use the most unlikely sources to bring about what you need.
3. Finally, remember to attend to your soul. Sometimes your greatest battles will take place inside your mind, will and emotions.

We need to realize the danger of a mismanaged or neglected soul! **You and I need to find time to be replenished in God!**

v.19 – *So God split the hollow place that is in Lehi, and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived...*

From this whole story, this is something you need to retain: God wants to lead us beside still waters and restore our soul. God wants our spirit to return and be revived. God wants you and I to retain a sound mind.

2 Corinthians 7:5-6 – *For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears. **Nevertheless God**, who comforts the downcast, ...*

Take refuge in Him, run for cover under His wings. Let His waters satisfy you. Let your mind be refreshed and renewed in His presence.