



Judges Chapter 14 Samson *part 2*;

"Squandered Resources" by

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An old woman, known to all her neighbors as "Garbage Mary", lived in a small town in Florida. Every day she would be seen dressed in her rags, walking the streets, scavenging through garbage cans for food, which she hoarded in her car or in her tiny two-room apartment. She was a recluse with no friends, and, as

she scrounged cigarettes and ice cubes from anyone who was available, it was logical to believe that she was an old woman who was rapidly losing her mind living on the verge of destitution.

Finally, Garbage Mary was picked up by the police and confined to psychiatric institution. But, when some court officials went to her apartment to collect a few of her personal effects, they were amazed to discover that there was money everywhere. Scattered through her apartment and her car were bank books, stock securities, oil drilling rights, real-estate documents, and cash, which indicated that Garbage Mary was more than a million dollars. These documents also indicated that she was not an old woman, but a forty-eight-year-old college graduate, who had inherited a great deal of money when her father died in 1974.

Further investigation revealed that she had experienced two unhappy marriages, and her brother felt the resulting trauma may have caused her mental problems. Her psychiatrist conjectured that, living alone, she had fallen into a mental rut because she had nothing to excite her. Whatever reason, the tragedy remains. Here was a woman, abounding in the physical resources she needed to meet her physical needs, foraging through garbage and living in rags, while her resources went unused and neglected. While her money collected interest, she collected garbage!

The tragedy of Garbage Mary is neglected resources. There are others who live as derelicts because they have squandered their resources. Money had gone through their hands like water, and, because they could not control their appetites and impulses, they feed their bodies from garbage cans, when they once lived in mansions.

Samson was a kind of spiritual "garbage Mary." *He did not end his life as a hopeless derelict. He was a leader of his countrymen, and a famous hero. But Samson squandered and ignore the resources that God had given him. He was a man of great potential and even greater tragedy, because his life was a story of waste. And in there is a lesson for us. We who are in Christ have enormous resources, far beyond anything that Samson knew. In the Lord Jesus, we have been given all things that relate to life and godliness. But we can waste those resources and live far below them...if we do not learn the lesson that Samson never learned- the lesson of self-discipline and wholehearted commitment to the Lord Jesus.*

(From "Hearts of Iron, Feet of Clay" by Gary Inrig)

It is quite possible that Samson was the strongest man who ever lived. Well, at least *physically*. Because in reality, he was profoundly weak. He was such, for the reason that he never learned to control himself. Proverbs 16:32 gives us just that warning: "...*better to have self-control than to conquer a city.*" With much, comes much responsibility and accountability. When our gifts are squandered or taken for granted, then we are apt to lose them. We must be "faithful" in what we have been given if we desire that God blesses us and uses us!

In Judges chapter 13 we saw the beginnings of this man Samson. It was all so incredible from the very beginning. It's too bad however that Samson didn't understand or see the miraculous in it all. Through it all we see three themes made evident: One, Samson was an incredibly gifted man, and had great potential. Two, he had and was seemingly unwilling to deal with, a fatal flaw that reared itself again and again, and no one could speak into his life on the matter. And three, God would be available to him through it all. Both when he was 'on' and yet also when he was so very 'off.'

The Philistines were ruling over Israel at this time. But not so much with a sword but rather through assimilation. Slowly and methodically, the Philistines intermarried with the Jewish people and entwined themselves geographically, financially, vocationally, and relationally. It was a 'quiet coup.' Conquered without really 'firing a shot.' Samson not only failed to stop such a slide, he ultimately 'slid' right along with everyone else. That's the problem with any even missional attempt to engage the lost world: *if you are not careful, you will become like them instead of them becoming like you and your redeemer.*

The church at that time was as dark as the world. The temple priesthood was under the care of Eli's two sons...the infamous "Hophni and Phinehas." These were a couple of winners! They were a pair of arrogant godless thieves who dipped into the temple funds, and engaged the temple in a form of prostitution. Gee...money and sex, what a surprize! Some things never change! It was a time of great spiritual darkness. 1 Samuel 3:1 says "Word from the Lord was rare in those days."

Again, Samson had gifts and resources that should have made for a spiritual champion. Besides his nearly supernatural strength, his parents loved and served God. He had the direct calling of God, and the guarantee that heaven would 'have his back.' He had the right stuff, he just never had the right heart.

We see a couple of instances of the manifest of that God ordained power in Chapter 14. Once, the killing of a full grown male lion. No small feat for anyone who ever lived! The other was the killing of 30 men in one sitting. Neither of these acts were of any spiritual dynamic. And yet God still covered him in His grace and His promise. There too lies a lesson for us. Just because God doesn't 'drop you where you stand' the first time you step off His direct plan for you does not mean He is somehow winking at your sin or He is a-ok with your actions! Sometimes God doesn't finish you for the sake of HIS word and glory, certainly not yours!

No matter what resources and gifting he has given you specifically...(and he is so willing for each of us, as he longs to manifest himself in each of us through spiritual gifting), there is one corporate equality for us all: *God is there to 'gas the engine and make it fly.'* He gives all of us the most fantastic of resources, which is Himself and the 'mo that He brings when He comes! Remember? "**All things** that pertain to life and godliness..." And again we read in Colossians 2:9-10... "*For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.*" We have all the right stuff...all the raw materials. But we have to be willing to use it.

One day Samson was 'in town' and spied a young Philistine woman and it was 'lust at first sight.' But gee...how could he have prevented such a thing? After all, "love is blind" right? No, not with God it isn't. And he could have stayed out of the Philistine town and away from all Philistine women. So mistakes were made that compromised his stance. They were not necessarily sin in themselves, but the *led* to sin. These are the "weights" that Paul spoke of...*not sins*, but things that slow us down and present us with traps and delays and seemingly always drag us into overt sin.(Hebrews 12:1)

The news of this young lady to Samson's parents would no doubt have been devastating. They knew the power and the promises of God on this young man, and they knew the Philistines were the enemy and thus Samson had no business in any 'yoked' arrangement with any of them...let alone a marital relationship. The parents tried to intervene. Samson was no doubt beyond the age of parental discipline so they had nothing in their arsenal except attempts at reason, and that didn't stand a chance.

One thing is for sure, Samson was one *shallow* individual! He wasn't seeking a godly wife...one in which to unite together for the glory of king and kingdom. No, he has something more base in mind! Verse 3 says Samson spoke..."Get her for me! She looks good to me." Hmmm...that's a fine heart and attitude, but far more common as to our primary criteria as men seeking a woman than anyone would care to admit.

The problem here, again as it is many times in our generation of believers, Samson wasn't a man, he was a *boy*. If they had had them then, I would have no doubt that Samson would have spent his days playing video games while living in his parents basement. He was the proverbial "boy that shaves." He was a boy that rejected authority. A 'rebel without a cause.' For his rebellion was simply an act of pride, lust, and power. He knew that intermarriage with a pagan was expressly outside of God's will. It was more than a "suggestion." But Samson's attitude was "I am going to do what I want to do." Generations of young adults have followed and have all lined up to waste away their best years and have nothing to show for it except some mental, spiritual, psychological, and even physical scars.

In both 17:6 as well as 21:25 of this book, we read those words "*and everyone did what was right ...(or pleasing), in his own eyes.*" Such must be the greatest ignored warning in the history of mankind. Because no one seems to get it. And thousands on thousands of stories have served as very little deterrent! Today, we have what appears to be near anarchy. And often by those who know the truth of God, and have family to back it, but still they say "I want what I want...*give it to me.*" It all comes down to authority, and if I am willing to allow anyone else to have such in my life, including God.

Funny that even Samson didn't seem to get the irony. It seems he kept practicing the outer appearances and actions of the vow of holiness, because he still never cut his hair. He let his lust run unchecked, but still must have believed that he was on a-ok ground because he hadn't cut his hair. He still *looked* like a sanctified Nazirite, even if he didn't live, think, or love like one! Once again, it seems that in many ways Samson would have felt quite at home in our modern age of the church!

I am forever amazed at how some folks will be careful to adhere to outward religious mores, while surrendering 'wholesale' on the inside and in their private lives. They will take baptism, communion, attend church, serve in community, take classes and pay their tithe, all the while carrying on gross sin elsewhere in their "compartmentalized" life.

As often is the case, Samson's undisciplined life was most evident in his surrender to the issue of sex and sexual attraction. But such need not be so guttural. No, our undisciplined life can manifest itself in food, laziness and inactivity physically, in TV, gaming, hunting, fishing, football, *whatever*. Almost anything can begin to take God's place. Samson would never achieve what he could have...his life would be cut short, and he would be just a sad story. I know some modern 'sad stories' too. And that's all they will ever be because they "want what they want and they want it now."

Self-discipline is not denying our drives and desires. It is submitting them to God for his direction and timing. Samson's sin was not being attracted to women, but rather not submitting that desire to God's control. Ultimately he did not even get the woman he wanted. Instead he got bondage, pain, and finally death. This is not a happy ending movie. It's like one of the European movies that end badly and you sit incredulous as the credits roll. He never got the woman, and he never become the man. It was a mess all around.

Samson could have stopped and turned back at any point, but like us so often, he was "riding the wave" and there was seemingly no way to stop him as he went from one sin to the next, one tragedy to the next tragedy. He was on a roll, and everyone could no doubt see it coming. Just like now. *Just like now*. God doesn't want anyone to live a "Garbage Mary" life. He is giving you so much in blessing and resources...you have the stuff of kings...*live like it*.