

Judges 13:2-5

“And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. And the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Behold, you are barren and have no children; but you shall conceive and bear a son. Therefore beware, and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for lo, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from birth; and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines.”

I don't know about you but something that really aggravates me is waste, "Waste." Sometimes it seems as though we are surrounded by waste, every where we turn, we see example after example of one type of waste or another. It can and is really upsetting to think of all the money that the government takes from us (money we could really use) and not only do they take and spend it, and they are about to take more, but they waste so much of it.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines waste as follows: to wear away or diminish gradually, to spend or use carelessly, to squander, to allow to be used ineffectively or become dissipated; unprofitably used, made or expended.

A couple of weeks ago I experienced a kind of waste that can really test your patience, "the waste of your time," especially when someone else wastes it. To make a long story short, the people at our DMV wasted theirs and my time and they didn't even bat an eye. Once my daughter Marie and I went there on three separate occasions and each time someone different asked for something different, and we still did not received what we went to get.

Another type of waste that is far too frequent these days, and really hurts to see, is the waste of people's lives. To see people who have and/or had the potential to do great and wonderful things, and gave it all away or lost it for something which is usually selfish and/or stupid, is a terrible tragedy.

People who waste their lives often say they did not have the time to do everything **they wanted**; they just ran out of time. Ever notice how the words we use to describe time; the minutes, the hours, the days, the years that make up our life are often the same words we use to describe money? Time is spent. Time is saved. Time is wasted away. We never have enough time. Time is precious. We have only to look at our children, at our aging parents, we only have to look at ourselves in the mirror, too know that time is a commodity we should never waste. Will someone PLEASE answer this question for me?

Why is it that we multi-task, inter-face, Skype, text-message, call-forward in order to save time . . . only then to take that saved time and invest it in some meaningless, empty, self-absorbed, self-serving ways?

God has blessed every person with the same amount of time 1440 minutes in each and every day. God has blessed each and every person with talent and/or talents to use each and every day. With everyone blessed with the same amount of time, and with God given talent(s), why is it that most of us never accomplish very much in life? Most work a job, maybe raise a family, and have a house, which is full of personal stuff, maybe own a couple cars. Most may have some money put away for a rainy day, but if we look, I mean really look at our lives, most have never even come close to accomplishing the great things God had planned. Why is that?

We can see in the Scriptures many people who could have, and should have, been something, they were given tremendous blessings, but for whatever reason they blew it, people like: Adam and Eve (lived in perfection and had no wants, ended up losing everything), their son Cain (born to parents who walked with God in the garden of Eden committed murder, and condemned by God), King Saul (an anointed King of God whose life ended tragically when he killed himself by falling on his own sword), and lets not forget Judas (a man who spent 3 years walking, talking, and learning from Jesus Himself, ended up selling himself and then hanging himself).

All of these individuals had tremendous blessings, opportunities, and potential. God had big plans for each of them. They are all vivid examples of wasted potential.

I thought this would be a good place for us to start our New Year. Let's start 2014 with this question. This year's question to live by; "What am I committed too." We start this year by looking at the life of Samson, and we will discover that Samson was and is a powerful example a blessed individual of wasted potential. When we look at the life of Samson our reaction should be, "what a waste." It should be noted that Samson was not the first nor will he be the last person who could have done something for God, but didn't. If Samson were permitted to look back over his life I believe his reaction would be, "WHAT A WASTE!"

I would like for us to focus on a couple of things this morning: What Samson had, What Samson did, What Samson lost. You could say Samson was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. Samson had a lot of things going for him: He was born to parents who wanted a child very badly. Manoah and his wife wanted a child, but Manoah's wife was sterile and so the couple remained childless for many years, but God heard their cries and one day

when Manoah's wife was out by herself, the angel of the Lord came and told her that she would have a child, a son! She quickly ran and told her husband and they both rejoiced over this wonderful news.

They were told by an angel of God they would have a son, and that he will have an opportunity to something great through his service to God. Not only was Samson born to parents that desperately wanted him, he was also born to a family who believed in and worshipped the God Almighty, which was a rarity in those days. How many of you had godly parents? Hold that thought. Again, before Samson was born, while still in his mother's womb, he was set a part by God for a special purpose, he was to be a Nazirite he was chosen to deliver the Israelites from the hands of the Philistines.

Like most of us today, despite being given such a great start, Samson did not take very long to go astray. Sampson quickly became a selfish, self-centered individual. Everything was about him, and his parents were no better they actually helped in bringing Sampson down. This is clear in 14:1-2 *"Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines. Then he came up, and told his father and mother, "I saw*

one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah; now get her for me as my wife.” He told his parents what he wanted and they did what he asked.

Samson did whatever Samson wanted; he lived for himself and for his own pleasures. Samson knew the things he did were wrong, that is why the text says he didn't tell his parents. He must have thought to himself, “what they don't know won't hurt me,” but Samson had forgotten though his earthly mother and father could not see and did not know, his Heavenly Father both saw and knew everything. Samson went from bad to worse as his pride and arrogance grew. We find Samson in these chapters of Judges using his strength not for God's glory but for his own glory, wanting to show everyone just how great he was. Basically, Samson had become too big for his britches.

Samson did not have the luxury we have today, that of Scripture. We are told by Solomon said in Proverbs 16:18; “*Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.*” Samson had it all, but because he did whatever he wanted to, he lost every bit of it and more. What exactly did Samson lose? He lost his strength; he lost his freedom; He lost his sight; He lost his life. And most importantly, he lost the presence of the Lord.

Passage 16:20 is crystal clear, when Samson needed God the most, because he did not do as God instructed, he learned a painful truth, “*He did not know the Lord had left him.*”

Think of what Samson could have done for God if he used his talent and abilities for the glory of the Lord He could have done so much. What a Waste. What a senseless Waste!!!! I am sure it had to break God’s heart. As God’s eyes move over His Kingdom today, as God looks at His Church, as He looks at this church. His heart still breaks as he sees the tremendous waste that is everywhere.

There are so many people, countless people, whom God has given talent(s) and ability(s), who can do great and tremendous things for the Kingdom of God. Everyone according to Jesus has been given at least one talent; everyone has the ability to do something significant for the kingdom of God, and like Samson, we know what God wants, we know what God desires, we know that God wants us to be servants in His kingdom, but we want what we want. We, like Samson, use our God-given talent(s) and/or ability(s) more for ourselves than for God and His glory.

God hears us say all the right things, “we ALL need to serve God, put Him first”... But God is waiting to see our actions; God is waiting to see us take that first into the Jordan as with Joshua. He is waiting for us to use the talent(s) and/or abilities for Him and His glory. Problem is we choose to use what we have for ourselves and then have the arrogance to claim the glory for ourselves as well. Deep down we, like Samson, think that we can make it on our own, we think it’s okay to be like Frank Sinatra and “do it our way,” rather than God’s way. God has given so many so much, but all we want to do is usually centered around what we want and our glory rather than for God and His glory.

It’s not bad to be reminded that we sin and fall short of God’s glory. The ultimate sin we commit everyday is found in the minutes and hours we live in spiritual wasted-ness. A selfish spirit and/or a soured spirit are the sins we breathe into this world. When we look for ways to pass our time, when we look forward to a weekend of getting wasted, when we put our spiritual lives in the waste basket for the sake of selfish pleasures, we insult and degrade God’s spirit, the breath of God, the same breath which breathed life into the first human being God created.

It's a sin to turn the church into nothing more than a comfortable pretty building, instead of Christ's body. It's a sin to use faith as an excuse for judgmental hate. It's a sin to read God's word but not live God's word. It's a sin to waste our time and talents and not redeem them for God's glory.

Let's start this year off right, this morning as you come forward to receive Holy Communion I pray you commit and/or recommit your lives to God this year. Let's commit ourselves this year to use our time and talents for God, to putting God and His glory first. We see the signs everywhere, "God Bless America." God has blessed us, each and every one of us, just as He blessed Samson, question is, are we ready to use these blessings for God and His glory, or like Samson are we going to waste them? Only you can answer that question. Don't end up looking back and saying "What a Waste." Make your commitment to God today.