

“God’s Marvelous Grace”
Judges 13:1-5
(Preached at Trinity, June 14, 2015)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tonight we begin our investigation into the life of Samson, the last of the judges. He is by far the most colorful of the judges. We would have to say he is the best known as we remember the many adventures of his life. Who hasn’t heard of Samson and Delilah? But, over and over we are stricken by the immorality that pervades his life. It is easy to lose sight of God’s redemptive purpose that is overshadowing the Book of Judges. The Book of Judges is a book of deliverance, but it is a reminder that there can be no ultimate deliverance without God’s ultimate Deliverer, Jesus Christ.
 - a. While the Book of Judges speaks of Israel’s many enemies and the oppression they brought upon this nation we must not lose sight of Israel’s ultimate oppressor. Their true enemy was the one within, the curse of sin. Sin ruled in their hearts and this was the ultimate cause of their misery.
 - b. There is only one Savior who can deal with the problem of sin. He did so 2000 years ago by His life and substitutionary death upon the cross.
 2. As we move through **Chapter 13** our thoughts are continually drawn to Christ, God’s Savior who will be born many years after the life of Samson. We cannot fail to see the similarities between the birth of Samson and the birth of Christ: A childless mother and the visit of an angel, the promise of a deliverer, the child that is set apart, parents left bewildered.
 3. This is by design. We are supposed to have our thoughts drawn to God’s redemptive purpose. We need to guard ourselves from being distracted by the antics of Samson and lose sight of the larger picture of God’s purpose.
 4. As we’ve gone through the Book of Judges we’ve seen the repeating pattern of God’s deliverance: Israel’s sin, God’s judgment through the raising up of an enemy to oppress them, Israel crying out to God for relief, God’s mercy in raising up a deliverer to defeat their enemy, they enjoy a season of peace—the judge dies and the pattern repeats.
 5. We’ve already seen that after Gideon we no longer see the season of peace. Their sin is escalating. There can be no peace while sin rules the human heart.
 6. With Samson we find yet another break in the pattern and with it a wonderful testimony to God’s marvelous grace.
- I. We find in this passage God raising up His deliverer even though Israel did not seek relief
- A. In **Verses 1-3** we find the familiar pattern broken
 1. We find Israel falling into sin—nothing surprising here.
"Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD"
 2. We find God giving them over to their enemy—again, nothing surprising
"so that the LORD gave them into the hands of the Philistines forty years."

3. Then in **Verses 2-3** we find God's plan to raise up a deliverer through the birth of a child - "you shall conceive and give birth to a son."
 4. Here is where we are surprised. The pattern is broken. We find no indication of Israel crying out to God
- B. Israel had become accustomed to their sinful condition
1. It had been 40 years. There is no indication that they were in distress over being in bondage. Idolatry was all around them and yet they were content. They were content in their condition of sin and blindness.
 - a. It should be noted that at the beginning of **Chapter 14** Samson found his Philistine wife in Timnah less than 20 miles from Jerusalem. In other words, the Philistines were settled and living comfortably among the Israelites.
 - b. Worst of all, Israel was blind to their blindness. All was well. Few things pricked their conscience. The final verse of the book describes them well:
Judges 21:25-1:1 NAU - "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes. "
 - c. In other words, they lived according to what they considered right or wrong.
 - d. They were quite satisfied with their situation, even though they were in bondage. Their true bondage was sin but they were blind to this reality and totally unaware of their blindness.
 2. H.G. Wells wrote a short story entitled, *The Country of the Blind*, about a lost village of people who were blind but unaware of their blindness. "In South America there is an old legend about a lost valley high in the mountains where all the people are blind. It is said that at one time the people could see but long ago a disease came to the valley which caused them to lose their sight. This disability was passed to the next generation and their children were born blind too. Around this time there was a terrible earthquake and the mountain roads leading to the valley were blocked by huge rocks. No one could come in or go out and the valley was cut off from the rest of the world and forgotten, except in the legend. A few years ago, a mountaineer by the name of Nunez was leading a climbing expedition and after falling into a ravine he came upon the village and soon met the villagers. 'Who are you and where have you come from?' they asked. He told them he'd come over the mountains from the city of Bogota, and when they showed no sign of understanding, he explained that it was a large, modern city. 'Everyone there can see,' he added. He expected they would be impressed, or at least excited to meet a stranger from the world outside, but instead, the blind men shook their heads. Nonsense, they muttered. What is he talking about, 'city', 'mountains' and 'see'? What kind of crazy talk is this?"
 3. Israel was blind, living in the midst of a world of blindness. They had long forgotten the presence of God.
God judged them with blindness
Isaiah 29:9-10 NAU - "Be delayed and wait, Blind yourselves and be blind; They become drunk, but not with wine, They stagger, but not with strong drink. ¹⁰ For the LORD has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep, He has shut your eyes, the prophets"

4. They had no knowledge of their blindness. They were comfortable serving under the Philistines and saw no need for deliverance.
 5. In this woeful condition God came in grace to raise up a deliverer. In the midst of His judgment God was showing mercy
- C. This is exactly the state of humanity
1. The fall of Adam brought total blindness
It is like a terrible scale upon our eyes preventing us from seeing spiritual realities.
1 Corinthians 2:14 NAS - "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."
 2. It was into this world of darkness that God sent forth Christ. From eternity God chose to bestow grace upon this world of darkness.
 - a. There were none who were seeking Him
Psalms 14:2-3 NAS - "The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. ³ They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one."
 - b. We were not seeking deliverance. We were quite satisfied with our sin. Christ came to us while we were in the midst of our sin.
Romans 5:8 - "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
Ephesians 2:4-5 NAU - "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),"
- II. This glorious grace in the Gospel is despised by blind humanity
- A. Just because God sends forth His Savior doesn't mean blind men will receive Him
 1. Israel did not receive Samson
We can see this in **Chapter 15** after Samson slaughtered a great number of the Philistines. The men of Judah were not pleased.
Judges 15:11 NAU - "Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?"
 2. Lost humanity will not have Christ. In the Parable of the Nobleman or Parable of the Ten Pounds Jesus says of the citizens,
Luke 19:14 - "But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'"
 3. Lost humanity despises God's graciousness
 - B. The work of the Gospel is telling men they are blind
 1. They look at us as fools. Like H.G. Wells' *The Country of the Blind* they respond to us, "What kind of crazy talk is this?"

2. Blind men do not see their sin and cannot accept their condemnation
To the blind the preaching of the cross is nonsense
1 Corinthians 1:18 NAU - "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

C. This blindness has three sources

1. First it is a judicial blindness. Israel's sin is escalating. God's judgment is increasing.
In their blindness God judges with even greater blindness
Matthew 13:13-16 NAS - "Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ "And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; ¹⁵ For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes Lest they should see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I should heal them.' ¹⁶ "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear."
2. Second, it is an inward blindness of sin. It is a depravity of heart that blinds us to the beauty of holiness. Quite simply, we love our sin, we love this present world—and we hate God. Even though Christ has come and the Gospel is fulfilled in our sight we will not have it.
John 3:19-20 NAU - "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."
3. Thirdly, since the fall of man Satan has actively blinded the eyes of the unbelieving.
2 Corinthians 4:3-4 NAS - "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

III. God in His grace overcomes our blindness

- A. Salvation is a mighty display of God's power
 1. This is part of God's purpose in the great display of Samson's power. But Samson is only a foreshadow of God's ultimate Deliverer
 2. Israel's blindness was great and their condemnation was great. But the God who brought judgment upon them is the God who demonstrates His grace towards them.

3. We were under God's wrath and judgment, but the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Romans 1:16-18 NAU - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness"

B. By God's grace He has opened our eyes. He has removed our blindness

1. Our blindness was great but God's grace is greater than our blindness
2. Jesus has come to accomplish the opening of blind eyes.

Acts 26:18 NAS - "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

Isaiah 9:2 KJV - "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

Isaiah 29:18-19 NAU - "On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, And out of *their* gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. ¹⁹ The afflicted also will increase their gladness in the LORD, And the needy of mankind will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel."

3. This is by God's wondrous grace

Ephesians 2:5-10 NAU - "even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

Conclusion:

1. If you are following Christ it's by God's marvelous grace. He showed mercy upon you when you were unworthy, undeserving—a child of wrath. He sent forth Jesus Christ because of His grace and infinite love.
2. If you are not following Christ do not pretend you don't need Him. Do not pretend your sin is not dreadful.

Don't be like those in *The Country of the Blind*, "What kind of crazy talk is this?" You need a Savior and Jesus Christ is the only Savior.

Acts 4:12 NAU - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."