A Calling Stronger Than Death

When our hearts align with God's will

Small Group Discussion Guide · Judges 16:28–30

Bible Passage

Judges 16:28–30

Sermon Summary

Blinded and mocked, Samson seemed to have reached a tragic end. Yet as he stood between two pillars and cried out to God again, his desire aligned with God's will. This is what a calling is. God aligns our hearts with his and works through us to fulfil his purposes. When we rediscover our calling, even the fear of death can no longer hold us back.

Related Bible Passages

1. Philippians 1:21 · Paul's conviction that life is about fulfilling his calling and that death is gain echoes Samson's willingness to die.
2. Romans 8:28 · God works all things together for good. Even Samson's tragic circumstances were not outside God's purposes.
3. John 12:24 · A grain of wheat must die to bear much fruit. This helps us see that Samson's death was not simply a meaningless end.
4. Esther 4:14 · The statement when Esther had come to her position "for such a time as this" points to a moment when a person's circumstances meet God's purpose.

Helpful Background

The temple of Dagon where Samson was taken is thought to have had two levels, with the Philistine rulers below and around 3,000 people celebrating above. Samson was brought out to "perform", but this was not simply a display of tricks: he was made a spectacle for the crowd to mock.

Discussion

1. Getting Started

1. Have you ever made a big mistake at something you were usually good at and felt embarrassed in front of others? Share as much as you feel comfortable sharing.
2. After losing his sight and being mocked by the Philistines, Samson cried out to God again. What do you think about the idea that being at our lowest can lead us to turn to God?

2. Exploring the Passage

1. Read the passage and the verses leading up to it. What was Samson's situation as he felt for the pillars? What were the Philistines doing?
2. Samson's prayer in verse 28 was not a request to save his own life; he was willing to die with the Philistines. His desire aligned with God's will, rather than simply an act of personal revenge. What does this teach you?
3. Fulfilling God's will is not a matter of us doing 50% and God doing the other 50%. It is God working through us to fulfil his purpose completely. Where do you sense God at work through you right now?
4. Samson's calling was given to him before he was born, rather than something he chose for himself. How easy or difficult do you find it to see a role or responsibility you did not choose as a calling from God? Share your honest thoughts.

3. Going Deeper

1. Samson killed more Philistines when he died than during his lifetime. What seemed like his lowest point became the moment when God worked most powerfully through him. Looking back, has a time when you felt completely broken turned out to have meaning?
2. What do you imagine God was doing while Samson was blind and being mocked, before he rediscovered his calling? How do you respond when answers to your own prayers seem slow to come?

4. Living It Out

1. Choose a day this week to put your heart into a task at home or work that you would rather not do. See it as an opportunity for God to work through you.
2. Think of a situation you might face this week that could overwhelm you, embarrass you or hurt your pride. What could help you turn to God, as Samson did, rather than give up?

This Week's Challenge

1. On Tuesday evening, tell someone in your family that you are willing to take on a responsibility this week that you have been reluctant to accept.
2. If you face an embarrassing moment at work or in a group this week, resist the urge to walk away. Instead, take a moment to pray silently and ask God for help.

Try one of these challenges this week. At your next meeting, take turns sharing how it went and listening to one another.

Pray Together

- Pray that our hearts will align with God's will, even in roles we would not have chosen.
- Pray for the faith to call out to God, even when we feel embarrassed or humiliated.
- Pray that we will embrace a calling stronger than death as we live out our faith this week.

Closing Prayer

God, Samson cried out to you again even after he had been blinded and mocked. Help us turn to you when we are at our lowest. Remind us that our calling is to align our hearts with your will. This week, help us trust that you are working through us, even in roles we would rather not take on. When we feel embarrassed or humiliated, help us hold on to you instead of running away. Help us embrace a calling stronger than death, so that the fears of this world do not hold us back. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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