

Dying With the Philistines

Judges 16:28-30

I. Introduction: 1, 2

I. 3 The story of Samson:

- A. Due to their sins, God has delivered the Israelites *“into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.”* (Judges 13:1)
- B. There is a man, Manoah, of the tribe of Dan. Manoah and his wife are unable to have children (Judges 13:2).
 - (1) Manoah’s wife receives a message from an angel that she *“shall conceive and bear a son”* (13:3).
 - (2) Her promised son is to be raised as a *“Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines”* (13:4-5). A Nazirite was not to drink from the fruit of the grape, not to eat anything unclean, and *“no razor shall come upon his head”* (13:4-5).
- C. Unfortunately, Samson seems to be one who takes God’s commands lightly:
 - (1) He touches an unclean animal, a lion (14:9; Lev. 11:27).
 - (2) Married outside the children of Israel (14:2; marries a woman of Timnah who was a Philistine).
 - (3) Probably drank wine (14:10).
 - (4) Committed fornication with *“a harlot”* (16:1, 4).
 - (5) Broke his Nazirite vow (hair cut) due to his own negligence (16:20).
- D. Spiritual undiscerning: Was not aware *“that the Lord had departed from him”* (16:20).
- E. He was blinded and imprisoned by the Philistines (16:21).

2. 4 *“Let me die with the Philistines!”* (16:28-30).

- A. A penitent (?) Samson physically died with the enemy of God’s people.
- B. Many Christians die spiritually with the Philistines today!
 - (1) It is a slow death, imperceptible just like Samson’s as he was unaware that the Lord had departed from him.
 - (2) Philistines = World
- 3. This is not a new problem (**Rev. 3:1**: *“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, ‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: ‘I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.’”* **Rev 3:17**: (church at Laodicea) *“Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ — and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked — ”*).

II. Discussion:

I. 5 Why Do God’s People Die With the Philistines? I would like to suggest five things that lead to it:

- A. **** Forget the worth of one’s own soul (Matt. 16:26:** *“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”*).
 - (1) Caused by forgetting the we have been cleansed from our sins (**2 Pet. 1:9:** *“For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.”*).
 - (a) Our cleansing did not come cheap (**1 Cor. 6:20:** *“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*; **1 Pet. 1:18-19:** *“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received*

by tradition from your fathers, I 9 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”).

- (b) Elders to carefully watch over the flock because of their value (**Acts 20:28**: “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”).

(2) Caused by losing respect for human life (Gen. 1:26).

- (a) If one loses respect for human life—he loses respect for spiritual life also.
- (b) If human life is cheap—it follows that the soul that inhabits it is cheap (e.g., some brethren’s prejudice against the Lord’s work in the Philippines).
- (c) God values all human life (physical and spiritual)(Gen. 9:1-6).
 - (i) Holocaust of WWII couldn’t happen in the U.S. Sure about that?!
 - (ii) Over 55 million babies killed (legally!) since 1973. Imagine if over a period of 41 years that nearly 9 747-400’s (416 passengers) crashed every day and everyone on board was killed (3,675/day). Can you imagine the outcry! That’s how many babies have been murdered, on average, per day since Roe v. Wade became law in 1973!
 - (iii) All abortions are hideous, but just think of the “partial birth” abortions supported by the president and his party. While in the Illinois state senate, Obama even opposed a bill that would provide life-saving treatment for an aborted fetus that was alive outside the womb.).
 - (iv) Euthanasia is legal in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg; assisted suicide is legal in Switzerland, Germany, Albania, Colombia, Japan and in the U.S. states of Washington, Oregon, Vermont, New Mexico, and Montana.
 - ☛ Cost issue, reduce health care costs (health care panels under Obamacare!).
 - ☛ Elderly are an inconvenience (why waste expensive treatments on an old person).
- (d) It is God who gives life and it is He who should be the one who takes it, unless a man does something to forfeit his right to life (**Acts 25:11**: “For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying”).

(3) Desensitization to this abomination:

- (a) The first few times you hear about these things you are shocked, but after a while some take it for granted and think little or nothing about it.
- (b) Once society silently accepts it, this rubs off on Christians if we’re not careful.

B. 6 Not grounded in the faith (Lk. 8:13: “*But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.*”)

- (1) Whose fault is it if I don’t grow in faith, virtue, knowledge, etc.? **2 Pet. 3:18**: “*but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*”; 2 Tim. 2:15
 - (a) Classes are provided by the congregation.
 - (b) Members of this church (and me!) are willing to study with anyone at any time.
 - (c) Gospel meetings (here and at several congregations within driving distance).
 - (d) Do you avail yourself of these opportunities? Some will drive for hours to go fishing, go to a ballgame, etc., but won’t drive across town to attend a gospel meeting.

- (2) God puts no premium on ignorance (**Jn. 8:31-32**: “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”; **Hos. 4:6**: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”).
- (a) Truth is what sets God’s people apart from the world (**Jn. 17:17**: “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”).
- (b) The apostle’s mission was to teach, baptize, and then teach some more! **Matt. 28:19-20**: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”; **Matt. 11:28-30**: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”).
- (c) We need to be like Mary! **Lk. 10:42**: “But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” (**Lk. 10:40**: “Martha was distracted with much serving...”).

C. 7 Word choked out of our life (Lk. 8:14: “Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.”)

- (1) Sports, hobbies, entertainment; in and of itself time devoted to these things is not wrong, if in the right proportion and in the right priority.
- (2) Cares of this life (**Matt. 6:33**: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”; **Jn. 6:27**: “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”).
- (a) It’s easy to get our priorities out of line, especially if we allow ourselves to get, or remain, spiritually weak.
- (b) We need to work to make a living, but what about when work (e.g., overtime, travel, etc.) interferes with worship? My struggles over the years; major motivation for more education.
- (c) Does a headache that we use as an excuse to miss worship services or Bible study keep us from going to work on Monday morning?!
- (d) Do we put recreation, sports (kid’s games too!), vacations before attendance? One of the main themes of Hebrews 10 is “willful” sin. God will punish willful sin so severely the Hebrew writer reminds us that “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (10:31) But, what specific “willful sin” does the Hebrew writer mention in chapter 10? It’s “forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” (10:25).
- (3) Pleasures of life:
- (a) Like Samson, some Christians consider the way of righteousness too narrow (**Matt. 7:13-14**).
- (b) We won’t willfully sin when our mind is focusing on the right things (**Phil. 4:8**: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things.”).
- (c) Sin always leaves a mark that is very hard to completely erase (**Jer. 17:1-2**: “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; With the point of a diamond it is engraved On the tablet of their heart, And on the horns of your altars, 2 While their children remember Their altars and their wooden images By the green trees on the high hills.”). When we “dabble” in sin (e.g.,

pornography, social drinking, gambling, etc.); it remains a temptation for a long time because it is so hard to erase it from our mind.

- (i) View pornography—even after repenting—images remain in the mind.
- (ii) Drink alcohol—repent—see liquor and remember the pleasure it gives (*cigarettes*).
- (iii) Curse—repent—ugly words remain a part of one’s vocabulary and at times slip out.
- (iv) Gambling—repent—temptation remains (Acts 8:18-19; Simon the sorcerer).
- (d) James exhorts us: *“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”* (Jas. 1:27).
 - (i) The nature of sin is such that once tasted, it’s hard to get out of one’s mind.
 - (ii) As Jeremiah said, it effects the heart (did so to Judah!).
 - (iii) When we get to the point of when we constantly “dabble” in sin (a little drink won’t hurt me! Buying a lottery ticket once in a while is not so bad!) we are in real danger (i.e., searing one’s conscience; 1 Tim. 4:2).

D. 8 Not distressed about the sin around us (2 Pet. 2:7-8: *“and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) —“).*

- (1) Desensitized—like a frog in water dying one degree at a time.
- (2) “Everybody else is enjoying it; so why not me?!”
- (3) Our society is “saturated” with sin: entertainment (movies, TV, videos, plays, magazines), immodest dress (not enough clothes to wad a shotgun shell), foul language (workplace, school, etc.), fornication (divorce rate is plummeting in the U.S. because fewer and fewer couples are getting married!).
- (4) It is difficult to live in a sinful world and not be stained with sin ourselves (Noah, Lot, Joseph).

E. 9 Reject reproofs and admonishments (Eph. 4:19: *“who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”; 1 Tim. 4:2:* *“speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,”*).

- (1) God’s word reproves us (**2 Tim. 4:2:** *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”*).
- (2) We shun reproofs to our own detriment (**Prov. 15:10:** *“Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.”*).
- (3) Ought to count those willing to correct us as our friends, not our enemies (**Psa. 141:5:** *“Let the righteous smite me ; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil”*; Gal. 2:11-14; **2 Tim. 4:2:** *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”*).

2. 10 Signs We Are Dying With the Philistine. I would like to suggest six surefire warning signs:

A. ** Worship by rote (i.e., from memory without thought, meaning or feeling; mechanical; **Isa. 29:13:** *“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men”*).

- (1) Giving not sacrificial or cheerful (**Mal. 1:6-14; 3:8-9**).
- (2) Do not try to grow in giving; don’t believe/understand Acts 20:35 (*“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”*).

- (3) Spend more on leisure items than giving to God (**Matt. 6:20-21**: “*but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*”).
 - (4) Lackluster singing, sleep during the sermon, skip Bible class (Jn. 6:68; 12:48), sporadic attendance in general.
 - (5) Casual attitude—both in dress and demeanor (doesn’t Malachi teach us we are to offer our best to God?).
 - (6) Eat the Lord’s Supper daydreaming rather than discerning the Lord’s body and His blood (1 Cor. 11:27-30).
 - (7) Can’t “amen” prayers—because don’t know what was said—bowed, but didn’t pay attention.
- B. 11 Shun opportunities to be with Christians (Heb. 3:13**: “*but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*”).
- (1) Bible classes, gospel meetings, etc.
 - (2) Potlucks, invitations to meals, etc.; not required, but provides an opportunity to associate and grow closer to one another.
 - (3) It is certainly possible that congregations are “unfriendly,” but when a person never avails himself of opportunities (e.g., potlucks) the charge is hollow. Who is really being “unfriendly”?
- C. 12 Spend more time chasing the dollar than serving Christ (1 Tim. 6:9-10**: “*But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*”).
- (1) God’s word repeatedly warns against covetousness (**Lk. 12:15**: “*Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.*”; **Matt. 6:19-21**: “*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*”; **Mk. 10:23**: “*How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!*”).
 - (2) Work of God neglected, children and family are neglected as we chase the dollar.
 - (3) Things money buys often distract us from more important things (recreation, vacations, etc., etc.).
 - (4) Not wrong to have money or things, but we must keep our priorities in order!
- D. 13 Not easily stirred to repentance (Acts 24:25**: “*Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.’*”; **Acts 17:32**: “*And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, ‘We will hear you again on this matter.’*”; **Rom. 1:32**: “*who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.*”).
- (1) Live openly in sin or excuse it, justify participation in it.
 - (2) Condone sin of others—by silence or by lending your name and influence to it.
 - (3) We need to be extremely careful if we think we can dabble in sin and not be negatively affected! **Heb. 3:13**: “*but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*”

- E. **14 Not moved to restore an erring brother or sister** (**Gal. 6:1**: “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”).
- (1) Announcements are made about someone experiencing spiritual difficulty, caught up in sin, failing attendance, etc.
 - (2) After announcement—not concerned enough to call, write a note, send an e-mail, or pay a visit (“Someone else will take care of that.”; **Jas. 5:19-20**: “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”).
- F. **15 Consider works of the flesh as of no big consequence** (**Gal. 5:19-21**). “So what...”
- (1) Will argue dancing, mixed swimming, immodest apparel, lewd entertainment (e.g., R-rated movies, “soft porn,” etc.) are not sinful.
 - (2) At first such Christians are embarrassed to be caught in such behavior (e.g., sneak around, reconnoiter before entering a liquor store or bar); but later don’t care if others know or not.
 - (a) Show off pictures of the Prom, or the vacation at the beach (immodest apparel).
 - (b) Discuss R-rated movies they’ve seen, trivializing the evil it portrays (sex, foul language, excessive violence).
 - (c) Justify/rationalize drinking intoxicating beverages or even taking drugs (e.g., medical marijuana).
 - (3) Squirming yet? If we’ve repeated this or similar behavior we may be dying with the Philistines!

III. Conclusion: **16**

1. Do any of these signs describe your actions or attitude? If so, you ought to be very concerned!
2. We can’t allow ourselves to get comfortable with sin; if we do so we will die with the Philistines!
3. **17** We can avoid this slow death if we make a conscious effort to: 5 things
 - A. **Examine self** (**2 Cor. 13:5**: “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified.”).
 - (1) Requires brutal honesty with self!
 - (2) Requires a “good and honest” heart (**Lk. 8:15**: “But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.”).
 - (3) **Prov. 4:23**: “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”
 - B. **Confess and repent**

1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Acts 8:22: “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.”
 - C. **Study**: **Rom. 10:17**: “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
 - D. **Grow**: **2 Pet. 1:2-11**
 - E. **Participate**: **Eph. 4:15-16**: “but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ — 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”