

Tension

God Has an Ideal and God Uses Broken People

Icebreaker:

Describe something odd or funny or affirming that has happened to your faith or your family's faith during our stay-at-home time.

Introduction:

God has set forth ideals in his word, and His mercy is amplified in our weakness. This lesson is about the tension between God's ideal and His using broken people to advance His purposes. He does indeed have ideals, but He also has great mercies for broken people. We can find hope when we bring Him our hopelessness.

Pastor Dave opens the sermon with three personal examples from people he has known who attended Sun Grove. In the first illustration we learn that God does indeed love messy people. In the next, we learn about the mercy of God when we do not measure up to his ideal standards. And in the last we learn about a woman who was taught in another church that divorced people were broken, and it was not until she found Sun Grove that she came to realize that God loves and has a plan for broken people.

- **God has an ideal and God uses broken people is not a problem to solve, it is a tension to manage.**

1. In your spiritual walk was there a time that you or others had unrealistic ideals or

expectations? What made these “unrealistic”?

2. How do you respond when you fall short of those ideals? (Roman 3:10-18)

• **God’s ideal shows us our need for Him. *Read Judges 14:1-7***

The story of Samson is a story about us—we try to do things our way. God had an ideal for Samson, but Samson demanded things his own way. He was willing to ignore the wishes of his parents as well as ignore the ideals of God. “She is the right one for me” (v. 3). No matter that she is a foreigner. No matter that I am upsetting my parents. I am the one with needs to be satisfied. I am the only one that matters. Anyone looking objectively at Samson would say he was headed down the wrong road.

3. Samson was a judge, yet in so many ways he showed that he was a sinner in need. How does selfishness lie at the root of almost all sin?

4. In what ways are we like Sampson?

Read Judges 14:8-17

Samson’s wrong choice for a wife allows her to be forced by her own people to find the answer to his riddle. He seeks to burn their fields in revenge and kills 30 of their countrymen. His excuse? (*Judges 15:11*) “*I merely did to them what they did to me.*”

Samson was broken. In his anger he lost his wife, he lost the riddle, and he sought revenge that led to many deaths. His life was falling apart, directly because of his poor choices.

5. How are we like Samson doing things our way while expecting the blessings of God? Can you think of an example in your own life?

6. What is broken about the way the Philistines treated Samson? What was broken about Samson’s response?

7. How as Christians should we react to being treated poorly by unbelievers?

- **Broken people try to fill their own emptiness, instead of trusting God's ideal. *Read Judges 16:1-28***

Samson goes on making poor choices. He finds another godless woman and is sold out again, resulting in his captivity and blindness. In his final hour, Samson humbly seeks God's compassion. Finally, he has run out of his own choices, and is forced to seek God.

8. How did Samson during his experience with Delilah not trust God? What keeps us from relying on God instead of following our own passions?

9. What caused him to turn to God at the end? What caused you to turn to God?

- **God uses broken people to demonstrate who HE is. *Read Romans 5:6-8***

God is not demonstrating your brokenness to the world. He is demonstrating His grace—who He is. We are hopelessly lost but renewed in hope with Christ.

From Pastor Dave's Sermon: Noah was a drunk, Abraham was too old, Jacob was a liar, Leah was ugly, Joseph was abused, Moses had a stuttering problem, Gideon was afraid, Samson was a womanizer, Rahab was a prostitute.

10. Can you think of someone you know or know of, who was hopelessly caught in his choices but found grace and hope in Christ? Explain briefly.

11. How has God used your brokenness to bring wholeness to others or glory to God? (2 Corinthians 1: 3-4)

12. How do we start to follow God's ideal for our life? (see Hebrews 12:1-2 and Romans 12:1-2)

God has great plans for broken people like you and me who fall short of his ideals.