

Sermon Title: SWEET HONEY FROM A LION
Preacher: Rev. Dr. Raphael G. Warnock, Senior Pastor
Scripture: Judges 14:1-9 (NRSV)
Date: October 8, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Judges 14:1-9 (NRSV)

¹ Once Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw a Philistine woman. ² Then he came up and told his father and mother, "I saw a Philistine woman at Timnah; now get her for me as my wife."³ But his father and mother said to him, "Is there not a woman among your kin or among all our[a] people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, because she pleases me."⁴ His father and mother did not know that this was from the Lord, for he was seeking a pretext to act against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. ⁵ Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah. When he came to the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion roared at him. ⁶ The spirit of the Lord rushed on him, and he tore the lion apart barehanded as one might tear apart a kid. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. ⁷ Then he went down and talked with the woman, and she pleased Samson. ⁸ After a while he returned to marry her, and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion and honey. ⁹ He scraped it out into his hands and went on, eating as he went. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they ate it. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the carcass of the lion.

SERMON NOTES:

(This sermon is part of a series entitled: Family: Some Assembly Required)

Within the theme "families require assembly," Pastor Warnock emphasized how young people may make mistakes while growing up. They may forget the lessons learned about the Lord and stray from His will for their lives. Parents often find it difficult to watch their children make bad decisions causing them pain and adversely affecting their futures.

A student read a poem that illuminated ways parents saddle children with the pain of past oppression and what children need as support.

Reverend Warnock used the lion in the passage about Samson as a metaphor for things that will come to our lives that work against our quest to grow in living out our faith. Sometimes we find ourselves feeling like there is no way out. We are at the end of ourselves. It is in the midst of those situations where we need to turn towards God and wait for His provision. That is when God provides it. God doesn't give us help before we need it because we would think that we did it ourselves. When we allow God to work in this way we are given a testimony to carry us through the next challenge. When God does it, the victory is as sweet as the honey from a defeated lion.

Sermon Points

1. God empowers you to **reverse destruction**. The adversary roared at him. The Spirit empowered him. I don't look like what I've been through. God blessed me in spite of me. It's not that the lions don't roar. It's that I am covered by His Grace [Rom. 5:20]. If it had not been for the Lord who is on my side, I would not be standing [Ps 124]. Know this when you go to work this week. When we have been sanctified and set apart we can overcome any lion that comes our way. When you are in the fiery furnace and the heat is turned up 7 times [Daniel 3:17] and there is no way out, you turn your heart toward God and that is when our God shows up and we discover we have more than we thought. It doesn't come before we need it. It only comes when we are facing the wall.
2. God empowers you to **resist distractions**. If the enemy cannot destroy you, he will try to distract you until you destroy yourself. There are some burdens that we bring upon ourselves. Sin will take you further than you intended to go, keep you longer than you intended to stay, and cost you more than you thought you would have to pay. Chaos happens when we do what is right in our own eyes. Our sin is always more expensive than we imagine. Grace will cover you and hold you, but it won't shield you from the consequences of your sin.

3. God empowers you to **reach your destiny**. Sometimes we discover that we don't have to fight. God will lock the jaws of the hungry lion. You don't have to do anything but stand [Ex 14:13]. Put on the whole armor of God [Ep 6:11-24] Trust that God is God and is not slack in his promises. Sometimes you don't have to do anything. Other times God gives you the tools (the check you did not expect to pay your bills). Sometimes every now and then the spirit of God comes upon us with such power that, like Samson, we tear into the lion with our bare hands. "However the Lord wants to help is alright with me. I just want the Lord to show up." It's not me, It's the spirit of God that allows me to overcome the enemy. Has anybody here ever taken the time to see the remains of the enemies you have already overcome? If I forget that God is stronger than any power in my life, the reason I know I am going to win the next battle is to see the victories he has given me in the past.

Discussion Questions

1. Are you asking the Holy Spirit to pray for you to bring you into agreement with God's will for your life and your world? If so, what has been the result, or have you noticed a difference in your life?
2. Has there been a time when you can thank God that you did not get what you wanted when you wanted it? Explain.
3. What are some of the lions in your life today? Are you running from getting eaten? Are you fighting tooth and nail? Or are you simply standing?
4. Have you ever had your back to the wall, thinking there was no way out? How did your salvation come? Did you find your need miraculously appearing? Describe the experience.
5. Do you look like what you've been through? Talk about how the Lord has kept you. Can you say "I'm covered"?
6. Describe a time when your appetite overpowered your ability. What were the consequences?
7. Has anybody here ever taken the time to see the remains of the enemies you have already overcome? Describe one such time.