

Samson

by David Ravenhill

David Ravenhill's sermon on Samson emphasizes God's ability to raise leaders from barrenness and the church's need for spiritual authority in challenging times.

Duration: 1:11:32

Scripture: Judges 13:1

Topics: "Samson", "Divine Intervention", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

David Ravenhill explores the life of Samson, emphasizing the importance of divine intervention in the birthing of a ministry. He draws parallels between Samson's story and the current state of the church, highlighting the need for a new breed of individuals who are fully committed to God's purpose. Ravenhill discusses the process of barrenness leading to spiritual conception, the necessity of a divine visitation, and the importance of ongoing teachability in ministry. He encourages believers to embrace their weaknesses and dependency on God, as true strength comes from Him. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper relationship with God to fulfill the calling on their lives.

Transcript

I have somewhat of a dilemma, and maybe the theologians on the front row can help me. I'm 46 years of age, have two girls, or three girls, two in their 20s, one 22, one 20, and a 13 year old, and I'm still submitting to my father. Now what I need to know is when I no longer have to submit.

I'm in heaven, in heaven. All right, so I've got a few years to go. So I'm, once you know this morning, I'm a man under authority, and I'm doing what my father told me to do.

So if you'll turn with me to Judges chapter 13. I want to look at the life of Samson. This is a first phase of his life that we'll be looking at this morning.

You'll hear the second phase tonight. But I want to speak concerning the birthing of a ministry. The birthing, or the development of a ministry.

I believe again, as I said on Sunday morning, that the church is going through a time of transition. I think that's very obvious that we are going through a unprecedented time of shaking. A time when that which has been done in the secret place has now been declared openly and from the housetops.

I believe that that shaking is not going to diminish, but that shaking will increase. I believe that just a little while ago, the Lord quickened to me that portion of scripture there in Matthew 24, where it says, this is but the beginning of birth pangs. I have never given birth.

I have watched my wife, at least with our last child Deborah, watch to give birth. And I've noticed one thing, that when the birth pangs start, they don't diminish, they increase. And Jesus said this is but the beginning of birth pangs.

I believe that the shaking that the church of Jesus Christ is going through right now, it's just the first twinges of that which is going to increase, that which is going to intensify, until everything that can be shaken will be shaken. And God is right now, I believe, raising up new men. I believe that we're in a time of transition, as far as a new facet of what God is wanting to do in the church.

And I believe that God, in order to bring about that, is going to require a new, if you like, as Brother Cain would say, a new breed of individual, a new breed of man. A new breed of man that would carry the anointing of the Spirit of God, rather than their own name, or rather than be ones that would be more interested in their own ego, or their own promotion, but ones that would stand, again as Brother Cain said, and I would testify to it as a faceless group of individuals, where God would receive the glory. And I, as I've read through the Word of God, again see that God is never lacking for a man, that when the situation seems desperate, God always has His man.

When God wanted to replace Moses, He had a Joshua already waiting. When He wanted to replace Saul, He had David out there looking after the sheep nobody would have ever imagined that David was the next successor to the throne. When He was taking Elijah, He had Elisha, a young man out there committed plowing away in the fields, but God had His hand upon it.

And you go through the Word of God, you see that God is never lacking for a man. But I want you to turn with me again to Judges chapter 13. Let's just look at the background to this particular incident.

It says in verse 1, now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. I think the emphasis there is on that word again. If you go back into chapter 4, and we won't turn to it, you'll have the record there of Jabin, king of Canaan, who oppressed the nation of Israel, not just for a day, not just for a week, but for 20 years.

They were in bondage, they were in servitude, they were under the oppression and the wickedness and the cruelty of this particular man. You go into chapter 6 of Judges and there you have the story of Midian. The Midianites for seven years again devastated the nation of Israel, swooped down on their crops, totally devastated all that they had, all the possessions, they were living in fear.

You recall that it was at that time that God raised up Gideon, but again he was hiding, he was terrified of the oppression of the Midianites that for seven years had kept Israel at bay, at seven years had had a heavy hand on the nation of Israel. And now we come to this portion of scripture, and it says that Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord gave them into the hands of the Philistine, not just for 10 years or 20 years, but for 40 years, an entire generation that was under again the bondage of the Philistines. The Philistines represent the demonic influences in the Old Testament.

It's interesting to look at the various tribes, if you like, or nations that rose up against Israel. We looked at the Amalekites on Sunday morning, the Amalekites typifying the flesh, typifying the sins. Saul was told by

Samuel, go destroy the sinners, the Amalekites.

But the Philistines are referred to in Isaiah as the soothsayers, the Philistines. They were a type of those that were involved in the occult, those that were involved in supernatural satanic practices, and so on. And here we find that the church, if you like, in the Old Testament, the church of Jesus Christ is under the bondage of the powers of darkness.

You recall that these are the people that God says, you are to be the head and not the tail. This is a company of people that God said, I want you to be above and not beneath. And yet here is a total reversal of everything that God intended for Israel.

They're in bondage, they're in captivity. They don't know what to do about the situation year after year after year after year. It's gone on and on and on, an entire generation under bondage to the powers of darkness.

I believe that again we have a parallel in the church of Jesus Christ today. God wants us to be the head and not the tail. God wants us to be above and not beneath.

I don't know what your philosophy is or doctrine is of dominion. I don't believe that the church is going to eradicate sin and set up the kingdom of God in the political sense. But I do believe that we're going to have a supernatural outpouring of the spirit in the spiritual sense, where we'll have victory over demonic forces, where once again the church of Jesus Christ will be a force to be reckoned with.

And I believe that this is what God intended for Israel to accomplish. They failed miserably. But God raised up a new people.

He's raised up the church of Jesus Christ. And we are to have dominion over the principalities and powers. No weapon formed against us is to prosper.

And just as in the Old Testament, we had individuals that subdued kingdoms, not in a political sense, but in a spiritual sense. I believe God is wanting to raise up a body of believers that will know what it is to go into kingdoms and subdue them in a spiritual sense. Not simply that we'll have men, Christian men in office.

That doesn't worry me. But I don't believe that that's what God's after. He's looking for a church where the world will tremble again because we are in the midst.

And so God here is wanting to raise up an individual. He's wanting to raise up a deliverer. You'll notice that specifically this is not simply a prophet, but a deliverer for the situation that Israel found themselves in.

And here she is right now, powerless, totally powerless to do anything about the situation. And I think that's the condition of the church as we look at it around the world. And if we look at it certainly through our natural understanding, we are powerless.

We see the increase of AIDS. We see the increase of homosexuality in New Zealand where I've lived for the last 15 years. They brought a bill before Parliament to lower the age of consent for homosexuals down to the age of 16.

And the church banded together and out of 3 million people, they got a petition of 800,000 plus signatures. The largest single petition seemingly in the history of any, any sort of statistics. And yet the government

completely overruled, completely overruled.

And we found that it is not going to be accomplished through signing petitions. The amount of energy that went into drafting petitions, getting them out to every church, lining up at the doors, putting your name, your address, and so on, I'm opposed to this, and so on, does not work. There is a force, I believe, a power that God is wanting to give to the church of Jesus Christ.

That he's not going to be brought about by petitions. It's not going to be brought about by legislation. It's not going to be brought about by political means.

We've seen that and we have failed miserably. God is wanting to raise up men. And so God begins here.

And I want you to see the way in which God begins. The first thing is he brings life out of death. Notice he comes.

Let's begin in verse 2. There was a certain man of Zorah of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. Interesting that he comes to the tribe of Dan. You recall that when Jacob prophesied over the, over his children, that he said of Dan, that Dan would be the ones that would be the judges of Israel.

And here now he begins, if you like, to fulfill that prophetic statement that was given over Dan. He reaches into the tribe of Dan, to a family, it says, of the Danites, whose name was Manoah, and his wife was barren, and had borne no children. Again this is a similar story to that which we heard yesterday about Elkanah, and Hannah, and Panina.

A barren situation. The only difference is here that Manoah did not take a second wife. Most people feel that because Hannah was unable to conceive, and because of the stigma and the reproach that was attached to that, that then Elkanah went and he took Panina.

Again, because of his frustration. So often we sort of marry into something when we can't produce it by ourselves, don't we? We create an Ishmael. But thank God that Manoah at least didn't take two wives.

I was thinking as my father was speaking yesterday that there is a tremendous amount of polygamy that goes on now in the Church of Jesus Christ. People don't have two at once, they just simply have one after another. And that's just as tragic.

We have evangelists not far from here, who have got two wives. One divorced, and one that he's living with. But thank God that Manoah was content.

But the angel comes in verse three and it says, then, now let me go back, and his wife was barren. Then, I'm amazed as I read through the Word of God at the way much God reaches down into barren situations. Invariably in the Word of God, when God wanted to raise up a deliverer, a judge, a prophet, some great statesman, God invariably takes a barren woman.

And I believe that there is a reason for that. And the reason is this, that God cannot get the glory any other way. You see, if we can produce something out of our own natural capabilities, then we can strut, and we can boast, and we can say, look what I accomplished.

Look what my brilliance accomplished. Look what my personality accomplished. Look what my organizational skills accomplished.

Look what I was able to do. The Bible says no flesh will glory in his presence. And so God reaches down into a situation that in the natural is totally unable to do anything whatsoever.

I believe that that is what God is looking for today. Not many wise men according to the flesh. God takes the foolish things, the things that are nought, to confound the things that are wise.

Again, that he might get the glory. And he begins again with the situation of a barren woman. Interesting in the scriptures that it's always the woman's fault.

Have you ever noticed that? Now you'll label me along with my father as being anti-women. We're not. I've got three daughters and a wife, and I'm surrounded by women.

I'm an expert on women. But we love them. But you see there is a reason, a spiritual reason, why the Bible never says that the man is barren.

Because the woman typifies the church. The woman in scripture always typifies the church. It is never God's fault.

It is never the bridegroom's fault. In him is life, and the life is the light of men. I am come that you might have life.

I am the resurrection and the life. God is not barren. The church, the bride, is barren.

Always represented. The bride is always the barren one. But I believe God brings us that place of barrenness.

I believe that there is a stripping process that in order to birth a ministry, God invariably will bring us to. I'm not speaking this morning simply because I've put together a message. My mother can testify, if you were to ask her, that I know what it is to be barren in the natural.

I'm not talking about in the sense of children, but in the sense of my own capabilities. I struggled all the way through high school. I brought home F's on my report card.

I never ever dreamed or ever desired to ever go into the ministry. Teachers told my mother and my father that I would never amount to anything. You might as well let David drop out of school.

He'll never make it. I've got two brothers that are both brilliant. My younger brother got his Ph.D. and working in the Smithsonian Institute, he's got brains from his head down to his feet, I think.

And my older brother, likewise, but he used his in a different realm, and I sort of missed out somewhere along the line. But I mean that. You will not know the times that I've laid on my beard, not once, not twice, but dozens and dozens and dozens and dozens of times, and wept before God, and said, God, I can't believe that you would use me.

You see, God takes barren individuals. I went through Bible school, a small school. The teams were selected to go out and represent the school, to sing, to testify, various things.

In three years, I was never once asked to do a single thing. I was too shy. I was too timid.

If I had to read publicly in class in Bible school, I would be so far ahead. I'd read over that verse two, three, four, five times. Why? Because I would, I would get flustered.

I was scared of my own voice. I was terrified of making a mistake publicly. I never did anything in high school publicly.

Never went into debate or anything else. Why? Because I didn't have it, you see. And I say that this morning, because I'm sure that some of you here have believed a lie, that I'm incapable.

I don't have the personality. I don't have the brains. I don't have this.

I don't have that. Let me tell you, you're actually the one that God's looking for. God begins with barrenness.

He brings us to the end of ourselves. When God wanted a replacement for Saul, He goes into the house of Jesse. And Samuel almost makes the same mistake twice.

He looks at Eliab. Eliab, tall, dark, handsome. And he says, surely this is God's anointed.

This is the type of individual I would use. And God says, hey, don't make the same mistake twice. Be careful.

We've already had one failure. I don't believe that Saul was ever in the mind of God to be king. His very name means asked for, demanded.

They demanded a king. And God chose a king on the basis of the way the people wanted a king. In order to teach them an object lesson.

If you choose according to the height of his stature, according to his intellect, his ability, his charisma, and so on, I'll show you that ultimately that will fail. I'm going to raise up a man after my own heart. And every time they mention Saul's name, they were reminding themselves we demanded it, we demanded it, we demanded it.

That's what his name means. Asked for, demanded. He was an object lesson of how not to do it.

He operated in the flesh, in his own strength, in his own energy. And God raises up again David. But you'll notice there's something about David.

David was not included with the other brothers. And finally Samuel goes down the line, this isn't it, this isn't, this isn't the one. And he stands back somewhat aghast.

And he says, isn't there anybody else? And Jesse his father says, oh yeah, there's still the youngest. You look that word up in the Hebrew and it means the least. And the root meaning means the despised one.

Not just the least as far as age is concerned, but the reject. The Jews, some of the Jews believed that David was illegitimate. And sin did my mother conceive me.

But he was one that they did not want to acknowledge. He wasn't called in when the great prophet came to town, when they had a feast. Oh David, don't bother about David.

He's a, he's an oddball. We don't want to be embarrassed by bringing David in here. And God says, listen, I'd take the barren one.

The least one. The despised one. The reject.

The one that you don't think could carry the anointing of the Spirit of God. That's the one that I'm after. When God wants to replace Elijah, he doesn't go into the school of the prophets.

He doesn't reach down, if you like, into an Old Testament seminary. He doesn't go to a Bible college where they've been groomed. And they could prophesy.

They even had a mantle of authority. They prophesied what was going to happen. Don't you know Elijah, that this day God is going to take your master away from you? But God bypasses that.

Reaches down to a lad that is plowing in his father's field. A farmer, not even an intellectual. And suddenly the power of God, the anointing of God, comes upon him.

You see, God reaches into barren situations. Isaac came out of a barren womb. Samuel came out of a barren womb.

John the Baptist came out of a barren womb. David himself, his ancestry, came out of barrenness. You recall that Ruth was unable to conceive.

She was married. Her first husband died in the land of Moab. Married a Moabite.

She returns. You know the story of Ruth falls in love with Obed. And it says God opened her womb.

Or God gave her the ability to conceive. She gave birth again to Obed. And then to Jesse.

And then of course David coming from that line. But you see, invariably God reaches into that sort of situation. Joseph, the great statesman, again came out of a barren situation.

And so God begins with barrenness. What do I mean by barrenness? I mean the inability in the natural to produce life. The inability within yourself to produce life.

You see, the very first law of kingdom living that Jesus gave there in Matthew chapter 5 was, blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God. What does that mean? That word poor literally means a beggar. It's a Greek word for a beggar.

Blessed are the beggars. What is a beggar? A beggar is somebody who sustains his life from somebody else. I was in India two years ago.

Almost exactly two years ago now. Ministering in Hyderabad in a bible school. And one day we went in down into the marketplace in the center of that great city.

And as we went along the road there, we pulled up in the jeep that the fellow was driving us in. And I looked down as we pulled up at a stoplight. And here was a a beggar sitting in a little narrow median strip in the the middle of the road.

A busy road with ox carts and all sorts of things crowding it. If you've ever been to India, the fascination of that country. And here was a little boy, possibly nine, ten years of age.

A big smile on his face, but totally crippled up. His whole legs were crippled up. His arm was crippled up.

And he just simply held out his hand. And he was positioned at a very strategic spot. But you see, he was a beggar.

He didn't have the means of satisfying himself. He didn't have the means of looking after himself. He didn't have the means of sustaining his own life.

It was he was incapable of working. And the only way in which that young boy lived was to live off the means of somebody else. And Jesus said, the first rule in my kingdom is total dependency upon me.

You beg for everything. You don't have it as a residue within you. It is not something that you simply operate out of the flesh, or operate out of your own energy, your own strength, your own self-sufficiency.

But you operate by begging for me. God, unless you build a house, we labor in vain. Lord, I can't produce it by myself.

Unless I abide in you, I cannot produce any fruit. But notice what Jesus said, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is. Theirs is, not will be, the kingdom of God.

You see, he brings us to that place where we know our own barrenness. And unless we come to that place where we've been stripped of everything else. And again, I'm speaking from experience now.

It's over the last year, I believe that, and maybe this is a cycle that we go through. But God doing a stripping in my own life. And yet, I said to my wife a number of months ago now, as we're going through a sort of a difficult period.

And I guess wives feel it maybe more than husbands, as far as the security, and where are we going, and what's happening, and so on. And I said, honey, don't deprive me of my wilderness. Don't deprive me of my wilderness.

It's the time, it's the place where God makes you. Time where character is formed. Time where you learn a new and a fresh dependency upon God himself.

But you see, most of us don't want to come to that place. You know better than I do, the ministry of Paul Cain. You've seen it.

You've seen the tremendous anointing and manifestation of the power of God on his life. And I'm sure you, along with me, would love long to move in that dimension. But how many of us are willing for 25 years of barrenness? You see, that's what it takes.

Where God does a stripping. Where God does a hiding. Where God says, you're not going to be in the limelight.

Because I'm going to give birth to something. But are you willing to wait my time? See, most of us want it. But we want it right away.

The second thing is that we need a divine visitation. You see, the answer to barrenness. And there's only one answer.

And that's that God intervenes. Again in verse 2, and his wife was barren. Verse 3, then the angel of the Lord appeared.

You see, we need a supernatural intervention. We are powerless until we have a meeting place with God. Until somehow God comes and changes that barren situation.

You recall that Moses went through a period of barrenness. Until suddenly God appeared in the burning bush. In fact, the Bible says there's an interesting little phrase, at least in the King James version.

I think it's Exodus chapter 2, verse 21 or thereabouts. Where it says, he was content to live with his father-in-law. He was content.

Can you imagine a man that for 40 years had been trained in all the wisdom and the training of the Egyptians. Lived in royal palaces. Had everybody waiting on him, hand and feet and everything.

Being groomed for the throne. And then he finds himself out in the wilderness after a period of failure. You know what the failure was? He tried to do it his way.

You see, Acts chapter 7 says, it entered his mind to visit his brethren. It entered his mind to visit his brethren. And you know his means of doing what God did in 24 hours.

His idea was, listen, if I can kill them off one by one, bury them in the sand, I'll bring deliverance that way. He'd still be there. That's a long process.

Taking hold of a man, wrestling him to the ground, killing him, digging a hole, burying him. The next day said, well that's at least that's one gone. It's only 500,000 left.

You see it entered his mind, supposing that his brethren understood. That God had raised him up to be a deliverer. And he failed miserably.

And he runs into the wilderness and he became content. He was content. In other words, he settled down.

But God began to strip him until finally, as he stood there, the angel of the Lord appeared to him. God himself appeared. There was a supernatural divine visitation that Moses had.

An encounter with God. You know what it says in Acts chapter 7? It begins by saying it entered his mind. It goes on to say, and God sent him.

Boy, there's all the difference in the world. There's too many men in the ministry because it's entered their mind. There's too few that God has sent.

And there's all the difference in the world between the two of them. Gideon, again terrified of the Midianites. He's there in the wine press.

What was he doing in a wine press? He was there because there was an enclosure. Nobody could see him. He wasn't treading out grapes.

He was threshing the wheat. But he was afraid because of the Midianites. But what happened? Suddenly the angel of the Lord comes to him.

Gideon, you're a mighty man of valor. He had a divine encounter with God himself. You go to Jacob.

Jacob, that twisted, scheming individual. But one night God gets a hold of him. There at the the Brook Jabbok.

And the angel of the Lord wrestles with him. He has a divine encounter. And he's changed into another man.

Joshua begins his ministry. Moses, the great statesman, has died. The very first thing Moses has to, or Joshua has to do.

He confronts the walls of Jericho there. Standing out in the field alone. Having assumed the leadership of maybe a million to three million people.

How on earth am I going to go against this tremendous city? What happens? The angel of the Lord comes. The the captain of the host. And he has a divine encounter with God.

Abraham. Bible says in Acts, the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham. You see there was a revelation of the nature, the character of God himself.

That came to Abraham. That gave him the impetus, if you like, to leave everything. And look for a city whose builder and maker is God.

Isaiah. Isaiah saw the Lord. And as a result, his life was transformed.

Paul on the Damascus road. Convinced he was doing God a favor by wiping out the church. As to zeal, he says, there was nobody that surpassed me.

But suddenly there was a blinding flash and God comes into the life of the apostle Paul or Saul. 120 on the upper room. Again possibly like they were in the, there after the resurrection, gathered in fear of the Jews.

Terrified, timid. And suddenly the Spirit of God sweeps into that place. We have Peter who, at the accusation of a little girl, denied him three times.

Now stands up before a vast multitude. Begins to speak under the power and the anointing of the Spirit of God. What made the difference? These men had a divine visitation.

You see there was a meeting place with God. And we need to know that God somehow has touched our life. We've had a divine encounter with God.

We know that God has come into our barrenness. And then we have the promise in verse 3 of conception. The angel Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, behold now you are barren and have born no children but you shall conceive and give birth to a son.

The promise of conception. You see God has to invade our life. There has to be again a divine encounter with God.

Somewhere along the line, if God is going to raise up a ministry in your life and through your life, there has to be a divine meeting place with God. Conception, spiritual conception has to take place. Let me talk for a moment about conception.

Conception begins only after commitment. God is not loose. God does not run around getting people in trouble.

The Bible says if that happens, you're a bastard and not a son. Unlike in marriage, there is first of all the leaving and the cleaving. There is first of all a radical total commitment to God himself that has to come before conception can take place.

I would love to minister on the cross but I don't think it will be this time. But we need a new understanding of why Jesus Christ died on the cross. It may shock you if I were to say Jesus Christ did not die to take away your sin.

Someday I'll answer that. I'm going to leave it right now. But you see we need an understanding of why Jesus Christ died.

He is looking for those that will commit themselves to him. Those that will belong to him. When my wife married me, she forsook her father and her mother.

She forsook the place where she was living. She left behind her name and she took my name. And when we come to Jesus Christ, we leave behind our identity.

Nobody knows who Nancy Schultz is anymore. She is now Nancy Ravenhill. You see there is an identity that she has lost.

And we need to come into a relationship with God of total abandonment to everything that we have. Where our name no longer is important. You see the essence of Babylon was let us make a name for ourselves.

That's Babylon. That's the root of Babylon. Let us make a name for ourselves.

It says there in Genesis. And everybody wants to make a name for themselves. My organization.

My this, my that, and so on and so forth. And commitment requires that we take his name. Hallowed be thy name Lord.

From now on it's no longer my name, but thy name that's going to be hallowed. Thy name that's going to be recognized. Your name is going to be in esteem.

Your name is going to be lifted up. I'm going to lose my identity. I'm going to commit myself.

Whither thou goest, I will go. Whither thou lodgest, I will lodge. Your people will be my people.

Where you die, I will die. You see what Ruth said there is a message on commitment in the spiritual sense. We have to die where he died.

Most of us don't want to do that. We don't want a Calvary. We don't want a crucifixion of our own desires, our own plans, our own ambitions.

See when my wife married, she teamed up with me. And in a sense what God had called me to, and she had to forsake other things. And so first of all in order for conception to take place, there is a total commitment first of all.

The second thing in order for conception to take place, there is a there is a need to be alone. I have pastored now for 15 years on a team in New Zealand. I was not the senior pastor, but I have visited the hospitals many, many, many times.

I can't think how many times to visit people in the church, women that had given birth. In New Zealand of course it's socialized medicine, so they stay in a minimum of seven days to ten days. And after three or four days, I would make my way up there sometimes with my wife, sometimes by myself, and visit one of

the mothers in the church.

There she would be radiant. Sometimes the husband would be there, depending what time I went, whether it was during the day or whether it was in the evening. There she is radiant, showing off this little priceless possession that God had given, little boy or a little girl.

Isn't he cute? Isn't he beautiful? And so on and so forth. And I have witnessed dozens of those situations. I've held them in my hands just a matter of months later as I stood before the congregation, and offered them up to God, and thanked God for the life of this little one, and offered it back to God on behalf of the parents publicly.

But you know, I've never ever been there once when conception took place. You see, you see many times the baby, so to speak. As you see a Paul Kane, as you see somebody else stand and minister the Word of God, and you see the public demonstration, but you haven't been there when conception took place.

And conception takes place alone. It doesn't take place in a meeting like this. It takes place when you're alone with your beloved.

You see, conception can only take place where intimacy is involved. It is impossible in the natural for conception to take place when a man and a woman are separated. The Bible says your sins have separated between you and your God.

And unless there is a removing of everything else that stands between you and the one that you call your beloved, conception will never take place. You see, conception can only take place where there's nakedness. Can only take place when there is an exposure.

And you see, most of us aren't willing to expose ourselves before God. We cover up. Lord, I'm not willing to be honest.

I'm not willing to be transparent. I'm not willing to be to show you what I'm really like. You see, clothes can hide a lot, can't they? But you see, nakedness reveals everything.

The Bible says we stand naked before Him with whom we have to do. All things are exposed. All things are exposed and are naked before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

We have to come to that place of not going around pretending we're pregnant. But where we acknowledge, Lord, I'm barren. I acknowledge my barrenness.

I acknowledge I can't do it by myself. Lord, this is what I'm really like. Lord, I'm battling with this lust.

I'm battling with this problem. I've got this sin in my life. Lord, I'm going to be transparent this morning.

I want you to cleanse me. I want you to wash me. I want to be totally naked before you, Lord, because you see me anyway.

But see, honesty really is nothing more than nakedness. Out of the various seeds that Jesus sowed or the various hearts, if you like, the only one that received the Word and produced fruit was the honest heart. You see, I could give maybe a marriage or a message on marriage this morning.

And you know that your marriage is not what it should be. But you will not come to the altar. Why? Because somebody else may see you and think, boy, I thought they had it together.

And because we're not honest, the Word does not penetrate and therefore the Word is lost. And it's only when there's an exposure, it's only when there is an honesty that the Word of God then can conceive and bring forth. But most of us don't want to acknowledge that.

We go around in sort of maternity clothes, spiritually speaking, with a pillow or something stuffed up there as though we've got it all. We borrow somebody else's message because, Lord, I don't want to acknowledge. I don't have anything to share this morning because you haven't given me anything.

Lord, I'm barren. So I'll borrow something from Spurgeon. I'll borrow somebody.

I'll use somebody else's baby. But Lord, I refuse to admit that I'm barren. You see, God requires an openness, an exposure.

And of course, conception only takes place where, if you like, there is an intimacy, where there is a love relationship. God has to bring us to that place where He and He alone is our love. Where there is an entwining, as it were, just as in the natural there's an entwining, there is an entwining with the Spirit of God.

And an intimacy with God whereby the Spirit of God can put His life within us. And so the angel says, you shall conceive. After the conception, there is the gestation period.

And I think maybe this is the hardest period to go through. I think those of you here in a natural, and I've watched my wife as she's suddenly found out that she's pregnant and maybe the joy that comes with that. We're going to have a child.

But then the long wait. You know, we can get so excited about a prophecy that comes maybe and somebody puts their hands on you, prophesies something about how God is going to use you and so on and so forth. But you know, I think prophecies always lack.

And maybe it's God's means of doing it, but they never say how long. I stand before you still waiting for 20, and I'm standing here 25 years after certain prophecies were given to me that I know are from God. And I have not yet seen the fulfillment of those prophecies.

You see, the gestation period may take a while. Moses, 40 years of gestation in the backside of the desert before God says, okay, now you're ready. Joseph, remember coming down to breakfast one morning? Conception had taken place during the night, dreams, visions, all his brethren bowing down to him.

Boy, he came down, he was so big, he could hardly get through the door. Telling his brothers, listen, one day you guys are going to bow at my feet and so on and so forth. Boy, he was elated.

It's sort of the prophecy had come to him in the night. 13 years later, his brethren bowed down to him. And between the first appearance of God, there is a time of affliction, the Bible says.

He was afflicted, he was placed in prison and in chains. The Word of the Lord tried him, tested him. You see, most of us don't want that.

We want the visions, we want the dreams, we want the the tremendous prophetic word to come over us. But we don't want 40 years looking after sheep in the backside of the desert, a test of his faithfulness. We don't want 13 years in prison.

Jesus, 30 years in a carpenter's shop. The Son of God himself, making plows, fixing harrows. The Levites, even though they were born into the Levitical tribe, 30 years before they could officiate in the sanctuary.

Paul, somebody, some believe were 13 years on the backside of the desert. You see, we don't like that, we don't want that. We want the call and the commission to come in the same day.

You see, there is a difference and a lot of misunderstanding about the call of God and the commission of God. There is a difference. I remember counseling a young boy, sort of a hippie type guy that came to the altar many years ago in New Zealand.

I went up to him and I asked him if I could pray with him and what it was concerning. And he said, well, I believe God has called me tonight to go and be an evangelist. To the surfers on a particular beach, very well known beach where hundreds and hundreds of kids were and so on.

And you know, as he shared and talked and told me that in that meeting, he believed that God had placed a call upon his life. And as he shared, I couldn't doubt that. I believe that.

But you see, I said to him, listen, the call and the commission are two different things. Between the call and the commission, there is always preparation. You see, Jesus called his disciples at the very beginning of his ministry, forsake everything, come after me, take up your cross, follow me.

That was the call. Three and a half years later, it was the commission, go into all the world and preach the gospel. In between, there is a preparation.

There is a sitting at his feet. There is a learning. But most of us don't want the preparation.

We want a call and a commission in 24 hours. But God doesn't work that way. And so, there is always a time of gestation.

There is always a time where God will allow us to go through a time where things are just so difficult for us. You see, a baby is born in the natural, at least the first nine months are in the dark. And I believe that many times God will take us through periods of darkness.

Abraham, you recall, there as he stood defending the sacrifice in Genesis 15. It says that darkness came. And behold, a terror of great darkness.

God will take us through times where seemingly we don't understand what is going on. But it is a process that he's taking us through, of developing us, of producing character, of patience, of perseverance. Paul says, I wrote the works of an apostle among you.

Well, with not signs and wonders just, but with perseverance. I wrote the signs of an apostle with perseverance. You know, we have the idea that an apostle doesn't need perseverance.

He speaks a word and it happens. He snaps his finger and it takes place. But Paul says, listen, apostleship requires perseverance.

So there is a time, a gestation period that we have to go through. Notice something that happened here and uh, just requiring the um, what's the word, the requirements anyway that God placed upon Manoah's wife. Verse four, now therefore be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing.

For behold, you shall conceive, give birth to a son, no razor shall come upon his head. For the boy shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb and he will begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines. Now therefore be careful, do not eat or drink any strong drink or any unclean thing.

Verse seven, and he said unto me, behold you shall conceive, give birth to a son and now you shall not drink wine or strong drink or eat any unclean thing. For the boy shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb. Down into verse 14, she should not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor drink wine or strong drink, nor eat anything.

Let her observe all that I have commanded. Notice the angel Lord three times, within a space of just a matter of a few verses, three times the warning is given. Be careful, make sure you do everything according to my commandments.

But do not partake of wine, do not partake of strong drink, do not partake of that which is unclean. Why? Because you are going to give birth to a Nazarite. But you'll notice something, that in order to give birth to a Nazarite, she had to become a Nazarite.

You see, you cannot give birth to a ministry of prayer unless you know how to pray. Imagine how hypocritical it would be for me to sit there listening to my father emphasize prayer and then watching him at home, never ever praying. See, it's no use me stressing holiness unless I live a holy life.

It's no use me stressing integrity unless I'm a man of integrity. It's no use me having an emphasis on righteousness unless I'm righteous, on purity unless I'm pure, on compassion unless I'm compassionate. And God said to this woman, listen, if you are going to bring forth a deliverer, a Nazarite that I'm able to use and anoint, then you need to take the vow of a Nazarite yourself.

I'm not going to have this little boy growing up and reaching for some grapes on the table because you and dad, you and your husband are eating grapes. And the little boy says, why can't I have one? And they wrap him over the knuckles and say, you can't have it, it's not good for you. But daddy, you're eating it.

Mommy, you're eating it. You see, there was an example that had to be set in order for a ministry to come forth. Paul says to the elders, and not Paul, Peter writing to the elders, be an example to the flock.

Jesus leaving us an example that we should follow in his footprint. You see, the tragedy is that we've had ministries that have emphasized holiness and purity, but then all of a sudden the exposure has come and they're not living it. It's tragic.

And God says I'm not going to have a young boy grow up. Being told he can't do this, while all the time he sees in your life that taking place which you have refused him. And if you are going to give birth to a Nazarite, if you are going to give birth to a deliverer, then you need to become that thing yourself.

And you see, that's why God can't trust us with certain ministries until it becomes a part of us. Until it's something that God has wrought in our very spirit. Where we love prayer, therefore we can teach on prayer.

We love evangelism, therefore we can teach on evangelism. We've got compassion, therefore we can be compassionate. And so he puts us through, again, be careful.

You make sure you observe. You keep my commandments. See, most of us would like the ministry.

We'd like the end product, if you like. But we don't want to have to have that outworked in our own lives. That's where the failure comes.

Proverbs says, an inheritance gained hurriedly in the beginning will not be blessed in the end. Most of us demand our inheritance long before it's due, like the prodigal son. He had an inheritance coming, but it brought him to ruin.

And we demand from God, God give me, give me, give me. It's mine, it's my right. We have all sorts of teaching, name it, claim it.

You're a king's kid, get on with it. God's got all these things, and we demand that which God has, but we're not prepared to wait his timing. And we get it, and we can't handle it, and it causes us leanness.

He gave them the desires of the heart, sent leanness to the bones. And so three times, the angel warns this woman, be careful, make sure you do not violate this particular law. All right, the next thing, in verse five, that this ministry was to be totally, totally God's.

For behold, you shall conceive, give birth to a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb. Over into verse seven, it says there, he shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

It's interesting, because the law of the Nazirite was a voluntary law. It was a law that was open to both men and women in the Old Testament. It was a law that they could place themselves under.

It was a covenant, if you like, an agreement that they could make, where they chose a certain period of time. Any woman in the Old Testament, any man in the Old Testament, didn't have to belong to the tribe of Levi. But anybody, it was open to anybody.

They could take the vow of a Nazirite. They could determine for the next 12 months, I am going to be a Nazirite. I'm going to bind myself with a vow, not to eat that which comes from the, the vine and so on.

Speaking about natural stimulation. But I'm going to separate myself unto God. And at the end of that period of time, whether it was a week, whether it was a month, whether it was a year, whether it was 10 years, then they were free from that obligation.

But notice God's conception, if you like, of what a Nazirite is. This man shall be a Nazirite from the day of his birth to the day of his death. You see, I think we've got too many Nazirites that say, I'll try it for a while.

I'll give God a chance. I'll go somewhere for a year. I'll go here for a month.

If it doesn't work out then, well, I've given God a chance. You see, God is looking again for Nazirites that are totally committed to His purpose, regardless of what happens. They don't put any sort of time element on it.

From the day of your birth, your spiritual birth in the eyes of God, you are separated from the unclean. And to the day of your death, be clean ye that bear the vessels of the Lord. That's what Isaiah said.

If you are going to be one that would bear the vessels of God, the one prime responsibility is cleanliness, holiness, purity. You'll notice that it was associated with the burnt offering. His parents brought brought a burnt offering and offered it up.

Burnt offering again, a voluntary offering, the burnt offering that Paul refers to there in Romans 12, I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your body, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. It was the one offering that was totally consumed. You recall that some of the offerings were given back or a portion was given back to the priest.

Some was given back to the one that brought the offering. But the burnt offering was totally consumed. Talks about total commitment.

And here associated with the birth of this ministry, there was a total selling out to God, where God consumed everything. There is a law requiring the burnt offering in Leviticus, I think it's chapter six. I've got my notes there somewhere.

Yeah, Leviticus six and verse nine. Has some interesting things to say about the burnt offering. First of all, it says the burnt offering shall remain on the altar all night.

You see, it's very easy in any sort of a meeting like a meeting last night or a meeting like this to place on the altar something in the heat of the emotion of that meeting. To say, Lord, I'll sell out. I'll give you this.

I'll give you that. Lord, I'll place my life upon the altar. But you see, after the placing it up the altar, there is always a night season.

And God says there is a time, if you like, when it's so easy to take it back. But once you place it on the altar, it stays there all night. During the times of darkness, during the time where there's an inactivity, during the time when nothing else seems to be taking place, you leave it on the altar.

Not only that, but according to Leviticus 8, and it says, and the fire shall be kept burning on it. Boy, how hard it is, isn't it, to keep the fire burning constantly in your life, that which you've committed to him. You know, you leave, you go home, you get involved with the various everyday things of life, and so on.

The fire begins to dwindle. You make a commitment to pray more. You go back into your job.

This comes in, that comes in, and so on. And the fire begins to die out. But you see, the law of the burnt offering was, it had to be totally consumed.

It had to be left on all night long. And the fire had to be constantly kept burning. See, that was, that's what God requires.

No doubt there are ministers here this morning that have placed their lives on the altar somewhere, 10, 20, 30 years ago. And the fire's gone out this morning. Fire's gone out because of a lack of prayer, because of a busy schedule.

There's been a temptation to take it off. Lord, I'll get a job. I'll go into real estate.

I'll go into this. I'll go back to the profession or the calling that I had before you called me. Lord, I'm discouraged.

I'm weary. You need the fire to burn again this morning. You need to fan it into flames by the Spirit of God, by discipline, by prayer.

Because once you place it on the altar, it's God's. And it belongs to Him. Verse 8, And Manoah entreated the Lord and said, Lord, please let the man of God whom thou sent come to us again, that he may teach us what to do for the boy who is to be born.

We need an ongoing teachableness. Manoah, in this sense, was barren. Manoah says, God, I don't have the wisdom.

I don't have the ability. I don't have the understanding. I don't know how to begin.

I've never had a ministry like this before. I've never had a child before. And since you originated this idea, since you birthed this idea, since this is your responsibility, then Lord, you have to teach me.

You see, most of us, we get the baby and then we decide, I'll train it myself. We get the ministry. And it may be supernatural.

It may have a supernatural conception, if you like. But once we get it, I want to do with it now that I've got it, now that I've got my inheritance, the prodigal said. I'm going to go and I'm going to spend it the way I want.

If he'd have gone to the father and said, Father, thank you for the inheritance. What do you suggest I do with it now that I've got it? How should I invest it? How should I use it? Father, you've been a successful businessman. You've accumulated all this money.

What do you suggest I do with it? No, he grabs it. He gets it from the father. It's a gift, if you like, but he runs off and he takes off and I'll do it my way.

And Manoah says, Lord, teach me, teach me, teach me how to handle this. Lord, this is a whole new pathway. I've never been this way before.

I need your counsel. I need your direction. I need to know your ways.

See, the children of Israel were involved in the supernatural. They saw his acts, but Moses knew his ways. And you see, most of us see the acts of God, but we don't understand the ways of God.

Teach me your ways. Teach me your ways. Isaiah says that his ways are higher than our ways.

Your ways are not my ways, says the Lord. Neither your thoughts are my thoughts. I've heard people quote that so often in prayer.

I say, oh Lord, we can't know your ways. You know what that was? You look that portion of scripture up. It's a rebuke.

It's a rebuke. Because he goes on to say, let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thought. Your ways and my ways can be together.

That's why the Psalmist said, Lord, teach me your ways. It's not that God's ways are so far off that we can't understand them. It's just that we are so carnal that we don't want to.

And God says, if you are willing to forsake your ways, repent of your ways, I'll show you my ways. And yet we pray that prayer totally out of context. It's a rebuke to God's people that we have drifted apart.

Teach me thy way, oh Lord. Teach me how to handle this. See again, a constant dependency upon God.

Let's just close with a couple of thoughts. In verse 24, When the woman gave birth to a son, named him Samson, the child grew. The Lord blessed him.

It has to be the growing up, the maturing. See, every ministry needs to develop. Not only can there be a supernatural conception and birth and so on, but then as we begin to grow and ask God, Lord, let me develop in this particular area.

You see, the child grew. The Bible says Paul grew in strength, daily confounding the Jews. He wasn't down at the local gym pumping iron, but he grew daily in strength.

What? Spiritual strength. Confounding all the Jews there as they went through their Torahs. They went through the Word and said, this is wrong, that's wrong, and so on.

Paul confounded them. He grew in strength. Jesus grew in wisdom, in stature.

Peter says, desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby. See, God wasn't looking for a child. He was looking for a deliverer.

She gave birth to a son. She didn't give birth to a deliverer. There had to be the growing.

There had to be the maturing. I believe that one of the things so often we stop short of, we get a hold of something, then we stagnate. The Lord quickened to me a portion of Scripture concerning this present move we've just made from New Zealand.

We've been back here in the States now almost exactly a year. And the Lord spoke to me. It took me three years to make this decision to move.

I was in a very secure place of ministry, largest Pentecostal church in the country, and had everything in a natural going for me. And God gave me a verse in Jeremiah 48. Moab has been undisturbed.

Moab has settled on his leaves. He has not been emptied from vessel to vessel. Therefore his aroma remains.

And for 15 years I'd been settled. While I've never made wine, I understand that the process of making wine is that you pour it into one vessel. You leave it for a period of time, and all the residue and all the, that which is not wine, the pith of the grape begins to settle down and solidify at the bottom.

And then they gradually just pour off the pure wine. And again there is a settling process. And then they pour it off again and keep pouring it off until they've got the best wine.

But it says Moab has settled on the leaves. And eventually those leaves, that filth in the bottom, begins to permeate. And it begins to affect the wine, so it's no longer good wine.

And God says I'm going to begin to empty you from vessel to vessel. The transition, boy it's not easy is it? Even being emptied from one house to another, from one country to another, as well as the spiritual transition that you go through with that. But you see you leave behind in the natural when you move house, at least most people.

Boy they have a garage sale. The house beside my parents was just sold and the fellas just moved. And we went there the other day and at the top of the drive he's got a table out there and all the junk and all the belongings.

Why? He's leaving behind the leaves. He's moving on. And we do that.

There's a sort of a spiritual house cleaning. We don't want to take with us all the filth that we've accumulated. And spiritually it's the same way.

We need to grow up. We need to come to a place of maturity. Maturity in prayer, maturity in outreach and so on and so forth.

You see but most of us sort of stagnate. We get in a rut. God is saying listen there's something more.

You go from faith to faith, from victory to victory, from glory to glory. A path of the just is what is a shining light. It shines more and more until the perfect day.

It's not a spot. It's not a place where you stand and say here I am. But it's a path.

It's an ongoing walk and talk and relationship and maturity with God. Paul says when I became a man I put away childish things. It's not speaking there I don't think, just in the natural.

Speaking about spiritual things. And the last thing in verse 25, the Spirit of God began to stir him. The Spirit of God began to stir him.

Notice it was not Samuel stirring the Spirit but the Spirit stirring him. I think so often we try don't we to stir the Spirit. We try and make the Spirit sort of cooperate with our schedule, with our program, with our thinking, with our way of doing things.

Lord do it my way. Fit within the framework of my denomination. Lord if you can't move then get out and do it somewhere else.

My brother just told us the other day of a denomination in this very city that right now is drawing up a declaration, if you like, a stand on what they believe about the baptism of the Spirit. How tragic. See that's the beginning of the end.

God's going to bypass them. You see the big sin of Israel is they limited the Holy One of Israel. They put limitations, they put a governor on, like a governor on a car.

You've got a v8 engine but you put a little governor on there and it will only get up to so many revs and you can never get it any further than that. Why? Because you've limited the power and there are denominations that now put limitations. We don't believe this, we don't believe that.

God is going to bypass them because they are trying to stir the Spirit their way instead of allowing the Spirit of God to stir His way. But the Spirit began to stir Him. You see it wasn't He that was in control of the

Spirit, the Spirit was in control of Him.

And there's all the difference in the world. And God has to come and invade our thinking and invade our way of doing things. And I've had to learn that.

The very, very first prophecy I ever had over my life some 20 odd years ago now, 25 or 6 years ago. The very prophecy was this, your carnal mind is enmity against God. That's one prophecy I've never ever forgotten.

You see my, my way of thinking. Not necessarily carnal in the sense of sin and uncleanness but carnal in the sense of natural way of thinking. You see God doesn't operate this way.

This is ridiculous and so on and so forth. And it's enmity against God. It's an enemy of everything that God wants to do.

We want to be respectable. Our denomination isn't ever going to dance. Our denomination isn't you know, I'm not going to make a fool of myself speaking in tongues.

I'm not going to make a fool of myself doing this or that or the other thing. You see. And our natural reasoning, the Bible says the natural mind understands not the things of the Spirit of God.

Why the foolishness? We need to grow. We need allow the Spirit of God to have His way in our lives. Let's close in prayer.

Father we just ask again this morning you take this word. Lord seal it again in our hearts. Pray that Lord it may fall into good ground.

Lord right now whatever stage your people may be at that Father that we'd receive encouragement. Father if there's one here barren, they've been crying out in the barrenness. We thank you that Lord you can come.

That Lord you're the one and the only one that can open the womb. And Father we believe when that cry develops and when that desperation comes that you'll come supernaturally, sovereignly. And Lord you'll allow them to know what it is to know the conception of the Holy Spirit.

Pray Lord for those that have already been impregnated as it were. And yet Lord they've not seen yet the fulfillment. Haven't even seen maybe the stirrings even as a woman would go through a time when there's no kicking.

There's no activity in the womb. It seems to that there's nothing happening. There's no enlargement taking place.

And Lord there are some this morning that are sitting and they're saying Lord I believe that word that prophetic word was from you. I believe something happened. But Lord there's no visible evidence.

Father give them the encouragement Lord to believe that that which you've begun you're able to bring to birth. Father I pray for those that right now are experiencing the Lord just the the twinges of movement so to speak. That Lord they would not abort Lord prematurely that which you're wanting to do.

Father let them come to that place where Lord there would become a day of deliverance. A day Lord when they would know this is the day that you're bringing to birth that which you've entrusted into my care. Father for those that have already given birth those are already moving Lord this whole assembly.

Father give them your Lord your teaching. Father give them your instruction. Lord let them know how to raise that which you've entrusted to them.

Father let them be careful how they walk. Lord don't let them touch the unclean. Don't let them touch that which is Lord just natural stimulation.

But Father bring them to that place I pray where Lord they'd come back to you time after time like Manoah. He entreated the Lord. He begged of the Lord.

He pleaded to the Lord. Lord I don't know how to go any further. I don't know what to do now.

Lord give me instruction. And Father we pray that your spirit would stir. Lord we wouldn't limit the Holy One of Israel.

Lord have your way in our life we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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