



BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

January 2021

Editor Janelle Daum

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PASTORAL MEDITATIONS



“And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson. And the young man grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.”

Judges 13:24-25

2021 will quickly come upon us and that means that we will soon see New Years Day and it will be time for all of us to make new resolutions for the coming year. I have been thinking a lot about resolutions recently, mostly about how hard it is to keep them. I make

E-mail: jbvbeditor@hotmail.com your article.

resolutions at the beginning of the year and have every good intention of keeping them. The only problem is that I soon forget about them and life goes on as usual. As I look back on the year I am always left to wonder, why didn't I keep that resolution? Why didn't I see the improvement that I resolved to make in my life over the last year? I don't think I am the only one with that problem.

Samson was a man that was used mightily by God. He was one of the few people in the Bible whose conception was announced by an angel, in this case it was the pre-incarnate Christ who appeared to Samson's parents. That would be a humbling start for anyone. He was to be a Nazirite from birth and his purpose, according to Judges 13:5, was to begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines. That was his calling and it made up his life's resolutions. The fulfillment of those two resolutions began in 13:25 where we are told that the Holy Spirit started pushing Samson to do the work to which God had called him.

His life can be divided into two parts, each of which includes five great feats of strength and heroism. The first part of his life started out well, but we can see that he was starting a downward spiral away from the Lord. It all started with the killing of the lion in the vineyards of Timnah. Judges 14:6 tells us that "the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat." It was an amazing display of strength provided by the Holy Spirit, but it also led to the first recorded breaking of his Nazirite vow. After some time had passed he was returning to Timnah to claim his bride. He turned aside to see the carcass of the lion and found that some bees had taken up residence in it, and they had produced honey. In violation of the Nazirite vow to not touch anything dead or unclean, Samson scooped all of the honey out of that dead carcass and went on his way. He then made a wager with the men of Timnah and when he lost we see his second great

feat of strength. Judges 14:6 tells us that he went up to Ashkelon and the Spirit of the Lord rushed down upon him again and he struck down thirty Philistines and took their garments back to Timnah to pay off his debt.

The next two events show his downward spiral beginning to pick up speed. First he burned the Philistines fields with torches tied to the tails of 3,000 foxes. When the Philistines in response killed Samson's wife and her father, he swore vengeance on them and killed all of them who were involved. That was all done in his own strength. No mention is made of the Holy Spirit helping him. The Israelites were frightened of what the Philistines would do next so they bound Samson with ropes and turned him over to the Philistines. Once again, in Judges 15:14, we see that the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him and he broke the ropes and killed 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey. Unfortunately that is the last time that we read that the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him.

In the second part of his life he also performed five great feats of strength, but they were all done in his own strength. He didn't call on the Lord for help and the Lord didn't come upon him to help. It ended with the final breaking of his Nazirite vow, his head was shaved and his great physical strength disappeared. The saddest legacy of his life is found at the end of Judges 16:20. It tells us, "But he did not know that the Lord had left him." He was taken captive. His eyes were gouged out. He was taken to Gaza in bronze shackles and put to work grinding at the mill in the prison. His last great feat of strength is found at the end of Judges 16 when he was taken to the temple of Dagon so that the Philistines could make fun of him. In 16:28 he turned to the Lord one last time and prayed, "O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once, O God, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes." Then he toppled the two pillars that held up the house and it came crashing down and

3,000 Philistines were killed that day.

So what does the life of Samson have to do with us and our resolutions? It has to do with temptations and our inability to control them. Samson liked sweet things, no matter where they came from. Samson liked Philistine women, even though they only caused trouble for him. Samson liked to toy with people and make wagers with them, and to hide the truth from them. Those were his temptations and every one of them kept him from fulfilling his God-given resolution for his life.

Temptation works in the same way for us. Maybe the resolution is to lose weight. That works until we smell those fresh-baked cookies and we just have to have two, or three, or maybe a few more. Or we go to the buffet and we eat one full plate of food, and then go back for just a little bit more. And we see several things that we just have to try and so we come back to the table with another almost full plate. Maybe the resolution is to spend more time in personal Bible study. But then all kinds of interruptions begin to intrude on that time and you go with the interruptions. Pretty soon a couple of days have gone by and you have missed your study time. Then a couple more days go by, and before long you are out of the habit and the resolution disappears. Have you ever resolved to read through the Bible in a year? There are a lot of great guides out there to help you achieve that goal. It can be done by reading just a few chapters a day. But if you miss a day or two all of a sudden you are faced with this massive amount of reading you have to do to catch up and you give up because you don't have the time. Temptation has done its job again to pull you away from your resolutions. Maybe it's a resolution to spend more time with the family and less time at work, or to have a weekly date night with your wife, or to finish those projects that never seem to get done. Temptations and life can get in the way of those resolutions every time.

Here's the thing we miss. Just because we start a new year it doesn't mean that we start with a blank slate. We carry all of the weaknesses and all of the spiritual struggles of the last year into the new year with us. Most of our resolutions deal with external activities when the real issues are issues of the heart. It doesn't matter if we make outward changes if our heart stays the same.

So here is the challenge for the new year. Resolve to do things that will transform your heart over the next year. Over and over in the Scriptures the connection is made between the heart and outward actions and speech. If we want to bring glory to God in our speech and in our actions then they have to flow out of a godly heart. So don't make resolutions about outward changes. They are destined to fail. Make resolutions that allow God to change your heart. Resolutions that take you to God's Word and to prayer. If you get off track and miss a day or two don't see it as a failure. This isn't a short sprint, it's a long marathon. So just pick yourself up and ask God to help you to keep moving ahead. Resolve to spend less time with people who tear others down and speak in unloving ways and more time with people who speak in loving ways and act in loving ways. They make the best mentors because their hearts are moving with God.

Resolve to do whatever it takes to let God change your heart this year. It's a guarantee that if you do that, then you will also see changes in your life. Resolve to let 2021 be a year of godly change!

Blessings,
Pastor Randy

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JANUARY AND BEYOND

EVENTS CALENDAR 2021:

Sunday's

9:30 a.m., Worship Service

Re-Start Date TBD - Fellowship

10:45 a.m., Sunday School for the Whole Family

Wednesday's

6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., AWANA Clubs (Meet in Person)

7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., 6th-8th Grade Youth Group

7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., 9th-12th Grade Youth Group

Thursday's

2 p.m., Prayer & Women's Bible Study at BVBC

6:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study held at various homes

Saturday's

January 2, 8 a.m., Men's Bible Study on ZOOM

January 16, 8 a.m., Men's Bible Study on ZOOM

Friday, January 1, New Year's Day

REMINDER:

**Newsletter Articles are
Due Sunday, January 24th**

MISSIONARY OF THE MONTH

RICK & DEBBI BARDIN - CAMEROON



NOVEMBER 2020

OPEN ROADS

Prayer

- Pray for continued open roads so patients can get to the hospital to get the care they need and the hospital will be able to recover financially.
- Pray for the projects to be completed well and for the remaining funding to come in for hydro project: nabconference.org/give/special-projects.
- Pray for the chemotherapy fund also in the NAB special project page. We are now a recognized cancer treatment center and so many people cannot afford the chemotherapy they need. This fund helps them get it. One course of chemotherapy is equal to half a year's wage for the average Cameroon laborer. Your gift of \$600 will subsidize the cost and make this life-saving treatment available to

patients in need. See the same giving website: nabconference.org/give/special-projects.

- Let us never forget to pray for God's glory to shine forth from our hospital and may it be a light to all those who come.

Praises

- Praise for open roads and patients being able to come.
- Praise that COVID-19 has been manageable at our hospital.
- Praise for our strength and health.

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on the earth is yours O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things.

1 CHRONICLES 29:11 (NIV)

Greetings again from Mbingo!

The dry season winds are blowing in the Harmattan dust. Not our favorite time of year, but to everything there is a season. God is in the wind as well as the rain.

Since we last wrote there has been much progress on the hydroelectric project, and the main dam has almost been completed. They will now be building another smaller dam to supplement the water supply. Pray for funds to finish the work needed. On last calculation. We need \$170,000.

Another project, one to supply piped-in oxygen throughout the hospital, began the installation phase a couple weeks ago and is nearing completion. The copper tubing is being installed in each ward, and the system may be ready for use by the end of the month. This will make it possible to supply oxygen from the wall directly without depending on oxygen concentrator machines at the bedside. We did not have enough of the machines, and they didn't always work properly. The system will greatly improve quality of care for those needing oxygen. We are so grateful for the NAB in their promotion

and giving to these two projects. They have had a major role in contribution.

October proved to be a challenging month for patients to be able to get to the hospital. There were a few weeks of lockdown where no traffic was allowed on the roads. This meant only patients who could trek here were able to come. The last couple of weeks have been better, an answer to prayer! We are grateful and pray for no more lockdowns. One bright spot in the month was when a mother and her little girl were able to come to the hospital after the roads opened and get the care they needed. We were able to give the little girl one of the dresses that the White Cross ladies from the US made. They were both so happy. It was a little big, but she'll grow into it!

Rick is happy doing pathology and thankful for a committed staff who help the work go on well. There have been plenty of specimens from here and from many other places in Cameroon to keep the path lab humming. Rick is also enjoying his continued involvement in discipleship with one of our CIMS residents and with a Fulani young man.

Our Mbingo 1 church received a new pastor in the month of September, and that same month we sent forth our evangelism/missions pastor to be going to school at the seminary in Jos, Nigeria.

Also, in September, I (Debbie) assumed the role of treasurer for the Women's Group in the church. Our group, like all the women's groups in our Cameroon Baptist Convention churches, is involved in discipleship-type meetings each week and making visits to the bereaved in the church and also families with new babies. We participate in local projects in the community and projects involving CBC women as a whole.

Wishing all of you a Happy Thanksgiving and a Very Merry CHRISTmas!!

In Him Matchless Love, Rick and Debbie Bardin

MISSIONARY UPDATES

AMANDA BENSON - PHILIPPINES



November 28, 2020

FINALLY!

Finally, after an extra five and a half months in the US, I am able to return to the Philippines! I have my passport with my visa, all my paperwork is printed out, and my tickets are purchased for Monday, November 30. It seems surreal that in just a couple days, I'll be on my way back. Though, one thing I've learned since Covid is that I should always hold my plans loosely; I really have no control over what will happen tomorrow (or even today!). I can plan, but those plans may need to change. But I also hold onto the truth that our God never changes, and He works all things together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

So, what do the next few days look like for me? I will work Sunday night, and then around 4:15 am or so Monday morning, I'll head to the airport to check in for my flights. I fly from Sioux Falls to Minneapolis,

to Detroit (yes, wrong way!), then to Seoul, South Korea, then to the Philippines. I should arrive in the Philippines around 10:30 pm local time on Tuesday (around 8:30 am Tuesday CT) after over 26 hours of travel. Once I get there, I get my covid test in the airport (which I have to register for before I leave), then take a taxi to my hotel, where I have to wait for my results. If they are negative, I can go to my house for the remainder of my 14-day quarantine. I'm praying I'm negative and get my results the next day.

In these next few days and weeks, I would appreciate prayers for:

- Smooth travel (making all my connections, that my luggage would all make it to Manila with me, that I would be able to sleep on the airplane when I need to and stay awake when I need to, that I would have no issues getting into the country, etc)
- That my covid test would be negative and the result would come back quickly. If I can get the result back by 4pm on Wednesday, I have a ride home and don't need a taxi. :)
- That I would survive my two weeks of quarantine! LOL. I will be allowed to go walk/run in my neighborhood, but I'm not supposed to be by anyone, and I'll be on my compound by myself. I have people bringing me groceries, though! :)
- For a smooth transition back to the Philippines, especially knowing that it is different than when I left, due to strict Covid-19 regulations.
- For a strong finish to this quarter. We have 3 weeks left, and I am hoping not to get too far behind by taking a day off to travel.

I really can't express enough how grateful I am for each one of you. It has been SO great to reconnect with so many of you during this time of furlough (or meet you for the first time!). I have loved all the time I've had with friends and family over the past year and a half. I am still amazed that despite Covid, I still am fully supported and ready to return for another term of serving at Faith Academy.

May God continue to bless you as you serve Him!

Talk to you next time from the other side! :)

Amanda

Praises

- That God has made a way for me to return to the Philippines!
- That my visa showed up in time for me to take the flight that I booked.
- That I have had a great furlough and have enjoyed the extra time with friends and family.
- For God's constant provision in all things.

Prayer Requests

- See the prayer requests listed in the email above. :)

December 2, 2020

I've Arrived!

Short Version:

I made it to Manila!!!!!!! I tested negative for Covid and am going to go home tomorrow!

Long Version:

Monday morning, I went to the airport to begin my journey! Everything was smooth sailing, though definitely more work than normal. My paperwork was checked multiple times (at all airports except one). My long flight had very few passengers - maybe 40-50, so almost everyone had a row to themselves (and they could have moved to an empty row if they didn't). It was nice to be able to lay down to sleep, so I think that helped me sleep better than I normally get on airplanes (that and having stayed up all night before my flight). In Korea, a Delta agent took another lady and myself all the way through the airport to the transfer desk for our airline to get our paperwork checked, then to our gate, which was super helpful!

Once I landed in Manila, the journey was long to get to my hotel. They had everyone from the airplane go to a certain gate, where we waited. They handed out forms for the Covid test. A handful of other

passengers and I had already registered and paid for our tests online, so we weren't really supposed to wait, but they made us wait anyway. Then, they moved us to another gate where people were paying for the Covid tests (again...shouldn't have had to wait there). Finally some of the others spoke up enough that they moved us to the right gate to get our Covid tests...where they had one person to service all of us. And for some reason, two of the people took about 30 minutes each, which none of the rest of us understood, since we all had registered and paid online!

Thankfully, once I got through registration (about 2 hours after I landed), I got my covid test right away (worst Covid test ever...throat swab and BOTH nostrils!!), then went quickly through immigration (they barely even checked my paperwork and asked no questions) and got my luggage....then had to wait again to register for transportation and prove I had a hotel lined up. I took a taxi to my hotel and had a great conversation with the taxi driver (I still remembered a bunch of my Tagalog! Yay!). I got to my hotel at 1:40 am, after landing around 10:20 pm. I have been here waiting for my test result...which I just found out is negative! Yay! However, since I was here past a certain time, I need to pay for a second night of a hotel, so I'll stay tonight, try to get a bunch of work done, and go home tomorrow!!!!

Thank you all for praying with me through this journey! It's so good to be back! Praise God for smooth travels and a negative test!!

Amanda

Missionary Contact Info.

Amanda Benson:

Website: send.org/benson

Email: oboejo09@gmail.com

Address:

113 E. Leighton St., Brandon, SD 57005

Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: SEND International
PO BOX 513, Farmington, MI 48332, Missionary #169352

Rick & Debbi Bardin:

Address:

PMB BOX 43 Bamenda

Northwest Region

Republic of Cameroon

Email: RBMEDPATH@gmail.com; DBARDIN55@gmail.com

See instructions Below

How To Give to North American Baptist Missionaries:

Step 1: Go to the NAB's new missions webpage nabonmission.org.

Step 2: Click on the “missionaries” label.

Step 3: Click on the national missionary to whom you would like to designate your support.

Step 4: Click on the “give to..” button on the national workers page.

Step 5: Fill out the form. All gifts given through the NAB are tax deductible.

BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

PRESENTING A CHANGELESS CHRIST FOR A CHANGING WORLD