

LIONS & HONEY

TEXT: *Judges 14:5-9* Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done. And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.

THESIS: To show that for the believer trials and battles not only bring tears but blessings.

INTRO: A. While on his way to battle the Philistines, a lion crosses Samson's path. It was a *"young lion"* i.e., it was in the prime of its life and strength. But Samson too is in the prime of his life and besides - *"the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him"* - and he was able to kill the wild beast. Later when he passes by that dead carcass, he sees that a swarm of bees has deposited a treasure of honey inside. He not only eats of that honey, but shares it with his parents. Here is a wonderful picture of strength distributing weakness.

ILLUS.: When believers savor a victory they should share that with others. As Samson stood with the honey in his hands, sharing it with others, so we should share the victories won in spiritual battles with all who are dear to us. With the sweet victory or "honey in our hands" we should offer it to others declaring *"O taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."*

B. In Samson we have both a picture of the victorious Savior, offering His sweetness of His salvation and satisfaction to the world, but also a picture of the victorious saint, offering the sweetness of the Savior to others, showing that battles bring blessings and that **"LIONS & HONEY"** go together.

I. WRESTLING WITH LIONS:

1 Peter 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

A. Conflicts Begin Early:

1. Samson is just a young man when this encounter took place (*"...it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth."* Lam. 3:27)
2. Believers too will find that spiritual warfare begins immed. after trusting Christ.

ILLUS.: One of the greatest shocks to the young convert is that he still has the same old lusts, desires, and problems, but now they become battles, because He has a new nature – the blessed Holy Spirit – fighting the lusts of the flesh. Before he could sin without a battle, now every sin brings conviction and when a wrong choice is made, he must humble himself and confess that sin to His Savior.

B. Conflicts Continue Through Life:

1. Becoming a Christian is enlisting as a soldier for the duration of the war – life.

ILLUS.: Soldiers are made not in boot camp, but in warfare. David was a man of war. He had slain his "ten thousands", knew little of luxury, lived in caves, and was a **"man after God's own heart."** Solomon sat on a golden throne, surrounded by beautiful women, palaces, gourmet food, exotic animals, architectural wonders he had created, was well educated, and had great wisdom, but he drifted away from God, worshipped idols, and lived a decadent life. He may have built the Temple David dreamed of, but it was David who worshipped the God of that Temple, not Solomon. So with spiritual warfare. Believers must face trials, testings, tears and tribulation. *"...and we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."*

1 Peter 4:12 *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

2. Those who sign on to glide into heaven without a struggle soon find the path is often booby trapped by Satan, full of ambushes from the world, and laden with attacks from our own flesh.

ILLUS.: "No cross, no crown; no conflict, no conquest; no sweat, no sweet!"

- a. It was a young, lion roaring against Samson – strong and fierce.
- b. It was terrifying; Samson had nothing in his hand – but something in his heart (*"...the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily"*).

c. It was strengthening; you cannot make veterans without victories.

3. We must learn to expect strong temptations, fierce persecutions and severe trials.

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

4. Samson was on his way thru the vineyards of Timnath when he met the lion, and you need to learn when you are in the pleasant places the lion will roar against you also – just as in the early days of our Savior’s ministry He was led into the wilderness and was met by the roaring lion.

5. Doubts bring lion-like attacks upon unstable believers; begin doubting the Word and you will lose the battle and the victory.

ILLUS.: The roaring lion is attacking the very Word and words of God in the Bible-a-month club! If they can remove words, doctrines, etc. it casts a question mark over the Book. *"Yea, hath God said...?"* Can we trust a book which can be changed?! Can we trust verses which can be changed?

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. **NIV**

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. **KJV**

Galatians 3:16 Now, God gave some promises to Abraham and his child. And notice that it doesn’t say the promises were to his children, as it would if his sons –all the Jews were spoken of, but to his Child – and that of course means Christ. **TLB**

NOTE: Trials are sent to the believer for much the same reason the Canaanites were permitted to live in the Holy Land – that Israel might learn war and be equipped for battle against foreign foes.

6. Many times you, like Samson, will be all alone, without anything in your hand (no Bible, no friends with you, no church to back you up), but you are not to rely on the energy of the flesh or friendships, but on the Holy Spirit, for help.

II. FEASTING ON HONEY:

A. Lion Fighters Are Often Honey Eaters:

1. The honey is a product of the battle! It is found in the place of conflict. (Again, no conflict, no conquest; no sweat, no sweet!)
2. The believer’s life has its sweets, and what is sweeter than honey?! i.e., what is more happy than the joy of the victorious believer?
 - a. The believer’s joy is unlike the mirth of the world, e.g., there is no “hangover!”
 - b. The believer’s joy is lasting, not fleeting.
 - c. The believer’s joy is satisfying – we don’t need a new “fix” each week!
 - d. The believer’s joy is deep, rooted and grounded in an infinite Savior.
 - e. The believer has the promise that ***"as sin abounded, grace doth much more abound."***

B. Lion Fearers Are Often Honey Depleted:

1. Who are the happiest Christians you know? Those who have gone through the greatest battles and have come out on top.
2. Who are the most miserable believers you know? Those who have lived easy lives without conflict.

ILLUS.: Those who have blessed me most are those saints who have suffered much, but continue to rejoice *"Through it all, through it all, I've learned to trust in Jesus, I've learned to trust in Him!"* *"Some through the waters, some through the flood, some through the fire, but all through the blood. Some through great sorrow, but God gives a song; in the night season and all the day long."*

- a. Those who run from or shun the trials never eat the honey.
- b. Those who never fight the battle, never enjoy the sweetness.
- c. Those who have no fight, receive no might.
- d. Those who rely on the flesh, never know the fullness of the Spirit.
- e. Those who live painless lives, live joyless lives.
- f. Those who live without conflict, live without joy.

SONG: "Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas? Are there no foes for me to fight, must I not stem the flood? Is this vile world a friend to grace, to help me on to God? Sure I must fight if I would reign; increase my courage Lord; I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, supported by Thy Word."

CONCL.: If you don't get to eat honey down here, even though you have battled lions, you will nonetheless have nothing but sweetness when you reign with Him up there forever!

Romans 8:17 *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*