

Bedford Presbyterian Church

105 West Main Street, Bedford, Virginia

From 1844 to 2021 (177 Years)



Week of February 28, 2021

We will continue sending out this combination of the newsletter and bulletin to keep you up to date on announcements, prayers, needs and scheduled activities for those that are uncomfortable to attend service.

Included will be the usual newsletter information, along with prayers, scripture and a sermon.

We hope that you can utilize this format to keep up to date while being away from actual services, meetings, activities and watching the online sermon.

Please be in prayer for the end of the coronavirus and healing for those affected by it.



Bedford Presbyterian Church
serving Christ since 1844

A Biblically Guided Christian Community,

Loving God, Loving Others,

Serving the World & Growing Disciples

THE APPROACH TO GOD

One: The peace of Christ be with you

All: And Also with you

Prelude

"Abide with Me"

J.S Bach

Words of Welcome and Announcements

- Next Sunday is communion, please take time to prepare your hearts to receive this sacrament.
- A reminder that Something More will resume on March 3rd at 3 pm.
- For other announcements, be sure to read the rest of the bulletin

Call to Worship

One: Let us worship God, who is gracious and blesses us.

All: Let us worship God, who calls all nations to praise.

One: Let us worship God, who judges the peoples with equity.

All: Let us worship God, who guides all the nations of the earth.

One: Let the peoples praise you, O God.

All: Let all the peoples praise You.

Hymn of Praise

"May the Peoples Praise You"

Keith Getty

Prayer of Confession

Gracious and forgiving God, we confess the rough places of our own hearts. We confess the angers that become stony roadblocks to Your peace. We confess the mountains of hurt feelings we leave behind us through our thoughtlessness. We confess the crookedness of our motives. We confess the pits of despair into which we cast our brothers and sisters by our greed and injustice. Straighten our spirits, God of Righteousness, that our lives may reveal not our brokenness, but Your glory. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

One: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Through Jesus Christ we have been born again to new life.

Gloria

"Glory be to the Father"

Hymn 734

PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

Time for all God's Children

Scripture Judges 13:1-7 and Matthew 6:24

Women's Trio *"If Heaven Never Was Promised to Me"* Andre Crouch

Sermon The Man Who Tried to Serve Two Masters

Throughout history there have been many men who were noted for their great strength. One of the earliest was a man by the name of Milo Croton who lived in ancient Greece. He supposedly carried a four year old bull around the stadium at Olympia. Another was a Roman Emperor named Maximinus Thrax, who crushed rocks with his bare hands and pulled heavy wagons all by himself. He was supposedly eight feet, six inches tall and ruled between 235 and 238 A.D. A more recent strong man was Louis Cyr. He was born in Canada in the late 1800's, and was noted for lifting a horse off the ground and pushing a train car up a hill. Here in America, Brian Shaw is considered one of, if not the strongest man in the world. At 6'8" he eats a dozen eggs for breakfast, weighs around 400 pounds and has won the World's Strongest Man Competition in 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2016. He's called the "Gigantor." On one occasion he bench pressed 525 pounds. None of these men, however, can compare to Samson, the Bible's mightiest strongman. His story is found in Judges 13:1-16:31. It's a story which began with great promise, but which sadly ended in tragedy. Together let's examine his life and see if we can determine what happened and what, if any, lessons we can apply to our own lives.

If you have read the story of Samson's life, you know that it had a marvelous beginning, but a very sad ending. As had taken place on other occasions, the Israelites had forsaken the Lord once again and were now being assailed by another legion of enemies. This time it was the Philistines, a warrior race that lived along the Mediterranean seacoast. They were known as the Sea People and at one point, were so strong that they had almost conquered Egypt. They were a worthy adversary and to make matters worse, they knew the secret to making tools and weapons out of iron. They had ruled over the Israelites for 40 years, especially the tribe of Dan whose territory was located right next door to their major cities along the seacoast. Israel was in need of a deliverer and God was about to provide them with one. His name was Samson. The story of his life can be divided into five chapters or episodes. Let's take a brief look at each of them:

1. **A Miraculous Birth**—Judges 13:1-24—The Angel of the Lord visits Manoah and his wife and promises them that they will be the parents of a son who is to be a Nazirite, a man dedicated to the Lord. This son, who was named Samson, which means "Sunny," would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to deliver the Israelites out of the hands of the Philistines. His uncut hair would be the source of his God given strength and would identify him as being a Nazirite, a man completely and wholly dedicated to the Lord.
2. **A Messed Up Marriage**—Judges 14:1-20—Samson falls in love with a Philistine girl, much to the chagrin of his parents. On his way to visit her, he kills a young lion which becomes the inspiration for a riddle at the bridegroom's feast. His bride reveals the answer to the riddle, angering Samson who pays off his wager in blood and departs for home.
3. **A Vengeful Warrior**—Judges 15:1-20—Samson goes to visit his wife and discovers that she has been given to another man. In response to this perceived insult, he captures foxes, ties their tails together and burns the Philistines' crops. They retaliate, killing his wife

and father-in-law. Infuriated, Samson vents his anger, killing a multitude of Philistines. Marching into Judah, the Philistines demand that Samson be turned over to them. The men of Judah comply, but when Samson is released into their custody, he breaks the ropes which bind him and using the jaw bone of a donkey, proceeds to strike down a thousand Philistine warriors.

4. **A Fatal Attraction**—Judges 16:1-22—Samson’s lustful desires get him into trouble, first with a harlot in Gaza and then with an amorous woman named Delilah. Employed by the Philistines, she eventually discovers the secret of his strength. She shaves his hair and betrays Samson to his enemies. They gouge out his eyes, bind him with bronze shackles and imprison him at a grindstone threshing grain.
5. **A Tragic Victory**—Judges 16:23-31—The Philistines decide to host a great celebration at their temple dedicated to the god, Dagon. Samson is brought into the temple to entertain them. His hair, representing his Nazarite vow, has regrown. Grasping the two supporting pillars of the temple, he pulls down the building upon himself and 3,000 worshipers who have gathered there, ending both his life and his twenty year ministry as a judge of Israel.

Well, as stated earlier, Samson’s life started with great potential and promise. You could even say that it began miraculously. Unfortunately, it didn’t end that way. Samson had become an object of ridicule and mirth, brought before the crowds at Dagon’s temple so that people could make fun of him. But even then, realizing that his miraculous strength had returned, Samson was clueless as to why God had chosen him to be a judge. Take a look at the prayer he prayed standing there between the two pillars of the temple, “O Sovereign Lord, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes” (Judges 16:28). The entire focus of Samson’s prayer was not upon his people and their needs, nor was it upon the Lord and what God still might accomplish through his life. It was focused solely and utterly upon himself, a desire for revenge because he was blind. How did Samson arrive at such a low point in his life that his last words were, “Let me die with the Philistines” (Judges 16:30)?

The answer can be summed up in what Jesus had to say in Matthew 6:24. Speaking to the multitudes during the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” In other words, it’s impossible, to serve two masters. Somebody, or something is always going to claim your ultimate allegiance. You cannot bow before God and the things of this world all at the same time. Nevertheless, that’s precisely what Samson tried to do and he failed. He was supposed to be a Nazarite, living a life dedicated to God, abstaining from alcohol, never touching a dead body and refraining from the cutting of his hair, as an outward and visible sign of his devotion to the Lord. He could have been a giant of the faith, serving his people as a righteous judge and delivering them from the oppression of their adversaries. But he forsook that way of life. In so far as we know, he never held court as a judge and never asserted himself as a religious leader among his people. In fact, he never even led an Israelite army in combat. He was essentially a “one man band,” who enthusiastically embraced the wayward life style of the Philistines. Even though he was supposed to represent God, his way of life was just the opposite. He was vengeful and violent, consumed by carnal desires, unwilling to protect and really care for his people. Yes, he killed a lot of Philistines, but in the end his actions brought no peace. In fact, just the opposite took place. Eventually his tribe, the people of Dan, were so completely overwhelmed by the Philistines that they forsook their homeland and moved north. Samson is a perfect illustration of Jesus’ admonition, “You simply cannot serve two masters, because no matter how hard you try, you’ll end up loving one and despising the other.”

And the same is true for all of us if we try to live the same way. Like Samson, eventually our lives will end in tatters, a hollow shell of what they could have been if we had only remained true to the Lord.

So how does all of this apply to you and me? You may have already guessed. Modern day Christianity in America is following in the footsteps of Samson. God's people want to straddle the fence between godliness and worldliness. They want to enjoy all the sensual pleasures that this world has to offer while still being considered loyal followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's not just the folks in the pews. Sometimes it's the people who stand behind the pulpits. We've all heard the stories about nationally recognized religious leaders, both men and women, who have fallen from grace. In many instances, both they and everything they stood for, was shattered, like pieces of broken glass. While living in Hampton Roads, I learned of a large, fast growing church with a charismatic pastor. Unfortunately like Samson, he pursued an immoral relationship which not only ended his pastoral ministry, but which so disrupted the life of the congregation that they had to file for bankruptcy, losing their multimillion dollar facility.

Over and over again, those who write about the Christian church in America report, "There is no discernable difference between the life-styles of those who claim to be Christians and those who do not." In other words some, perhaps many of God's people have become like Samson. They have bought into the ways of the world, our modern day secular, godless society and they have embraced its standards, instead of what the Bible says about the way in which we are to live. In fact, a recent study has determined that only a minority of Christians in America today possess a biblical world view. They see the world and interact with it and one another by today's standards, most of which have nothing in common with the Scriptures.

That's way we need to remind ourselves of what Paul had to say to the Christians in Rome. Writing in Romans, chapter 12, verses 1 and 2 he said, "Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds." He then goes on to illustrate throughout the remainder of that chapter what this kind of lifestyle looks like. In other words, he is saying that we need to live like Christians, not like the rest of the world around us. What we say and what we do, should reflect the values of our faith and not the attitudes and actions of the current society in which we live.

And that my friends will be a challenge. Some groups like the Amish and the old order Mennonites, have simply withdrawn from modern day life, living in their own distinct and separate communities. That's one alternative which we may be forced to adopt. But there are also some other possibilities that we need to consider, alternatives which Samson could have adopted, which would have created a more positive outcome for his life. Let me share three of them with you.

1. Renew your allegiance to the Lord and His Word. What if Samson had listened to the wise counsel of his parents and married an Israelite girl of his own faith background, instead of a Philistine lass? What if he had spent time really listening to and absorbing all of the accounts of what God had accomplished through his ancestors? What if he had truly embraced and then put into practice the faith of his fathers? His life would not have ended in a prison grinding grain for his captors. Now as never before, we must become totally committed to the Lord and the Christian way of life as revealed in the Scriptures.
2. Become aware of what is happening around you. What if Samson had really understood the schemes of his supposed Philistine acquaintances and friends? What if he had truly realized that Delilah only wanted to utterly and completely destroy him? What if Samson

had not been so gullible? He would have retained his strength, not only physically, but spiritually as a leader among his people. The same is true for us. We need to carefully scrutinize current events and cultural trends from a Christian point of view. That's why I belong to the Family Foundation, which addresses issues in Virginia and the Family Life Council, which addresses issues in Washington. I want to know and if necessary, take action about what is really happening in my state and my nation.

3. Withdraw from the influence of today's secular society. What if Samson had decided that he was no longer going to be influenced by the Philistines? What if he had committed himself to spending more time with his fellow Israelites, instead of living at times all alone in a cave? What if he had learned that we need to love and work with one another, instead of being lone rangers? He would have been an uncompromised champion of the God of Israel. We too must limit the impact of what is transpiring around us, whether it is what we watch on TV, what we view on the internet, where we send our children to school, or what kind of company we keep in our everyday lives. We also need to spend more time with fellow believers. There is strength in an alliance of liked minded believers with whom we can find guidance and support, to face the challenges of life.

Have you ever tried to straddle a fence, walking down the middle without falling off on either side? It can be quite difficult and very painful when you fall. Samson tried and even with his great strength, he failed. Jesus said, "You cannot serve two masters!" His words of warning are just as true for us as they were for Samson. So let's stop tittering on the precipice of disaster. Instead, let's jump down on the side of the Lord!

RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Praise Song

"Undivided Heart"

Dan Marks

Affirmation of Faith

Creed

Myself, do not forget God's teaching, but let your heart keep His commandments; for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare they will give you. Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them round your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and of people. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.

Doxology

"Doxology"

Hymn 34

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the People

Let us, O Lord, offer our lives, our hearts and our gifts to serve You. As our vision is renewed, so renew our acts of kindness, our dedication to show Jesus to the world and our desire to make our spheres of influence better reflect the glory of God. Amen.

Lord's Prayer- *Now let us pray together the prayer our Lord taught us*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Closing Song

"May Your Presence Go With Us"

Don Moen

THE SENDING FORTH

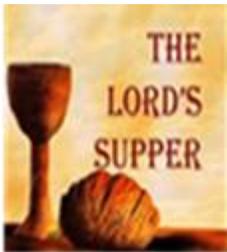
Benediction

May the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be and abide with you this day and forever

Postlude

"Trumpet Voluntary"

Gordon Young



Next Sunday we will be celebrating the Lord's Supper.

Paul reminds us that we should examine ourselves prior to partaking of communion so that we are not guilty of eating the bread or drinking the cup in an 'unworthy manner'. Please take some time to prepare your heart to receive this sacrament on the Lord's Day.

Joys- February 28th

Joy- the Smith's parents have received vaccine and can visit now

Ellen thanks everyone for their prayers and concerns shown for her and Tom

Concerns- February 28th

Avery: Rev. Frank and for Tinkie who has dementia

Barnes: Kim Hedrick- (friend) health issues

Eunice- sciatica, torn rotator cuff, doing better

Benton: Roger (friend) in rehab

Linda Crawford- (friend) mass on lung (after beating cancer)

Linda- personal health problems

Blair: Katy Neel- (LHS student) lymphoma- chemo

Tonya Blair's friend-(Shelly Longnecker) recurring cancer

Boone: Jim Hedrick - (friend) recovering from partial lung removal

Judy Jockets- (sister's friend) lung cancer

Jim Cutler- (LHS teacher) stage 4 lung cancer

Dennis Sulka - terminal pancreatic cancer

Casdorff: friend who had quadruple bypasses

Compter: two brothers- unbelievers

Prayers for friends to come to the Lord

Bob- (friend) Parkinson's

Michael Compter-(brother) heart failure

Cram: Winslow's-(friends of Sally) family & medical problems

Janice Campbell-(friend) under hospice care

Ryan- (grandson) searching for his faith

DeWitt- Tammy's mom in rehab, dad is home

Dills: Katy Neel- lymphoma- chemo

Easter: Jan- upcoming eye surgery

Fleming: family dealing with addiction and self- esteem

Their children- having difficulties

Foster: Joyce Abbott- (former member) cancer

Marian Kelly- (friend) breast cancer, mother's caretaker

Craig Nielson-(nephew) in hospital with covid

Howard-(Tom's brother) thyroid and other health issues

Tom- on oxygen

Goodman: Charles- health issues, heart monitor, dialysis

Randall Sales-(SRHS coach) cancer

Katherine Saunders- (Hugh's daughter) hospice

Grigg: Danny Miller- (co-worker) bladder cancer

Heinrich: Steven - (grandson) autoimmune disorder

Barbara Lore- (Helen's sister) heart problems

Kuhn- Kibbey: Nancy Milton- (friend) cancer, Alzheimer's

Dot- idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, wet macular degeneration

Grandson- alcoholism

Dan Withers- (friend) inoperative cancer

Mauser: Joyce Reese- (friend) health problems

Steven-(son's boss) going blind

Norma Jean- (Gayle's sister) medical issues

Meyers: Patty- doing better

Patty McKinney- (friend) home now

Morris: Lisa (Robert's wife) lung cancer, beginning treatment

Morris: all law enforcement, firefighters and all other first responders

Forensic scientists who deal with crime

Doris Jean Coble- (cousin) in nursing home

Saunders: (Ronnie) Colin Bridges- (grandson)

Scott- (son-in-law) doing well, still undergoing chemo

Ronnie- worried about children

Scheurer: Jim Hedrick-(friend) cancer, partial lung removed

Bob Lindell-(friend) prostate cancer

Sonny- (son) colon cancer

Smith: Dorothy Smith (John's mother) moved into assisted living; pray she comes to the Lord

Bill & Marie Walker- (Sonya's parents) continue doing well

Stetson: Clay Ramsey- thyroid cancer

Dr. Fessler- went blind, in hospital

Stevens: Jackie Landis- heart problems

Mike Elliston- asthma

Bill Gray- loss of leg, cancer, covid-19

Russell- upcoming knee surgery, May 5th

Toney: Karen Hyde-(friend) bladder cancer

Cal Rice- (former pastor) bone cancer, refused treatment

Van Dyke: Donna Mannel- (friend) MS

Prayers for all front line workers, Drs, nurses, first responders

Prayers for our nation and our President

Prayers for those dealing with loneliness

Prayers for healing the divisive spirit among our leaders/nation

Prayers for an end of the coronavirus and healing for those infected

Prayers to speak and listen to those who are different



Bedford Christian Ministries is in need of the following:

Mixers

Toasters

Coffee Makers

Can Openers- manual and electric

Microwaves

Blenders

Air Fryers

Towels/ Wash Cloths

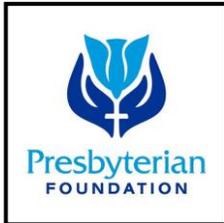
Full, Queen and King, sheet sets

Diapers

School Supplies

If you can help, you can drop off your purchases at the church office or at BCM, Monday, Tuesday and Friday.

Three more ways to support Bedford Presbyterian



CREDIT CARD! -- If you wish to make a donation to the Church using your credit card, go to the Bedford Presbyterian Website and look for the **DONATE** button. Donations through the website will be charged a 2% processing fee by the Presbyterian Foundation.

CLICK for more information: <https://www.bedfordpresbyva.org/donate.html>



SHOP ONLINE! – on your web browser or cell phone app shop at Amazon Smile (smile.amazon.com). Register Bedford Presbyterian as your charity of choice and Amazon will .5% of your entire eligible purchase price to the church.

CLICK for more information: <https://smile.amazon.com/>



SHOP IN THE STORE – Link your Kroger Card to Bedford Presbyterian Church as your charity of choice and a percentage of all your purchases will be contributed to the church.

Click for more information: <https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards>

It's not much.... but every little bit helps.



Capital Campaign

The funds raised by the 175th campaign are nearly depleted and a new campaign "Moving in Faith" has begun to address some exterior maintenance and repair issues, as well as some interior lighting upgrades. Some items are critical such as painting the steeple. Others, like new doors to the fellowship hall and sanctuary are not so critical but will soon become so. Our goal is \$45,000.00 over the next two years. Move forward in faith and give to the "Moving in Faith" capital campaign.

**Thank you for continuing to send in your contributions and pledges.
You can mail your pledge or contribution (also 5 ¢ a meal and Heifer) or you
can drop by the office, Mon-Thurs between 8 am - 4pm.**

Activities for week of February 28th

Sunday: 10 am Worship with Rev. Philip Parker
Prayer time in fellowship hall after service

Monday: Quilters- 6 pm

Tuesday: 3 pm Something more, in-person and ZOOM

Sunday: March 7th
10 am Worship
Communion
Prayer time in fellowship hall after service

March Birthdays

Sonya Smith 2
Sally Cram 3
Eunice Barnes 12
Judy Toney 12
Jagger Creasy 14
Maggie DeWitt 17
Nick DeWitt 18
Ronnie Saunders 24

March Anniversaries

Roy & Sally Cram -19
Richard & Elizabeth Creasy -24

Here's a list of our shut-ins, please take time to send a card or
give them a call, to let them know you are thinking of them.

Covid Shut-ins

Mr. & Mrs. Roy Cram
Mr. & Mrs. Lester Heinrich
Mr. & Mrs. Dick Kibbey
Mr. & Mrs. Al Mauser
Mr. & Mrs. Ron Morris
Mr. & Mrs. Harold Neal
Ms. Lynne Palmer
Mrs. Christine Riley
Mrs. Judy Toney
Ms. Gloria Saunders
Mr. Ronnie Saunders
Ms. Mary Wilkes

Long Term Shut-ins

Anne Arthur
Rev. Frank & Tinkie Avery
Pat Clarke
Janet Eagler
Ann Fowler
Dorinda Hopkins
Doris Koch
Ruby Page