



# Glyfada Christian Center



23/03/2025

**Preacher** Anton Beukes; Stavros Antoniadis

**Series** God's gifts

**Service** Sunday Service

**Passages** Psalm 19:1-6; Judges 13:1-5; Judges 13:24-25; Judges 14:5-7;  
Judges 14:19-20; Judges 15:11-15; Judges 16:17-20; Numbers 6;  
Romans 12:1-2

## Gifted – Characters not in line with their Gift (Samson)

### Pastor Gail – Welcome

1. Amen, Amen, Amen. Would you remain standing please. We'd like to read from the Word. Psalm 19:1-6. There are Bibles near you. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

They have no speech; they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth."

2. Sometimes, we forget to just stop, and be amazed, at what God has done. And we can't see outside in the world, because we are down in a basement, but if we could look outside right now, I'm amazed. Let's be amazed today.

3. No matter what's happening in the world, the sun rises, nothing stops it, nothing stops it. It just goes on its pattern, always, as God has declared. What an amazing God. We're pretty crazy as humans. We tear one another with war. We hurt one another with words. We separate one another depending on what country you're from. But the heavens, the heavens, every moment, when we look at the sky, declares the glory of God.

4. This morning, isn't it amazing that He never changes. Can we just pray a moment and thank Him. Let's pray together, all together. Lord, we praise You and we bless Your name Lord. Thank You God, for the security and the certainty of the heavens, that when we look up, we behold the sun, the moon and the stars, that declare, 'Look what God has done.' God is speaking to us through the heavens, and He declares, 'I alone, have set the earth in motion. I am your great, great God, and no matter what mankind will do, I have the final word.' We praise You today oh Lord, You have the final word, God. You are Lord almighty, maker of heaven and earth, God, and what You say will stand. Oh God, we give You the glory, this morning. Oh, Hallelujah, for Your power, for Your presence, for Your love, God. That God, we are called to know You, in the greatness and the majesty and the wonder of who You are. There is no one like You, oh God. You are magnificent. We cannot express our thankfulness, but I thank You God, I thank You oh Lord. Oh God, we thank You for Your presence. We thank You, oh God for Your beauty oh Lord, Hallelujah, glory to God, Hallelujah.

5. I want us to declare this in Greece. His name is wonderful. We need to declare this in this way. It's not just that His name is beautiful, it's not just that His name is powerful – His name is wonderful. It's the same in Greek and in English. It's wonder-full, it's full of wonder. We need to declare this over this land. Sometimes we stop only at the power. But the Lord wants us to walk with the wonder of who He is, Amen

#### Pastor Gail Announcements

1. It's always so nice when people greet one another and share love. I want to make just a few announcements. This one is really important. Next Sunday, the time changes, we go forward an hour. You have one less hour to sleep. Go to bed one hour earlier. Every year, people go, 'Oh, I forgot!' and you come dragging in. Today even, you can put an alarm on your phone, for that day. So, we just wanted to remind you of that this morning.

2. We are going to get ready to take an offering in a moment, but I want to tell you really quickly of a few other important things.

3. Wednesday night, we will continue till Easter, we will have prayer at 19:00. 19:30 is Bible Study. It is fantastic. We're looking at words you all know, but you don't know what they mean or you have forgotten. We're looking this week at the word, 'righteousness.'

4. Also, every Tuesday morning to Friday morning at 10:00, the church will be open for prayer. We do have offering plates at the back, if you do have a prayer request, please write it down. You can fill it out and please put it in the offering plate. We'll be praying for it this week. Or you can send it to us at: [prayer@glyfadacc.org](mailto:prayer@glyfadacc.org).

5. So, holy week is coming. We're in the middle of Lent. Next week we can talk a little bit more about Holy Week and fasting together. But I would like to put on your calendars today also, on the 13th April, which is Palm Sunday, right after service, we will have a lunch together, it's going to be so nice. It will be very fasting style, salads, etc. But it will be great, yummy.

6. And before we go any further, those of you who are interested in joining the local church, if you can stay after for just a few minutes, we want to decide on a time when we can begin to discuss.

7. We want to pray for our young men. We have 5 young men that are now in Thessaloniki this weekend. Louka and Michael, escorted these young men for a youth conference.

For more announcements, please watch the video.

### **Pastor Brian – Orphanage in Morocco**

1. Pastor Gail gave me just a few moments. We had an exciting even this week, I received a phone call from a man in the US, to talk about a project that we're doing together in Morocco. While we were on the phone, I asked him his name, I only knew him as Pastor Jack. And he said my name is Jack Wohl. And I said, the same one that pastored in Rabat? He said, 'Yes.' And I said the same one that was on the board of the Village of Hope? And he said, 'Yes.' And I said, 'This is Brian, and I also was. But before you.' And we began talking and reminiscing.

2. Most of you who are now in this church would not have been here around this time. But I'm sure that Henneke and Cecilia would know this well, and Trudy and Helen, Leto. In 1995 we were contacted by a group in South Africa, and they asked us if we would be willing to build an orphanage in Morocco. We thought it was a wonderful idea. So, we went to work raising some money. We sent this organization in South Africa a bunch of money, and then they disappeared.

### **Anton Beukes – Main Message**

1. Good morning you all. It's good to be with you this morning. In a world where we hear so many horror stories, where we don't want to open a newspaper, or even listen to the news, it is good to hear good news here this morning. Thank you for sharing, Brian, Gail. We need to hear more of these stories. Not to be reminded of how good we are, because we are not, but we need to be reminded of how good God is. So many times, we hear the refrain in the Old Testament, "For His love endures forever." And what He has started, He will bring to fruition, and we just need to put our faith in Him.

2. If you have a Bible with you, or nearby, you can turn with me to the Book of Judges 13:1-5. I don't know about, but I love super heroes, the ones that you read about in the comic books. Or the movies. The 'Marvel Universe.' Or DC comics. When I grew up, I loved Superman. And I wanted to be like Spiderman. And as I grew older, there were a few others that I liked as well, like 'The Hulk,' and others.

3. But it seems like things have changed in the last few years, when it comes to the Super Heroes. Because, when I grew up, the Super Heroes were there to save the world, to protect the weak, people with morals and standards. But it looks like, if we look at the Super Heroes, we look at today, like, 'The Venom,' or, 'The Black Adam,' are actually not such good characters.

4. But then, we have those in between, who do good things, but are not men and women with character, and they actually remind us of ourselves. I think when we look at the Bible, the person in the Old Testament, that is the closest to a Super Hero, was Samson, who received everything, but could not hold it together. So, as we look at our series on 'Gifted,' we also need to look at those in the Bible, who were gifted a lot, and sometimes used it to the good, but unfortunately, their character, was not in line with their gift.

5. I wish we had time to look at the whole story of Samson, but pastor Gails said, I only have 45 minutes, something like that, so, I'm going to look at a few passages in the 4 chapters in Judges. So, Let's read together, Judges 13:1-5, "Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. The angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines."

6. If we read the rest of the chapter, we see that Manoh's wife went to him, and told him about the appearance of the messenger. He did not fully believe her, but prayed, that if God sent this messenger, that He will do it again. And so, the messenger, the angel, appeared again to his wife, and she ran to fetch him, and he repeated these words. And then Manoah, wanted the messenger to have a feast with them, to eat with them. And the messenger said, 'No, I cannot. But prepare this meal, as an offering to the Lord.'

7. As they baked the bread and sacrificed or burned the lamb, a miracle happened. The angel went into the smoke, into what went up into the sky, and Manoah and his wife realized that this was the Angel of the Lord that had appeared. Manoah said, "We will die, because we saw the Lord." But his wife was a bit wiser, and she said, 'If the Lord wanted to kill us, He would have done that already.'

8. So, we read in Judges 13:24-25, "The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol."

9. Then we read the next 3 chapters. And amongst these chapters, we read 3 times, how the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson. We read the first time, when Samson went to meet his bride, his Philistine wife. And on the way, the following happened. And we read this in Judges 14:5-7, "Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare

hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done. Then he went down and talked with the woman, and he liked her.”

10. That is the Samson we love, who protected his mother and father, who tore the Lion apart, whom was overwhelmed by the Spirit of God. Then we read, that sometime after, he went down again to get married to this woman, and on the way there, he found the carcass of the lion, that he had killed, and there was a beehive with honey in it, and he took some of the honey, ate it and gave some to his parents.

11. When he came to the wedding, the people of the village gave him 30 companions, and he gave them a riddle. And he said that, ‘If you could tell me the meaning of this riddle, by the end of this week, by the end of the 7 days of this wedding, I will give you 30 sets of clothing. But if you cannot do that, you need to give me 30 sets of clothing.’ And we all know what happened, they went to his wife, she nagged him, and she nagged him, and eventually he told her. She then told the 30 companions, and they told Samson. I don’t think Samson was a very happy man.

12. After a week long of celebrations, of being merry, having a nagging wife, now he had to get 30 sets of garments. And it was not very cheap. It was thousands and thousands of Euros worth, that he had to get. And so, we read in Judges 14:19-20, “Then the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of everything and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he returned to his father’s home. And Samson’s wife was given to one of his companions who had attended him at the feast.”

13. This time it was not a lion that threatened his life. This time he was angry. Not just because they figured out his riddle, but because he told his wife what the riddle was, and now he had to cash up. But it is interesting that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, in order to go out and kill 30 people. Because what we did not read earlier in the chapter, was that when he wanted to marry this Philistine woman, his parents said, ‘No there must be another Israelite girl that he can marry.’ But he wanted to marry this lady, and then we read, that the Lord allowed that, because the Lord wanted to punish the Philistines through this event. So, through this event, the Lord came into his life, powerfully, to kill the 30 men.

14. Then, after some time, he went back to visit his wife, who was not his wife anymore, and he heard that she had been given to one of the companions. And now, he was really angry. So, he went out and he caught 300 foxes, he bound them 2 by 2 on their tails, with a torch in between, and he sent them into the grain fields, and the olive groves, and everything was burned down.

15. Now, the Philistines were very angry. In the meantime. Samson went to hide in a cave, and the Philistines went to his father-in-law, and his wife, and burned them to death. So, now, he was even more angry. But as he was in the cave in Judah, the Philistines came close to the people in that cave, and they asked the people of Judah where Samson was.

16. So, we read in the next few verses, Judges 15:11-15, “Then three thousand men from Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, “Don’t you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? What have you done to us?” He answered, “I merely did to them what they did to me.” They said to him, “We’ve come to tie you up and hand you over

to the Philistines.” Samson said, “Swear to me that you won’t kill me yourselves.” “Agreed,” they answered. “We will only tie you up and hand you over to them. We will not kill you.” So, they bound him with two new ropes and led him up from the rock. As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands. Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men.”

17. So, for a third time, we see the Spirit of the Lord coming powerfully upon him, to kill the Philistines that came to kill him. And in a sense, he saved the people of Judah as well. So, 3 times we see that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson.

18. But the story does not end there. We also have the story of Delilah. And I’m not going to share that story with you. We all know the story, of how he fell in love with her, how she was bribed by the Philistine leaders to find the secret of his strength. How he lied to her 3 times, how she called the Philistines, how he overwhelmed them, and how she began to nag them, and she continued to nag him and he got tired of the nagging, as he didn’t learn from his former experience. We men, we don’t learn.

19. So, we read in Judges 16:17-20, “So he told her everything. “No razor has ever been used on my head,” he said, “because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother’s womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man. When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, “Come back once more; he has told me everything.” So, the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him. Then she called, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you! He awoke from his sleep and thought, “I’ll go out as before and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had left him.”

20. Samson knew what would happen if he would shave off his hair. God did not fail this time. God stayed true to his Word. The Lord and His strength left him. And so, they took him to prison, they took his eyes out, and he had to grind grain in the prison.

21. Sometime later, there was a big celebration, at the temple of Dagon, where the Philistines came together, to celebrate their victory over Samson, over the Israelites, and over the God of Israel. They even brought Samson in, to entertain them. There’s Samson alone with all these Philistines, Samson remembered where his strength came from.

22. And then we read in Judges 16:28-30, “Then Samson prayed to the Lord, “Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.” Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus, he killed many more when he died than while he lived.”

23. And so, came the end of our very sad hero. What do we learn from this story? I think the first thing that we need to acknowledge, was the importance of the vow that he was raised

with. The Nazarite vow was a vow that was voluntary, and was a vow, where one dedicates oneself to God. The Hebrew word, 'nazir', means to be separated or consecrated to God. And when we read Numbers 6, we see that there are 5 features of this Nazirite vow. First it was voluntary. Second, it could be done by either a male or a female. Third, it was for a specific time. Fourth, there were specific restrictions or requirements. And the last one was that at the end, a sacrifice was offered. But when we read the Old and the New Testament, we read of only 3 people, that received this vow from birth, for their whole lives. Samson, Samuel, and in the New Testament, John the Baptist. And Samson and John the Baptist, were dedicated to the Lord, because of the angel that appeared to their parents. And Samuel was dedicated by his mother, because the Lord answered her prayer.

24. And so, it is important to look at Samson from this perspective, that although he was dedicated to the Lord for his whole life, he had certain restrictions or requirements that he had to keep. And the Lord was with him, as long as he kept those requirements. As soon as he broke those requirements, the vow came to an end.

25. So, what do we learn from the story of Samson? We see that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson. In Chapter 13 we saw that as he was growing up, it started to stir in him. And 3 times we read that the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. Not just stirring, but powerfully, in strength. He had the Spirit with him, but at certain moments, He came down powerfully.

26. But there were also times in his life, that he used his own strength, to do certain things. He caught the 300 foxes, I don't know if you have ever tried to herd cats, but I think that a fox is worse than a cat, and I don't know how long it took him to catch 300 foxes, how many scratches and bites he had, but he did it.

27. After his wife and his father-in-law were burnt to death, he slaughtered many of the Philistines. And after spending a night with a prostitute in Gaza, we also read that he walked out of the city, carrying the whole city gate to a nearby hill. And then at the end of his life, he killed all those people in the temple, not because the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, but because his hair grew and he had some strength.

28. God answered his prayer when he was in the temple, and he had the strength to push the pillars. He had the strength, but he did not have the strength of the Spirit of the Lord.

29. We also learn from his life, that God allowed some sin or questionable moral behavior in his life, without taking His Spirit away. He was allowed to marry outside of Israel. He was allowed to lie to his wife and to Delilah. He was allowed to take revenge on his wife's murder. He was even allowed to sleep with a prostitute. God allowed those sins, but His Spirit did not leave Samson. But God did not allow him to break the commandment, the vow.

30. The moment he broke that requirement, that moment, the Lord left him. The final requirement, is that there was some forgiveness in the remorse that Samson had, but there was not full restoration. He had to die to bring the sacrifice that was required.

31. Now, as New Testament believers, we cannot just look at Samson's life, and say that the same is applicable to us. We live in a time after Pentecost. So, there are some differences

when looking at the Holy Spirit. We believe that all believers, receive the Holy Spirit when we come to faith. That was not the case in the Old Testament.

32. We also believe that certain gifts are given to the believers as the Lord pleases, at certain times. Sometimes the Lord gives a gift, and then He takes it away. I was once in a group on an outreach, where 2 of the young high school kids were very sick, and together with my co-leader we prayed for them that evening, believing that the Lord can heal them. And the next morning they were fully healed. The Lord gave the gift of healing, but that did not happen every time I prayed for somebody's healing.

33. What we also learn from the story, is that we need to trust the Lord at all times, not just when we are defeated. Samson relied on his strength; he relied on the gift that the Lord gave him. He did not always rely on the Lord.

34. I think, for those of us who are in ministry, and actually, we are all in ministry, we sometimes rely on our experience, our training, the gifts that the Lord gives us. We need to realize, that those things are important, but they are not as important as to rely on the Lord every moment of the day.

35. What we also learn from the story, is that we need to be aware of temptations. Being a Christian, being a leader, being in ministry, does not prevent us from falling to temptation. That's why we have one another, to help us to not fall to those temptations, to remind us to keep our eyes on Jesus.

36. I think the last point that is important for us, is that we are not called to make vows like these Nazarites did. But we are called to be fully holy, to be permanently consecrated for the Lord. Paul says in Romans 12:1-2, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will."

37. Super heroes will always fail us. There is just One that has never failed. Jesus Christ came to this world; He did more miracles than any person before or after him. His Words were truer than anything else spoken. Although He was tempted in every way, He never sinned. And through His death and resurrection, He allowed all of us, to have access to the Father's throne.

38. Jesus is not with us anymore, but His Spirit lives within us. I don't know if you realize, but each one of us, are super heroes. We are not just humans anymore. We are humans with the living God dwelling within us. And He gives us not just His Spirit, but also the gifts of His Spirit.

39. We may not all be as strong as Samson, or be as wise as Solomon, but we have the living God within us, that is much stronger than Samson's, much wiser than Solomon. If we keep our eyes on our Lord Jesus, then He will direct our lives. He will not just give us what we need, He will give us His gifts. Not for our pleasure, but for His glory. To build up one another and His church, and to be a blessing to this world, and a testimony to all. So, today is a call to us, to look at our lives, the super heroes that we are, and glorify our God, for what He has made us.



40. Let us pray. Lord God, we worship and we praise You, we give You all the glory and praises, because we are nothing, and You are everything. We thank You, Lord for Your Spirit, that lives in us, that works in us, that works through us. We pray Lord, that You will use us. We pray Lord, that You will gift us, so that we can be a gift and a blessing to this world. Help us to keep our eyes on our Lord Jesus, and that we will worship You in everything that we do. Thank You Lord Jesus that You are worthy, that we can pray this in Your name. Amen.