**Come Back Stories** *\*\*Series Graphic\*\**

Part 1: **Welcome Home**.

Part 2: **Crushed Dreams**

**It’s Never Too Late.**

(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 you do not eat anything unclean. You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched with a razor because the boy is to be a Nazarite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines.”

(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…”

(Judges 14:1-3)

“Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. When he returned, he said to his father and mother, “I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife.” His father and mother replied, “Isn’t there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?”

(Judges 14:5-6)

“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.”

(Judges 14:8-9)

“Some time later, when he went back to marry her, he turned aside to look at the lion’s carcass, and in it he saw a swarm of bees and some honey. He scooped out the honey with his hands and ate as he went along. When he rejoined his parents, he gave them some, and they too ate it. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the lion’s carcass.”

(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.”

(Judges 15:4-5)

“So he went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails, lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines. He burned up the shocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves.”

(Judges 15:14-15)

“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.”

(Judges 16:4-5)

“Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, “See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekelsof silver.”

(Judges 16:16-17)

“With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to death of it. 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.”

(Judges 16:21)

“Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza.”

1. God’s Power: Working **though me** or **in me**?

“*God, as much as I need have needed your power to defeat the enemy, I need your power to fix me.”*

1. Stop **holding out** and start **getting out**.

A great collapse doesn’t happen in a **single choice**, it’s a **series of choices** that brings the fall.

**Mismanagement** over time leads to **major** collapse.

**It’s not too late** to get out while you can.

1. Make a **smashing come back**.

(Judges 16:22)

“But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.”

(Judges 16:25-26)

“While they were in high spirits, they shouted, “Bring out Samson to entertain us.” So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them. When they stood him among the pillars, Samson said to the servant who held his hand, “Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them.”

(Judges 16:28)

“Then Samson prayed to the Lord, “Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more,”

(Judges 16:29-30)

“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, **30**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.”

 It’s never **too late**.

 You’re not **too far gone**.

 You’re not **too old**.

 You’re not too **far away**.

 **God is always good.**