

Sermon Title: Dropping the Jawbone



Judges 15 – The Story of Samson’s Revenge



Wednesday, April 9, 2025 – Student Ministry


I. Opening Question: The Temptation of Revenge

- Have you ever been wronged and felt consumed with wanting to “even the score”?
 - “I’ll show them.”
 - “They won’t do that to me again.”
 - Low-key fist-pumping when something bad happens to them.
 - Why does their suffering feel satisfying?
 - **Main point:** *This is called revenge.*
Revenge can be **active** (seeking payback) or **passive** (secretly wishing for harm).
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II. The Truth About Revenge

- **Revenge = Bondage**
 - Whether you act on it or not, if you’re holding onto it—you’re not free.
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III. The Samson Story (Judges 15)

- Quick summary:
 - Samson returns to find his wife given to another.
 - He burns the Philistines' crops in revenge.
 - Philistines retaliate by burning his wife and father-in-law.
 - Samson slaughters many, eventually kills 1,000 men with a **jawbone of a donkey**.
 -  **Judges 15:15-17** – The moment Samson finds the jawbone and uses it.

"Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men."
 - Escalation at every turn. Revenge keeps spiraling.
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IV. Key Truths About Revenge

1. **Revenge Always Escalates**

- One-up mentality: They hurt me, so I'll hurt them more.
- You don't even know what "even" looks like.
- It's a cycle—pain and violence just grow.

2. **Revenge Keeps Pain in Circulation**

- Example: Family feuds, school drama, social groups.
- Passive revenge: cold shoulder, eye rolling, distance, contempt.
- Think: *Romeo & Juliet* – cycles of revenge that outlive the original conflict.

3. **The Myth of Redemptive Violence**

- False belief: Violence fixes things.
 - "We'll crush them, and that'll bring peace." It doesn't.
 - From cartoons to nations—this myth is everywhere.
 - 📖 **Romans 12:19** – *"Do not take revenge... but leave room for God's wrath..."*
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V. Jesus Offers a Better Way

• **The Cross = End of Violence**

- Jesus absorbs the violence and ends the cycle.

"It is finished." – John 19:30

• The only way to stop the cycle is to **bear the pain**.

- Not saying tolerate abuse—**boundaries matter**.
 - But forgiveness is choosing not to hand the wound back.
 - It enlarges your heart and makes you stronger.
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VI. What Does It Mean to "Drop the Jawbone"?

• **Let go of the tool of revenge** (like Samson's jawbone).

• Choose to stop the cycle.

• Stop acting as the **judge**, and trust **God's justice**.

- 📖 **Isaiah 30:18** – *"For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!"*
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VII. The Truth Behind the Hurt

• **Hurt people hurt people.**

- Most people who wrong you are already living in pain.
- They're not coming from peace or joy.
- You don't need to make them miserable—they already are.

- 📖 **Luke 23:34** – “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”
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VIII. Heart Check: Are You Still Holding On?

- If you **can’t wish them well**, you're still holding out for revenge.
 - Dropping the jawbone means letting God be God.
 - It’s about **surrender, freedom, and trust**.
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IX. Final Challenge & Prayer

- Who in your life do you need to forgive?
- What “jawbone” are you still holding?
- Ask God for the strength to drop it and let Him handle it.