Weekly Devotional: Who is your family?

Scripture Focus: Judges 15:10-13

12 And they said to him, we have come down to bind you up so that we can deliver you into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said to them, swear to me that you will not fall upon me yourselves. And they spoke to him, saying,

13 No, we will only bind you and deliver you into their hand, but we certainly will not put you to death. And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock."

Dear Church,

Greetings to you in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour, **Jesus Christ**.

Let me ask you something—have you ever felt restricted, misunderstood, or even held back by your own family or the people closest to you? You're not alone. Scripture shows us again and again that some of the deepest battles don't come from strangers, but from within our own circles.

We see this clearly in the spirit behind the Chaldeans. In Scripture, the Chaldeans were not only an empire but a system of counterfeit wisdom—appearing learned, spiritual, and trustworthy, yet operating apart from **the Lord God**. They gained influence not just by force, but by infiltration, slowly reshaping loyalties and identities until **the Lord God's** people were weakened from the inside. Babylon fell suddenly, without battle, revealing that hidden manipulation can be more dangerous than visible opposition.

Think about Samson. His life was marked by powerful victories, but also painful choices. When he aligned himself with the wrong relationships, those choices carried consequences—not just for him, but for the people around him. What's striking is this: when the Philistines wanted to stop Samson, they didn't attack him directly at first. Instead, they pressured the people of Judah—

his own people. And Judah, living under Philistine rule and fear, chose to bind Samson and hand him over to the enemy.

This is an important place for us to pause and reflect. A true family stands with you when the enemy rises up—not when it's convenient, but when it's costly. When people are ruled by fear, flesh, or the world, they may speak kindly to you while things are calm. But when pressure comes, they may choose safety over faith and deliver you into the hands of the enemy. We see this pattern more than once. Even **Jesus Christ** was betrayed—not by a stranger, but by Judas, one of the twelve. Someone who walked closely with Him. Someone who looked loyal on the outside.

So let me ask you gently: Have you ever felt betrayed? Restricted? Handed over—emotionally, spiritually, or relationally—by people you trusted? Here is the good news. The Lord who goes before us, who straightens crooked paths, is inviting us to partner with Him. He does not ask us to fight these battles alone. When we walk with Him, He fights for us.

But He also calls us to make wise choices. We must invest our time and energy in finding the right family—a spiritual family that will stand with us when they are challenged, threatened, or pressured. A family that doesn't abandon us when we make mistakes, but walks with us through the consequences, teaches us truth in love, and helps us grow into better decisions.

Let me be honest. There are many people who truly desire to make right choices—but they struggle because they've never experienced a healthy, godly family that nurtures freedom and faith.

So, dear church, as you read this, let's turn the question inward: Will we be a family that binds people and hands them over to the enemy? Or will we be a family that stands, prays, teaches, restores, and fights together under the Lordship of **Jesus Christ**?

May the Lord help us choose well—and be the kind of family that reflects His heart.

Reflection for Today

Today we are reminded that some of life's greatest battles come not from strangers, but from those closest to us. Scripture shows that fear and compromise can cause even familiar people to surrender God's purposes for temporary safety. Like Samson, our strength is not only tested by enemies, but by the relationships we choose to trust. Yet the Lord God goes before us, straightening crooked paths and fighting for us when we walk in obedience. Even when betrayal comes, Jesus Christ understands, for He Himself was handed over by one who walked closely with Him. This truth calls us to seek and become a spiritual family that stands firm in faith rather than fear. Today, may we choose loyalty, wisdom, and love that reflect the heart of Christ.

Prayer

Oh Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, I come before You.

First of all, I thank You for preserving me and for not leaving me alone when I made wrong choices and struggled with the consequences. Many times, I followed the principles of this world and expected my family to change, yet in Scripture You have given clear and perfect principles for family and relationships. Deliver my heart from worldly principles, and help me live according to the principles in Your Word. You are my true family, always willing to lead me into genuine fellowship, yet I have often turned away from Your direction for my own convenience. Thank You for Your loving warnings and correction. Help me to make right choices by sitting at the feet of Jesus Christ, walking with people of faith, and being strengthened for the battle against the devil and all evil. In the name of Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

This week's takeaway

Some of the greatest challenges we face come from within our closest circles, not from obvious enemies. Fear and compromise can cause people to choose safety over faith, even at the cost of God's purpose. Jesus Christ calls us to walk wisely and surround ourselves with a spiritual family that stands firm under pressure.

(Devotional Reflection written by Rev. Immanuel Ebenezer Paul on behalf of Hear Matthew 11:28 Ministries, published on 10 January 2026. All Scripture quotations are from the Recovery Version of the Holy Bible (Living Stream Ministries)).

Announcements:

1. If you are seeking support in your discipleship journey, we warmly invite you to join our weekly discipleship sessions held every Saturday at 6am (IST).

Link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81144235750pwd=RG4veEdLQkJNS1NxYW1ZWmNnb3EvQT09

b3EvQT09 (Meeting ID: 811 4423 5750. Passcode: 12345).

2. If you wish to receive personal counselling, kindly use this link to make an appointment. https://scheduler.zoom.us/rev-immanuel-paul/appointment

3. We welcome you to join our WhatsApp group to receive updates and Communication about our ministries and meetings https://chat.whatsapp.com/EokMFGuZdgb23Sg8BsHzas

4. If you are interested in continuing to receive our future devotional articles, we kindly request your assistance in updating our database with your name and email ID.

For this purpose, we have prepared a short questionnaire for you to complete. Once the form is filled out and submitted, you will be enrolled in a six-month subscription plan. You may select your preferred language(s)—Tamil, English, and/or Telugu—in which you would like to receive the publications. You may choose one or multiple languages. We will renew this process every 6 months.

The questionnaire subscription link https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd1CqDjh3ofH8KyqVfzTnG38kCZxAzOyp8MHecoFrY6lL4p3Q/viewform also be available through email and on our website (https://hearmatthew1128.org/). Please note that future devotional articles will be sent only to those who complete the form and subscribe through this process.

We look forward to walking with you in faith and fellowship.