Sermon Title: Pivotal Decisions – Putting a Purpose On it  
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- Question: how many of you are in the middle of making a very important decision in your life?  
- So, what are you gonna do?  
- Do you have a plan for this?  
- Are you going to just keep asking people for advice until you get the answer that you want hear?  
- Or are you going to stress eat and put things off at the last minute? That’s always a good plan.  
- Some of the decisions that you make - you don’t know if they’re going to be big not.  
- This is why we need God - not only can we not make big decisions without Him - but we don’t even know which ones are big.  
- Some of us spend an eternity deciding the location to get married - however the real big decision is how you are going to resolve conflict in your marriage.  
- Since we don’t really know when the decision is going to be big – better to call it a pivotal decision.  
- Take for example the pivotal decision of what church you will go to worship - here you’ll have fellowship with other people and have an opportunity to grow your faith.  
- Key point: All good basketball players are good at pivoting because they keep 1 foot planted.  
  - **The power is in the pivot.**  
- Now let’s go to Judges 13.  
- We all get a completely different perspective when we pivot and it’s our small moves that set the direction.  
- Plus, a lot of things that happened you will occur outside of your own volition and decision-making anyway.  
- God is so much bigger than your decisions.  
- You may be very successful in business, however the culmination of all your successes are bigger than you and are bigger than the summation of all your decisions.  
- God position us so that we are in a position to make good decisions.  
- God is not a synonym for you making good decisions.  
- Is your view of the will of God big enough to accommodate even your bad decisions?  
- Now let’s go to Judges 13: 1-  
- You probably have never heard a sermon on this passage of Scripture.  
- In this passage in Judges the Hebrew people didn’t want God to be their king.  So, a bunch of other judges were picked instead.  
- Here in Judges. God delivers the Hebrew people into the hands of their enemy.  
- I know that God is going to use me - but I need to know specifics and details – what are my marching orders, dates, and times.  
- I need to know the plan.  
  - **Without the plan the promise is abstract rhetoric.**  
- God hears us better than Siri and Alexa.  
- God hears our groans even when the words don’t come.  
- God hears us even when we sing off key.  
- **God is never going to do it the way you want it done - but God does want to see that you trust him.**  
- Manoah wants to know the plan, and in vs. 13 the angel pivots to the wife.  
- God pivots, and we need to see what direction he points us.  
- When God pivots, we have be quick - to go with him.
• Is God trying to pivot your prayer life? Is God trying to pivot your strategizing? Is God trying to pivot because you’re always trying to look for him by your logic? Or your own analysis? Or your own calculation?
• God is the spirit and you can’t get to him through strategy and analysis.
• The only way to come to God is with open hands, and an open heart, and open arms.
• The pivot is a small move but sets a completely different direction.
• God says to Manoah, you can’t handle the plan right now.
• Manoah realizes this: This gift set, this marriage, this child - they are all from the Lord.
• Since it is from the Lord we need Him to show us how to do it.
• God will not answer the question that you ask - but he will give you the wisdom that you need - because God always has a better question.
• Our faith is not a formula – and we are generally not very good at pivoting.
• The pivot means that the solution is to come from a different place.
• If it’s from God, then we need God to pivot us through it.
• Key vs: 17 Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the Lord, “What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?” 18 He replied, “Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding.
• This is the pivot: it is beyond your understanding.
• So, everything that you can name and everything you can explain is not God.
• Our first move to God is when we realize it is beyond what we can understand
• Everything that you cannot name is God.
• When we get past the point of our ability to reconcile our situation - when we get beyond our ability to work it out - this is where God is - and this is where God lives. This is where God dwells - in the mystery - In the uncertainty and in the tension.
• And we keep trying to find God in our logic - but he is not found with logic - God is beyond your logic.
• And since this situation came from the Lord we are going to need God to handle it.
• And since the word came from the Lord - we are going to make the offering to the Lord.
• Since our breath came from the Lord we are going to offer it back to the Lord.
• And when the flames came up the revelation came through.
• And so how you process your desires and decisions right now is critical
• After Samson was born the Lord blessed him.
• And then there was another pivot.
• And you don’t really know how big the pivot was until you walk out.
• The very small decision is a small pivot but sets the overall direction.
• It’s the little things that you do that set the direction of your day in the direction of your decade - and even for generations to come.
• See chapter 14.1
• Samson pivoted - 14 Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. 2 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.”
• Do you have a desire that doesn’t look anything like a Bible verse?
• Now the future of the Hebrew people is threatened by Samson’s bad decision.
• The Philistines were known for child sacrifice and were known to worship other gods.
• The Philistines were known for abusive practices that are contrary to the word of God.
• In chapter 14, Samson is running to what he was supposed to deliver the Hebrew people from.
• And his parents can’t convince Samson for making a bad decision.
It’s hard enough to make your own good decisions - and then you start throwing in the decisions that other people make - that you can’t affect or control - no matter how hard you try.

There are some things you just can’t control.

Samson was very determined - even though there were all kinds of consequences due to the clashing values between the Philistines and Samson’s people,

We are now at the most important pivot of the whole message today.

Everyone here today has experienced the situation with the plan you had in your head - a model that you had – that did not match the life that you are living.

Samson - who was radiant - who is blessed - who is strong - who carries the expectation of the deliverance on his shoulders - is making a dumb decision.

You are going to go into situations in your life that you’re going to pray about - and plan about - and now that will work – and you will be faced with the question - now what do I do?

When this happens consider the parentheses.

There’s a little thing that was put into this record long after the events that happened

Watch how the text pivots with the parentheses.

Recall from grammar school that something in parentheses can be removed from a sentence and sentence will still be ok - is added in to provide helpful information to the people reading it.

See chapter 14 and verse 3: 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?” But Samson said to his father, “Get her for me. She’s the right one for me.” 4 (His parents did not know that this was from the Lord, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.)

The author says - this is from the Lord.

The Lord was seeking an occasion or picking a fight to free his people from the Phoenicians.

But God didn’t want it done through a good decision - but through bad decision.

Watch what God does here - because he is sovereign - in his ways no man can fathom.

God uses Samson’s dumb decision to free nation.

If God did this for Samson - will he not do this for you?

Won’t God use this moment to?

The more times we can say - this is from the Lord, we admit that the author knows that we don’t know yet.

Put a purpose on it.

When you find yourself beyond your own understanding, pivot to the purpose. We say "Lord I don’t like this right now and I don’t get this right now - I can’t explain this right now - I can’t rationalize this right now - but if you started it, you will finish it" - there is power in the pivot there is power in your praise and there is purpose in the pivot.

God wants to break some things free and shut some things down and to bring some things through.

We need to make a pivotal decision in turn from this and go to this.

We are going to turn from what we don’t understand to the God - who according mystery of his will has predestined according to his good pleasure - in all things work together for his purpose - we are serving a God that can take an instrument of death called a Roman cross - and get it down on the ground - God says I am the power - I am the resurrection power - and I have the keys to the grave.

God says put a purpose on it - we are all go through some pain and we made a lot of mistakes - but put a purpose on it.

God please even use the dumb stuff that I did to deliver your purpose.

This is bigger than me this is bigger than us.
This is bigger than what we feel right now - and it is bigger than what my mind can fathom.

Lord will you please use the dumb stuff that I did to deliver your purpose?

This is bigger than what my heart can know – and is bigger than my senses.

This is bigger than my setback.

He called me - he chose me - and I’m going to trust him that this is from the Lord.

With a parenthetical insert - brought to us by the NIV translation - there are things that are bigger than what we can know in life.

The parentheses represent the purpose and you just have to trust that you just can’t figure it out yet.

God is bigger God than what you give them credit for.

God is bigger than human decisions.

And if Samson did not marry the woman that he was not supposed to marry, this too was from the Lord - he’s looking for something that we can work through - and God will even use the dumb stuff.

Samson would never have been hurt by the Philistines had he not made the wrong decision.

It goes to show that God is using everything - so the things happen the way they’re supposed to happen in the way that it is.

Stop asking the court about what it was and start asking God for what it is meant to be.

God wants to use the dumb stuff too

you can’t control it anyway.

Closing prayer: It is a pivotal decision that you make when you find yourself in these disappointing situations - where it seems like you can’t win - whether you believe that there’s going to be a bigger picture - or you’re going to minimize God’s presence to your level of understanding - right here right now let’s turn it around - instead of trying to tell God what is best for us - trying to do what is right in our own eyes – let’s turnaround - instead of groveling in the guilt of things that have already been said and done - God uses the weirdest things about you - God uses that little habit that we have - and uses it so that it can our testimony - this is from the Lord. How? I’ve no idea - and when we don’t have a plan, we pivot to the purpose - and God is working in all of it - God help me make better decisions in the future - but use the dumb stuff too - this is probably the best prayer that I’ve ever prayed.

2nd Closing prayer: Father I honor and bless your great name today. And together we offer our reverence, our attention, and our affection. We don’t know what was done or what they did it. We don’t know what we can control that leads us to make a dumb decision. We declare over our lives that this is from the Lord. We can pivot when we are planted. God is trying to turn our attention to something greater - greater than our pain - greater than our insecurity - this is from the Lord. The writer put in parentheses to let us know - this is what makes life makes sense. And his name is beyond understanding. Father thank you for your sweet Holy Spirit that gently reminds us of your love and compassion and concern for us. I pray now in this moment that you will administer the gifts of healing - the portion of joy that belongs to your children - that is often been robbed. We come up against the thief that triggers us to aim in the wrong direction - we now turn our eyes to you Lord.