

**NEWS AND VIEWS**  
**MOUNT OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH**  
3500 Edwards Mill Road, Raleigh, North Carolina 27612-5362

Phone... (919) 787-1910  
E-mail: office@mobic.org  
Web Page: [www.mobic.org](http://www.mobic.org)

*“Southern Baptists with the Full  
Gospel for the Whole World”*

---

SAM GORE, Senior Pastor

NANCY MCBRAYER, Office Manager

EDITH JACKSON, Prayer Coordinator

MIKE KING, Maintenance Supervisor

---

VOLUME 39

November 2017

NUMBER 11

---

Thanksgiving celebrations are often about food, family, football, and fun. But history might teach us, *if anyone truly takes history seriously lately*, that Thanksgiving was celebrated and initiated with an original intent much different than what it's become. Even in our predominantly secular society, Thanksgiving used to be a time when the shopping season for Christmas was begun. Now Halloween serves as that launch pad. Or is that now Labor Day? Interesting how the ever-changing American culture has changed the concept of this uniquely American holiday. But true thanksgiving, the kind that honors and focuses on the Lord, will always occupy the God-fearing mind.

Consider the context of this passage from the Word of God in the book of Judges.

*She said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him. (Judges 16:20)*

Delilah's delight was Samson's devastation. A lifetime of taking God for granted finally caught up with Samson, the strongman. Too late he realized that the power that had delivered him and rescued him time after time was gone. Painfully, he realized that he was absolutely nothing without his God. Those of us who have seemingly made it this far in our own strength have yet to discover that lesson. But we will. Someday the journey will be too far, the test will be too hard, the circumstance will be too overwhelming. In that day we will be painfully aware that we have been oblivious to His presence.

When we acknowledge to God that we have taken Him for granted, it will not come as a surprise to God. Human history has repeatedly ignored His presence. And this condition shows up often in the lives of those who are called the people of God. But still He desires for us to know Him. And He wants more than a part-time relationship. Unless we spend time daily in God's presence, even the most spiritual among us can begin to take Him for granted. Some wisdom can surely be gained from Samson's lack of it. Some thoughts to think...

**I. WE CAN BE OBLIVIOUS TO GOD'S PRESENCE WHEN WE LISTEN TO THE VOICES OF OTHERS MORE THAN GOD.** We can be guilty of listening to the voices that challenge us to show our strength. Often the voices are those closest to us. We can be tempted to do things that will bring us glory at someone else's command. We are destined to fail when we hear and act on these challenges.

**II. WE CAN BE OBLIVIOUS TO GOD'S PRESENCE WHEN WE THINK WE ARE THE SOURCE OF OUR STRENGTH.** Samson thought the power he had grown up with belonged to him. He became oblivious to the fact that God had given him strength to glorify God and serve others. In an instant we can also be weakened at the strongest point of our life.

**III. WHEN WE ARE OBLIVIOUS TO GOD'S PRESENCE WE WILL BE IGNORANT OF HIS DEPARTURE.** Sometimes we don't really miss someone until after they are gone and the lack of their presence is an emptiness that yearns to be filled. If the empty place in your life is desperately begging for the presence of God, we dare not fill it with something less. If you've ever enjoyed God's presence, you know what you are missing. But sadly, sometimes the truth is we don't miss what we never had.

On Thanksgiving Day this year, or yearly day by day, remember the Lord your God.

Blessings to you,  
Pastor Sam