

## Facing the Goliaths of Life

Text: 1 Samuel 17

Thesis: To learn from David's example in overcoming some of the challenges of life.

Introduction:

1. So often, when studying the Bible, we recognize characters of the Bible by their counterparts.
  - a. For example:
    - i. There was Paul and Silas (or Barnabas) who went hand in hand preaching
    - ii. There was Ananias and Sapphira who both died for telling the same lie.
    - iii. There was Aquilla and Priscilla who taught the Scriptures together.
    - iv. There was Nadab and Abihu who God devoured by fire.
    - v. Then we read about Adam and Eve who were the first man and first woman on the earth.
  - b. But perhaps the greatest of all known examples of counterparts is the story of David and Goliath.
2. In 1 Samuel 17, we find the young man David, being challenged.
  - a. At least three times in the text David is described as an individual of insignificance.
    - i. He was told that he was, “. . . not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.” (1 Sam. 17:33)
    - ii. He marveled others with his unimportance for, “when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.” (1 Sam. 17:55)
    - iii. Again thinking of this young lad who was suppose to not be there, “. . . the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is.” (1 Sam. 17:56)
  - b. So, David right from the get go, had many obstacles to overcome.
    - i. Some children have often said when they are little that they can not do something because they are just, too little.
    - ii. However, David was not that kind of boy.
3. So with this said, within this chapter, we will read of the familiar account of David facing not just a man named Goliath, but a giant.
  - a. However, while looking at this huge man compared to the small boy that David was, we may believe that this was his biggest obstacle to overcome.
  - b. But, we would be wrong.
4. Notice, that there are 3 problems that David was faced with:
  - a. First, he was faced with the cowardice of others.
  - b. Second, he found himself being criticized of others.
  - c. And third, notice the religious conflict brought on by others.

Discussion:

I. From our study we observe that . . . COWARDICE WAS A GOLIATH THAT DAVID HAD TO FACE.

- A. Beginning in 1 Sam. 17:1-3 it says, “Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.”
1. Now, here we see that both the Philistines and Israel were face to face preparing to fight.
    - a. However, notice that it was the Philistines who started this fight because they were gathered at Shochoh which belonged to Judah.
    - b. You know, Satan usually brings the fighting to us in our spiritual battle just like he did to Eve in the Garden, or to Christ in the wilderness and also to us, for as Jesus said, wolves will disguise themselves as sheep (Christians) and come in among us (Matt. 7:15).
  2. So, we have the heathen Philistines on one mountain and the armies of God on the other with a valley in between them.
    - a. Notice that God’s people were not intermingled with those of the world.
    - b. It is because they served two different masters.
- B. So, while the battle is being prepared, we now need to be introduced to the main characters of the fight.
1. “And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.” (1 Sam. 17:4)
    - a. Now, if the standard Hebrew cubit is 17 ½ inches long and a span is half of a cubit which is roughly 8 ¾ inch across, there is no doubt that this 9' 6" (nearly 10 feet tall) structure of man, struck terror into the hearts of the Israelites.
    - b. So, Goliath, whose name means splendour, was a man of Gath and from the race of Anak (Josh. 11:22) by which we learn from Numb. 13:33 that the children of Israel were seen as “grasshoppers” in their sight.
    - c. And this Goliath was their awesome champion.
      - (1) I mean, it must have been a sight to see because the word champion here means, “between the armies.”
      - (2) Now, this could have meant that either he was standing in between them or that he was so big that he took up a lot the room between the two armies; you decide.

2. But the point is that he was a massive giant, “And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.” (1 Sam. 17:5)
  - a. Now, most helmets in those days were made of leather, but here we see that Goliath was treated very well because his helmet material was used for royalty.
  - b. Furthermore, his body was fully protected by this coat which was basically a shirt of brass scales which weighed about 125lbs.
3. “And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.” (1 Sam. 17:6-7)
  - a. So, Goliath was armed with this huge javelin that weighed more than 25lbs.
  - b. It is interesting that Goliath did not even carry his own shield.
    - (1) He had a shield bearer which was usually done for captains, kings and or course, champions.
4. And so, here comes this frightening champion before the army of the living God and of course, they were afraid.
  - a. And they not only feared Goliath’s challenge, but his very presence (1 Sam. 17:11).
  - b. Goliath was bold, antagonistic and was so intimidating that for 40 days, his challenge of a fight, went unanswered (1 Sam. 17:16)
- C. Now, we come to the other main character in this battle, David.
  1. Remember that he is just a youth, but we shall now see, David was faced with the challenge of the cowardice of others.
- D. Reading from, 1 Sam. 17:17-26
  1. Notice that no one, not even the king, wanted to stand up and fight this bully, Goliath.
    - a. They were all cowering before him and were afraid.
    - b. However, David was no coward.
  2. But why?
    - a. Why was David so courageous?
    - b. Why were the others so cowardice?
  3. Keep these questions in your mind as we look onward to our next point.

## II. CRITICISM WAS A GOLIATH THAT DAVID HAD TO FACE.

- A. David is now faced with the challenge of criticism from others.
- B. When David arrives and observes this “uncircumcised” Philistine defying the army of the living God, he asks “What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine?” (1 Sam. 17:26)
  1. There is the surety in David’s mind that Goliath would be killed.

- a. However, giants have always been frightening, disagreeable and disheartening.
  - b. The other men around were thinking that perhaps someone with more rank, more intelligence or simply “someone else” would defeat Goliath.
2. It was puzzling for David to see his countrymen paralyzed and shamefully unable to answer the call to serve.
    - a. **You know, sometimes we may see this in the church today where Christian soldiers will not lift a finger to advance the cause of Christ.**
    - b. **They are all dressed up for the battle, but refuse to fight.**
  3. Now while David was very young here, he was still able to perceive the disgrace that was being inflicted upon Israel by the defiant, unanswered challenge of the infidel.
    - a. But, this was not only a disgrace to Israel, but also to God and David could not allow this barbarian to make Jehovah the target of ridicule regardless of how terrifying the size was of Goliath.
    - b. Thus, it was a zealous love for the honor of God which caused these heroic reactions.
- C. So, while David was genuinely inquiring about what needed to be done, the critic, David’s oldest brother speaks up: “And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.” (1 Sam. 17:28)
1. Eliab was asking David why he has come to this place of battle?
    - a. Do you just want to see the consequences of war?
    - b. I mean Eliab was really sticking it to David saying, who is taking care of the sheep?
  2. Yet, David does not bow to the criticism of his brother.
    - a. Instead, “David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?” (1 Sam. 17:29)
    - b. David knew that he was right in what he was doing and he was not going to allow a hypercritical, weak brother (even though older) to dampen his intentions.
      - (1) It is interesting to see that Jesus also encountered false accusations, bitter opposition and yet, he did not waver in his mission.
      - (2) You know my good brethren, there is a cause.
- D. Now, when David stands up and addresses his brother, another critic comes out, Saul.
1. Notice 1 Sam. 17:30-33.

- a. Saul saw nothing more than the frailty of youth and simply told David to shut up and that he could not defeat the giant!
  - b. However, David believed what the apostle Paul believed, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Phil. 4:13)
- 2. Since David remembered back to all the times he had faced opponents of superior strength and had prevailed then with the help of God, he knew that God would not forsake him now.
  - a. Sadly for Saul and those who were like him, their faith was no longer in God even though that they claimed it was.
  - b. **The children of Israel were acting much like frustrated Christians today who no longer hold to the plain Bible preaching because they are frustrated and can no longer taste the sweet flavor of God’s Word.**
- E. So, instead of David bowing down to the criticism, he says in 1 Sam. 17:34-37:
  - 1. How powerful it must have been for David to stand strong in the midst of criticism.
  - 2. But, why?
    - a. Why did David stand so strong?
    - b. Why did the others criticize so much?
  - 3. Keep these questions in your mind as we look onward to our next point.

### III. CONFLICT WAS A GOLIATH THAT DAVID HAD TO FACE.

- A. When we continue to look at this story of David and Goliath, we may, on the surface see just a physical conflict brewing.
  - 1. However, this was more than physical.
  - 2. It was a religious conflict involving Jehovah and the gods of the Philistines.
- B. Notice if you will 1 Sam. 17:42-45.
  - 1. Observe that Goliath came in the name of his “gods,” but David came in the name of Jehovah.
  - 2. However, Saul did not understand that God was fighting because earlier he had tried to match power with power by attempting to put David into his personal armour.
    - a. However, like Christians ought to know, a living faith is sufficient for victory.
    - b. So, David rejected the worldly inventions much like we are to reject worldly inventions and arm ourselves with the Bible (Eph. 6:17) **because it alone is sufficient** (2 Tim. 3:16-17)!
- C. So, without any armour, David proceeds to meet Goliath even though he was verbally looked down upon by this towering giant.
  - 1. You know, while our opponents may have something negative to say of us, like David, we ought to be undaunted and press on in the face of verbal attacks even though, like David, he was unaided by even his own brethren.

2. David, physically stood alone.
- D. Notice now, carefully, the courageous faith expressed by this young hero in 1 Sam. 17:46-51.
  1. In the conflict between Goliath's gods and David's God, David and Jehovah prevailed.
  2. But, Why?
- E. You know, I have asked the question, "why" 3 times:
  1. Why was David so courageous when the others were so cowardice?
  2. Why did David stand so strong while the others criticize so much?
  3. Why was David able to be victorious in the religious conflict when no one else would?
- F. It is because the Christian is suppose to be, ". . . strong in the Lord and in the power of HIS might (Eph. 6:10), not in the power of OUR might.
  1. We must believe that faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1 Jn. 5:4).
  2. However, just like David went on the offensive and charged the bigger man, ignoring the battle will not ensure the Christian victory, but fighting will.
    - a. You know, when we read of the church in Acts, we notice that their aggressive and straightforward efforts lead them to teach inside the synagogues, market places, and schools.
    - b. And, they never hesitated or apologized for meeting false doctrine head on and exposing it even though they were branded and spoken against by many others (Acts 28:22).

#### Conclusion:

1. You know, it is not always easy to stand for what's right.
  - a. Where does the courage come from you may ask?
    - i. It comes from learning to trust in God.
  - b. When one is criticizing you for standing for the Truth and for doing what you know is right, do you know what the secret is to dealing with it?
    - i. See: 2 Thess. 1:3-10.
    - ii. We must have the desire to please God instead of pleasing men!
2. Paul said, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal. 1:10)
  - a. **We must stand for our convictions because pacifism cannot prevail against the foes we face (Eph. 5:12)!**
  - b. **We must stand fast in the Faith (1 Cor. 16:13).**
3. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." (Eph. 6:10)
  - a. Now is the day for you to stand against the masses, to march against the grain, to formulate your Bible based answers to the questions you will face, to turn a deaf ear to criticism and to be courageous being that soldier of the cross!

- b. **Remember, we must stand boldly as David against the world and say that the Lord is our helper and we cannot fear what man shall do to us (Heb. 13:6).**
4. Isaiah told us if, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:” (Isa. 26:3-4).
- a. We must put all our trust in God!
  - b. And I pray that God will increase our faith (Lk. 17:5), that we, like David, may stand in his power and might (Eph. 6:10) and so live as to be the conquerors that we are designed to be (Rom. 8:37)!