

# The King We All Need (pre 2024 General Election Sermon)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp. Amen. So, king, kingship, kingdom is one of the major themes of the Bible. The question that is asked, who is the king that we need? Think about that question personally. We are faced with any number of problems, brokenness. Is there anyone that we can trust to find the solution?

Ties in with what's happening in our nation this week with the general election. Which leader or party will we trust? Faced with economic challenges, who's going to keep our schools and hospitals running? Who's going to provide homes, deal with unemployment, face the challenges of social breakdown? Is there someone who can fix it? Actually, since the Garden of Eden, the very beginning of the story of the Bible, the question of kingship has been important.

Who is it who will sit on the throne of our lives? Adam and Eve, when they were made, the first people they were made to live under the rule of God the king. But we read Genesis 3, that they rebelled against the king. They wanted to be independent of God, to be in charge by themselves. Why do we see so much chaos, so much breakdown and confusion? Why is there sin? It's because people wanted to be on the throne rather than God. On Sunday evenings, we've been in the book of Exodus, and the story of kingship has been all over that text as well. There's been the bad king, the false king, Pharaoh, who makes people slaves. And then there is the true king, the good king, the Lord God, who gives freedom. So today, we're going to follow the Bible story in the search for the true king, and we're going to focus our attention on David. But to set the scene for us, we need to recognize that the people need a king. To understand what's happening with David and Goliath, we actually need to go back one book in the Bible to the book of Judges. Boys and girls, I know in junior church, you looked at some of the judges. By the time you get to the end of the book of Judges, there's a particular focus. Each chapter, from chapter 17 to 21, looks at a different problem in society in that day. There were religious problems, and political problems, and moral problems, and social problems that seem to get worse and worse and worse, and there's a phrase that keeps repeating. And it's this, the people had no king. So the book of Judges sets us up. The answer to the problems that we face is finding the right king. Now that brings us to the book of Samuel. The first king of Israel is a man called Saul. The people's choice. By chapter 15, he is someone who we see rejects God's words, so God rejects him as king. And then in 1 Samuel 16, the chapter just before the one we've read,

Samuel the prophet is sent to go and anoint a future king, to find the man after God's own heart. And we understand that David is God's choice of king for his people. Just a teenager, just a shepherd boy, the son overlooked by his family, but seen and loved and chosen by God. And so now we come to chapter 17.

[ 4 : 13 ] Chapter 17, perhaps the most famous battle scene in the Bible. Part of Israel's history, no doubt, this story would be told and retold. It would be a way for them to praise God and to remember God's goodness to them. At the beginning of the chapter, we find the Philistines have gathered their forces for war on one side of a valley. The Philistines were the vicious enemies of God, of the people of God.

And you've got the giant Goliath on one side of the valley issuing his challenges, and on the other side of the valley, you've got Saul and the forces of Israel, and they're paralyzed with fear. And so the question is, who's going to win this battle?

And as important as that question is this, who is the king who will win the battle? Okay, so now that we've set the scene, let's look at the story, the victory of God's king.

We're going to do this looking at seven different scenes. It's a really long chapter, but we can do this in seven scenes. And I want us to see, and this is a feature of how the authors of the Old Testament tell their stories, that we're going to see in the details of the story some key points that will help us to recognize, in the first instance, the victory of David the king, but how it's going to point us to the victory of Jesus the greater king.

So the first scene, the first thing to draw attention to is a scene of strength versus weakness, apparent strength versus apparent weakness. Descriptions. Verse four, we read the description of Goliath. Now, I don't know if you noticed, as I was reading the text, a certain thing that comes out. Let me just begin to read it again. This is Goliath. His height was six cubits and a span, so he's about three meters tall. He's massive. He had a bronze helmet, a coat of bronze. On his legs, he wore bronze. He's got a bronze javelin. The picture being presented to us is Goliath. It's a massive metal man. He is a fighting machine. Boys and girls, I am sure you know who Iron Man is. In my head, I'm imagining Iron Man, except way bigger and way tougher. Okay, he is a fighting machine. Now, who's he coming up against? He's coming up against David. And it's wonderful the way the description of David is saved for the battlefield. You've got this three-meter iron giant looking down at David. And how does Goliath describe him? He saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome. Here's this handsome young lad come to fight against the iron giant. And we're supposed to think this is a total mismatch. It's the ultimate David and [ 7 : 46 ] Goliath story. Greater power, greater size, greater skill, so that we understand the point that the victory of God comes through apparent weakness in such a way that God gets the glory. That's scene one, strength versus weakness. Scene two, and this is significant as well, takes us to the principle of single combat. Again, I know that some of you like epic movies with battle scenes. Some of you like Star Wars. If you watch any of those sort of epic movies, you'll find there's lots of set-piece battles where you look across the whole screen, and there's hundreds of people fighting at the same time.

The more interesting battles are those 1v1 moments, those ones where it's Luke and Darth in that great lightsaber battle. Well, when we come to 1 Samuel 17, we have a really interesting battle. If you read all the other battles of the Bible, you're going to find there's armies fighting with one another. There's lots of action going on. This one's different, isn't it?

Did we hear the challenge of Goliath? Verse 8 and 9, he says, choose a man and let him come down to fight me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we'll become your subjects, but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects. So, this is a challenge of two champions, a challenge of single combat as Goliath representing the Philistines, and the question becomes, who's going to represent God's people? It should be Saul. Saul, after all, we're told, is a head taller than everyone else. He's supposed to lead the people in battle. But verse 11, on hearing the Philistines' words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified. It's not going to be Saul. It's not going to be someone from Saul's army. We must wait for God's king to appear. Scene 3, which actually we didn't read, but we'll get to now, is of the brothers' rejection. So, David arrives on the scene that the shepherd boy, who is sent by his dad with some food, bring some supplies to your brothers who are fighting in the army, and find out how things are going. And so, David arrives, and he hears the challenge of Goliath, and he sees the soldiers quaking with fear, and he's ready to fight. Now, we know at this stage, chapter 16, God has chosen him. This is God's choice for king. He has been anointed. And here's something else that we know. His brothers know that too, because his brothers were there when he was anointed. So, listen to verse 26. This is David. David asked the men standing near him, what will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel?

Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? He is concerned for the honor of God. Verse 28. Here's his big brother's response. When Eliab, David's eldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, why have you come down here?

And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are, and how wicked your heart is. Eliab resents David. His heart is not right.

[ 11 : 38 ] He rejects the one who's chosen to be king. Scene four invites us to appreciate that God's choice of king is a shepherd king. So, we read in verse 31 to 40 of when David and Saul meet. So, we get Saul, the people's choice of king. He's hiding in fear. He's failing in his duty. But the picture that we have of David is wonderful. David, the shepherd who trusts that the Lord will be

with him. He acknowledges that when he was busy looking after the sheep, God helped him to ward off bears and lions. And so, he says in verse 37, the Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine. It's the shepherd who trusts in the Lord. But we also see this wonderful image where Saul says, okay, if you're going to go and fight, you need to get dressed up in my armor. And so, he tries to make David look more like a warrior. Of course, they don't fit and he doesn't want it.

He's going to step into battle as the shepherd. So, after he gets rid of the armor, verse 40, what does he take instead? He takes his shepherd's staff in his hand. He chooses the five smooth stones.

He puts them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag. And with a sling in his hand, approach the Philistine. Attention is being drawn to the fact that this is the shepherd who's chosen to be king. Scene five that we can use for explaining our story, this recognition on the battlefield that the battle is the Lord's. Whenever we come across in the Old Testament the story of Israel's battles, there's always a spiritual dimension. And here we see with Goliath and with the Philistines, there is an attack on God's purposes. There's an attack on God's people. There's a defiance of God. Who is your God? He's a nobody. Our gods are better. And as David comes to meet the challenge, it's not just a physical challenge, it's a spiritual challenge. And that's clear from his words. Verse 45, you come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defied. Or verse 47, all those gathered here will know that it's not by sword or spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord's. The Lord is the God who saves, not by sword and spear. David is on a mission to defeat Goliath and to display to Israel and to a watching world the glory of God and His power to save. That leads us to scene six and to this moment of decisive victory. There's a guy called Gerald Walker. He did some really fun research in a paper called The Flying Circus of Physics. He was working out the speed and the accuracy of a slingshot. And he worked out that that simple slingshot that David had could fly a stone over 600 miles per hour and be accurate at a range of 200 meters. Two football fields worth of accuracy.

[ 15 : 39 ] That's a powerful weapon in the proper hands. Verse 48, as the Philistine moved closer to attack, David ran quickly, reaching into his bag, taking out a stone. He slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead and he fell face down on the ground, dead. And if that, as if that wasn't comprehensive and decisive enough, verse 51, David ran and stood over him, took hold of the Philistine's sword, and after he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword. There is no doubt victory is here. The battle belongs to the Lord.

But that's not the end of the story. Wonderfully, that's not the end of the story, because the last scene, scene seven, is a scene of shared victory. Remember those terrified troops? The other side of the valley? Oh, Goliath's massive. We're certain to be defeated. They're paralyzed with fear for 40 days.

Now, as they see the victory of David, they run to join the battle. And it says in verse 53, when the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp.

They did nothing to earn the victory that day. They showed no courage. They showed no trust. They showed no concern for God's honor, so that they stood up and said, I will fight.

But they shared in the victory. And they understand that David was the king they needed that day. So that's the story of the victory of God's king, okay? We're going to come back to that.

[ 17 : 39 ] But we need to keep going in the storyline of kingship in the Bible to think about the search for the true king. Picture the nation of Israel the day after this great battle.

Can we imagine them gathering together, asking, is this the king that we all need? Is this the one? Is he the one who's big enough to fix all that is broken? Is he the answer to all the problems we've been seeing in society? It's a question that mattered hugely for God's people.

It mattered hugely in the day of the judges. It matters hugely for them as this small nation surrounded by enemies. Who's going to give them security? Who's going to lead them in true worship?

It's a question that matters for us as well. As we are confronted by problems, political, personal, spiritual, who will we trust? Where is the king that we need? Where can I find security? Is David the one?

Let's follow the theme of king and kingship through the rest of the Old Testament. Because this section that we're in right now is a section both of great expectation but also of failure. So the first

three kings are highlighted in great detail. First, we've already seen Saul.

[ 19 : 13 ] He fails morally, spiritually, and politically. Rejects God's Word, and so God rejects him. He's unable to deal with the Philistines. David, well, he has success politically for a time, success spiritually for a time, but we know that the end of his reign is marked by that great moral fall, and his kingdom begins to fall apart. We come to his son Solomon, begins wonderfully with great wisdom, trusting in God, but he too fails spiritually, turning to idols. And so after these first three kings, the people are still waiting, and they're still longing. And as the storyline goes, as the kingdom is broken up between Israel and Judah, we find this moving spotlight. The authors move from kings of Judah to kings of Israel, and all the while we're asking the question, is there a true king? Is there a king?

And we discover even the best of kings, they fail. Even the best of renewal initiatives do not last. Even when society comes to a point of trust in God, it only is for a season.

But that doesn't mean that hope dies. Rather, hope continues. And especially there's this wonderful promise given to David in 2 Samuel 7, that one of his seed, one of his family, will be a king who will reign forever. And so there's great hope for the people of God tied up with a coming king who will rule and reign forever. He's the one who'll be the answer to personal needs, spiritual needs, national needs, universal needs, the Messiah king. You come to the book of Psalms, and you find hope in this king.

Psalms 72, this king who will rule forever, bringing peace and prosperity. You come to the prophets. Isaiah chapter 9, the seed of David, who is the mighty God. Jeremiah 23, the branch of David David is the Lord our righteousness. Isaiah 53, the servant of the Lord is the arm of the Lord. So there's great hope for this coming king. So we get to the end of the Old Testament, and the question remains, where is the king? There must be something, someone better than this.

When will God send his Messiah king? You take a look through the whole of the Old Testament, the picture that emerges. Ultimately, only, only the creator king is big enough to fix all that is broken. The religious, moral, political, social problems, they're too big for a government to fix.

[ 22 : 07 ] They need the creator king. And that's what the prophets anticipate for us, that God's Messiah king, when he comes, will be none other than the Lord himself. And so it's no wonder, as the New Testament begins, that joy breaks out when the angels announce, Jesus is the Lord. Jesus is the God who saves. He is the anointed one. He is the promised Messiah king. He's come to establish the kingdom of God. He is the king we all need. And we're going to use David's story to see that more clearly.

The question is asked, where is the king? Because there's a problem. The solution ultimately rests in Jesus, the king we all need. And we can look at the story of David and Goliath to see Jesus is the true and better David. It is true that only the creator king is the solution to the great problems that we face, and Jesus is our creator king. He is the true king. He is the great giant killer. Remember how I said those details that we find in the Bible stories are there for a purpose? In this story, they show us the victory of David the king, but point us to the greater king. Well, just like David, Jesus comes in apparent weakness. Jesus is born of the Virgin Mary. Mary from a very poor family, from a very unimportant town. Jesus' first night on earth is spent not in a palace, but in a manger surrounded by the animals. When Jesus rides into Jerusalem to be heralded as king, he comes riding a donkey.

donkey and not a war horse. John's gospel tells us, just as it was with David, Jesus came to his own, but his own did not receive him. And that included his brothers. The brothers of Jesus rejected his claims to be the son of God and the savior of the world. That seems crazy.

Until they met him risen from the dead, and then they believed. And remember that Jesus' story leads towards the cross, not a throne. He comes in apparent weakness.

Yet we know the storyline of the Bible in his death is the death of death itself. It looks foolish. It looks weak. But it is the power of God for salvation.

[ 25 : 10 ] Just like David, we're told that Jesus is the Lord's chosen king. We already mentioned the message of the angels. He'd be called Jesus, the son of the most high God.

Think about what happens when he is baptized. He is anointed with the Holy Spirit. There's a declaration that this is God's man. And then there's the voice from heaven, this is my son.

With him I am well pleased. This is the promised king. We have the witness of his miracles. Every healing is an announcement that the kingdom of God is breaking in. And that God's kingdom is a place of grace and of healing and of renewal. Think about Jesus' testimony. John chapter 10, I am the good shepherd. I am. He says, I'm the Lord of the Old Testament. I've come to fulfill the

functions of the Lord in the Old Testament. I've come to be the good shepherd, the shepherd king. He does that by laying down his life for his sheep. The good shepherd is also the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. And that by his wounds we are healed. He is the shepherd who calls and his sheep hear his voice. He invites us to trust him, to know him, to receive him as king. Just like David did, Jesus wins a decisive battle in single combat. Where does Jesus' battlefields? [ 27 : 06 ] It's the cross. When the forces of evil conspire against him, when he faces down the great giants of sin and death and the devil. And in that story of spiritual combat, we are there, helpless, powerless, against enemies far too great for us. We cannot win freedom. We cannot defeat those powers. We need a hero who comes from outside of ourselves. We need Jesus to be our great champion.

That's who he comes to be. That by the grace of God, he comes as our representative, as our substitute, taking our sin, taking its punishment, bearing the wrath of God, securing our forgiveness. There on the cross, the justice of God is satisfied. The love of God is poured out. There is victory. In the cross of Jesus. And just as David did, King Jesus, by his grace, shares the victory with his people.

When we read this story, David and Goliath, we need to avoid the temptation to make ourselves the hero. Jesus is the hero. He is the one, the only one, the creator king who has the power to deal with what's broken inside of us. Jesus, our creator king, is the only one who has the power to remake the world, to give us the world, to give us the society and the world that we all want, to destroy all that is wrong with the world because of our sin. That the victory of the cross and the resurrection is the decisive victory.

Now we wait for the final victory when Jesus comes again and he makes the world new and sin and death are gone forever. This is perfect society with God at the center for all eternity.

[ 29 : 20 ] So that trusting in him, we don't need to live with fear. We don't need to live with a sense of being hopeless and helpless. Our sin and our guilt, they no longer define us.

Because our risen champion has won the victory and we share in the spoils. His resurrection life is now our resurrection life under the rule of our great king.

Jesus is the true king we all need. And that's true for us as we come to face our giants.

Now the order is so important. First we need to understand that Jesus is the true and better David. That we are weak and he is strong. That we would be crushed by our spiritual enemies but Jesus fights for us and wins for us and only then only then as we're trusting in him can we ask, how can we learn to be more like David with the giants that we face?

What are the giants that you face? Perhaps they are many. It could be insecurity or it could be an illness. It could be disappointment. It might be temptation. Perhaps persecution and opposition or the pool of idolatry.

[ 30 : 40 ] When we face those giants, what do we do? We look to our true king. Trusting in King Jesus, we have confidence that the victory is secure in the shepherd king who fights for us and is with us.

We understand that his commitment to us is absolute. The king who went to the cross for us is now the king who sits on the throne of the universe for us. That his grace, his power, his love, they belong to us as his people.

We have a place in his eternal kingdom. That's our living hope. So to make progress in the battles that we face with the giants that we encounter, we stick close to Jesus and his gospel.

And in his strength, we're invited to fight in his name. As we see all that he has done, the victory that he has achieved to save us, as we recognize that he was motivated by the glory of God.

So we too are motivated by that concern. So we go into spiritual battle knowing the Lord of grace is with us and for us.

[ 32 : 07 ] And we persevere knowing we are on the winning side when we are with Jesus. Because he is the king we all need. It's a wonderful story.

Wonderful story as we head into this summer. As we anticipate the general election. As Christian people, we understand our hope and our confidence is in a far greater leader, in a far greater king who sits on the throne of the universe.

His rule is unshakable. And he is the one who will one day return to bring in the world that we all want. And in the different rhythms of the holiday season, wherever we find ourselves, we're invited to remember as the people of God, our shepherd king.

He'll be with us and for us. Inviting us to know him, to enjoy time with him and his word, to trust him as our savior king. poetry.  
Let's pray with him. Kunden, let's pray with him. With him, let's pray with him. Let's pray with him.. ■  
Luke