

Axes in God's Hands for God's Glory

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Date: 19 June 2016

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[0 : 00] If you would take your Bibles and go to 1 Samuel or 1 Samuel, chapter 17, if you're visiting with us, that black Bible in the chair in front of you, you can pull that out and go to page 214, you'll find 1 Samuel or 1 Samuel, chapter 17, 1 Samuel 17, page 214 in that black Bible. Pardon my allergies, my body is trying to acclimate back to our weather.

So there was major humidity in San Jose and Santa Cruz, if you can imagine, near the beach. That's kind of weird. Why are my towels aren't drying? So you come out here an hour later, wow, my towels are already dry. My body is trying to acclimate.

And I also want to, before we read the passage, just thank people like Travis and Michael, people kind of overseeing things, Jordan, Tyler, Daniel, Jane.

I know she's... Yeah, that's good. And there's a whole bunch of other people, Ellen doing things, all you people, and just hold them down things, thank you. Appreciate that. Make sure you thank them for that.

1 Samuel 17, I'm going to read the whole chapter, at least up to verse 54, and then we'll dive in. What? What? What? What? Somebody say something.

[1 : 55] 1 Samuel 17, chapter 17. 1 Samuel 17, now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle, and they were gathered at Soko, which belongs to Judah, and they camped between Soko and Azekah, and Ephes-damim.

And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array to encounter the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on one side, while Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them.

Then a champion came out from the armies of the Philistines named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span, probably over nine feet tall.

And he had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale armor, which weighed 5,000 shekels of bronze. He also had bronze guards on his legs, and a bronze javelin slung between his shoulders, and the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam.

And the head of his spear weighed 600 shekels of iron. And his shield carrier also walked before him. And he stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, and said to them, Why do you come out to draw up in battle array?

[3 : 21] Am I not the Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants.

But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us. Again the Philistine said, I defy the ranks of Israel this day.

Give me a man that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. Verse 12. Now David was the son of the Ephathites of Bethlehem, Judah, whose name was Jesse.

And he had eight sons. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced in years among men. And the three older sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle.

And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab, the firstborn, and second to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. And David was the youngest. Now the three oldest followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem.

[4 : 30] And the Philistine came forward morning and evening for forty days and took his stand. Then Jesse said to David, his son, Take now for your brothers, and Ephra this roasted grain and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to your brothers.

Bring also these ten cuts of cheese to the commander of their thousand, and look into the welfare of your brothers, and bring back news of them. For Saul and they, and all the men of Israel are in the valley of Elah fighting with the Philistines.

So David arose early in the morning and left the flock with the keeper and took the supplies and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the circle of the camp while the army was going out in battle, Ray, shouting the war cry.

And Israel and the Philistines drew up in battle, Ray, army against army. Then David left his baggage in the care of the baggage keeper and ran to the battle line and entered in order to greet his brothers. And as he was talking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine from Gath named Goliath, was coming up from the army of the Philistines.

And he spoke these same words, and David heard them. And all the men of Israel saw the man. When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid. And the men of Israel said, Have you seen this man who is coming up?

[5 : 44] Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. It will be that the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel. Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel?

For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should taunt the armies of the living God? And the people answered him in accord with this word, saying, Thus it will be done for the man who kills him.

Now Eliab, his oldest brother, heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness?

I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart for you have come down in order to see the battle. But David said, What have I done now? Was it not just a question? Then he turned away from him to another and said the same thing and the people answered the same thing as before.

When the words which David spoke were heard, they told them to Saul and he sent for him. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail on account of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

[6 : 57] And Saul said to David, You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him for your youth. Oh, he's been away from his youth. But David said to Saul, Your servant was tending his father's sheep.

When a ryan or bear came and took a ram from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him and rescued it from his mouth. And when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him.

Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear. And this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them since he has taunted the armies of the living God.

And David said, The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, he will deliver me from the paw of this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Go!

And may the Lord be with you. Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head and he clothed him with armor. And David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk for he had not tested them.

[7 : 57] So David said to Saul, I cannot go with these for I have not tested them. And David took them off. And he took a stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had even in his pouch.

And his sling was in his hand and he approached the Philistine. Then the Philistine came on and approached David with the shield bearer in front of him. When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him for he was a youth and ruddy with a handsome appearance.

And the Philistine said to David, Am I a dog that you come to me with sticks? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine also said to David, Come to me. You probably should do it in Arnold Schwarzenegger voice.

Come to me. I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field. Verse 45. Then David said to the Philistine, You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin.

But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day, the Lord will deliver you up into my hands and I will strike you down and remove your head from you.

[9 : 07] And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear.

For the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands. Verse 48. Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David. David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine, and David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead, and the stone sank into his forehead so that he fell on his face to the ground.

Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him, but there was no sword in David's hand. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him by cutting off his head with it.

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines as far as the valley and to the gates of Ekron.

Excuse me. And the slain Philistines lay along the way to Shaarim, even to Gath and Ekron. And the sons of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines and plundered their camps.

[10 : 32] Then David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his weapons in his tent. This past week, I saw a short video of a guy.

He's out in the forest and there's this tree just laying there and he takes, you know, this saw and he cuts off a piece of the tree and then he cuts off another piece of the tree from this limb that he cut off and then he has this log, I don't know, maybe like that long.

Probably like that big around. You know? And he takes this log and he made a serving spoon out of it with an axe.

He actually used two different axes, but he uses this huge, big, you would think that he could, you know, do it with a little thing or with a saw or something.

No, he uses an axe and he makes this, you know, probably about that big, serving spoon out of it. It was amazing to watch this. Watching him use this huge, clunky axe to carve what he wanted from this piece of wood.

[11 : 56] I mean, about 90% of what he did was, and he used these other little things to carve out more stuff for the spoon part, the serving part of the spoon. But 90% was done by the axe, this clunky axe.

It would be interesting to see, before and after shots, you know, before you have this big old line and after you have this serving spoon. This is what God does.

He uses clunks to carve out what he wants for the glory of his name. And here in this passage, in 1 Samuel 17, what we're going to see is for us to be a church with a passion for God's glory.

Or another way to put it, axes in God's hands for God's glory. That's what we're going to see from this passage here in 1 Samuel 17.

It's a call for us to be a church, to have a passion, to be driven, to be passionate for the glory of God.

[13 : 07] The way David was passionate for the glory of God. Or David thought of himself that he was just an axe. I'm an axe in God's hand for him to show his glory through me.

That's what I am. And that's the calling from this passage to us, the church. Which is axes in God's hands for him to just show his glory.

So, a long statement here, that we would be a church with a passion for the glory of God, specifically for the glory of Jesus' name. We are mere axes in the hands of God for him to display his glory through us.

God graciously uses clunky sinners for his glory. Any clunky sinners here? All of you should be raising your hands right now.

Come on. So much so, he puts his name upon us. Israel was nothing special. They were nothing special.

[14 : 15] They were not some huge, great, awesome, super power nation. They were nothing. But God uses them to show his glory.

This is incredible truth. How can God love and then use clunky sinners, clunky axes, he does?

He does. As one writer said, Jonathan Lehman, quote, how wide, long, high, and deep Christ's love is. It covers a multitude of sins and embraces a sinner.

Actually, it doesn't just embrace the sinner. It places the whole weight of Christ's own identity and glory on the sinner. so that what God says is, and Jonathan Lehman still says this in his quote, my name, the Lord's name, will rest on them and my glory will be theirs.

Unbelievable truth that God would do this. And this is what we see in this passage. God using David in Acts to show that he's real and his grace rested upon his people.

[15 : 38] So, in this setting of historical, real historical facts, this really took place with this huge, armored-like Goliath warrior, people try to think, what's the point of this passage?

They have different thoughts of the point of this passage. Some think that the point of the passage is that God kills our enemies. Is that the point of the passage? Or maybe the point of the passage is that we should kill our enemies.

Maybe somebody thinks the point of the passage is the five smooth stones. We should, they represent faith, love, what do I have here? Hope, wisdom, and joy.

That's what they represent. We've got to have that in the Christian life. Is that the point of the passage? Actually, there's five smooth stones really stand for nothing. Except that David knew how to count.

Praise the Lord. And he came well prepared. Good thing? Or maybe the point of the passage is that God gives us strength against those who are against us.

[16 : 50] Or maybe the point of the passage is that we need to be brave and courageous like David. Or maybe the point of the passage is that the Lord will deliver us from this evil president and give us a better one in the coming election.

Or that God is against liberals. That's the point of the passage. Or those ultra-conservatives. Well, maybe, maybe a few of these principles are true.

Except for the we must kill our enemies. But friends, none of those display the point of the passage. That's not the point of the passage.

That's not the point that it's in 1 Samuel. Why is this in... How many verses? 54 verses.

Explaining all the details. Why? You get some clues. Go to verse 26.

[17 : 56] This is your first clue. When David spoke to the men who were standing by him saying, what will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel?

For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should taunt the armies of the living God? You're given a clue there.

Taunting the armies of God. Notice he doesn't mention taunting Israel. Notice he doesn't say taunting Judah and our warriors.

No. David says taunting the armies of the living God. He says this on purpose. So there's your first clue. The next clue is going to be in verse 36. David is speaking to Saul, the king.

And David says, your servant has killed both the lion and the bear. And this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them. Why?

[19 : 02] Since he has taunted the armies of the living God. We're given clues here. We're given clues that David has a passion for God.

You don't taunt God. You don't make fun of God. You don't mock God and who he is. You don't do that. So you're given little clues here.

Verse 26 and then verse 36 and then it kind of expands out starting in verse 45. So go to verse 45 now. He is standing before the Philistine, David.

And then he speaks to the Philistine after the Philistine. Blah, blah, blah. There's all this stuff. You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin.

But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. Notice, we see David has a passion for God, has a passion for his glory, has a passion for who he is.

[20 : 10] This is what David was concerned about. Notice what happens now in verse 46, what he says. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you.

I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth. Why? Why is God going to do this? Why is David going to do this?

Why is God going to have David do this? What's the point? What's the reason? What's the purpose? Notice the next part of verse 46. That all of the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all of this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear, for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands.

What's the point? God wants to make Himself known to the whole world, that He is real and He's with His people.

That's the point. He wants to make known His glory, and David understood that. David got that.

[21 : 27] See, it wasn't about Israel. It wasn't about Judah. It wasn't about that. It was about God. See, God is more concerned about making Himself known among the nations, and to show His sovereign, mighty power.

If there's anything that this passage teaches us, it is that God uses clunky axes to display His glory. He uses axes to make Himself known, and He used David to show, God's going to use me to show His glory.

So, we need to be a people who say, God, you use me, and show your glory through me. Show your glory through me. Glorify your name through me, whether it's suffering, trials, whether it's good things, whether it's bad things, whatever I'm experiencing, show your glory.

He wants us to be a people like David, who are just so enamored with His glory, because God is enamored with His glory. Because God says, I will not give my glory to another.

Remember, we just read that in Isaiah 48, right? 48, was it 48? 48, right? 43, 45, 46, something like that, 40 something. A people that have a passion for His glory.

[22 : 54] So, we should be a church that's driven like David was. He was driven for the glory of God. You're in 17, go to 1 Samuel 16.

You get a glimpse of this in 1 Samuel 16. David was a man after God's own heart. 1 Samuel 16, look at verse 6.

So, chapter before, verse 6, came about when they entered, they looked at Eliab and thought, surely the Lord's anointed as before him. Let me give you some background. Samuel goes to Jesse's house.

The Lord says, I'm going to have you announce someone else to be king. So, Samuel's looking around. He sees these big guys. Here's Eliab, right? And then Shammah, you know, and then Abinadette, well, it's actually Abinadette, then Shammah, right?

These huge guys are big, muscles, right? Their necks, you know, can't even see their necks, you know, they're like that. They're massive figures. And Samuel says, look at these guys, awesome.

[23 : 54] Verse 7, but the Lord says, don't look at their appearance or the height of his stature because I have rejected him.

For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. The Lord already saw that David had a heart for his glory.

He already had a heart for his glory. David had a passion for God to be used by God for the glory of God. That is the difference.

Goliath was about himself. Saul was about himself. Not so with David. He was a man after God's own heart.

And God's heart is to display his glory and David was that type of person. He wanted to display God's glory. glory. That's what he wanted. That was his life trajectory.

[24 : 55] That was his overall life purpose. See, it's not about how special David was. It's not about how special Israel was. Israel thought they were special.

Oh, God is with us. All right. They thought they were awesome. You're missing the point. God is special.

God is that he should be with Israel. Or put a different way, he should be with Israel or with his people. It's about how special and unique God is that he should be with his people.

God is special. God is unique. notice in back verse 46 of chapter 17. For the battle is the Lord's.

The end of verse 47. For the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hands. The battle is the Lord's. In other words, it all belongs in his hands.

[26 : 04] It all belongs to him. It's not about us, but his glory. It's not about us, but his amazing grace toward us. Friends, this cannot be an option for us.

Because God himself is passionate for his own glory. God's ultimate goal is to uphold and display the glory of his name, says John Piper. And how did he fully display his glory?

In his son, Jesus Christ. We're going to talk about that a little bit later, what that means. So, let me say something radical.

To you, I'll shock you. God is most concerned about his glory, not you and not me. God is more concerned about his glory, not you and not me.

Yes! Let me bring you down, out from the shocking statement. His concern and his passion and his care for his glory makes him most concerned about you and me.

[27 : 20] So, God is more concerned about his glory than you and me. But because he's more concerned about his glory, that's what we need. Because God knows that we really need, what we really need is to make most of his glory.

We need to make most of him. Mainly, making most of his glorious grace in Jesus Christ. That's what we need. This is what brings true satisfaction.

Wellspring of my soul. The greatest treasure, what we just sang a moment ago. This brings true satisfaction to us in this life and in the life to come.

God and his glory, Jesus and his glory. This is the kind of church we need to be. Why? Why? Why should we be this kind of church?

We should because David understood that God's glory is ultimate because God is ultimate. The path to true lasting unending joy is found in God himself.

[28 : 30] That's why. And the greatest way that God has revealed himself, the greatest way that God reveals his glory, the greatest way that God reveals who he is, is in his son, Jesus Christ.

So we should seek a passion for the glory of the name of Jesus in all that we do. Because in Jesus is the fountain of our joy. Wellspring of my joy, satisfaction is found in Jesus Christ.

John Piper once again, for in Jesus, quote, he is blindingly glorious and infinitely worthy and breathtakingly beautiful and awesome in power and inscrutable in wisdom and limitless in knowledge and tender in mercy and terrible in wrath and the source and foundation of all truth and goodness and beauty.

End quote. That's what you find in Jesus Christ. So the greatest way to joy is following Jesus Christ.

Are you here and you don't know Jesus Christ? Are you here and not a follower of Jesus Christ? Are you here and not a Christian? Oh friend, come. God loves to show his glory and one way he shows his glory is by forgiving sinners.

[29 : 56] Psalm 25 11, for the sake of your name forgive my transgressions. God will forgive you all your sins. Jesus came, he lived, he died, he rose.

And if you repent and put your trust in Jesus Christ, God will save you and you'll find such satisfaction. That's the gospel. So if you're here and you're not a follower of Jesus, that's for you to know.

Come, repent and trust Jesus and you'll find the wellspring of your soul. So satisfied. God will forgive and cleanse you. He will forgive and cleanse you.

So, as I said, Jesus Christ is the ultimate. God reveals his glory in him. The path to true lasting unending joy is in God himself.

So what is the greatest way that God makes himself known and how he showed his great sovereign power? What's the way that he does this? It's through the cross.

[30 : 55] through the cross of Jesus, God makes himself known fully and shows his great sovereign power, really his great sovereign goodness.

Jesus sought God's glory. Just like David, you can put your finger in 1 Samuel and go to the Gospel of John if you would, or you can listen to me as I read the Gospel of John, chapter 7, verse 18.

The Gospel of John, chapter 7, verse 18. Jesus says, He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory, but he who is seeking the glory of the one who sent him, he is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

Jesus is talking about himself. He says, I'm after, and I'm passionate about the glory of God. I'm passionate about the glory of the Father.

Again, in the Gospel of John, go to chapter 12 of the Gospel of John, or listen to me as I read John 12, verse 27.

[32 : 09] John 12, 27. Jesus says, He's talking about the cross, and He has to go to the cross. He says, now my soul has become troubled, and what shall I say, Father, save me from this hour?

For this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

What's Jesus saying? He's saying, Father, glorify your name. When I go to the cross, you're going to glorify your name. That's what I want. Glorify your name. Jesus was so passionate about the glory of God, that he knew that part and the greatest way that God would display his glory was when he went to the cross.

One more passage to show you and prove it to you. John chapter 17. A couple pages forward in the gospel of John. Or again, you can listen. John 17, Jesus' prayer, starting in verse 1.

John 17, verse 1. These things Jesus spoke, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour has come. Now the hour for him to go to the cross has come.

[33 : 28] Glorify your Son, that the Son may glorify you, even as you gave him authority over all mankind, that to all to whom you've given him, he may give eternal life.

And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorify you on the earth, having accomplished the work which you've given me to do.

And now, you glorify me, together with yourself, Father, with the glory which I had with you before the world was. So what gives God such glory?

What gives God the greatest glory to his name? Jesus going to the cross. Jesus dying for sinners. Jesus sought the glory of the Father in all of it.

so much that he endured his final hours of suffering for God's glory, knowing that that very suffering ultimately glorified the Father.

[34 : 28] Unbelievable. Because that's how God shows his grace, is at the cross. God showed his great glory in the goodness of the cross, because in the cross, God displaces mercy, his grace, his compassion, his love, his goodness towards sinners like us.

This is why we should have a passion for the glory of God, because he poured out his glory upon us when he poured out his grace upon us. So we should be a people who are so driven by God's glory.

in and by the cross, God saves sinners. And then what he does, he uses them to display his glorious grace.

We're nothing but axes in his hands. Do you want to be an axe? God, use me for your glory. I'm an axe. You've shown your grace to me. Use me as you see fit.

This was why God was so intrigued by David. David understood this. David had a passion for this. David understood and he had a passion.

[35 : 43] He was driven for the glory of God. You don't taunt with the armies of the living God. Don't mess with God. Don't mock God. And this is why God rejected Saul.

David was committed to God's glory. Saul was committed to his own glory. If we had time to look at 1 Samuel 15, there would be an example of that.

God told Saul, you must do this and this and this and this. And Saul said, I did do it. He did not follow the Lord. He was after his own glory.

Not David. The Lord honored David but he rejected Saul. Paul. Interesting too, when you look at David and his passion for the glory of God, we see that he points us to Jesus Christ.

Because David is a type of Jesus. What's Jesus going to be like? You look at David. The life of David, his passion for the glory of God. That's the way Jesus was.

[36 : 55] So are we ready? Are we ready to be a church passionate for the glory of God? Are we willing to be used by God as clunky axes in his hands?

I pray that we're like that. I hope that it encourages you for us to be a church that's consumed with the glory of God. Father, do that in us.

Help us to know that all the different pieces, all the different places, all the different situations that we're involved in, we're a part of, what's in our lives, difficulties, trials, joys, sorrows, that you are working in us as a church to display your glory through us, use us, we are axes, we are your instruments, you've shown us your grace, you've shown us your glorious grace, let us be a people who are consumed with your glorious grace.

grace. If you would take a few moments, ponder, think, we've seen in 1 Samuel 17, and after a few moments of silence, we'll do our time of giving, and we'll sing our last two songs, closing prayer.

prayer. Pray for yourself, maybe at this time, that you would be consumed with the glory of God. Maybe pray for someone that you know is struggling.

[38 : 55] In the midst of their struggle, they would see God's glory. Take those few moments, if you would.

Thank you. God■■■■ nodenden übers big