

AM 1 Samuel 17 David and Goliath

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[0 : 00] Turn with me in your Bibles to 1st Samuel, 1st Samuel chapter 17, 1st Samuel chapter 17.

Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle, and they were gathered at Soco, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Soco and Azekah in Ephesdamim.

And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and encamped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in line of battle against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.

And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze.

And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron.

[1 : 26] And his shield-bearing, and his shield-bearer went before him. He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, Why have you come out to draw up for battle?

Am I not a Philistine? And are you not 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 be your servants.

But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us. And the Philistines 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. Now David was the son of a nephrothite of Bethlehem and Judah named Jesse, who had eight sons.

In the days of Saul, the man was already old and advanced in years. The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab, the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

[2 : 43] David was the youngest. The three eldest followed Saul. But David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening. And Jesse said to David his son, Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers.

Also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See if your brothers are well, and bring some token from them. Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

And David rose early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper, and took the provisions and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the encampment as the host was going out to the battle line, shouting the war cry.

And Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. And David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage, and ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers.

[4 : 03] As he talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before.

And David heard him. All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were much afraid. And the men of Israel said, Have you seen this man who has come up?

Surely he has come up to defy Israel. And 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.

And David said to the men who stood by him, What shall 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 defy the armies of the living God? And the people answered him in the same way, So shall it be done to the man who kills him.

[5 : 11] Now Eliab, his oldest brother, heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled 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 presumption and the evil of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle. And David said, What have I done now?

Was it not but a word? And he turned away from him towards another, and spoke in the same way, and the people answered him again as before.

When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him.

Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth.

[6 : 22] But David said to Saul, Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and struck him, and delivered it out of his mouth.

And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and struck him and killed him. Your servant has struck down both lions and bears. And this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied 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 will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.

And Saul said to David, Go, and the Lord be with you. Then Saul clothed David with his armour. He put a helmet of bronze on his head, and clothed him with a coat of mail.

And David strapped his sword over his armour. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.

[7 : 40] So David put them off. Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in his shepherd's pouch.

His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine. And the Philistine moved forward, and came near to David with his shield-bearer in front of him.

And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in 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 said to David, Come to me and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.

Then David said to the Philistine, You come to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin.

[8 : 44] But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head, and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to 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 saves, not with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand.

When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly towards the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead.

The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him.

There was no sword in the hand of David. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it.

When the Philistine saw that their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Sharaim as far as Gath and Ekron.

[10 : 35] And the people of Israel came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armour

in his tent.

Amen. And may God bless to us that reading from his word, and to his name be the praise. Shall we come before the Lord again in prayer?

Let us pray. Amen. Please turn back with me in your Bibles to the passage we read, 1 Samuel chapter 17.

The story of David and Goliath is well known. Most, if not all of us, first heard it when we were children. It's an exciting story involving a confrontation between an intimidating armed giant and an apparently vulnerable young man who wears no protective armour and whose only offensive weapon is a sling.

The odds are stacked against young David, but it's the giant Goliath who ends up dead. I'd like us to look at this incident this morning, hopefully with fresh eyes, and see what God has to say to us through it.

[12:16] The book of Judges sets the scene for the events of 1 Samuel. In many ways, Judges is a sad book.

It recounts how after settling in Canaan, the promised land, God's people, the Israelites, repeatedly rebelled against him and fell into idolatry.

When that happened, God allowed them to be attacked by their enemies and defeated. God wasn't being capricious in letting them suffer.

No, the fact was that he loved them too much to let them go their own way and do their own thing. If it took defeat at the hands of their enemies to bring them to their senses, that was a price worth paying.

In due course, after a time, they would come to an end of themselves and cry out to God for help.

And when they did that, the Lord would provide someone to rescue them from their enemies.

[13:43] This cycle of sin, judgment, repentance, repentance, and deliverance happened again and again.

The book of Judges closes with the words, In those days, Israel had no king. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Israelites had no earthly king, but they did have a king. The Lord was their king.

The problem was that despite all his kindness to them, they refused to live unitedly and obediently under his rule.

In the early chapters of the book of 1 Samuel, we find the people clamoring for an earthly king. They wanted to be just like the neighboring nations and have a man to lead them and rule over them.

[14:54] And God gave them a king in the person of Saul. In some ways, Saul was the ideal king. He was tall. He was handsome.

He could display real courage. But overall, Saul was a disappointment. He willfully disobeyed the Lord.

And as a result, the Lord determined to replace him. He sent the prophet Samuel to the town of Bethlehem to the home of a man called Jesse.

Samuel was introduced to each of Jesse's eight sons in turn. Despite being an impressive individual, the eldest son, Eliab, wasn't the man God had chosen to be the next king.

Neither was any of the next six sons in order of age. Instead, it was the youngest son, David, whom Samuel was told to anoint.

[16:10] David wasn't an obvious choice. He was a good-looking young man, certainly, but he was so young, he was really only a lad.

That was the problem. He lacked the maturity you would look for in a king. David really was a surprising choice, but he was God's choice.

Samuel was reminded, the Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

For the rest of this book of 1 Samuel, Saul remains on the throne. The newly anointed David is king in waiting, but he is not recognized as such.

That's the background as we come to the account of David and Goliath in chapter 17. The Israelites' old enemies, the Philistines, have invaded once again and they are encamped not very far from David's hometown of Bethlehem.

[17:28] The Philistines occupy one hill, the Israelites occupy another and there is a valley in between. You can imagine the tension as the two armies look warily across at each other and

wonder when to launch an offensive.

And then there is an unexpected development. A man comes out of the Philistine camp, a huge man, he is enormous, over nine feet tall.

He is wearing about 126 pounds of armor. He wields a spear with a 15 or 16 pound iron head. and he challenges the Israelites to choose one man to engage with him in one-to-one combat. It is to be a fight to the death. The Israelites need to select a man to represent them and fight Goliath on their behalf.

[18 : 32] The question is who will that man be? David is looking after his father's sheep but providentially his father sends him to bring provisions to his three eldest brothers who are serving in Saul's army just as Goliath is repeating his challenge to the Israelites.

and David promptly offers to take on Goliath. He does so in the face of discouragement on all sides. His brother Eliab treats him with a contempt older brothers often reserve for their younger siblings. Why have you come here? This is serious stuff, men's stuff, you're just a boy, run along and tend to your sheep. Eliab thinks David is too young.

King Saul thinks that David is too inexperienced. Look at what he says in verse 33. You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him for you are but a youth and he has been a man of war from his youth.

And as for Goliath when he sees David he despises him. He doesn't think he is a worthy opponent. Am I a dog he asks that you come to me with sticks?

[20 : 13] But David braves the verbal abuse of Goliath. He takes a stone from his shepherd's bag, he shoots it from his sling and he strikes Goliath smack in his forehead.

Goliath falls flat on his face. David runs over and relieves Goliath of his sword and uses it to cut off his head.

The Philistine army flees, the Israelites are in hot pursuit and many of the Philistines are slaughtered. A defenceless lad armed only with a sling and stones takes on a heavily armed giant complete with shield bearer and kills him.

I wonder if you know that old Sunday school chorus only a boy called David only a rippling brook only a boy called David five little stones he took and one little stone went in the sling and the sling went round and round one little stone went up up up and the giant came tumbling down. It was an amazing victory. There are two particular aspects of the story which I would like to highlight this morning.

[21 : 50] The first is that David had a clear spiritual perspective. David had a clear spiritual perspective. When he hears Goliath's challenge he asks in verse 26 the rhetorical question who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God.

Who is this Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? That's a highly significant question. Not only is this the first time that words spoken by David are recorded in the narrative of 1st Samuel it's the first time that any mention has been made of God in this particular story. David is aware that the Israelites and the Philistines aren't just two peoples in the ancient Near East who happen not to like each other particularly.

he knows that the Israelites are God's covenant people and that in taking them on Goliath and the Philistines are also taking on their God.

We have here a confrontation between God's people on the one hand and God's enemies on the other. There's a spiritual dimension to the conflict and David's clear spiritual perspective determines how he reacts.

[23 : 44] The rest of the Israelites look at Goliath and see a formidable giant. Verse 24 tells us that they run away in great fear at the very sight of him.

But David looks at Goliath and sees a man who is defying the people of God and so foolishly and pointlessly challenging the honour of the living God himself.

The rest of the Israelites compare Goliath with themselves. David on the other hand compares Goliath with his God.

God not only that when David offers to fight Goliath he doesn't do so out of mere bravado. His confidence is not in himself or in what his own strength can achieve.

When he tells Saul how he has rescued his father's sheep from lions and bears he ascribes his exploits not to luck not to courage not to physical strength but to the Lord.

[25 : 04] Look at what he says in verse 37 The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.

David is dependent on the Lord his God and look at what David says to Goliath as the giant threatens and curses him.

Verse 45 You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with 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 defied.

And he goes on to say that all those present will soon know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear for the battle is the Lord's and he will give Goliath into our hand.

God is I think that spiritual perspective which David had is key to all that happened and it helps us apply the passage to our own lives and experiences.

[26 : 33] We often use the expression a David and Goliath situation with reference to any situation where a person or a group is up against overwhelming odds.

But the sort of situation to which this passage is directly relevant is one in which the interests of the Lord and of his people are at stake.

Perhaps a Christian is under attack simply for being a Christian or for seeking to uphold Christian standards. It may be peer pressure that can be a real problem particularly for young Christians. It may be a work situation where we are being encouraged to cut corners. It may be a situation where we are very conscious of the activity of the evil one.

After all we wrestle against the world and the devil as well as the down drag of our own sinful natures. It isn't easy to stand and resist but this passage encourages us to do just that where the interests of the Lord and his cause are at stake.

[28 : 01] The battle is the Lord's and we must do what is right in dependence on his grace.

Nowadays we tend to shy away from using the language of conflict and warfare in the context of the Christian life but there is biblical imagery which is as relevant now as ever.

Soldiers of Christ arise and put your armor on strong in the strength which God supplies through his eternal son.

Yes the weapons we have to engage in the battle may be decidedly unimpressive from a worldly point of view. The armor which the apostle Paul urges us to put on consists of things like truth and righteousness faith and prayer from a human perspective these things look unimpressive they look inadequate but so did David's sling and stones as he went out to fight Goliath.

We must remember that the battle is the Lord's and that the resources he has given us are the means he blesses.

it's not just at the personal level that God's honor is reproached the church in the west is under attack from a society increasingly unsympathetic to the exclusive claims of the gospel.

[29 : 53] What we believe is no longer dismissed as irrelevant in some quarters it's branded as dangerous. The opposition of a secular society is formidable.

We need to hold on to David's spiritual perspective to paraphrase his words who are the church's opponents that they should defy the armies of the living God.

Of course in his confrontation with Goliath David was victorious. In our battles victory is not guaranteed.

God may thwart the attack. He may deliver his servant. He may rescue his church. But that is not always the case.

We need to remember two things. One is that this life is not all there is. There is a life to come.

[31 : 07] One day all the wrongs of this world will be righted. And the second thing is that we need to emulate the faith of the three men in the book of Daniel who ended up in the blazing furnace.

Remember the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. these men refused to comply with King Nebuchadnezzar's demand that they worship the golden image he had set up.

What they said was this, if we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it and he will rescue us from your hand, O king.

God works in his way. But even if he does not, we will not serve gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.

The God we serve is able to save us. But even if he does not, we will not dishonor his name.

[32 : 24] God works in his way and to his own timetable. In 1950, Christian missionaries were thrown out of China.

The communist authorities closed churches and threw pastors into prison. It looked as if the faithful and costly work that had been conducted for over a century by Christian missionaries and others would be wasted as the church in China withered under a godless regime.

But in recent years we have discovered that far from withering away, the Christian church in China survived and grew.

It grew exponentially. From a human perspective the situation in 1950 looked hopeless. but what was in many ways a huge setback for the church was turned round in the Lord's purposes.

And now there are many millions of Chinese Christians. You see the battle is the Lord's. David had a clear spiritual perspective.

[33 : 52] He saw that Goliath challenged the honour of his God and he did what he could to uphold the honour of his name in dependence on his grace.

That's the first thing I'd like to highlight. The second thing more briefly is this. David demonstrated that he was a suitable king.

David demonstrated that he was a suitable king. Remember that David is the anointed king in waiting. Although very few are aware of that.

David's victory over Goliath establishes his credentials as the coming king. it confirms he has what it takes to be the leader of his people.

Through his defeat of Goliath David comes to public attention. Chapter 18 tells us that women came out from all the towns of Israel to greet the returning army.

[35 : 06] They were singing Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands clearly David was beginning to make his mark in going head to head with Goliath.

He showed that he had a capacity for leadership and he made a promising start as the future king. David acted as his people's representative.

He confronted his people's enemies. and he secured a crushing victory. I wonder if that reminds you of anyone.

I think it should remind us of the Lord Jesus Christ. David points us forward to Jesus the greatest of all kings because we need a king who will represent us in the battle with sin and death and Satan.

A king who will defeat all our enemies. In dying on the cross Jesus paid sin's penalty.

[36 : 27] His death was an atonement for sin. He paid sin's penalty and broke its power and ensured his people would one day be free from its very presence.

Through his death he defeated Satan and rescued his people from the kingdom of darkness. That was a tremendous victory and it was in many ways an unlikely victory.

Sin and Satan were defeated not by a spectacular show of force but in the person of a man nailed in weakness to a Roman cross.

Jesus came into our world as a vulnerable baby. He lived an ordinary life in relative poverty and obscurity. He died a shameful and untimely death.

As he hung on the cross he didn't look like a victor to the watching bystanders. No doubt the devil thought that the victory was his but Jesus was God in human form dying in accordance with his father's will and purpose and having defeated sin and death and Satan he was raised to life again after three days and now lives by the power of an endless life.

[38 : 03] in the words of the apostle Paul Jesus disarmed all hostile powers and authorities and made a public spectacle of them triumphing over them by the cross.

He rescued his people from their enemies once and for all. That makes him a suitable king.

He exactly meets our needs. He deserves the name that is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus has won the decisive victory but that victory has not yet been fully consummated.

I find it helpful to think of it in terms of D-Day and V-E-Day. D-Day in June 1944 was the key victory of the Second World War.

[39 : 21] It was when the Allied troops inflicted a decisive defeat on the Germans on the beaches of Normandy. That was in June 1944 but it wasn't until May 1945 until V-E-Day Victory in Europe Day that the Germans formally surrendered and the war in Europe was finally over.

Jesus has won the decisive victory on the cross. D-Day is past but the devil has not yet formally surrendered even though he is a defeated foe.

And in the meantime mopping up operations are underway as men and women are offered the opportunity to give their allegiance to God's anointed king.

The question for you and for me is this will we put our trust in this king in this greatest of all kings will we recognize his authority and so enjoy the benefits of the victory he has secured and if we have enlisted in the army of king Jesus are we prepared to fight under his colors and live consistent lives under his lordship.

Shall we pray together? O Lord we thank you for the victory which the Lord Jesus won over sin and death and Satan and we pray that we may acknowledge him as our king.

[41 : 35] Help us to put our trust in him to commit ourselves to him and help us to live under his lordship that when we find ourselves up against spiritual forces we cannot handle we have one who is able to fight for us one who has secured the decisive victory and who will one day be acknowledged as lord of all we ask it in his name amen we

I'll do a