

The Gospel of David

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[0 : 00] Amen. Folks, let's pray. Father, would you open our hearts to hear your word this evening. In Christ's name, amen. Good evening, everyone. I've been on holiday. It's great to be back. I missed you all. I see some new faces out there. Would you say hello to me at the end of the service?

I'd love to meet you. All right, let's get into it. David and Goliath, I've been so looking forward to preaching David and Goliath because it's one of the great stories, isn't it? It's one of the great, great stories.

It's one of the best known and most loved biblical stories. And we love it because it's the story of the underdog, right? It's the karate kid versus the Cobra Kai dojo from memory, right?

It's a Rocky versus Apollo Creed, Clubber Lang, Ivan Drago, right? And what was the last one?

[1 : 07] Mayweather, the last one? I can't remember. Yeah, it's Luke Skywalker versus the Death Star, right? We love these kind of stories. And it's been preached a million times, I know. And there are a number of ways to preach it, and some are better than others.

One approach would be this. One approach would be to view this story as a metaphor for the challenges faced in daily life.

You would have heard a few of these sermons, right? Yeah, yeah. We're both from... Anyway, it doesn't matter. So in a sermon that would go like this, it would be something like this.

It would be like, identify the Goliaths in your life. Relationship Goliaths, financial crisis, family problems. And David is this model of an underdog who steps up to these giants.

And the lessons would be something like this. So there would be, visualize a positive outcome. Like in chapter 17, verse 36, David says, I killed a lion, I will kill Goliath.

[2 : 16] So visualize a positive outcome. Act with confidence. David ran towards the giant. It says, be yourself. Like David tried on Saul's armor.

And you've preached the sermon, haven't you? I have preached the sermon. And tried on Saul's armor, but it didn't fit. But think about the stuff that you're good at and do that.

Take risks, et cetera, right? So in this way, the Bible becomes something that helps us solve our problems. And that's, you know, they're not terrible lessons, right?

Be confident. It's good to visualize things positively. You know, be yourself. Take risks.

All that stuff. It's good stuff, right? However, but, in this story, David is not the person you are supposed to identify with.

[3 : 18] The point of the story is not, David's really great. We can be like David.

In this story, you know who you are, right? You're the soldiers. You're the people on the sideline. You're the people who have no hope in the face of a great enemy.

That's who we are. We are the people that need someone to fight on our behalf. Anyway, that's the angle I'm taking. And it's the right one. So let's get on with it.

It's probably helpful to have your Bibles open. Because I'll sort of jump in and out of the text a bit.

And it's kind of a behemoth, right? It's a big chunk of text. All right. Verses 1 to 3.

I'll look at it in little chunks. Verses 1 to 3. Here we go. So two armies face each other. Each on a hill, separated by a valley. That's what it describes in verses 1 to 3.

[4 : 19] So imagery is kind of profound here. This is a minor point, but it's probably worth mentioning. In the Bible, good things tend to happen on mountains. Right? You know, like the tablets, the Ten Commandments, Sermon on the Mount, Transfiguration, etc.

Valleys tend to be places where bad things happen. Places of death and fear and doom. This story, the valley of the shadow of death. You know, in Psalm 23, Sodom and Gomorrah were in a valley. Gehenna, which is like hell, was in a valley.

You know, obviously the phrase of valley. There's lots of... I'm just joking, mate. I love the valley. I'm just messing with you. Anyway. So these two armies face each other on a hill.

Israel on one. Philistines on the other. Philistines, as you know, ancient enemies of God. And as we've learned from Samuel already, they were a major motivation for Israel actually calling a king, wanting a king.

Because they thought, well, let's get a king, and then we can destroy the Philistines. But Saul, who was the people's chosen king, hadn't done his job of sorting them out. So here we are, each army on a hill, facing each other, valley in the middle.

[5 : 28] Verses 4 to 7. Into this valley twice a day for 40 days would step Goliath. Now, in verse 4 there, the first thing they describe about Goliath is what?

What do you notice there? It's his height, isn't it? It's his height. Isn't it interesting? It's his height. They say he's, whatever, six cubics in a span, whatever that is, like nine feet tall or something. Does that ring any bells?

It should. What was the first description of Saul? It was tall, right? Really tall guy. A head above everyone else.

Jesse's eldest son? How do they describe him? Really tall man. Now, both are wrong choices, weren't they? And Samuel 16 actually says, do not look on his appearance or the height of his stature in describing one of these bad choices.

Now, wouldn't it have been cool if someone in Saul's army had said, hey guys, do you remember what God said? That we're not to be overly impressed by really gigantic people. But I don't think anyone did.

[6 : 29] But it is a theme of this passage, though. You know, like, we don't have time to get into a whole lot of this, but one of the things that this passage challenges us with is this idea of what are we seeing? What are we seeing?

Do you see this enemy for who he really is, which is nothing, compared to an army backed by a living God? Or do you just see this unbeatable giant?

You know, are you impressed by the height of this person, the stature of this person? And this is why the writer of Samuel goes into so much detail. Did you notice when Melanie was reading out, there's this incredible description of Saul, what he's wearing and stuff?

Why is that? It's not particularly interesting. The reason they go into that is because they want us to realize, want us to think about what the armies of Saul were focusing on.

They were focusing on what this person looked like, what Goliath looked like. They were fixated on this. And they were so fixated on it, it terrified them. That's all they could think about. Not God.

[7 : 29] Not God who could swat Goliath aside like a fly. So this guy was huge. That's what they saw. Huge, impenetrable, crazy, sort of big weapons.

In verses 8 to 11 here, we find out that he's got this thunderous voice, and every day he mocks the Israelites. Verse 8 here, why do you come out and line up for battle? Verse 10, this day I defy the armies of Israel.

He's playing a mind game with them. I don't know if anyone's seen this movie, 1979, Pumping Iron, with Arnold Schwarzenegger. Has anybody seen this movie?

It's a great, it's an iconic, thank you, it's an iconic movie, right, of a documentary about bodybuilding, because Arnold Schwarzenegger, before he was an actor and a politician, he was a bodybuilder, and the world's greatest bodybuilder ever.

And there's this iconic scene in the movie where he is, he would go around before a competition, and he would just psych people out. So he'd walk around with his Austrian accent, and it'd go up to people, particularly Lou Ferrigno, who, you know, Lou Ferrigno, Jesse, right?

[8 : 36] Yeah, Lou Ferrigno, who played the Incredible Hulk in the TV. And anyway, so he'd go around, and Lou Ferrigno wasn't very smart, and he'd just go up to him, and he'd go, Lou, you cannot win.

You know, I am, I am Mr. Atlas, eight years in a row. Mr. Universe, five years in a row. You cannot win. You know, he'd just play these mind games, totally freak them out, and of course, he would win.

Every year, it's like undefeated, right? Undefeated. This is what Goliath's doing, totally freaking them out with his mind games. And so, but in his taunts, there's this proposal. Goliath has this very interesting proposal.

He says, you choose a guy, Israel, you choose a guy, and I'll fight him. And whoever wins, will win for everybody, for your side.

So it's, what it is, is it's representational fighting. David or Goliath, were not just fighting for their armies, they were fighting kind of as their armies. So their people would be treated as if they won or lost.

[9 : 41] In other words, what happened to the victor, what happened to the people. That's a very, very important aspect. We'll come back to that shortly. So Goliath puts out this proposal every day for over a month, and there are no takers.

They are completely intimidated by him. The other big thing to say about this little section is, whose job was it to fight Goliath? Whose job? It was Saul's.

Saul. He was big and tall. He was a warrior. That when he was anointed, he was supposed to sort these guys out. Here's his one chance. Just fight this one guy, and it's all over.

But Saul, in this story, is a minor character. Okay, verses 12 to 19. We sort of strangely get sort of reintroduced to David.

And you kind of just slide your eyes over that 12 to 18 there. The emphasis of this little section here is that David is the youngest of an unimportant family, shepherd, not a soldier.

[10 : 41] And his job during the confrontation was to take food to the battlefield. And the passage is clearly, or we read it here in verse 17 and 18.

I'll read it here. Now Jesse said to his son, David, take this roasted grain and these 10 loaves of bread for your brothers, and hurry to their camp. Take along these 10 cheeses to the commander of their unit.

So the passage is clearly trying to develop these two contrasting characters, right? On the one side, you've got this giant man with these enormous weapons and penetrable armor.

On the other side, you've got the kid who delivers the cheese, right? So people would look, and they'd look at this young boy, and they'd go, right, so he's the cheese deliverer, and this is the unbeatable giant who could destroy all of us.

Verses 20 to 27. This is the episode where David actually goes to the front to check on his brothers and deliver the cheese, hand over the food, et cetera. And at this point, Goliath comes out when David is there.

[11 : 43] Goliath does his spiel, and it's interesting what it says. It says, David heard it. In verse 23. I find that interesting. David heard it.

He doesn't see Goliath. He just hears Goliath. So he doesn't see Goliath at all, as the others do. He just hears this man insulting God, and insulting Israel.

And his response is very different to everyone else who is, you know, terrified. Verse 26. I love this line. Who was this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?

The next little section, 28 to 37. David wants to have a go at Goliath. Like, you read it. He just wants to have a crack at the guy. And it's not bravado.

He actually manages to get himself in front of Saul, the king, and make his case. And listen to what, and Saul says to him, mate, you're just a kid. This guy's this huge warrior. You're just a kid. And listen to what David says, verse 34 to 37.

[12 : 47] Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it, and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it, and killed it.

Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear. This uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of the Philistine.

Saul said to David, go, and the Lord will be with you. So it's not bravado. David has seen God act on his behalf. He's not saying, oh, I can totally outwit this guy.

You know, I'm way more agile than that guy. No, he just goes, God has rescued me, or the Lord, Yahweh, the God who delivers, has rescued me. He will rescue us from this Philistine.

It's all, there's this sense of like David saying, like, what's wrong with you guys? What's wrong with you people? He just, he just perceives the whole situation so differently.

[13 : 55] Verses 38 to 40, we have the scene of Saul trying to put his armor on David. I mean, it just shows that Saul just, even though he says, okay, well, you can fight, he just doesn't, Saul just, he's got no idea.

You know, of course the armor doesn't fit, and David doesn't use it. And there's a bit of a wink to the armor that Goliath is wearing, I think, you know, in terms of what these people trust in, you know, Saul won't use his armor.

Clearly, he's not going to have a go at Goliath. Goliath is trusting in his armor, and David doesn't need the armor. One commentator put it like this, Saul has no courage, Goliath has false courage, and David has true courage, because he trusts in a God who acts.

Then says that David grabbed his five smooth stones and heads into the valley. You will hear some ridiculous sermons on these five smooth stones. I think they're just five smooth stones.

Like, I don't, I don't think it's the Pentateuch, you know, like I don't, you hear people preach this, and they'll sometimes say, you know, when you're facing the Goliath of financial crisis, the five, taken to battle the five smooth stones of joy and prayer, and I don't know, invariably one of the stones is giving to the church.

[15:26] But anyway, very nice. All right. Okay. This is 41 to 51.

This is the battle. The battle is actually pretty quick. We see that, you know, David heads out there, and Goliath is kind of going, you know, what is this?

Like, you sent out this kid to me. In verse 43, Goliath says, am I a dog that you should come at me with sticks? You know, so, Goliath just sees this little kid, right?

And he tells him he's going to feed his body to the birds. It's an interesting line. It's mentioned a few times. I think what it's trying to establish here is that Goliath represents death. Goliath holds the power of death in his hands.

We'll come back to that. So his words are pretty harsh towards David, but David's retort is awesome. Let me read it to you. Verse 45 and 46.

[16:24] So this is David speaking to Goliath. I love this. 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.

This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I will strike you down and cut off your head this very day. I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.

Isn't that cool? It's so cool. Okay, so the battle is over pretty quick. It says David just runs in there, uses his sling, knocks out Goliath, grabs Goliath's sword, and cuts off his head.

So, Goliath, face down, head cut off. Remind you of anything? Anything? 1 Samuel 5. Dagon, statue, head fallen off, prostrate before God.

It's a great little message there. We all eventually end up prostrate before God. We all eventually end up humbled before God. Now, there are lots of other little nods here to various things we could talk about, but I want to sort of finish here by just looking at the whole story from sort of 10,000 feet, looking at the big picture here, in some very simple sentences, which are structured around this question, how does this help us understand Jesus?

[17:52] How does this help us understand Jesus? That's the key question here, I think. Well, David was God's Messiah that day.

David was the Messiah that day. And let me explain this in four ways, or highlight this in four ways, and show how this David Messiah helps us to understand who Jesus is.

Okay, one. So David in the story is not the self-actualized hero for us to admire, although it's not a bad thing to admire him. He was brave and courageous, and that's great, you know, but that's not the main point of us.

The emphasis in the story is that God saves. And what did Israel need to be saved from? They needed to be saved from their greatest enemy. And the greatest enemy was embodied in this person called Goliath, this giant Goliath.

So God destroyed Goliath using his chosen king, saving his people. So it's not difficult to see that this story helps us to understand Jesus in this sense, is it?

[18:59] That our greatest enemy is sin and death, and God, using his chosen king, Christ, defeated death. Okay, two.

Remember the deal that Goliath offered up, but ultimately sort of reneged on, we find out. The deal was, you win, and everyone on your team wins. What does this mean? It means that David's victory wasn't about inspiration, but rather imputation.

What do I mean by that? Because he won, Israel won. Because Christ defeated death, all who trust in him have victory over death.

All right, three. The people at Faithful Day, they were terrified, they had forgotten God, they saw with fleshy eyes, this huge giant, they listened to his words, those words sunk into their hearts, that they forgot God.

They actually deserved defeat that day. But not only did God save the Israelites that day, he saved them in spite of the fact that they actually deserved death, because they had forgotten about the living God.

[20 : 14] Whilst we were still sinners, Christ died for us. You know, it's a wonderful picture of grace, isn't it? Four. What did, what did it look like, this victory that David won?

Well, it looked like madness at first, didn't it? Absolute madness. When you watch with eyes that don't trust in God. You know, a boy armed with five stones, facing off a giant.

What did Christ's victory look like? Madness. Weakness. The Son of God, mocked, beaten, crucified, naked on a tree. Looked like madness.

The very sword, here's a little detail, just to explain this some more. The very sword, right? The very sword that Goliath said, I will destroy you with. The very sword that Goliath said, that he intended to kill David with.

David used to kill him. The worst thing humanity could come up with that could do to a person on the cross, people came up with that, right?

[21 : 18] The worst thing that humanity could come up with to do to a person, God used that to free them, to save them. In summary here, the story of David and Goliath is one of the best pictures of the work of Christ in the Bible, I think.

And I don't have any action points to finish off the sermon. I have no applications, because the passage is not about three steps to a better sort of whatever in your life.

The passage is about proclamation. It's telling us something. It's proclaiming a truth. And what is it that it's proclaiming? This is it. That through his chosen Messiah, God has delivered you from your greatest enemy.

That's it. It's proclaiming God good everything is truly saying