

1 Samuel 17

Good morning and thank you so much for joining us. Would you please turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 17 as we continue our verse-by-verse study through this incredible book? This morning we find ourselves in one of the most well-known accounts in all the Bible, as David stands toe to toe with a giant named Goliath.

The title of this morning's message is Fighting our Battles

Let's pray

It's been a couple of weeks, so let's remind ourselves of where we're at so we have our footing for our study this morning.

As a result of his continued disobedience to God, the Lord declared that King Saul was going to lose the throne. The prophet Samuel anointed a young shepherd boy named David as the next future king of Israel.

After his anointing by Samuel to be the next king of Israel, do you remember what David did? He didn't order a new set of business cards to say 'king elect'. He didn't grab a chariot and race through the streets of Bethlehem yelling 'I'm God's choice-you're looking at Sauls replacement.'

No David awaited further orders. At this point in David's life, his responsibility wasn't armies, or battles or even kingdoms. No, his duty was caring for his sheep.

As we see constantly through the scripture, it's being obedient and faithful to where God calls us that opens doors to the impossible.

1-3

1 Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and were gathered at Sochoh, which belongs to Judah; they

encamped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim. 2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the Philistines. 3 The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. **SHOW PIC** The Valley of Elah is one mile wide. And there's a brook – about 20 feet wide – that cuts through the valley, and overflows during the rainy season. On our trips to Israel we visit the Valley of Elah. Today, wheat rises where armies stood. **CLOSE PIC**

4 And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. At 9'9" tall, Goliath was three inches shy of bumping his head on a regulation basketball hoop.

There's no shortage of skeptics who question the validity of Goliath's size. Yet it's interesting that non-biblical historians have also reported men of enormous height. Herodotus, Diodorus, Siculus, and Pliny all mentioned people 7 cubits tall.

SHOW PIC In fact, a man named Robert Wadlow was 8'11" when he died on July 15, 1940. Goliath's enormous height seems strange to us, but it's not without precedent. **CLOSE PIC**

5 He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. Goliath's body armor weighed about 125 pounds. A coat of mail consisted of metal strips sewn together with leather. Goliath's armor had the strength of steel and flexibility to fight

6 And he had bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders.

7 Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer

went before him. Throwing this spear was like hurling a balance beam-it measured 2 ½ to 3 inches in diameter, and its head alone weighed 20 pounds. Imagine the strength it took to throw this spear, especially when you consider a shot-put weighs only sixteen pounds.

8-9

8 Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, “Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. 9 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.” Ancient warfare was brutal and bloody hand-to-hand combat. Even the victorious side frequently suffered mass casualties.

Often, rather than fight a battle, armies would send out a champion to square off in a winner take all death match. The thinking being that even if they lost, they would still survive, albeit have to live as slaves or servants.

Goliath was the Philistine’s champion-their representative. Easy to understand why! And he taunted Israel to send out an opponent brave enough to fight him.

10 And the Philistine said, “I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.” 11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.” If you remember, who was the tallest man in Israel? It was King Saul. The king was the one man who came closest to matching Goliath physically, but Saul and all Israel are cowering in fear.

Psychological fear is a powerful weapon in warfare. In WW2 German fighter planes used a high-pitch siren when flying to lower the morale of their enemies when they performed air raids.

In the Iraq War, the United States used the shock and awe campaign to psychologically maim, and break the will of the Iraqi Army to fight.

More recently, in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. counterinsurgency used heavy metal to confuse or scare local militia.

Goliath bellows from across the valley, and no one in Israel responds...

The scene now shifts to David in v 12-15

12 Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse, and who had eight sons. And the man was old, advanced in years, in the days of Saul. 13 The three oldest sons of Jesse had gone to follow Saul to the battle. The names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. 14 David was the youngest. And the three oldest followed Saul. 15 But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. David had been in Saul's presence earlier when he played the harp for him. So we pick up the scene here where David is back home in Bethlehem, taking care of his father's sheep.

16 And the Philistine drew near and presented himself forty days, morning and evening. Forty, in the Bible, is the number of testing and trial...

- Rain pelted Noah's ark for forty days.
- The children of Israel wandered forty years.
- Jesus was tested in the wilderness for forty days.

17 Then Jesse said to his son David, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried grain and these ten loaves, and run to your brothers at the camp. 18 And carry these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand, and see how your brothers fare, and bring back news of them." David's dad, Jesse, sends David out to provide some food and come back with an update of how it's going.

19-21

19 Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20 So David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, and took the things and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the camp as the army was going out to the fight and shouting for the battle. 21 For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up in battle array, army against army. Imagine David pulling up to this scene, hundreds of thousands of men shouting, blood boiling, ready to fight and kill each other.

22-25

22 And David left his supplies in the hand of the supply keeper, ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers. 23 Then as he talked with them, there was the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, coming up from the armies of the Philistines; and he spoke according to the same words. So David heard them. 24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid. 25 So the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be that the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption from taxes in Israel." Saul

had offered a three-part reward to the man who defeated Goliath.
1st the man would gain great riches,

Second the man would get Saul's daughter in marriage, and perhaps the most attractive perk of all, a lifetime tax exemption for he and his extended family. That's quite a windfall. Yet nobody is courageous enough to step out and take on Goliath

26 Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "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?" 27 And the people answered him in this manner, saying, "So shall it be done for the man who kills him." David can't believe his ears. The giant was blaspheming God, and nobody was doing a thing about it.

28 Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle." Notice the significant opposition that rose up against David. It was his own brother cutting David down by his words.

Here's Goliath, acting like the mouthpiece of Satan himself by taunting Israel and mocking God, and Eliab wants to fight with this little brother!

Tragically this is a scene that is often repeated in churches today. Even in the face of the lost world all around us and with the end times upon us, some folks in the church want to battle over insignificant things, cutting one another down.

Here, Eliab accuses David of being a show-off. It's especially painful when your own family tries to dowse your faith. At times

the biggest opposition to faith isn't the ridicule of the enemy, but the skepticism of a loved one.

29 And David said, "What have I done now? Is there not a cause?" I have the word now underlined in my bible, because it demonstrates this was not the first time David's brothers horribly treated him. And David is hurt! What have I done now??? He's exasperated.

At this point, many of us, myself included, would be staggered from the pain of this hurt from a loved one. But David's words that follow are key-**is there not a cause** are critical to the events that are about to unfold.

See David wasn't concerned about his own glory or success, or even defending himself. David's concern is for the glory and success of the LORD's cause.

It's right here, at this moment, that the bellowing giant named Goliath is a dead man. This is where the battle was won.

If Eliab's hurtful words could get David in the flesh and out of step with the Spirit of the LORD, get David focused on himself, then David's strength would be gone.

But in the midst of his hurt, David was more concerned about the Lord than himself. David was in step with the Spirit of the LORD and little does Goliath know he's a dead man walking.

30 Then he turned from him toward another and said the same thing; and these people answered him as the first ones did.

31 Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported them to Saul; and he sent for him. It's not like David is bragging-'put me in front of Goliath and I'll whoop his butt'. Not at all. But while everyone else is frightened, David is courageous, and EVERYONE NOTICES David's courage.

We find ourselves in similar circumstances today don't we!
There's so much to be afraid of! What's happening with Russia,
and China, our own country is falling apart at the seams, moral
standards lowering every day, inflation out of control.

But as followers of Christ we know the end of the story don't we-
we win!!! And when we keep our eyes on the Lord, we remember
this world is not our home. So we can be courageous, and in the
midst of the turmoil, people will notice there's something different
about us!

32 Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of
him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." It's one
thing to say, 'somebody should do something about the problem.
Everybody says that. But it's a whole other thing to say, "I will do
something about the problem."

33 And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this
Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of
war from his youth." Saul waited a long time — at least 40 days —
to hear someone say they will fight Goliath. Now someone has
said it, except it came from the mouth of a youth.

Saul looked at the "tale of the tape" and quickly thought there was
no way David could win.

These next 3 verses have ministered to me in ways no other
section of the Bible has...

34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's
sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the
flock, 35 I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb
from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its
beard, and struck and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both lion
and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of
them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." 37

Moreover 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 hand of this Philistine.”

And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!” As a shepherd facing lions and bears trying to steal his sheep, David had no idea at that time he was being trained to fight a giant. Yet now, David can look back and know that the same God who delivered him before, will also deliver him now.

In the midst of our preparation we rarely see how God will use it. But God does. The question is how we respond to those trials.

38-39

38 So Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail. 39 David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them. And David said to Saul, “I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested them.” So David took them off. Saul isn’t brave enough to fight Goliath, but he sends his armor with David. Yet when David suits up – Saul’s armor doesn’t fit. And it makes sense-Saul was tall, David just a youth.

And there’s a critical lesson for us here. If the Bible, and prayer, and the Holy Spirit have strengthened Christians for centuries – sustained believers in the throes of death – worked miracles – won victories – even slain giants in Jesus’ name... Why do we think we need to adopt the latest Christian fad?

Rather than strap another person’s armor, each of simply need to trust what God shows us in His word.

40 Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd’s bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his hand. And

he drew near to the Philistine. The question arises, “why does David pick up five stones?” We learn in 2 Samuel 21 that Goliath had four brothers. But we can’t say for sure why he picked up 5 stones.

But notice the end of verse 40-David drew near to the philistine. Faith is about to take action. David could have said the bold words, renounced Saul’s armor, trusted in God’s armor, and gathered his ammo. But if he never went into the battle, what would it have mattered?

Remember the dead sea is dead because water flows into it, but doesn’t flow out. We all need to apply our faith for the glory of God.

41-43

41 So the Philistine came, and began drawing near to David, and the man who bore the shield went before him. 42 And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was only a youth, ruddy and good-looking. 43 So the Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. When Goliath asked, “Am I a dog?” it was worse than it sounds. The Hebrew word for dog (keleb) is used in passages like Deuteronomy 23:18 for male homosexual prostitutes. Goliath took David coming to fight him as an insult to his manhood. Goliath is raging

44-47

44 And the Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!”

45 Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, 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. 46 This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel 47 Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands." It's one thing to believe in your heart silently. It's something else to make a statement publicly. David was bold, not in himself, but in God. He knew the battle belonged to the LORD.

48 So it was, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. You can picture this scene. Large, lumbering Goliath moves toward David, and young David hurries and runs toward Goliath.

I find it fascinating David didn't run away. He didn't hide. He didn't panic. He didn't even drop to his knees and pray.

A lot of Christians struggle at this very point. Is God supposed to do the work or am I supposed to do it? The answer is, "Yes!" God does it and we do it. Trust God, rely on Him, and then get to work and work as hard as you can — run right at the enemy. That's how the work of God is done.

It was Spurgeon who said "The lazy-bones of our orthodox churches cry, 'God will do his own work'; and then they look out the softest pillow they can find, and put it under their heads, and say, 'The eternal purposes will be carried out: God will be glorified.' That is all very fine talk, but it can be used with the most mischievous design. You can make opium out of it, which will lull you into a deep and dreadful slumber, and prevent your being of any kind of use at all."

As we've discussed many times, prayer is critical, and there is a time to pray, and a time to act.

49 Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth. Everyone else thought, "Goliath is so big, I can't beat him." David thought, "Goliath is so big, I can't miss him."

A slingshot is nothing compared to weaponry Goliath possessed, but interestingly enough the stones from Elah Valley were made of barium sulphate, which is extremely dense, making the stone like a little missile as it flung from David's sling.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But there was no sword in the hand of David. 51 Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. God had given the victory!

52-53

52 Now the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted, and pursued the Philistines as far as the entrance of the valley^[fn] and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell along the road to Shaaraim, even as far as Gath and Ekron. 53 Then the children of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their tents. The Philistines had agreed to surrender to Israel if their champion lost back in verse 9, but obviously didn't.

It's a reminder the devil never lives up to his promises.

Let's finish the chapter 54-58

54 And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.

55 When Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this youth?"

And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I do not know."

56 So the king said, "Inquire whose son this young man is."

57 Then, as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. 58 And Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?"

So David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." This brings us to a difficult issue in our text. David played the harp for Saul, and we saw a few weeks ago how David became Saul's armor bearer. How come Saul didn't recognize David?

Perhaps David played his harp behind a screen or a curtain for Saul so Saul never saw his face. Others think that because of the distressing spirit, Saul was not entirely in his right mind.

We also know that David did not spend all his time at the palace but went home to tend sheep. It's possible that David's appearance changed during a time when he was away from Saul, so Saul didn't immediately recognize him. Or a careful reviewing of these verses shows that Saul is asking whose son is David from-meaning wanting to know David's dad-which is Jesse. So David introduces himself as the son of Jesse, a resident of Bethlehem.

At this point David had no idea that he was a forerunner of the Son who would leave His Father to be born in Bethlehem in order

to save us from the Goliath of an enemy out to destroy us. Jesus will come from the lineage of David.

It was faithfulness on an errand for his dad that would result in David's first big victory. David could've protested and said-'don't you know that I'm the future king. Hey I'm no door-dash driver! Let those guys find their own cheese sandwiches.' Of course that's not what happened, David just obeyed and served.

This is often the way God's directions come. We may be looking for some spectacular sign from heaven or a mysterious voice in the night. More likely though God will call us and direct us through the simple everyday occurrences of life. When we're walking with God, directed by HS, and faithfully taking care of our responsibilities, God will guide our steps, He will direct our path, and He will use us for His glory.

Goliath will not be David's last battle will it? Here's a young man, slayed a lion, a bear, and now a giant. And he will have many more battles in front of him.

Some of you are facing a Goliath today. Your problem is big, your problem is intimidating. You look at the tools at your disposal and it doesn't seem like they can even make a dent. Your problem is constantly shouting at you, day after day, growling and snarling how you cannot fix it yourself. The challenge in front of you seems totally impossible.

Luke 18:27 But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

Too often we think the problems that are easy for us are easy for God, and we think the problems that are hard for us are somehow hard for God.