

THE SMALLER AREAS

“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.” —1 SAMUEL 17:36

David was a simple shepherd boy who liked to play the harp. Goliath was a giant of a man and a champion warrior of the Philistines. For forty days he challenged the Israelites to send a man to fight him to the death, and in this way, determine victory for either the Israelites or Philistines. Clad heavily in bronzed armour, equipped with javelin, spear and sword, Goliath mocks the shepherd boy who comes out to meet him with a slingshot.

How did David come to be in that position? Where did he get the courage to face Goliath? Even Saul, who had offered rewards to any man who would fight Goliath, was reluctant to let him go. But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it; I struck it. I rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair; I struck it, and I killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear.” (1 Samuel 17:34-36).

What David is saying is this: “I want you to know that out on the hillside, with no audience to impress, I proved God’s strength. I killed the lion and the bear. If God wants me to be a good shepherd, He’ll enable me to be a good shepherd. And because I proved God in the smaller areas, I will prove Him in the bigger ones. The God who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”

David took his staff and sling, chose five smooth stones, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and approached the Philistine. He said to Goliath, "All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves, for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands" (1 Samuel 17:47). The first stone David shot struck Goliath in the forehead and killed him instantly.

What this teaches us is that unless we are living with God in the smaller areas, the day to day responsibilities, we will never prove God in the bigger areas. We cannot leap into victory from nowhere. We cannot act on our own in the smaller aspects of our lives and then somehow switch God on when it comes to much greater challenges. There are no shortcuts to the victories God gives us. We'll never experience Him when we're facing the giant, until we experience Him looking after the sheep.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, keep me dependent on You in my day to day life, so that I may confidently face the greater challenges. Thank You, God.

TO REFLECT UPON: Is God at the center of my everyday life?