



Cross the Line

June 18, 2023 - Pastor Jason Carter

Our identity is discovered in God. We are called to know God and to live for Him. The only way we can do this well is to know who we truly are in Christ.

There are four types of opposition you will encounter in establishing your identity in Christ while dealing with your giants. The question is, despite opposition, **will you still cross the line?** Will you cross the line of becoming who God wants you to be?

One thing we must become familiar with as a Christian, and in any form of leadership, is **tension**. Tension is the building block of faith. It is the connection point between facts and truth. It is holding fast to what God says is true even though our current situation may present itself with a differing set of facts:

- God tells us that, through Christ, we are forgiven, even though we may have a checkered past.
- God tells us to pray when we see no way.
- God tells us to be faithful when in obedience even though we may see little change.

1 Samuel 16:1 Now the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."

-Samuel was sent to Jesse's house to anoint the next king of Israel.

1 Samuel 16: 11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here."

-David wasn't invited to the house when Samuel came. He didn't look the part of king, as he was serving as a shepherd. He was forgotten, overlooked and discarded.

It is not a matter of “if” we will face adversity, but “when”. *Who will you choose to be and who will you choose to believe?* **This is what living your identity means.**

Your identity is given spiritually and proven practically. We put into practice who we believe we are. How we live reveals what we believe. It does not come naturally to most people. It is something that is both discovered and learned.

- *Where do you find tension in your life?*

- *Who will you choose to be and who will you choose to believe?*

The four types of opposition you will encounter in establishing your identity in Christ and dealing with your giants:

1. The people on the sideline who criticize those who try (family included).

1 Samuel 17: 26-29 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?” And the people answered him in this manner, saying, “So shall it be done for the man who kills him.” 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?”

- Be careful around those who belittle what you are faithful with or what others are faithful with.

17:28 I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle. Eliab (David’s brother) has reacted and misjudged his heart.

And David said, “What have I done now? Is there not a cause?”

The cause was God’s name and His character. Goliath blasphemed God and mocked Israel’s army.

But David has already determined Goliath was going down. He was a dead man and his brother would not talk him out of it.

“We generate fears while we sit. We overcome them by action.”

-Dr. Henry Link

2. The giant.

1 Samuel 16: 8-10 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. 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 Philistine said, "I defy the armies 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.

- The giant is massive. He had been a force to be dealt with for years. He mocks, he intimidates, he demands, he belittles, and he demands to be fought on his terms.

We have giants in our culture, we have them in our family histories, and we have them in our own personal life. They are things that mock us, make us afraid, control our next decision, dictate to us how things will go down, and what we will do or won't do.

1 Samuel 17:43-44 He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!"

- Your giant, your challenge, your change will be an obstacle and it will speak directly to you to discourage you.
- How many times have you used the language of the problem, or the difficulty, or the enemy to explain why you **can't** do something?
- You don't know what battle changes your lineage, changes your circumstance, changes you or your faith, changes your perspective about what God can do or what God can do through you.

Goliaths (the giants) serve a purpose in our identity. We get to discover who God is to us and who we are through Him.

- Have your actions ever been misunderstood or misinterpreted? How did that affect you?

- What giants are in your life?

- How is this giant forming your identity? Are you facing it or running from it?

- Who are you letting dictate your decisions?

3. Those hiding in the tent (and in life).

1 Samuel 17:32-33 David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth."

Opposition will always try to create a huge contrast and by doing so, it will try to undermine your identity. The older we become, the more likely we will live in the tent (in hiding/out of harm's way)

- We have more years of experience and more years of loss.
- We have more understanding of potential consequences/more to lose.
- We have stopped putting ourselves in a position to need faith.
- We may feel like life has passed us by in some way and we have retreated.
- Saul thinks because he can't do it, David can't do it.
- Saul has a history of compromise. Compromise is the thief of faith.

For those who are stuck in regret, **failure is not final**. In order to get past the past, you must face the past. God calls us to deal with it, not deny it.

4. Lions and bears (Anything that causes you to quit, stop, give up or be half-hearted).

David answers Saul with proof of his track record.

A. Faithfulness in your present season matters more than you know.

1 Samuel 17:34-37 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, 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 this Philistine."

David had built a history with God. He was faithful while no one was watching and had become a warrior because of it. The "lions and bears", the difficulties, the frustrations, losses, and failures are all part of us discovering what God already knows; what our true identity is.

Not knowing how to do something is not an excuse to not find at how to do something.

There is not freedom without fighting for it.

Remind yourself:

I am broken but I am here.

I may have messed up, but I am showing up and I'm not giving up.

It's about pursuit not perfection.

There is no ***giant killing***
without ***sheep tending***.
There is no ***breakthrough***
without ***starting small***.

B. Someone will always tell you how to live your life if you don't know who you are.

1 Samuel 17: 38-40 Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So, he took them off. Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

You don't have to be someone else. God will teach you to engage your own giants.

David killed Goliath, but what was the secret of David's success? He was battle ready. He had skill. He knew the Lord and trusted Him. He was faithful in the off seasons when no one was watching. He had been entrusted with and committed to helpless animals that he would stake his life for. This is what prepared David for his next season/assignment.

- *Have you dealt with the issues from your past?*

- *What are the lions or bears in your life?*

- *How is your current season shaping you? What are you learning now that God can use in the future?*

David crossed the line:

1 Samuel 17: 45-47 David said to the Philistine, "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'll 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. 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."

God calls us to step across the line, engage our giants, defeat them and live out our identity in Him. *Will you do it?*

Don't be discouraged from those who are hiding in their life. Don't quit in your current season. Don't offer anything less than all you have. God is at work in you. Your current situation is preparation.

Cross the line. Make your life about God and learn to walk in faith.