

Uncommon: Different on Purpose

Uncommon Strength

1 Samuel 17:19-50

The people of God have always been different on purpose. We were never meant to blend in.

“You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.” Leviticus 20:26

Main Idea: God Gives Uncommon Strength to those who Trust in Him

“Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. 20 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. 21 And Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. 22 And David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage and ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers. 23 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. 24 All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were much afraid. 25 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.’ 26 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?’ 27 And the people answered him in the same way, ‘So shall it be done to the man who kills him.’ 28 Now Eliab, his eldest 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.’ 29 And David said, ‘What have I done now? Was it not but a word?’ 30 And he turned away from him toward another; and spoke in the same way, and the people answered him again as before. 31 When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him. 32 And David said to Saul, ‘Let no man’s heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.’ 33 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.’ 34 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, 35 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. 36 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.’ 37 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!’ 38 Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat

of mail, 39 and David strapped his sword over his armor. 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.’ So, David put them off. 40 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. 41 And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. 42 And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. 43 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. 44 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.’ 45 Then David said to the Philistine, ‘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. 46 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, 47 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.’ 48 When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49 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. 50 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.”

1 Samuel 17:19-50

I. Uncommon Strength is Grounded in One’s True Identity

Israel is unified under the leadership of King Saul at this point in their history. Their enemy was the Philistines. They were supposed to drive out the Philistines, but they had not been able. Why? Ultimately, the Philistines hadn’t been driven out because Israel didn’t trust or obey God!

“The Lord said to Samuel, ‘How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.’ ... Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward...” 1 Sam 16:1, 13a

“Then David said to the Philistine, ‘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.’” 1 Samuel 17:45

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine.” Isaiah 43:1b

Main Idea: God Gives Uncommon Strength to those who Trust in Him

II. Uncommon Strength Is Measured by a Different Standard

David was small, young, inexperienced, did not show any sign of strength to his people. Not even the men in his family believed he was regardless of him being anointed earlier in the reading. King Saul thought he was naïve and was clear in saying so.

Yet we know

“For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7b

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might...For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:10, 12

“David assumes God will bring the victory. He never questions the outcome of the battle but simply wants to know who the blasphemer is and what the spoils will be when he goes down. ‘Of course, whoever fights Goliath will win,’ David seems to be saying. ‘Didn’t God promise us victory over the Philistines? Did you all forget that promise? Why has no one believed it?’” J.D. Greear

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Uncommon Strength is from God and God Alone

David beat Goliath. How was this possible with no reasonable way to point to? *Uncommon Strength.*

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.”

Zachariah 4:6

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.” 2 Corinthians 4:7

The issue wasn’t Goliath, but the Lord’s armies losing courage because they believed they couldn’t win against someone stronger and better equipped. David, however, trusted that with faith in God, victory was still possible.

“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.’ 37 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.’” 2 Sam 17:36-37a

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This story isn’t about an underdog believing in himself; it’s about how we are more like the fearful Israelites than David. They needed someone to fight for them, just as

we need Jesus — the true and better David — to defeat our greatest enemy on our behalf.

“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.” Colossians 2:13-15

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities

- **CSB Study Bible** – Trevin Wax, Ed. (2017)
- **Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel** – Grear & Thomas (2016)
- **Tony Evans Study Bible** – Tony Evans (2019)
- **Spurgeon Study Bible** – Charles Haddon Spurgeon (2017)
- **Bible Exposition Commentary** – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- **New American Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel** – Robert D. Bergen (1996)