

# “Courage, Your Giants, and THE Giant” // 1 Samuel 17 // *The Life of David* #6<sup>1</sup>

## Announcements

This is the primary thing God has called us to... he put us here to call on the name of the Lord for this city. Join us.

## Introduction

1 Samuel 17, if you have your Bibles...

The other day I saw an updated list of the most common phobias (the APA defines a phobia as something that causes you such stress you are unable to function in a normal way when it is present). **There list included all the usuals:**

- **Arachnophobia:** fear of spiders
- **Ophidiophobia:** fear of snakes
- Of course, there's **Necrophobia:** the fear of death and **Glossophobia:** that's the fear of public speaking
  - (Interestingly, and you're probably heard this: people rank fear of public speaking higher than they do the fear of death. As **Jerry Seinfeld** says, that means for most people, if they

---

<sup>1</sup> Works Consulted: Tim Chester, *1 Samuel For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word for You)*, The Good Book Company, September 15, 2014; John Sailhammer. *NIV Compact Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); Eric Mason, "UNDEFEATED | Everyone Needs A Giant | Dr. Eric Mason, sermon streamed live from Epiphany Fellowship Church on June 23, 2020; Timothy Keller, "The Hero of Heroes," sermon posted by

have to go to a funeral, they'd rather be the guy in the casket than the one giving the eulogy.).

- In fact, I ran across this article the other day about how to **overcome the fear** of public speaking. Listen to this: *"Before you go on stage, stand still and feel the ground beneath your feet. Close your eyes and imagine yourself suspended from the ceiling by a thin thread. Then imagine you're made of rubber. Look into the mirror and make a horse's laugh with your lips. Why not lie on the ground and pretend you're floating? Or, just collapse on the ground like a limp doll."*<sup>2</sup> So, if you guys ever wonder what I am doing backstage before I walk out here, now you know...

There're more bizarre phobias like:

- **Octophobia** - the fear of the number 8
- **Olfactophobia** - fear of foul smells
- **Coulrophobia:** fear of clowns
- **Tocophobia:** fear of being around pregnant women
- **Omphalophobia:** Fear of belly buttons. It did not specify whether innies or outies are more terrifying, but we all know..
- **Arachibutyrophobia:** which is, of course, fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of your mouth
- And then **Windbagaphobia:** which is the fear of long sermons

Just kidding. I made that one up. *Fear, of all kinds, is a part of life, and your success in life, in large part, is determined by how well you learn to manage them.*

GospelinLife.com, January 25, 2004; Joby Martin, "Prophets Priests Kings - Week 10: Down Goes Goliath," sermon preached at The Church of Eleven22, posted on June 30, 2019; Andy Stanley, "[The Reluctant Hero](#)," Part of "David" series, posted May 15, 2018. Ray Vander Laan, [www.followtherabbi.com](http://www.followtherabbi.com).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.wikihow.com/Overcome-Your-Fear-of-Public-Speaking>

Something about me you may find surprising: throughout my life, I've struggled to find courage in certain things. I say "maybe you find that surprising," maybe you don't--but sometimes I tend to present rather confidently-- like my wife says--"Often wrong, but never in doubt"--but that doesn't mean there's not fear at work behind the facade sometimes.

In high school, I sometimes struggled to find the courage to stand up to my friends and do the right thing. I was afraid of the awkwardness and their rejection. Throughout my life, I've struggled to tell the truth when doing so could damage me or make someone unhappy with me. In high school I struggled with the courage to ask girls I liked out, scared she'd say no and I'd be embarrassed--so I'd do that cowardly **sneak-a-date** thing, where you hang around a girl like you're going out without ever having to man-up and actually ask her out--you girls know what I'm talking about. We call it a "friendationship" around here. I was sometimes even timid to call for the ball in a clutch situation in a game because I thought I'd mess the play up...

One of the darkest chapters of my life happened as a failure of courage. It happened when I was living overseas in a predominantly Muslim country. We'd arranged a short term trip for some American Christians to distribute some Bibles to the people in our area. A Bible translation had just been completed, and we wanted to get it out to the people, so we arranged for these guys to do some strategic drops. To make a long story short, they got caught. They were taken into custody by the police in a city about 10 minutes north of where I lived. They'd caused a riot: a mob of nearly 2500 people were demanding the police release these guys so they could kill them. The mob burned the car these guys were driving. The US Embassy tried to send in a helicopter to get them out but it couldn't land because the people were shooting at the helicopter. (Eventually, they got them out by smuggling them out in the back of a utility truck in the middle of the night.) The police didn't have any direct evidence linking me with them but they suspected it, so I was placed in custody of the

vice-mayor of the city, who lived next door to me. I kept having police and investigators come to our house to ask questions. They indicated that some of the mob knew who I was and had talked about coming for me. At one point I called my boss and said, "I've got to get out of here... They know we're connected and I think they might come for us." I'll never forget he said, "You can't run. If you do, they'll KNOW that you're connected, and that will put our whole platform at risk... You need to stay there and act normal as long as you can." I was so scared. I remember walking out on my 3rd story balcony and thinking, "If I jump off here and break my leg, they'll have to take me out." I had several copies of the same Bible these guys were giving out, and I went out in the woods and hid them in case the police did a search of my house. I'm embarrassed by all this now, but this was not the way I'd always assumed I'd handle "persecution," because I was always the guy who told people boldly, "*You have to be willing to die for Jesus.*" **Listen: It's one thing to say that to your small group;** it's another thing when you think someone's at the door who wants to take you up on that offer.

Maybe you relate to that. Or maybe you don't. Maybe you're just one of those people who is naturally fearless. *But for most of us, courage is a choice we have to make.* **CS Lewis said one of the greatest struggles of his life was developing courage.** So, today I want us to discuss how those of us who are not naturally fearless do that.

**This is crucially important. Aristotle said that courage is the cardinal virtue** because without it it's impossible to persevere in any of the other virtues. For example: you may desire to have integrity, but telling the truth is hard sometimes--isn't it? Without courage, you'll end up folding no matter how much you desire to live a life of integrity. You can't persist in any of the virtues without courage.

**1 Samuel 17 is all about courage--it might be the most famous courage story in the world:** the story of David and Goliath. In this story we see 4 kinds of courage: Saul: he has *no courage.* Then we'll

see Israel: they have *disappointed courage*. Then there's Goliath: he has *counterfeit courage*. And finally, we'll see David, who's got *real courage*.<sup>3</sup>

**Little warning as we get started:** Everybody thinks they understand this story. If you grew up in church this is probably one of your first Bible memories! I can't say the words "David and Goliath" without thinking in **flannel graph images**. Anybody else identify with that? Even beyond church, this story has become a cultural metaphor for whenever an underdog team plays a much better team and they win. My wife went to UVA and one of the things she hates is how nobody on ESPN, literally nobody, can talk about UVA basketball in any context without saying "You know, UVA is the only #1 seed ever to lose to a #16 in the NCAA tourney in the David vs Goliath upset of the century." She hates that.

**So we are familiar with this story about courage**--it's just part of the common parlance in our culture—but I want to suggest to you that there are some deep Bible things at work in this passage that you may not see at first glance that get to the heart of what it means to have courage.

Verse **1** [by the way, you will get **so much more** out of this if you have your Bible open in front of you. I'm going to show you a lot with the specific phrases here] **Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle.**

We tend to glamorize and romanticize ancient warfare, but, y'all, it was awful.

- In modern warfare, we kill from a distance. In ancient times, you killed at arm's length.

- Armies would form these shield walls and thrust themselves together and then everything became a death whirlpool of spears and swords and fire bombs. Unless you were several layers deep in the line, your chances of survival were extremely low.
- If you survived, at the end of a battle, **you'd** be covered in blood, not sure if it were yours or your enemy's and chances are you would die of an infection. More people in those days died of infection from battle wounds than in the battle itself.
- If you were lying wounded on the battlefield, you were terrified about who would get to you first. If it was somebody from your side, you had a chance of making it out. But a lot of times it was somebody from the other army, who would come along with a spear stabbing everyone who looked like they might be alive in the throat.<sup>4</sup>
- If you did die out there, it was usually days before anyone would come and retrieve you. So, your corpse would lay there in the hot sun and the birds of the air and the animals of the field would eat your flesh. No funeral. No burial. No family. Just corpses everywhere.
- That's what we're setting up for here. So these people had reason to be terrified.

**This battle was against the PHILISTINES. The Philistines were the perpetual enemies of Israel, and** they were a fearsome enemy.

- Sometimes in modern parlance we use the word "Philistine" to refer to somebody backwoods--"Oh, he's such a Philistine." The irony is the Philistines were one of the most advanced civilizations of this era. They were the first to work with bronze and iron. In fact, we refer to this epoch of world history as 'the iron age,' and the Philistines were the leaders in that.<sup>5</sup> Their weapons and shields, unlike Israel's, were made of iron.

<sup>3</sup> Inspired by Tim Keller, who identified 3 types: No, counterfeit, and real.

<sup>4</sup> Andy Stanley, "[The Reluctant Hero](#),"

<sup>5</sup> This is from studies done by Ray Vander Laan. See [www.followtherabbi.com](http://www.followtherabbi.com).

- The Philistines controlled the 3 major cities along the most popular trade route in the world--the Via Maris (pic), the way of the Sea--with the 3 big cities being Gezer, Megiddo, and Hazor. Think of it as the NYC, Miami, and RDU of the ancient world... The Philistines controlled those.

But here's the thing: **God had given Israel the land of Canaan. It was theirs for the taking**; Israel had just never fully believed the promise that God would do it. That's a crucial backdrop to this story: The Philistines were not supposed to be there. God had promised this land to Israel.

<sup>3</sup> And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. (I've actually been to this place. It's about a mile wide--a perfect battle place). <sup>4</sup> And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. (6 cubits and a span would make him 9' 6". Now, there are some scholars who say that this is a scribal error and that it should read "4 cubits & a span," because the difference in the number 4 and 6 in Hebrew is really miniscule, and sometimes when these texts were copied someone would mess it up, or it would get smudged--and from that point on the number would get re-copied down wrong. There are a few places in the Bible where this happened and some scholars believe that's what happened here. If so, and he's 4 cubits and a span, that would make him 6'9," which is still a giant, especially in those days when the average male was about 5 feet. **So,**

<sup>6</sup> Tim Chester, "1 Samuel For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word for You)," The Good Book Company, September 15, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel describes Saul's armor (verse 38) and Goliath's armor (verse 5) with the same word: shir-yone ("armor," or "coat"). This is a normal word for armor in the OT and is elsewhere translated as breastplate, body armor, and harness. The difference between Saul's and Goliath's armor is that Samuel modifies Goliath's shir-yone (armor) by adding the noun kas-keh'-seth (scales). In verse 38, Saul offers David an armored coat (with no other

**whether 9'6" or 6'9", Goliath was the guy you wanted getting off the bus first at an away high school football game.**

<sup>5</sup> He (Goliath) had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, ('coat of mail'--that doesn't mean he was plastered with a bunch of postcards and stamps; it's referring to one of those iron metal meshing garments. They were very rare and very expensive, but the Philistines had them because they worked w/ iron.

Interestingly (GET THIS), in Hebrew it says, literally, a "coat of scales,"<sup>6</sup> and it's the only time in the Old Testament the word "scales" is used to describe clothing. Scales. What image do you think the author is trying to conjure up?<sup>7</sup> A snake. Goliath stands there like this gigantic snake as the enemy of God's people. The writer is trying to get you to think of Satan: ...and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze.<sup>6</sup> And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. (Why does the narrator keep repeating the word 'bronze'? Because the Philistines were the only ones who really had bronze--this is what made them such a fearsome enemy. Israel was out-classed.)<sup>7</sup> The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And his shield-bearer (his intern) went before him.

<sup>8</sup> He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come

descriptive nouns attached). In verse 5, Goliath wears a scaled armored coat. This word kas-keh'-seth (scales) is used 8 times in the OT. Only in this chapter does it refer to armor. Every other time it's talking about an animal's covering. Interestingly, in Ezekiel 29:4, the prophet uses the word kas-keh'-seth to describe the scales of a big metaphorical water snake whom God will drag from the Nile. Guess who the big water snake represents? Pharaoh--another historical enemy of God and his people.

down to me. <sup>9</sup> 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.” This is called “representative warfare,” where one person fights on behalf of the army. Don’t think, “Arm-wrestling match.” The stakes were high; if Israel’s representative were to lose, thousands of people would die, and their women and children taken captive or raped or killed.

Day and night, the story says, Goliath taunted them. <sup>10</sup> ...Give me a man, that we may fight together.” As they were prepping breakfast in the morning, he bellowed out, “Give me a man...!” At night as they were roasting S’mores around the campfire, they could hear in the distance, “Give me a man.” Terrifying.

<sup>11</sup> When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

**Saul was afraid?** Don’t you remember why the people had chosen Saul? He had been **HEAD AND SHOULDERS** above everyone else; IOW he was THEIR strong, capable giant—their man of war who they thought guaranteed them security and would make them proud. What you are seeing here is that the King Israel has chosen to replace God has utterly failed them.

Vs. <sup>17</sup>: Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Jesse said to David his son, “Take for your brothers... parched grain, and these ten loaves... and these ten cheeses to your brothers and see if they are well.” <sup>10</sup> bread loaves and cheeses is essentially an ancient, deconstructed pizza. David basically gets sent on a pizza delivery run.

<sup>20</sup> And David rose early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper (Notice how the author of 1 Samuel will not let go how faithful a shepherd David is; before he goes on this trip, he arranges for a sheep sitter) and he took the (little pizza kits, the Hot Pockets) provisions and went, as Jesse had commanded him.

And (David) came to the encampment as the army was going out to the battle line shouting the war cry. This is a rather pathetic scene: they are not going out to battle; just doing up to the battle LINE and doing the war cry. Imagine you’re at Cameron Indoor Stadium, and the little countdown clock for when the game starts is approaching zero—the music is blaring, the cheerleaders are doing flips, the team is in the huddle going ‘ohhhhhh...’; the crowd is going wild, crazy towel guy is doing his thing, the other team and the refs are out there on the court, anticipation builds, the team in the huddle yells, “GO DEVILS!”... but then... they don’t take the court. They go back and sit on the bench and the scorekeeper puts up a couple of more minutes on the countdown clock and they go through the whole ordeal again. And they keep repeating this over and over, never taking the court. Eventually that would get embarrassing! It’s what’s happening here.

<sup>23</sup> As (David) talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name (this gigantic, scaly Satan-type figure), came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him.

So, David asks, “Who is this meathead and why doesn’t somebody go take him out?” And everybody is like, “Well, because he’s 9’6!” And David says, “I’ll do it.”

<sup>28</sup> Now Eliab (David’s) eldest brother (remember him? The one God passed over for being King) 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 (Do you hear the insult? “Listen, runt--haqqaton--why don’t you focus on that handful of sheep out) in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle.” How stinging this must have been for David! **Y’all, isn’t it true that often, when you are trying to do what’s right, the most discouraging opposition comes from the people who should be on your side?**

Goliath is big enough as it is, but then you got a bunch of family and fellow believers telling you that you are arrogant and crazy for doing what you are doing?)

Well, somebody goes and tells Saul, and at first, Saul is excited to hear that a champion is willing to fight, until in walks this 15-year-old baby-faced runt kid. He doesn't have any battle-experience, or scars, or cool tattoos. Just a shepherd staff and a harp slung over his shoulder.

<sup>33</sup> 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." "David, not only is this guy twice your size; he's been fighting for longer than you've been alive! He's got socks older than you."

<sup>34</sup> But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. (BTW, I love how David has given himself a permanent promotion. Notice he says, "I 'used to' keep sheep;" "used to" as in, "This morning. That was my job. But now that's in the past. Now my business card says 'Giant Removal Specialist.'" David continues, " And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, <sup>35</sup> I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. First, "caught him by his beard?" What did bears look like back then? Bears with beards sounds cool.

<sup>37</sup> "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!" In other words, "Good luck being dead."

<sup>38</sup> Then Saul clothed David with his armor. But remember, Saul is **head and shoulders** above the average Israelite, and David is a runt. This stuff looks like a clown outfit on David. <sup>39</sup> Then David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them." So David

took them off. <sup>40</sup> Then David took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. (These aren't real weapons, they are shepherd's tools. BTW, these 5 stones are not symbolic of anything. Every once in a while I'll hear some well-meaning Bible teacher say something like, "These 5 stones represent—worship, prayer, Bible reading, tithing and K-Love music..." Those are all great things, but that's not what these rocks represent. These are just 5 rocks he picked up--which, btw, taking only 5 stones feels like a heck of a lot of confidence to me. I would want, like, 30... His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine. <sup>42</sup> And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. <sup>43</sup> And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" (Read this like, "Seriously, you guys sent out Sheldon Cooper from *Big Bang Theory* to fight me? Harry Styles was the best you could do?" <sup>44</sup> 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."

<sup>45</sup> 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. <sup>46</sup> 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 (Not bad for a novice trash talker, if you ask me! Now watch this:), that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, <sup>47</sup> and that all this assembly (his fellow Israelites) may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. (Notice the 2 audiences: one, **the world**, he's going to show them God exists; and 2. **God's people**, to show them that God keeps his promises.). For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."

**Notice that David is asking different questions than everybody else.** Everybody else is asking, "How big is our enemy and do we have

anybody big enough to beat him?” David only asks, “What does God want to do in this situation?”

You want to know where courage comes from? It begins when you change the question. Courage comes when you stop asking, “What am I capable of?” and start asking, “What does God want in this situation?”

If God calls me to it, he’ll see me through it.

<sup>48</sup> When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.<sup>49</sup> 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 Goliath thought, “Well, *this* was the last thing to ever enter my mind.”) and he fell on his face to the ground.

<sup>51</sup> Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath (David didn’t even have a sword! He had to borrow Goliath’s) and killed him and cut off his head with it.

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.<sup>52</sup> And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines... and plundered their camp.

**What a great story, right? Here’s the million dollar question:** What’s the main point? Is it:

- The bigger they are, the harder they fall? How about: There is always hope for the underdog, so never stop believing in yourself? *Don’t stop believing. Hold on to that fee-ee-ee-ling?* Is that it?
- Maybe that underdogs tap into strengths giants forget about? (That’s Malcolm Gladwell’s take.)
- Or how about, “If you trust God, God will give you victory over all the “giants” in your life—be that a lousy job, the undefeated

football team filled with rich kids, the girl who is mean to you at school; the boss who is holding you down; cancer.

- **Is that the main point?** Trust God and he’ll remove all the obstacles from your life?
- Or is the main point, “God has appointed you to conquer the giant of mediocrity and thrive in your job and your relationships and your finances?”

**I’ve heard ALL of these taught as the main point**, and I don’t want to say there is no application toward those things--

*But they are not the main point.*

Let me **teach you something about Bible interpretation, particularly OT interpretation**. This is a common mistake people make when reading the Bible:

*The story of David is not **David → You.***

*It is **David → Jesus → You.***

Don’t cut out the **middle man**. In this case, he’s really important; he’s the main point of every one of these stories. This book—**1<sup>st</sup> and foremost**—it’s not a book about you; it’s a book about **Jesus**.

**Which is #1, if you are taking notes:**

**1. Jesus is the true David**

Jesus was the **small, unassuming shepherd boy** who fought the real giant, Satan, that scaly snake who wielded the sword of our sin and the spear of our curse. **Jesus, like David, defeated that giant**, as our representative, while we stood on the sidelines like cowards doing nothing to help him, while all of our idols--all the Sauls we had

chosen to put our trust in--stood pathetically on the sidelines utterly unable to deliver us.

***Almost 1000 years after this David-and-Goliath battle took place, a small baby was born in Bethlehem, where David was from. He took the field as our representative and utterly crushed the head of Satan, all by himself.***

***Jesus was, in every way, our representative: he lived the life we were supposed to have lived--he faced every temptation that Satan threw at him and overcame them all; then he died the death we had been condemned to die.***

He fought as our representative and died as our representative, and because of his victory, we are now freed from Goliath's threats.

You see, Goliath, in this story, is *not* PRIMARILY supposed to represent contemporary obstacles in your life: career difficulties or chronic pain or cancer or Comrade Putin or China or all the folks on the other side of the political aisle.

Goliath is a picture of Satan, that scaly snake, who defies God, threatens his people, and attempts to thwart his purposes. In his hands, he holds the sword of our **sin** and the curse of **death**. He's called "the Accuser of the Brethren"—the taunter of the brethren—which means he day and night reminds us of our shortcomings and our limitations and our sin and our failures and our shame. And in our strength, we can not overcome him, because the facts he brings up before us are mostly TRUE.

But at the cross, Jesus took the curse for our sin, and in so doing, he took the sword of our sin out of his hand and killed him with it.

The writer of Hebrews says it this way: (Jesus partook of our flesh and blood), that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. **Heb 2:14–15**

Doesn't that sound like he's describing this scene here in 1 Samuel 17? There we stood on the sideline, captive to our shame and guilt and fear of sin and death. Then Jesus came, and partook of our flesh and blood and disarmed our enemy on our behalf. He not only disarmed the enemy, he decapitated him. And now we no longer live in captivity, terrified by his greatest threat, the fear of death. Our hero defanged the snake; took the stinger out of the power of death. This past Easter, I told a story about a girl who was allergic to bees...

## **2. Because of Jesus' victory, I can have undaunted confidence**

**Here's how this story gives us confidence:** What if, in the things that scare us, and cause us anxiety--what if the REAL threat in all those things was gone?

HERE'S WHAT I MEAN: We fear rejection; we fear that something we say or do will make others turn away from us. But what if Jesus had taken the sting out of that fear by making us permanently acceptable to God in him? In him we hear, "There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus; he has removed our sins from us as far as the East is from the West." In him we hear from our Heavenly Father say, "You are my beloved son or daughter, in you I am well pleased."

You see, if I know I have his affirmation, what other people think about me becomes less important. It's not that we don't care what

people say about us--only an arrogant fool cares NOTHING about what others think--it's just that we are no longer captive to their opinions, controlled by them, paralyzed by them, living and dying for them. Because our sense of approval comes from somewhere else. That battle has been won. Listen, I care about your opinions, I really do... but at the end of day I know I have a Heavenly Father who has commissioned me, stands by me. I am reporting to him. If he loves and approves of me, then I don't need your approval as badly. Because of that, I don't live and die by your opinions anymore. If **he** says, "Well done, good and faithful servant," I can deal with pushback from people.

**Sometimes we're paralyzed by a fear of failure, because failure feels like a verdict on our lives:** "You failed to succeed at this; therefore YOU are a failure. You're not good enough. You have no value." So, I'm scared to get out there and just try something for fear I will fail. But what if Jesus took the sting out of that fear by saying, "As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love toward those who are in me." And, "I know the plans I have for you, to give you a future and a hope. I have fearfully and wonderfully made you, blessed to be a blessing. I have a purpose for you and you will be a blessing." That frees me up--of course, I still don't WANT to fail at anything, but failure is not a verdict on my life. I've already been declared valuable and my usefulness is assured and guaranteed by God.

Or maybe you are scared of death, or bodily harm. Jesus took the sting out of that fear away by defeating death and promising us resurrection, and assuring us that God is now working ALL things in our lives together for his glory and our good. So, he says, "Don't fear those that can kill the body, because you have on your side the one

who resurrects the body and promises to turn whatever the enemy means for evil into good." Listen: I don't want to die; I don't want to be in pain, but because of Jesus, the sting of death and bodily harm is gone from me.

Jesus defeated the real enemy in all these things. **So when Goliath, the Accuser, says to me after a personal failure, "God could never forgive you,"** Jesus stands there, as my representative, saying, "No. I have separated your sin as far as the east is from the west. Though your sins were red like scarlet, I've made them white as snow, and my mercies are new every morning.

(VAMP)

**Or when Goliath, my Accuser, says, "Your life is over, it's going nowhere and will amount to nothing--you're not making any difference to anybody,"** Jesus, my hero, says, "No! I have chosen you and appointed you to bring forth fruit. I have determined to give you a future and a hope, and nothing can stand against my good purposes in your life; no weapon formed against you will prosper; all those who rise up against you will fall."

Jesus' victory means I can **speak up when God tells me**, even when I know doing so might cause me pushback and mockery or loss of face before others, because his victory assures me that God is with me, and **if God is for me, who can really be against me? I know he stands by my side because he stood in my place.**

**Jesus' victory means I can obey God fearlessly, now, even when I know it may cost me dearly,** even if it means my own friends and

family turn on me--because Jesus has promised that there's no one who has left brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for his sake who will not receive a hundred times back in this life and even more in the life to come.

The story of David and Goliath does not mean that God now serves as my genie to immediately eliminate any problem; it means that in suffering, and loss and death and pain, God has removed the stinger, and he is weaving all things for his glory and our good.

*But, lastly...*

### 3. Because of Jesus' victory, I can have audacious courage

Listen closely to this. Like I said, **this story is mainly about what Jesus would one day do on the cross, and the big giant of our sin and death that he would eliminate, but it's not *just about that*.** It also gives us a picture of how God works through his people today when they trust him. You see, yes, David was a picture of the coming Messiah, but David was also a real guy at a real point in history living among a real people facing real danger. God had promised to give Israel the land of Canaan and defeat all enemies like the Philistines and Goliath stood in the way of that. David perceived that Goliath was in opposition to what God wanted to do, so he said, "You will not stand in the way of what God wants."

In our day, don't we see the Enemy trying to threaten and thwart the work of God?

I see him attempting to do that in our church. In our community. In my family. In the life of some of my friends.

This story shows me that when I see Satan defying the good things God has intended **for my children**, I can reply to him, "*You will not undo God's good work in my kids' lives; I don't care how loud your threats are or how big your sword is.*" Think about it: If Goliath represents Satan's challenges to the work of God, when I see Satan working in my family to undo God's work there, can I not say to him what David said, "You will not. You come to me with sword and spear but I come to you in the name of the Lord our God."

This story means that when I know what God wants in a situation, or what I think will glorify him, I can pray it into existence.

**This story means when Goliath, the Slavemaster, stands defiantly in front of a group of people--**saying, "These are mine. this unreached people group, this part of the city; these friends; these children; they belong to me," we can rush at him in Jesus' name—with my little slingshot and five rocks—and say, "No, Jesus by his blood purchased for God people of every tribe and tongue and nation to serve as a kingdom and priests and reign forever with him. He has said he will build his church and the gates of hell will not prevail against him." (Sometimes we interpret that verse to mean... but gates are not defensive weapons. Satan stands defiantly in front of someone we know God wants us to reach, and we say, "You come at me with sword and spear; I come to you in the name of the Lord our God. "Who can stop the Lord almighty? Who can stop the Lord?"

**This story means it's right for us to try big, audacious things for God.**

To plant 1000 churches. To try and put a campus no more than 15-minute driving time from everyone in the Triangle. To see a gospel revival come to our city. On our pastoral team we say we want to have a **bias for audacity**, and it's because of what we learn from stories like this one in the Bible.

**Jesus' victory doesn't mean I will never face any obstacles, or even that I will overcome, in an earthly sense, all of them.** It does mean that when I see Satan at work in a situation, I can stand against him and say, "The battle belongs to the Lord," and God will fight for me like he did for David.

**Conclusion:**

We started this message talking about courage. We said there were 4 kinds demonstrated in this story:

1. **No courage**--that's what Saul had, because he compared his size to his enemy's. **That's where some of you are.** You're Saul. The question you need to ask is, "Have you surrendered to do God's will, or are you seeking to do your own?" Courage starts with knowing you are living out God's purposes, doing his work, with him at your back, and not your own.
2. Then there is **disappointed courage**--that's what Israel had, because the champion they had served to carry them through life had utterly failed them. That's where some of you are. The thing or person you trusted in--your Saul, the marriage, the job, the friend--has utterly let you down. And now you are bitter.

Psychologists tell us that the measure of our hope in something becomes the measure of our disdain for it when it fails us.<sup>8</sup> Some of you put so much hope in your husband, the wife, the new job, the friend, boyfriend, that now you are utterly bitter. And you feel defeated and unsure if you can ever get back out there and trust again, afraid you'll just get hurt again.

3. Then we have **counterfeit courage**--that's Goliath's, who thought his superior strength assured him of victory. That's where some of you are. You're probably in the most dangerous position. You feel confident about the future because you are taller; your armor is thicker; your sword is bigger; your scoreboard is an unblemished record of W's. So far life hasn't thrown anything at you that you can't handle. Tragically, soon you'll be disabused of that presumption. Some failure, some disease, some divorce, death--it awaits.
4. and then there's **real courage**--For those of you that have real courage, like David, you have it because you keep your eyes on Jesus. You have courage because you know the victory belongs to Jesus, the victory belongs to him; and you are in him, and he stands beside you and fights for you, and the victory belongs to him.

The victory belongs to Jesus! The victory belongs to him. Keep your eyes on his finished victory, and it will give you undaunted courage in your current challenges.

HEADS BOWED

What are you afraid of? Can you rest in him?

---

<sup>8</sup> Noted by Andy Stanley

Do you know him? Have you received him? Jesus defeated the one giant you can never overcome, your sin and death. He did it by dying on the cross in your place and paying for your sin. But you have to receive that for yourself by surrendering to him. You can do that right now. Say to him, "Jesus I believe you defeated that giant and I'm ready to submit to you and do things your way..."