

The Story -- Only A Boy Named David

Last Sunday we looked at the story of Ruth. This morning we are going to talk about her great-grandson, David. First we need to set this in the context of our bigger story. Ruth was living in the time of the judges, when as the bible said, every one did as they saw fit, which meant hardly anyone was obeying God. God raised up the prophet Samuel and eventually the people tell Samuel they want a king to rule over them like the other nations. Samuel warns them a king will tax them and take their sons to fight in his wars, but God tells Samuel to give the people what they want. Samuel chooses Saul as the first king of Israel. Saul is tall, handsome, gifted as a general, but he has some deep character flaws. Although he reigns for 42 years, his disobedience catches up with him. Samuel tells Saul God is going to remove him as king and replace him with a servant leader, a man after God's own heart. God had chosen a shepherd boy named David to replace Saul as king.

While Saul is still ruling, God sends Samuel to the house of Jesse to anoint the future king. Jesse begins calling his sons to meet the prophet and when Samuel sees Jesse's eldest son, Eliab he thinks, "this must be the guy" but God tells Samuel, **"Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."** 1 Samuel 16:7 That's an important lesson for Samuel and for all of us! You can't judge a book by its' cover!

One by one the sons of Jesse pass by but the Lord tells Samuel he hasn't chosen any of these. Finally, Samuel asks, "Are these all the sons you have?" Jesse tells him, "there is still the youngest, but he is tending the sheep." He says that like he's the least likely to be chosen, after all he was the youngest. Instead, when David appears, God tells Samuel to arise and anoint him, he is the one God has chosen to be the king.

It's amazing the people God chooses. David was just a boy. He must have wondered how a shepherd with a gift for playing the harp and writing songs would ever become king. What could take him from the sheep pasture to the throne? In part it happens because of this amazing story, one of the most famous stories in the bible. Most everyone knows the story of David and Goliath. Turn with me to 1 Samuel 17 and let's look at this story.

During the reign of Saul the bible tells us the Philistines were constantly invading the land

of Israel. There were frequent battles and this particular battle occurred in the Elah Valley, with the Judean hills on the East controlled by Israel and the coastal plain to the west controlled by the Philistines.

Verse 4 describes the champion of the Philistines, a giant named Goliath from Gath. Over nine feet tall, he wore a bronze helmet, a bronze coat of armor weighing over 125 pounds, with a bronze javelin slung on his back. He carried a spear with an iron tip on it that weighed 15 pounds. You could describe him as a formidable foe.

Goliath suggested simplifying the battle with a method often used in the East. “There is no point in all of you fighting and dying. Send out a man to fight me. If he kills me, we will be your subjects and if I kill him then you will be our subjects and serve us.”

Verse 11 tells us that **“On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.”** I know the feeling don’t you? The giants in our life have a way of terrifying us. They are so huge, so overwhelming. Lined up against us we feel hopeless. What can I possibly do against such odds? And verse 16 tells us that this went on for forty days! Every morning and evening Goliath would shout his insults and issue his challenge.

It’s interesting that he came twice a day, morning and evening. Perhaps it was during the regular time of Jewish prayer, as they began to declare each morning and each evening, “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.” As they prayed and reminded themselves of the Mighty God they served, the enemy would terrorize and call into question God’s promises and his faithfulness. “Where is the God who will deliver Israel from the Philistine Champion?” That was the question Goliath was asking. “Is your God really able to deliver you?” Maybe the giant in your life has been asking you the same question lately. If so, be encouraged. God sends Israel a deliverer but he is an unlikely deliverer! A shepherd boy named David.

The youngest of Jesse’s eight sons, David had come to check on his three older brothers who had joined Saul’s army and were there at Elah. The family of the soldiers typically helped by supplying food so Jesse sends David to the front lines with supplies and to make sure the brothers were all right.

As David arrived at the Israelite camp, Goliath stepped out from the Philistine battle line and began to shout his usual defiance of Israel and once again the men of Israel fled in fear. I

suppose everyone with a brain ran, including David at this point. David was probably pretty happy to not be a soldier at this moment. “Look at the size of that guy!” But then something interesting happens. David overhears a conversation.

Look at verse 25. **Now the Israelites had been saying, “Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his father’s family from taxes in Israel.”**

It sounds like a sweet deal. Great wealth, a place of prominence, you’ll be the husband of the princess, and you and your family will never pay taxes again! Of course it doesn’t matter how sweet the deal is if you are dead. But, if you could manage to kill Goliath....hmm.. The wheels started turning, so in verse 26... **“David asked the men standing near him, ‘What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?’ They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, ‘This is what will be done for the man who kills him.’”**

David sounds braver and more spiritual now. “Well, who does this uncircumcised Philistine think he is that he should defy the armies of the living God? Now, tell me again, what did you say would be done for the guy who kills this giant?”

I’m not trying to make David sound like a mercenary but I think something happened when they began to talk about the prize to be awarded. There was a shift in perspective. You see, when you start focusing on the prize rather than the problem, your attitude begins to change. You begin to see things you hadn’t seen before. He’s not just a giant, he is an opportunity, for David and for God to show himself strong in behalf of his people, Israel. Goliath is not just a challenge, he is a means to the destiny God has for David. That giant you are facing may be the means to God’s destiny for you. Instead of running, do what David did! David begins to consider the weaknesses of a giant and the promises of a Mighty God! “Let’s see...the downside, he’s nine foot tall and wearing 125 pounds of bronze armor. The upside, I could out maneuver him and I could certainly out run him if I had to. Downside, he’s wearing a bronze helmet and he has an armor bearer carrying a shield out in front of him, however, upside, I see one vulnerable spot right

there in the middle of his forehead, right between his eyes.”

David knows if God is with you nothing is impossible, no giant is invincible, no situation is hopeless. The word of God tells us with man it may be impossible, but with God all things are possible. That giant you’re facing isn’t invincible. Your situation may look hopeless, but God specializes in doing things we think are hopeless and impossible. What you have here is a great opportunity for God to show his might and power.

David is thinking about taking on Goliath when his oldest brother Eliab hears him talking with these soldiers and jumps all over him. “Who do you think you are? Go home, take care of the sheep and leave the fighting to the men.” Of course, the men weren’t doing much fighting.

There will always be an Eliab around to tell you why you should give up and go home. “Face it, it’s impossible. It can’t be done, you can’t win, you can’t change.” Someone will always remind you of the statistics on what happens when an underdog faces a giant.

David could have listened to Eliab and said, “You’re right, what was I thinking. I’m going home.” But verse 30 tells us David turned away from his brother and now, for the third time at least, David turns to another group of men and asks the same question. “What did you say would be done for the man who defeats this giant?” “Same thing as last time I told you. You will have great wealth, you’ll marry the king’s daughter and you and your family will never have to pay taxes.” Then David said, **“Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.”** David weighed the cost, the risk versus the prize, but after he did, he decided it was worth risking it all.

Imagine him asking, “How much wealth do you think the person will get? And which princess is it? What does she look like?” Remember the Andy Griffith episode where Barney and Andy are fixing Gomer up with Thelma Lou’s cousin, Mary Grace. Gomer keeps asking, “Is she pretty?” “Well, she’s nice.” “But is she pretty?” “Well, she’s just so nice.” I can hear David asking “Is she pretty?” “Well, she’s nice.” “But if I’m going to fight a giant and risk my life, I need to know if she’s pretty. Is she worth the risk and the battle? Is it worth it?”

Folks we are in a battle. There is a giant shouting at us. The devil is a terrorist who wants to frighten, discourage and defeat us. He wants us to focus on how big and bad he is and lose sight of our awesome and faithful God. He wants us to look at the problem instead of the prize.

He wants us to lose heart, give up and go back to our old life. He wants to convince you it's not worth the sacrifice to serve the Lord. He'll keep telling you it's too costly, too difficult to serve Jesus. Maybe you need to ask like David, "What will be done for the person who remains faithful and risks it all to serve the Lord?" Is it worth surrendering your life to Jesus?

For those who choose to serve the Lord, he forgives your sin, takes away the guilt and shame, gives us abundant life here and now and prepares a place for us in heaven. He gives us new life, an eternal hope, an eternal home, an eternal destiny. What will be done for us if we keep serving the Lord and obeying him? The apostle Paul put it this way, **"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."** **1 Corinthians 2:9.** It's beyond anything we can imagine. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

We need to finish this story. David tells Saul he will fight the giant and once again someone tells him he can't do it! Instead of his big brother, now it's the king who tells David he's too small, too young, inexperienced, but David shares his resume with Saul. "I am young and I am just a shepherd, but I've killed a lion and a bear and this Philistine will be just like one of them today, not because I'm so tough but because the Lord is with me and this giant has defied the armies of the living God. David said, **"The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."** "I just don't think this loud mouth ought to be able to keep on defying the God of Israel."

David's confidence didn't stem from his ability, it came from his relationship with God. It came from his assurance that God was and is and will be faithful to those who choose to serve him and trust him. You see it doesn't matter if it is a lion or a tiger or a bear or a ten foot tall giant or if it's a tumor or a blood clot or depression or addiction or Alzheimers or cancer or a bad heart or diabetes or bankruptcy or unemployment or eviction or marital trouble or heartbreak or death or things present or things to come or anything else because the Lord who delivered us from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear can deliver us from the hand of whatever is coming against us!

But it's a giant! Goliath was over 9 foot tall, but from heaven's perspective, he wasn't all that big. Israel was running in fear, but heaven was so confident that instead of sending veteran soldiers and special forces, heaven sent a shepherd boy with a sling shot. Saul offers his armor to

David but David knew to trust in the Lord, not in armor or swords or spears.

Some of you are trying to figure out a way to defeat the giants in your life when what you really need to do is put your trust in God. You're running to all kinds of new things, trusting in this one and that one - how about trusting what you know? How about calling on God and trusting him? How about submitting your life to Christ and serving him because He can bring down every giant you are facing if you'll trust him.

David heads down into the valley as Goliath walks toward him. Verse 40 tells us David 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.

When Goliath saw that David was just a boy, the bible says he despised him. "What am I, a dog that you come at me with sticks?" He cursed David by his gods and said "come here and I'll feed you to the birds!" And David responded, **"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 hand you over to me and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth 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."**

With that, David ran toward Goliath, reached into the bag, took out a stone and put it into the sling, let it go and struck the giant in the forehead. The bible says the stone sank into his forehead and he fell face down on the ground. David ran over, pulled out Goliath's sword and cut off the giant's head with his own sword. The Philistines panicked when they saw their champion was dead. The Israelites charged after them and God gave Israel a great victory that day.

"Only a boy named David, only a little brook, only a boy named David, but five little stones he took." All those gathered knew exactly what David had said, that God doesn't need a sword or a spear to deliver us - he can use whatever he chooses, including a stone and a sling, for the battle is the Lord's and he will give the enemy into our hands.

I don't know what you are facing today. I don't know how big the giant is that is shouting at you and cursing you and defying you and your God. I don't know how limited your resources

are, but I can't imagine your resources are any less than David's. Talk about the odds being against you. A boy facing a giant, a man of war. A stone and sling facing a sword and spear and javelin. But David came in the name of the Lord Almighty. He came not in his authority but in God's authority. He came not in his own ability, but in God's anointing. He came not in his own name, but in the name of the Lord of Hosts and for the glory of the Lord. In a matter of days, all of Israel had heard of David the shepherd boy who killed the giant with just a stone and sling.

That's David's story. But what about you and your giant? I'm looking for someone today that all you have is a sling and a few stones and you are facing a heavily armed giant. I'm looking for someone that the odds are against you, everything looks hopeless. You are outmanned, outgunned, overwhelmed, don't know which way to turn. You are just the kind of person the Lord likes to meet up with. He is still delivering people out of hopeless situations. He is still conquering giants and He can deliver you. Are you ready to see the giants come down in your life? Here's what it takes:

Faith – “This day the Lord will hand you over to me and I'll strike you down and cut off your head.” It was bold talk but David knew the battle was the Lord's! Trust Him! Have Faith!

A first step – “As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.” You need to stop running from the problem and with God's help, face the giant in faith. Run toward the giant and let him know what God's word says! You need to decide today to take the first step toward defeating that giant!

A first stone – “Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead and he fell facedown on the ground.” It's time for you to let go of that stone. Do what you can do. Today, take the first step and the first action against the giant in your life, then trust God to do the impossible!

You may not know it or realize it, but there are giant killers in this place. There is a giant killer in you. You are more than a conqueror and you can do all things through Christ who strengthens and enables you. Have faith, take the first step and release the first stone!