

Faith ensured Victory

1 Samuel 17: 1-51 (Text Vvs.26b, 29)

Our text today comes from one of the most familiar passages in the Old Testament. David, the youngest son of Jesse, is just a lad of a boy. In the previous chapter, Samuel the prophet had anointed David king over Israel. Although, God fully intended for David to serve as king, the time for his reign had not yet come. As a faithful son to his father, David continued watching the sheep owned by Jesse.

Likely not knowing all that would transpire, Jesse sent David to take provisions to his three elder brothers, who were fighting under king Saul within the armies of Israel. David was instructed to take the provisions to his brothers and bring word again to his father regarding their condition. However, God had another plan for David, that no one was aware of, not even David himself.

Our text reveals a classic situation, often told in varied contexts, throughout cultures and generations – good versus evil; a hero locked into a fight to the death with a villain. It is a passage that has brought comfort and hope to many believers down through the ages. The theme of the text is faith in the Lord's power to bring ultimate victory. As we examine the hero and the villain, I want to discuss the [attributes](#) of each, while we consider the thought: [Faith ensured Victory](#).

I. The Presence of the Enemy (1-24) – The opening verses provide much insight to the enemy, the giant of Gath, Goliath. Through this we discover much about the enemy we face continually as we strive to serve the Lord. Consider:

A. His Proximity (1) – [Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.](#) We will soon discover the fear and dread Goliath created within the hearts of the armies of Israel. As much as they would have liked to avoid the giant, they had no choice but engage the Philistines. We find they were gathered on a piece of land that belonged to Judah. Saul and his armies did not have the luxury of ignoring the Philistines; they had invaded Israel. In fact, the Philistines were only about 16 miles southwest of Jerusalem. Whether Israel wanted a fight or not, the enemy had brought the battle to them. They had two choices – fight for their homes and families, or surrender the nation in bondage to Philistia.

- If you have been saved for any length of time, you are aware of the attacks of the enemy. Often these are unprovoked and unwanted, and yet we are forced to engage in battle with the enemy. We all have battles, physically, emotionally, spiritually, financially, and so forth. The enemy doesn't mind invading the tranquility of our lives, bringing the battle to our doorstep. These

attacks will continue, and even intensify as we draw closer to the Lord's return. Battling the enemy is a common occurrence that we all must prepare to engage.

B. His Enormity (4-7) – Goliath was a literal giant. Most scholars agree he was nine feet, nine inches tall. It is estimated that his armor weighed 125 pounds, and the tip of his spear weighed fifteen pounds. He was well armed for battle and terrified those who pondered the thought of meeting him on the battlefield. Goliath's size alone struck fear in the hearts of the Israelites.

- At some point in our lives, we will all face an enormous battle, one where the struggle is very real and the enemy looms large. I am not referring to small inconveniences, but those struggles that shake us to the core; those battles that genuinely test our faith and bring a realization of our mortality and inability within our own humanity. David faced Goliath; Moses faced Pharaoh and the Red Sea; Daniel faced a den of lions; Peter faced the giant of fear and denial; Paul was forced to face the reality of becoming a martyr for Christ. In those moments, we will suffer defeat apart from faith.

C. His Animosity (8, 16) – Goliath did not present a minor inconvenience or a casual threat to the armies of Israel. They were forced to deal with his accusations and the fear of attack each day for over a month. His hatred for Israel and the God they served was evident. Goliath had one goal – defeat Israel, and in doing so, mock the true and living God.

- We face an enemy who despises the Lord and all who serve Him. He knows he is a defeated foe, and yet he will do anything to hinder our faith and disrupt our efforts in serving the Lord. Satan is a determined adversary, one who will use any means necessary to attack the church, and individual believers, in an attempt to defeat us and bring reproach on the Lord. [Eph.6:12 – For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.](#)

D. His Ferocity (11, 24) – Goliath was successful in intimidating the Israelites. Each day he presented himself before them, and each day they cowered in fear. No man among the armies of Israel was valiant enough to fight against such a formidable foe. In fact, it appears they had resigned to defeat, losing all hope that anyone, or anything, could defeat Goliath.

- There can be no doubt we face a formidable enemy. He has perfected his craft since the Garden of Eden. He likes to strike fear in the hearts of men, causing them to question their faith and even the faithfulness of God. We have all faced trials, battles, and struggles that appeared to be insurmountable. We wondered how, or if, we would survive. The enemy has power, but he is

no match for our God. Greater is He that is within us, than he who is in the world. If God be for us, who can be against us? We are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus our Lord.

II. The Assurance of the Shepherd (26-51) – Remember, David had already been anointed king over Israel, but he had not yet begun his reign. In fact, he was still a lad, keeping watch over his father's sheep; but God would use David to defeat the giant and bring victory to Israel. Consider:

A. David's Conviction (26b, 29) – David had no experience in military excursions. He was not a soldier within the armies of Israel, but he was deeply concerned regarding the issue at hand. He wanted to know who this uncircumcised Gentile was – who does he think he is to defy the armies of the living God? David was jealous for the honor and reputation of the Lord. When rebuked by his brothers for his involvement, David asked a sobering question – is there not a cause? He was aware of the size of the giant, but David was not focused on the enemy; his focus was on the true and living God. David knew this Philistine was no match for the power of God.

- Struggles and battles will come our way. We may not enjoy them, but we cannot avoid them. The enemy will bring the battle to us, even as we try to faithfully serve the Lord. When we are attacked, we need the conviction of David. The enemy has power, but our God is greater. What have we to fear as long as the Lord is on our side?

B. David's Reflection (36) – Saul questioned David's intentions and desire. He was aware of the zeal the lad possessed, but Saul feared David was no match for Goliath. "You are but a youth, and Goliath has been a man of war since his youth." However, David was not deterred. His response is compelling. David relied on past experience to provide the courage and strength necessary for this battle. While watching over his father's sheep, David had encountered bears and lions. Faithfully defending the sheep within his care, David slew the bear and lion, delivering the sheep. God had proven faithful in the past, and David was convinced He would abide faithful in this battle. While the situations and enemies may have been different, the God David served had not changed. Goliath would be delivered into his hand just as the bear and lion. (Has God ever failed you in the past? You may be facing the greatest battle of your life, but it is no match for the Lord. Trust Him to deliver you as He has in the past. He abides faithful.)

C. David's Preparation (40) – Having convinced Saul of his courage and commitment, the king sought to arm David with his personal, royal armor. However, David was uncomfortable with the armor. It was not designed for him, nor was he familiar with wearing it in the midst of a fight. David laid aside the armor, and took only his staff and his sling. David stopped by the brook and chose

five smooth stones, placing them in his shepherd's bag. He went against the giant with five little stones and a sling in his hand.

- To the casual observer, this was foolish. However, David's plan was brilliant. He went into battle with weapons he had been successful with in the past. David had become very accurate with his sling. He used what had provided victory before. This provides a valuable lesson as we face the heat of battle. When engaged in conflict with the enemy, we need to use the weapons that have proven successful in the past. We must be clothed in the armor of God, bearing the Sword of the Spirit (God's Word,) the Shield of Faith, and Prayer. The heat of battle is no time to abandon our weaponry and armor for an approach that is perceived to be better suited.

D. David's Recognition (45-47) – This realization was foundational to David defeating Goliath. David knew before he ever entered to battle arena, that God would fight for him. The battle did not belong to David, it was the Lord's. David knew he was merely an instrument in the mighty hand of God, being used to defeat the enemies of Israel.

- We lack the wisdom, strength, and ability to overcome within ourselves. If we endeavor to engage the enemy apart from the Lord, we will suffer defeat. However, if like David, we recognize the battle is not ours, and trust the Lord to fight for us, we will experience victory. We may have to engage the enemy, finding the courage and commitment to stand, but in the end, it will be the Lord who fights for us, bringing victory!

E. David's Liberation (49-51) – To the shock of Israel and dismay of the Philistines, David defeated Goliath. God brought victory to His people through the obedient courage of young man. The giant of fear lay dead on the battlefield and Israel pursued their enemies, gaining a significant victory. The Lord can provide the victory we need, but we must trust Him. There is nothing we face that He isn't able to overcome. Whatever need we have, Jesus can provide!

Conclusion: Are you facing a giant today? Does the struggle seem impossible to overcome? If so, you are in a good place. You have admitted your inability. Now you need to trust the Lord to provide victory. He is able if you will seek Him and believe.

This passage reveals a beautiful picture of the gospel as well. Sin and death are represented by Goliath. David, the shepherd, is a type or picture of Christ. Man was unable to overcome the giant of sin and death, but Jesus secured victory on the cross. The enemy has been defeated and there is victory and life in Christ. If you have yet to respond to the call of the gospel, repent of your sin and come by faith today. The Lord stands ready to save you.