

Memoirs of a Giant Slayer

1 Samuel 17: 40-51

Our text today comes from one of the most familiar and recognizable accounts in all of Scripture. Israel was facing a formidable foe in the champion of the Philistines. The armies had gathered on opposite sides of the Valley of Elah, approximately fifteen miles west of Bethlehem. For forty days, the Philistine champion, Goliath, had taunted the Israelites to send a man down to fight with him. The losing side would surrender to serve the victor. No one within the armies of Israel had the courage to fight with Goliath. That all changed when David was sent by his father to take provisions to his brothers, who were among the garrison of Israelites.

This story resonates with humanity because it is a story of courage and victory. It reveals that the enemy can be defeated through the provision and power of God. David was an unlikely candidate to face Goliath, and yet God brought a great victory. We are no match for our enemy, but we are never forced to face him alone. Jesus has secured victory for us, and we can overcome through Him! Like David, we too can overcome impossible odds and enjoy victory through Christ our Lord.

Let's take a few moments to visit the [intense moments](#) recorded of this season in David's life as we consider: [Memoirs of a Giant Slayer](#).

I. The Difficulty David Faced – As you examine this chapter, difficulties appear immediately. In order to fully grasp the enormity of the situation, we must consider other verses. We can see:

A. Apparent Differences – This is the greatest “miss-match” of all time. No one expected David to have a chance against Goliath. There were great differences in:

- **Size** – Vv.4, 42 – [And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.](#) ^[42] [And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.](#) Goliath stood 9' 9" tall, and David was just a young man, ruddy, and of a fair countenance. He appeared as a child to Goliath.
- **Experience** – V. 33 – [And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.](#) David had no experience in battle and Goliath had been fighting battles since he was a young man. There was no comparison in the experience level of the two men.
- **Weaponry** – Vv.5-7, 40 – [And *he had* an helmet of brass upon his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of brass.](#) ^[6] [And *he had* greaves of brass](#)

upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. ^[7] And the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him. ^[40] And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling *was* in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. Goliath's armor weighed 125 pounds, and the tip of his spear weighed fifteen pounds. This giant of a man was well armed for battle. David went into battle carrying a shepherd's staff, his bag, which held five smooth stones, and a sling.

- From a human perspective, this would not be much of a battle. It appeared David stood no chance of defeating such a well prepared and formidable foe. However, we will discover that David had a decided advantage – he had the Lord on His side!

B. Accusing Doubt (28, 33) – And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. ^[33] And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. Goliath had come before the Israelites forty days in a row, challenging them to send someone to fight him, and they all remained in their places, cowering in fear. Along comes a shepherd boy with enough courage to fight the giant, and yet no one believed in his ability. They all assumed David would die at the hands of the enemy.

- The world around us, and the enemy we face, would have us believe we are destined for defeat. They assume we lack the ability to overcome and experience victory. If we are depending upon our abilities, their assumptions would be right, but we can rest in the power and provision of our Lord.

II. The Certainty David Felt – As we continue to examine this miraculous account, we discover the certainty in David's life and the faith he possessed. Consider:

A. His Confidence (36-37a) – Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. ^[37] David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. Drawing from past experiences, David expressed his confidence in the Lord. Saul did not believe David was capable of defeating Goliath, but David assured him that God would provide. His confidence was not in his own ability, but in the Lord.

- Fear often cripples our lives and hinders us from pursuing what the Lord has called us to, but we can rest confidently in the power and provision of Christ. He overcame everything the enemy threw at Him, defeating sin, death, and hell. He rose again triumphant over the grave, securing victory and eternal life for all who believe. We have nothing to fear. We are more than conquerors in Christ!

B. His Commitment (45-47) – No one should have expected less of David, but this reveals much about his character and commitment to the Lord. He had spoken boldly while surrounded by the armies of Israel, fairly safe within the garrison. Now he stood before Goliath, alone. There was no one else with him. It would have been tempting to ponder the gravity of the situation. Most would have questioned – what have I gotten myself into? Few would have stood there, preparing to engage Goliath in battle. David never wavered; his courage remained, even when standing in the presence of the enemy.

- We need the commitment David possessed. It is easy to serve the Lord and stand boldly within the comforts of the sanctuary. It is easy to share our faith when we are surrounded by others of like faith. We find it easier to stand when we are not alone, and yet there are times when we don't have the luxury of others with us. We too must be willing to remain committed unto the Lord, even in the face of great opposition.

C. His Courage (48) – [And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.](#) David possessed courage that exceeded human limitations. When faced with the enemy, David didn't hesitate. In fact, he ran toward Goliath, ready to engage him in battle. His fear had been replaced with faith, providing unwavering courage in the face of death.

- I will admit that this is easy preaching, but hard to practice in daily life. Far too often we allow our worries and fears to dictate our existence. Rather than standing courageously with the Lord, we run from our battles, seeking a place to hide. There is no reason for the believer to fear the enemy. He is a defeated foe. His defeat was forever settled as Christ atoned for our sin on the cross and rose in resurrection life! We should not seek trouble, but there is no reason to fear when the enemy comes against us. We are not fighting to secure victory; victory has already been won for us!

III. The Victory David Enjoyed (49-51) – These closing verses describe the great victory David enjoyed over Goliath. No one expected him to be victorious, but they hadn't figured God into the equation. Notice:

A. His Dependence (49) – *And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.* This reveals the dependence David placed upon the Lord. He stood against the giant, with nothing but a sling and a stone, fully expecting God to provide for Him. God proved faithful as David's stone hit the mark, defeating Goliath with only one of the stones in his bag.

- Do you ever feel like you are facing a mighty giant of opposition, and all you have are a few stones in your bag? If so, you are not alone. David's great encounter may have been the first such victory to be recorded, but it certainly would not be the last time that God would provide for those who depend upon Him. Our giants look nothing like the one described in the text, but they strike fear in our hearts nonetheless. Like David, we have nothing to fear. Our Lord is faithful to provide for every believer and we can depend upon Him in our time of need.

B. His Deliverance (50) – *So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.* This affirms that David had not secured victory through his actions, but God had provided victory for him, delivering him from the hand of the enemy. In his moment of greatest need, God provided deliverance.

- This was not surprising to David; it was exactly what he expected. Remember what he told Goliath just moments prior – *the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands.* We are no match for the enemy, but we don't have to be. The battles we face are not ours to fight. Victory has already been won. We have been delivered in Christ our Savior. There will be times when we must act in obedience to the Lord, but He never expects us to fight our battles alone!

C. The Assurance (51) – *Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.* On opposite sides of the valley, two armies stood in disbelief. The giant had been defeated by a shepherd boy, and his head had been severed as proof. There could be no doubt that Goliath had been defeated and God had brought a great victory for the nation of Israel. This stood as a lasting testimony of the faithfulness and power of the Lord.

- For the believer, let's fast-forward a few thousand years. The scene is much different, and yet there are similarities. Jesus had been crucified on the cross. Those who opposed Him thought they had rid the world of this blasphemous troublemaker. His lifeless body was buried in a borrowed tomb, and a stone was rolled in place to seal the grave. Three days later, as Mary came to anoint the body of Jesus, she made a profound discovery. The stone was rolled away and the Lord was no longer in the tomb. He had risen, just as He said! This too stands as an eternal

testimony to the power and faithfulness of our Lord. He already conquered every enemy we could face. The enemy was crushed as Jesus fulfilled redemption's plan and rose again in victory! What have we to fear? Our Lord is alive and well, seated at the Father's right hand, interceding on our behalf. The resources of heaven are at our disposal through Christ our Champion!

Conclusion: We all face giants that bring fear and dismay to our lives. You may be facing a giant of doubt or uncertainty today. Maybe it's a giant of fear or guilt. Maybe it is the giant of sin. Whatever giant you face, come to Jesus for complete victory. He has already defeated our enemies and we can rest in His grace and provision!