

Sunday, August 13 ,2023 *“David and Goliath”*

*Psalm 27 754 VU*

*I Samuel 17*

Have you ever been afraid? Really afraid of something? Out there in the dark of night and you cannot see your hand in front of you or what is within you making you sicker by the day? Maybe you've been to a building where you just did not feel safe because of a feeling you got. We all have fears—and like Lucy in Peanuts who diagnoses Charlie Brown with pantophobia- the fear of everything-we each carry these fears within us each day until such time we learn to realize that sometimes of what we were afraid no longer exists especially when something is done to change what is being experienced.

God knows that people grow fearful under many situations- surprise, sickness, hurtful situations with poor communication, and of course when giants of all different kinds come into our lives and we wonder what we can do to face them and then of course conquer them.

Our “At Your Request” story today is “David and Goliath” which is filled with fear, violent acts, trust, bargaining and anger. What is it about this story of a young shepherd boy overtaking a large warrior that appeals to so many people? What do the key characters of David, Goliath, Saul and the Philistine army show us as we face situations in our lives which need our attention and understanding to overcome?

From the narrative we learn the Judah and Israel are in battle over land which is desirable. The Philistines have an advantage in having one large man, a well-trained warrior, who is strong and powerful and could kill all of the enemies. For 40 days, Goliath pitched the Israel army under Saul to send their best person to battle him and the winner would take over the hills and valley between the two countries. And for 40 days the people stood in fear what would they do or how could they ever beat this huge man!

Then enters David a young shepherd boy sent to bring provisions to his brothers. He hears Goliath defying God and that triggers David to do something. Goliath said, “I defy the ranks of Israel. Give me a man that we may fight together.” And David asked, “What shall be done for the man who kills the Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” This question was repeated again and again. Saul heard about what had been shared and called for David. David is

willing to fight the giant; but Saul dismisses him as just a shepherd boy. David recants by saying he has killed lions and bears to save sheep. But more importantly to David, it is God who has saved him from lions and bears and God would deliver him from the Philistine. Saul finally agrees to David suited up for battle but David cannot wear the armor of another person as he cannot move. He simply takes with him what he knows how to use.

Goliath mocks him and threatens what will happen to him and David responds knowing that God will deliver him. And he says, "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. This story now moves from David vs Goliath to God-focus vs giant focus. David focuses on God and enters into battle and sees that he is not alone as he runs towards the giant. Goliath leans back in laughter at the kid coming to kill him; David puts the rock into place as the giant adjusts his helmet. And David takes that moment to aim and fire the rock that brings the giant down. Everyone is watching with their hands in front of their eyes—peeking through their fingers—not sure to be afraid of Goliath or for David. David's rock struck the giant's head and he falls forward. David runs toward him, takes out the giant's sword and kills the man with the sword.

David is victorious. People wondered what would happen next for this young man. But we must ask the questions which call us to understand our faith and trust in God. What had God seen in this man? Was there something that would only grow stronger within him to follow God's path? Many people see David as human- he led armies, had family problems, he served faithfully and knew God. He wept and cried over lost loves and lives, he wrote songs of faith and hope and God loved him.

And we can relate to him because he faced Goliath after what he had observed and acted on what he had seen. David observed two things about Goliath. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (vs 26 & 36) Yet he speaks of the living God in the same verses. He also speaks of the Lord of hosts, the one who will deliver Goliath to him, and that the battle is the Lord's. Nine times he refers to God as he faces the battle.

What about you? David and Goliath's battle is a story of good over evil; the underdog winning, the giant not destroying what is around them. It is a story of faithfulness being tested as both David and God were tested in what was to happen. This was not the first battle with Philistines—the walls of Jericho fell as well. But with David's question about which battle is being won for God, many questions arise. And were the Israelite people to remain faithful to God always? Just what did God do for David and why is this story appealing in light of the grand story of the Bible? Why did God pick David, the Israelites and are these battle lines still existing?

David eventually became king and his descendent the one promised by God, Jesus, would be the ultimate anointed prophet, priest and king. As prophet, Jesus would speak God's words; as priest he would mediate between God and sinful people and as king he would reign over God's people. We learn that David sinned but as a faithful follower of God, he points beyond himself to the one who would follow and become Saviour.

But when we remember David facing the giant we need to remember that we will have giants too. They may not be Goliath sized all the time, but God does care about us and helps us through these struggles. God through Christ can guide us to grow in faith so that when we face struggles we can depend upon our faith, and stand and walk with strength knowing that we can be victorious and overcome them. God cared about David as he prepared for battle and was victorious. God also cares about those smaller struggles we each face. But the ultimate struggle we have is in understanding of God's love for us in giving us Jesus to die and rise again for our sakes. God is working in all things for the the ultimate good of his people. As David was victorious in this battle, we will be victorious for evermore if we believe in Christ. When we trust Jesus we may live with hope knowing that the victory he won over death is for us. David's story with Goliath reminds us of being faithful; using what God gives us to tell His story with faith and hope.

Let us pray:

Holy God we praise you for this story of overcoming fear, standing up in faith for you and your victory over sin and death given in Jesus. Through this story of a young shepherd's faith in God we may grow in our faith and know that we are not alone no matter what we face. Hear our struggles now O God and we pray that you would help us to overcome them. Comfort us and guide us as we are in need. Amen.