

DAVID
I Samuel 17.12-50
"LIVE FREE OR DIE"

We continue today our series about the great Kings of Israel, Saul, David, and Solomon. Last week Pastor Dave talked about the anointing of David, the shepherd boy, the man after God's own heart.

He reminded us that God's calls the ordinary and then equips the ordinary to do extraordinary things. You and I would assume that shortly after David was anointed, he would take the throne.

But Saul was still doing well in the polls and his job rating was still high-high with the people, not with God. So God will use this time, while Saul is still king, to get the people ready for the transition and to groom David for his reign and rule.

We start the story today in I Samuel 17 with the Israelites gathering on one hill, pumped up from their surprise upset against their arch enemy the Philistines.

And in the other cornerrr, actually on the opposite hill, still smarting from their humiliating defeat to a bunch of Israelie home boys, are the dreaded, battle seasoned, well trained, and better equipped Philistines. And you better believe they want revenge and are ready for this rematch.

The battle line has been drawn, each on opposite hills, looking into the center ring of the Valley of Elah , waiting for the starting bell.

But there is no starting bell. The Israelites would have been elated thinking the Philistines have forfeited.

But wait, wait, what is this. It's a giant rock-no, a giant tree-no, a tank (opps-they didn't have tanks back then) No it's a man, a giant man, I Samuel 17.4-7,
"A champion name Goliath...He was over nine feet tall.

He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels, (about 125 pounds) on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back.

His shaft was like a weaver's rod, and it's iron point weighed six hundred shekels. (about 15 pounds) His shield bearer was ahead of him."

Wow! Think about that, his shield bearer has to be big enough to carry a shield big enough to protect Goliath.

Goliath is one big, bad, and ugly dude.

His voice easily rumbles and rocks through the valley, I Samuel 17.10.b-11

"Give me a man and let's fight each other." One on one, man to man, winner takes all.

The Israelites are trembling with fear, **"...Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified."** And they had to look at and listen to that ranting and raving for 40 days, thus, they had lost all hope.

You know when you stop and think about it, what would do you do?

I know many of you have had and may right now are facing some real giants. And may be asking yourselves What am I going to do?

A hero would help. By the way where is our hero?
Well after being anointed David goes back to work, tending sheep, business as usual.

Then one day his dad tells him take some food, go feed the brothers, and see how they are doing.
And David does.
He's up at the crack of dawn, gets someone to babysit, sorry shepherd his sheep, and heads to the front.

As he gets to the front and just happens to be in time to catch one of Goliath's little tirades.
And David is appalled, 1 Samuel 17.26b,
"...Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God."
In other words, who does this jerk think he is? Why doesn't someone take this guy out?

Now did you catch **"that he should defy the armies of the living God."**
"... the armies of the living God," that's really part of the key to the whole story?

Goliath is insulting not just Saul's armies, not just the armies of Israel, Goliath is insulting God?
So this battle is really God's battle.

David's doesn't tell God how big his giant is-he tells the giant how big his God is.
We hear that again, again, again, again, again, again, again, and again, at least nine times in this passage.

And while everyone else is in awe of Goliath, David makes two references to the giant,
neither using his name and neither time saying very complimentary words about him.

Before David confronts the giant he has to deal with a distraction, his jealous brother, Eliab.
Eliab was very upset, very angry, and very abusive.

Don't miss David's response to Eliab, I Samuel 17.30a, **"He turned away to someone else ,,,,"**
David basically ignores Eliab, he doesn't spend any time or energy trying to explain,
trying to reason with him, he just moves on.
It's not that he wasn't open to some advise-he was just shutting off the abuse.

Also David has to deal with Saul's doubts about him being capable or tough enough to take on Goliath.
David's response to that is found in I Samuel 17.36-37, and David again is again thinks God.

Friends, if you've committed your life to Christ you have been issue the armor of God
and that includes the shield of faith, Ephesians 6.16,
**"In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith,
with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."**

The shield mentioned here is about four feet high and covers the width of a man.
It has a covering that when the darts or arrows hit, they stick, but poof, the fire's out.

When people take personal pot shots at you, inappropriately call you out, or call you names
try using this God-given piece of armor called the shield of faith.

Speaking of armor, in first Samuel 17.38-40 we read that Saul issues David his armor.
Saul means well but the armor doesn't fit.

When you think about it sometimes others offer us their "armor."
That might be in the way of advise or resources, although well meaning they aren't always helpful.

David simply puts Saul's armor down, picks up his God-issued staff and sling shot, and puts five rounds of smooth stones in his pouch.

Now the latest thing I've read about these stones is that they were probably the size of baseballs and with the right guy taking aim, they could easily travel about 100 miles an hour. Goliath wouldn't know what hit him.

Ok, we're ready for the battle

Verse 41 tells us, Goliath **"kept coming closer to David."**

Isn't that the way it is with our giants-they get in our face and crowd our space.

And the trash talk starts, verse 43 and following, **"And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. Come here, he said, and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field."**

Dave doesn't back down, **"...I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defiled."**

As Max Lacado says, if you focus on the giants-you'll stumble, but if you focus on God, the giants will tumble. David's strategy, focus on God.

David goes on to tell Goliath that Goliath and his friends will be the ones that will be fed to the birds and the beasts.

Then in verse 46.b he says, **"the world will know there is a God in Israel"**

And adds, **"...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."**

Well the rest is history. David flings, Goliath falls, the Philistines flee, and a nation is free-at least for the moment.

Speaking of history, there is another nation that was saved due to the perseverance, dedication, faith, and sacrifice of their leaders.

That nation is the United States of America and one of the leaders was George Washington.

Washington was a soldier if there ever was a soldier.

He was shot four times and had two horses shot out from under him during one day's fighting in the French and Indian War.

He fought eight years in the Revolutionary War with only one week of furlough.

And we believe he was a man of faith and a man of prayer.

He laid his hand on the Bible at the first inauguration taking the oath as president of the United States. And his first official act as President was to instruct Congress to have 2 hours worship.

In the first week of July in 1776 the Declaration of Independence was presented to the world and thrown in the face England Empire.

But from then on until December of 1776 there was little to cheer about for the colonies. The Continental Army under the command of George Washington was being crushed.

They had been routed in and around the New York City, and pushed into Pennsylvania west of the Delaware River.

With the war effort going badly and the number of casualties mounting, morale was low and desertions high.

The Continental Army had been reduced from 30,000 soldiers to about 2,500 soldier.
 General Washington prophetically said, we need a win.
 And he came up with a plan, a very courageous plan and a very crazy plan.

Across the Delaware River in Trenton, New Jersey there was a garrison of Hessian troops.
 They were foreign professional soldiers, crack troops, and today we would call them mercenaries.

Washington's plan;
 To cross the river at night-which they did.

Then march nine mile in a blizzard, in the wind, cold, snow and ice-which they did.
 One third of those troops wearing burlap for shoes, leaving bloody foot prints in the snow.

Then they would attack, surprise, win, and reestablish the country's morale-which they did.
 They defeated the Hessians, captured 800 troops, and the nation was saved.

So, with their unconventional strategy and tactics, a providential storm,
 and with the element of surprise, the continental Army won a much needed victory.
 Their mantra became "Live Free or Die."

Isn't that a great story, a great David and Goliath story?

We too must face giants, hopeless, insurmountable odds as we struggle with life.
 Are we committed enough to live free or die?

As for our spiritual lives the apostle Paul encouraged the people of faith to live as people of faith.
 He encourages us to be intentional about how we live.
 Galatians 5.1, **"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.
 Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yoke of slavery."**

So, what are some of our giants?
 They are the things that keep us from faithfully doing what God wants done.

They are the things that make us anxious and that create anguish.
 They are our struggles and sorrows, the trials and temptations that we can't seem to shake.

Some of those giants grow roots on the inside; anger and envy, doubt, despair, and depression,
 fear and failure, greed and gluttony, laziness and lack of discipline, self criticism, self-condemnation,
 and just plain old selfishness.

Other giants may be additions of some kind, drugs or alcohol, or pornography.
 It may be an impossible situation at work or at home.
 It may be a financial difficulty or a broken relationship.
 It may be a task before you that you know you can't handle.
 It may be a dream that seems unreachable.

As individuals or a community we have to confront all kinds of giants too;
 There are fast flowing waters, wild winds, and a giant snow melt waiting to happen.

How are we going to help those contending with so much damage and devastation,
 those being displaced, and those faced with future runoff?

Here is what we learn from David when dealing with giants.

First is that they never leave on their own.
We have to face our giants-but we don't have to face them alone.

And the second is that taking the first step of faith is the hardest.
Think about David. He had faith and he had doubts but he acted on his faith.
The other soldiers had faith and they had doubts but they acted on their doubts.
So it's not about waiting until all those doubts are gone.

And third, it's about not going into the valley because you think you can do it
it is going into the valley even though you know you can't-but God can and will though you.

Faith is about facing our giants with faith,
taking that first mind reeling, knees knocking, palms sweating, hands shaking, heart pounding step.

David did
Washington did
Others have
Now, when confronted by our giants-we must too.