

Facing Your Giants

1 Samuel 17:40-51

INTRODUCTION:

The giants we face today may be unemployment, abandonment, sexual abuse, depression, bills, grades, whiskey, drugs, pornography, a career, a mistake or a future. The Bible teaches us that God has answers for our real life giant struggles. We must face the giant. No hiding, no running away, no cowering in fear.

The obvious Biblical starting point is the story of a boy and his battle with the giant.

I. THE ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU.

The slender, beardless boy kneels by the brook. Mud moistens his knee. Bubbling water cools his hand. He is searching for rocks. Stones. Smooth stones. The kind that stack neatly in a shepherd's pouch, rest flush against a shepherd's sling. Flat rocks that balance heavy on the palm and missile with comet-crashing force into the head of a lion, a bear, or, in this case, a giant.

Goliath towers above them all: nine feet, nine inches tall in his stocking feet, wearing 125 pounds of armor, and snarling like the main contender at a World Wide Wrestling Federation championship night . He wears a size 20 collar, a 10 1/2 hat, and a 56-inch belt. His biceps burst, thigh muscles ripple, and boasts belch through the canyon. **"This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other" (1 Samuel 17:10).** Give me your best shot . . . I m going to give you mine!

What odds did David have against his giant? Better odds perhaps than you give yourself against yours. Your Goliath doesn't carry sword or shield; he brandishes blades of unemployment, abandonment, sexual abuse, or depression. Your giant doesn't parade up and down the hills of Elah; he prances through your office, your bedroom, your classroom. He brings bills you can't pay, grades you can't make, people you can't please, whiskey you can't resist, pornography you can't refuse, a career you can't escape, a past you can't shake, and a future you can't face.

How long has he stalked you? Goliath's family was an ancient foe of the

Israelites. Joshua drove them out of the Promised Land three hundred years earlier. Saul's soldiers saw Goliath and mumbled, "Not again. My dad fought his dad. My granddad fought his granddad."

You've groaned similar words. "I'm becoming a workaholic, just like my father." "Divorce streaks through our family tree like oak wilt." "My mom couldn't keep a friend either. Is this ever going to stop?" When Saul and his men heard the Philistines' challenge, they were terrified (1Sam. 17:11).

With all the giants we must face, where is our focus?

II. DO YOU SEE GOD?

But what am I telling you? You know Goliath. You recognize his walk and wince at his talk. You've seen your Godzilla. The question is, is he all you see? You know his voice – but is it all you hear? David saw and heard more. David's first discussion, although it was about Goliath, was on the Lord. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he defy the armies of the living God?" (1Samuel 17:26) David shows up discussing God. The soldiers mentioned nothing about him, the brothers never spoke his name, but David takes one step onto the stage and raises the subject of the living God. He does the same with King Saul: no chitchat about the battle or questions about the odds. Just a God-birthed announcement: "The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of the Philistine" (1 Samuel 17:37).

No one else discusses God. David discusses no one else but God. A subplot appears in the story. More than "David versus Goliath," this is "God-focus versus giant –focus." David sees what others don't and refuses to see what others do. All eyes, except David's, fall on the brutal, hate-breathing hulk. All compasses, and David's, are set on the polestar of the Philistine. All journals, but David's, describe day after day in the land of the Neanderthal. The people know his taunts, demands, size, and strut. They have majored in Goliath.

David majors in God. He sees the giant, mind you; he just sees God more so. Look carefully at David's battle cry: "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" (1Samuel 17:45)

David sees the armies of God. And because he does, "David hurries and runs toward the army to meet the Philistine" (1Samuel 17:48).

III. THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S

David's brothers cover their eyes, both in fear and embarrassment. Saul sighs as the young Hebrew races to certain death. Goliath throws back his head in laughter, just enough to shift his helmet and expose a square inch of forehead flesh. David spots the target and seizes the moment. The sound of the swirling sling is the only sound in the valley. Sshhhww. Sshhhww. Sshhhww. The stone torpedoes into the skull; Goliath's eyes cross and legs buckle. He crumples to the ground and dies. David runs over and yanks Goliath's sword from its sheath, shish-kebabs the Philistine, and cuts off his head.

You might say that David knew how to get a *head* of his giant. When was the last time you did the same? How long since you ran toward your challenge? We tend to retreat, duck behind a desk of work or crawl into a nightclub of distraction or a bed of forbidden love. For a moment, a day, or a year, we feel safe, insulated, anesthetized, but then the work runs out, the liquor wears off, or the lover leaves, and we hear Goliath again.

Try a different tack. Rush your giant with a God-saturated soul. Amplify God and minimize Goliath. **STOP TELLING YOUR GOD HOW BIG YOUR GIANT IS AND START TELLING YOU GIANT HOW BIG YOUR GOD IS!** Download some of heaven's un-squashable resolve. Giant of Divorce you are not entering my home! Giant of depression you are not entering my life! Giant of unfaithfulness you are not welcome here!

It may take a lifetime, but you won't conquer me. Giant of alcohol, bigotry, child abuse, insecurity . . . you're going down. How long since you loaded your sling and took a swing at your giant?

One might read David's story and wonder what God saw in him. The fellow fell as often as he stood, stumbled as often as he conquered. He stared down Goliath, yet ogled at Bathsheba; defied God-mockers in the valley, yet joined them in the wilderness. An Eagle Scout one day. Chumming with the Mafia the next, so to speak. He could lead armies but couldn't manage a family. Raging David . . . Weeping David . . . Bloodthirsty . . . God-hungry . . . Eight wives . . . One God!

Acts 13:22 reminds us that God said that "[David was a man after God's own heart.](#)" A man after God's own heart? That God saw him as such gives hope to us all. David's life has little to offer the unstained saint. Straight-A souls find David's story disappointing. The rest of us find it reassuring. We ride the same roller coaster. We alternate between swan dives and belly flops, soufflés and burnt toast in life. **In David's good moments, no one was better. In his bad**

moments, could one be worse? The heart God loved was a checkered one. We need David's story. Giants lurk in our neighborhoods. Rejection. Failure. Revenge. Remorse. Giants . . . We must face them. Yet we need not face them alone.

Focus first, and most, on God. The times David did, giants fell. The days he didn't, David fell.

IV. **FOCUS ON GOD . . . NOT GIANTS**

David made only two observations about Goliath in **1 Samuel 17**. One statement to Saul about Goliath (v.36). And one to Goliath's face: **"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (v.26)**. That is it. Two Goliath-related comments (and tacky ones at that) and no questions. No inquiries about Goliath's skill, age, social standing, or IQ. David asks nothing about the weight of the sword or the size of the spear. **It is time that we stop telling God how big our giants are and start telling our giants how big our God is.**

But he gives much thought to God. As we read David's words again, we can count nine references to the Lord. **God-thoughts outnumber Goliath-thoughts nine to two.** How does this ratio compare with yours? Do you ponder God's grace four times as much as you ponder your guilt? Is your list of blessings four times as long as your list of complaints? Is your mental file of hope four times as thick as your mental file of dread? Are you four times as likely to describe the strength of God as you are the demands of your day?

CONCLUSION:

Israel felt Fear David Felt Courage

Israel envisioned Defeat David envisioned Victory

Israel remained Silent David spoke up.

Israel saw a Giant Israel saw God

Israel saw something Big David saw something Bigger

Israel saw the battle as theirs. David saw the Battle as God's

Israel was in no Hurry David could not Wait

Israel stood Still David ran Forward

Israel was stumbling while the giant was tumbling!

The whole matter may be summed up with the following statement:

**Focus on giants – you stumble.
Focus on God – your giants tumble.**

Which do you want to tumble . . . You . . . Or, your giants?

Lift your eyes, giant slayer. The God who made a victor out of David stands ready to make one out of you.

God's Plan for Man's Salvation