



Potomac Hills

Presbyterian Church, PCA

By Grace Alone ~ Through Faith Alone ~ In Christ Alone

The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.
1 Samuel 17:1-58

October 4, 2020
English Standard Version

“David and His Giant”

This is the 5th sermon in a topical series entitled,
Misused Stories of the Bible

*Heavenly Father, this is Your Word and we need it. Thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. We live by every Word that proceeds from Your mouth and we need this Word for it deals with great **fear** and little faith. Thank You for bringing us to this familiar story so that we might learn more about You and have our **faith** renewed and strengthened as a result. Help us to see Your grace in his story. Help us to see our own need of Your grace this morning. Help us to know You more through 1 Samuel, chapter seventeen. And so we pray, **have mercy on us** this morning, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, **help us see Jesus**, for in His name we pray, amen and amen.*

INTRODUCTION: *Twenty Seconds of Insane Courage* ¹

I don't know how many of you have seen the 2011 film *We Bought a Zoo*. It was based on the true story of a British man named Benjamin Mee. In 2006, Mee and his family purchased and moved into a 30-acre zoo. In his book by the same title, Mee says that his new “neighbors” included “five Siberian tigers, three African lions, nine wolves, three big brown European bears, four Asian short-clawed otters, two flamingos, a Brazilian tapir called Ronnie, some large boa constrictors, and a tarantula.”

The zoo was dangerously rundown. Mee was faced with a series of **challenges**, including

¹ The Introduction is adapted from the article, “My Family and Other Animals” by Benjamin Mee, 6/22/07, *The Guardian*, www.preachingtoday.com. Veggie Tales info comes from “Veggie Tales: Dave and the Giant Pickle,” at www.imdb.com.

dealing with a rat infestation, and finding enough money to feed the animals. On the fourth day of their new lives, the jaguar escaped, endangering the whole neighborhood. Despite the difficulties, Mee and his family restored the zoo into a place of beauty and safety that provided healing for themselves and for their community.

But it wasn't easy. Mee admitted, "There were lots of times when I thought, What have I done?" In the film version, Mee (played by Matt Damon), says, "*Sometimes all you need is twenty seconds of insane courage. Just literally twenty seconds of embarrassing bravery. And I promise you, something great will come of it.*" That's not just a great line from well-written screenplay. That's about how long it took for David to charge Goliath. It was ... literally ... twenty seconds of insane courage. And it's in that moment ... that we screw this passage up.

The account of David and Goliath is one of the most famous in all literature. This is a tale of right versus might in which the little guy beats up the bully. This story is part of our common culture. When the underdog wins a sporting event or an election, we say that David beat Goliath. And we love underdog stories! Sadly, throughout the years, many people have badly misunderstood the significance of David's battle with Goliath.

For example, there is a children's Veggie Tales video, *Dave and the Giant Pickle*, in which "*Dave, upset over not being allowed to join his brothers who have all gone off to war, is resigned to staying at home and taking care of the farm. When a giant pickle is sent to attack his village, Dave relies on God's teachings, and his own self-esteem, to fight the monster.*" And it becomes a **morality tale about overcoming fear**. I can't tell you how many "Giant Killing as A Way of Life" sermons I looked at this week.

And this is one of my favorite stories. As I wrote earlier this week, when I was growing up in Oakland, NJ, this was my all-time favorite Bible story – the little guy wins, the big guy goes down, the little guy chops off his head, and the winner's named David. How cool is that! As a little guy named David, **I loved this story!** And I still do.

However, when most people read this and most people speak on this text, usually the lessons go like this — Goliath represents your great **fears**, and David represents how you should handle those **fears**, which is just go right at them. Just take them out. The moral of the story is **be like David** ... or what Bryan Chapell calls **the Killer Be's** — "**Be Like, Be Good, Be Disciplined**" — **be like David**.

Yet this story is **not primarily about David**, but it's about the Lord whom David represents. Who are we supposed to identify with in this story? By nature, **we're not like David**, who actually doesn't show **any fear** and who bravely conquers his enemy. And I seriously hope you're not identifying with Goliath. Rather, we're like the fearful people who desperately need a champion to defeat an enemy they're incapable of beating on their own. So, let's get to the story. We're going to go through the first few sections pretty quick, because it's the later sections that hold the real message of the passage. And so we'll start with ...

v. 1-11: THE GIANT'S CHALLENGE ²

2 The Exposition of the text is adapted from the books, Opening up 1 Samuel by Dr. James Newheiser, pages 96-105; Preaching the Word – 1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader by Dr. John Woodhouse, pages 301-344; The Reformed Expository Commentary: 1 Samuel by Dr. Richard Phillips, pages 278-313; and 1 Samuel For You by Dr. Tim Chester, pages 119-132. **And the sermons, "The Hero of Heroes" 1/25/04 and "David's Courage" 5/3/15, both by Dr. Tim Keller, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, NY, The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive, Logos Bible Software 8.15**

¹ Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. And they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. ² And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in line of battle against the Philistines. ³ And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. ⁴ And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a **champion** named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. ⁵ He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. ⁶ And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. ⁷ The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And his shield-bearer went before him. ⁸ He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. ⁹ If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." ¹⁰ And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together." ¹¹ When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid."

Let me recap what happens in this part of the chapter. The Philistines and the Israelites were great enemies. They came and camped out on both sides of the Valley of Elah ... the Israelites on one hill, the Philistines on the other. They set up their battle lines. In the middle, of course, was no-man's land, the danger zone, the valley of death. No one went there. At some point ... a battle was going to happen. Israel and the Philistines have reached a military stalemate as both sides have dug in. Whoever won the coming battle, it was going to make a big difference, because the loser would be **enslaved** to the winner for years. All their families would be enslaved for years. Then suddenly, **into** the valley of death, **into** the no-man's land, **into** the danger zone, comes Goliath.

Goliath is a **massive human fighting machine**, over nine feet tall, heavily armored, and well-armed. In **verse 4**, he's called "**a champion**." That word literally means "**the man between**." He's the man who stands **between** the two sides, **between** the two armies, **between** the two enemies. Goliath, the **champion** of the Philistines, **challenges** Israel to send forth a man to fight him in **representative combat**. Those represented by the loser will surrender to the winner. But you have to know, **Goliath is much worse than a bully**. He's a blasphemer who curses the Lord and His people. The same Hebrew word used of Goliath taking his stand against Israel is used in **Psalm 2** of the kings of the earth who take their stand against the Lord and His Anointed One, making Goliath **an antichrist figure**. Goliath should worship Israel's God and submit to Israel's anointed king. Defying both invites God's judgment.

Instead, he arrogantly **challenges** them. He's an enormous figure, and he begins to shout, **verse 8**, "**Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me**." "**Choose a man for yourselves**"! Where have we heard those words before? At the very beginning of the story of Israel's kingship, Samuel spoke to the people, **1 Samuel 12:13**, of "**the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked; behold, the LORD has set a king over you**." The Israelites had already "**chosen a man for themselves**." His name is Saul!

Then we're told in **verse 10** that Goliath says, "**I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together**." And then we read in **verse 11**, "**When Saul and all Israel**

heard these words of the Philistine, they were **dismayed** and greatly afraid.” There it is. The king – Saul – is not being kingly. The king’s army is not being kingly. Here’s the great **challenge**. If they don’t meet this **challenge**, they’re going to be slaves again, and their families are going to be slaves for the rest of their lives, and yet they don’t have **the courage to meet Goliath**. Saul and his army are **overwhelmed by fear** and refuse to take up the **challenge** of Goliath. And so now, we’re confronted with ...

v. 12-25: A **ROYAL FAILURE**

¹² Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years. ¹³ The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. ¹⁴ David was the youngest. The three eldest followed Saul, ¹⁵ but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem. ¹⁶ For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening. ¹⁷ And Jesse said to David his son, “Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers. ¹⁸ Also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See if your brothers are well, and bring some token from them.” ¹⁹ Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. ²⁰ And David rose early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper and took the provisions and went, as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the encampment as the host was going out to the battle line, shouting the war cry. ²¹ And Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. ²² And David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage and ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers. ²³ As he talked with them, behold, the **champion**, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him. ²⁴ All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were much afraid. ²⁵ And the men of Israel said, “Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel. And the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father’s house free in Israel.”

So ... what should the king do? He should trust God, who stands with His people and who opposes the oppressor, which is the theme of Hannah’s song at the very beginning of this book, **1 Samuel 2:9-10**, “He will guard the feet of His faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. ¹⁰ The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them He will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; **He will give strength to His king** and exalt the horn of His anointed.”

Saul, as the king who has been appointed to fight the people’s battles, should go forth in faith, **1 Samuel 8:20**, “... that our king may judge us and go out before us and **fight our battles**.” When Saul became king, God specifically said, **1 Samuel 9:16b**, “He shall save My people from the hand of the Philistines.” Instead, he hangs back in **fear** and unbelief, offering a reward to anyone who will fight his battle for him. The **fear** of Israel, like that of the ten spies in Moses’ day (back in **Numbers 13:32–33**), is due to unbelief. As a result, this **challenge** of Goliath turns into forty days of **fear**.

David is not with Saul’s army to hear Goliath’s initial **challenge**, probably because he’s too young for military service. Rather, he’s sent by his father, Jesse, to check on his older brothers and to bring them food. Little does Jesse imagine what he’s sending David to do.

When David arrives on the battlefield, he gets a close-up view of Goliath and the **fearful** Israelite troops, **verse 23**, “As he talked with them, behold, the **champion**, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. **And David heard him.**” The only difference this time (which was a difference of **monumental importance**, though no one could have guessed it at the time) comes at the end of the verse, “**And David heard him.**” Did anyone notice? Did anyone care that young David from Bethlehem “**heard him**”? Of course not. But this was the turning point in Israel’s history! Because David “**heard him**,” David had ...

v. 26-39 **A FAITHFUL REPLY**

²⁶ And David said to the men who stood by him, “What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” ²⁷ And the people answered him in the same way, “So shall it be done to the man who kills him.” ²⁸ Now Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab’s anger was kindled against David, and he said, “Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle.” ²⁹ And David said, “What have I done now? Was it not but a word?” ³⁰ And he turned away from him toward another, and spoke in the same way, and the people answered him again as before.

³¹ When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him. ³² And David said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” ³³ And Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth.” ³⁴ But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, ³⁵ I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. ³⁶ Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.” ³⁷ And David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!” ³⁸ Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail, ³⁹ and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.” So David put them off.”

Again, I’m just going to recap this quickly. In his first recorded words in the Bible, David eloquently expresses indignation over the blasphemy of Goliath, this uncircumcised pagan who **defies the armies of the living God**. In **verse 26**, we’re reminded that circumcision was the sign of God’s covenant with His people. More to the point, David sounds nothing at all like what we’ve heard from Saul, or any other Israelite, in the Valley of Elah. David spoke of **taking away** the reproach from Israel rather than being shattered by it. He expressed contempt, not **fear**, before the Philistine **champion**. He saw, as apparently no one had, that this Philistine — this pagan worshiper of false gods — was mocking, not only Israel, but Israel’s God, who alone was “**the living God.**” David is a man who sees as God sees and is zealous for the Lord’s honor. David’s brother Eliab misunderstands David’s motives and rebukes him. Then when Saul hears that there’s a man who’s brave enough to fight Goliath, he sends for David. Saul, who sees only

with the eyes of the flesh, doubts whether David can prevail.

However, David, recalling how the Lord has delivered him in the past from the lion and the bear, expresses full confidence that the Lord will deliver him again. David's faith enables him to see how big God is and how small that makes Goliath. And David is not afraid to go against seemingly impossible odds, knowing the Lord is with him. His trust is not in his own bravery, skill, or self-esteem, but in the Lord. Saul finally agrees, wishes David well, and offers him his armor. David refuses the armor because it's too big, he's not accustomed to it, and instead prepares his own sling and stones for battle. The fact of the matter is that a sling, which is not a slingshot ... but a sling was a weapon. A sling was a little patch of leather with two leather strings. You put a stone two or three inches in diameter in it, and then you swung it around, over your head, and when you got it going really fast, you let go of one of the strings. If you do it right, a sling can propel a stone over 100 miles an hour. And so that's what David has ... a sling ... and five smooth stones ... those are all his ...

v. 40-47: RESOURCES FOR BATTLE

⁴⁰ Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine. ⁴¹ And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. ⁴² And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. ⁴³ And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴ The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field." ⁴⁵ Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and 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, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷ and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hand."

Now, here I have five smooth stones. These five stones actually come from the Valley of Elah in Israel. I was able to visit Israel back in 1990 and when we visited this famous valley, I picked up these stones and brought them home with me. I told you ... I **love** this story. Now, this week, Frank, our always kind Assistant Pastor, suggested I put one of these stones in a sling, swing it around, and ask all the tall people to stand up ... I mean, that would be the ultimate object lesson, wouldn't it? Well, lucky for you, I don't own a sling. At least, not that kind of sling. However, David did. And in our story, David goes to the field of battle, where Goliath immediately approaches him. Before the fight, each side taunts the other. And Goliath, upon seeing the youthful David, was angry. The Israelites obviously weren't taking him seriously! How dare they send out such an **unworthy** opponent! And I imagine that an angry Goliath was no doubt even more terrifying than anything seen in the Valley of Elah for the last forty days, **verse 43, "And the Philistine cursed David by his gods."**

Wittingly or not, by invoking the Philistine gods, Goliath signaled the true dimensions of this confrontation. More than Philistines versus Israelites, this was the gods of the Philistines versus the living God. It was a warrior who called on Dagon ... versus a youth who was the

Lord's anointed! Goliath, full of self-confidence, **curses** David and, by implication, the Lord whom David represents, again, reminding us of **Psalm 2:2**, *"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed..."* This is not merely a contest between two men; **it is cosmic combat between the gods of the Philistines and the Lord God of Israel.**

And then Goliath made his final threat, **verse 44**, *"The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field."* We see in Goliath the literal fulfillment of **Proverbs 16:18**, that *"pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."* Undaunted, David not only approached the menacing giant, but gave one of **the classic speeches in all the Bible**, one that **rebuked** the Philistine for his mocking, expressed David's **confidence** in the Lord's power to save, and announced his purpose in slaying the giant **champion**. And in some of the most inspiring words of the Old Testament, he clearly defines what is at stake, starting at **verse 45**, *"Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and 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, whom you have defied."*

The threatened disaster was not going to happen on that day. Not because Goliath was less powerful, not because Israel had the wherewithal to resist him, and not because Israel didn't deserve this fate. They did deserve it. But it didn't happen that day because the God of Israel had chosen a king for Himself on whom the Spirit of the Lord had come powerfully, **1 Samuel 16:13**, *"Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him [David] in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward"* and **he**, the coming king, the chosen and anointed one, was about to fight the Philistine. David knows that he's an instrument of God's judgment against the oppressor and he expresses certainty that the Lord will give him victory, **verse 46**, *"This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth."*

David intends this battle to be a lesson to those **fearful**, unbelieving Israelites, starting in the second half of **verse 46**, *"that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hand."* The victory over Goliath and the deliverance from his threats and **challenges** happened so that the people of Israel, and ultimately the people in **all the earth**, would know that the Lord is God. The purpose of David's victory is not simply to save Israel or defeat the Philistines. The purpose is the glorification of God **in the eyes of the world**. This is David's **"gospel message"** ...

1. I come in the name of the Lord;
2. You have mocked the Lord;
3. I will strike you down;
4. So the world will know who God is.

Leviticus 24:16 ordained the penalty for blasphemy was death by stoning ... and David had come to single-handedly enforce that censure. And that's exactly what happened. So, let's finish with ...

v. 48-58: THE RESULT OF VICTORY

⁴⁸ *When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.* ⁴⁹ *And David put his hand in his bag and took out a*

stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.”⁵⁰ So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David.⁵¹ Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their **champion** was dead, they fled.⁵² And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron.⁵³ And the people of Israel came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp.⁵⁴ And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.⁵⁵ As soon as Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, “Abner, whose son is this youth?” And Abner said, “As your soul lives, O king, I do not know.”⁵⁶ And the king said, “Inquire whose son the boy is.”⁵⁷ And as soon as David returned from the striking down of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.⁵⁸ And Saul said to him, “Whose son are you, young man?” And David answered, “I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.”

After such a long buildup, the warfare takes place quickly. David boldly runs out to meet Goliath and fells him with a stone hurled from his sling. David then beheads Goliath with his own sword. Obviously, the reason Goliath lost was because his self-esteem was too high ... he had banished his **fears** when he should have been afraid. Clearly, he didn't watch *Star Trek* because he went in with his **shields down**. And everyone knows **you never do that!**

In reality, Goliath becomes like his false god, Dagon, who was decapitated when the ark of the covenant was taken into the Philistine temple back in **1 Samuel 5:4**, “But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold.” As **Psalms 115:8** says, “Those who make them [idols] become like them; so do all who trust in them.” False gods and those who worship them cannot stand before the Lord.

After Goliath's death, the Philistines decide not to surrender and run for their lives, and so the Israelites take courage, pursue their enemies, and strike them down. Finally, Saul once again takes notice of David, no doubt planning to make further use of his abilities. The outcome will be the continued rise of David in Israel. After Saul's pitiful failures, finally God has raised up a man who can deliver Israel from her enemies.

The encounter between David and Goliath is part of the cosmic battle which began in **Genesis 3**, when Satan defeated Adam and gained dominion over the earth. At that time, the Lord promised that a **champion** would come, born of a woman, who would crush the serpent (representing Satan – **Genesis 3:15**). God later chose the family of Abraham, to whom He gave a land and people, to be the nation through which He would bring deliverance to humanity. As we come to **1 Samuel 17**, God's people are unable to enjoy their land because they're being harassed by their idolatrous enemies, the Philistines, who are represented by the blaspheming, arrogant Goliath. Israel needs a **champion** to deliver her from this Satanic oppressor. The people's king, Saul, proves unworthy, so the Lord raises up a new **champion**, David, who defeats Israel's enemies through God's strength, thus delivering His people. And the point of the story is that David's victory points ahead ... to ...

CONCLUSION: A Greater Battle and A Greater David

Goliath and the Philistines he represented are actually part of a major Bible theme — an important reality of which the Bible often speaks — the enemies of God and His people. It would not be difficult to trace that theme through the Bible. We would see that by the time we reach the New Testament, it's perfectly clear that the real enemies of God and His people are more terrifying and more powerful than the giant who stood that day in the Valley of Elah. All of us face an enemy, an army of enemies, as real, as powerful, and as terrifying as Goliath.

Death wields its terrible sword and mocks us all.

Sin threatens to bring us down.

Satan himself seeks whom he may devour.

You see, this passage is not primarily about how we can overcome our big problems in life with God's help or how to deal with bullies. We're not primarily to identify with David ... you're not David. Rather, you're the **frightened** people. I'm the **frightened** people. We're like the army of Israel, who faces a terrifying enemy which it cannot defeat. What does God give to **frightened** people? What does God give to **fearful** people? Here's what He gives. He doesn't give **frightened** people a good example. **He gives them a champion ... and a Savior.** He doesn't deal with their **fears** through **inspiration**. He deals with their **fears** through **imputation**. Imputation means that the work accomplished by someone else is credited to us. David won the victory and he didn't just save himself; he saved all Israel. And we, like the Israelites, **need a great champion**, anointed by God, to fight our battles and gain the victory we could never achieve.

Jesus is the **Champion** whom God promised would crush Satan. Just as David won the victory over Goliath without the help of Israel's army, so Christ went to the cross **alone** ... and there He defeated Satan, sin, and death ... **for us**.

Like David, Jesus was zealous for the Lord's honor in the face of blasphemy. Just as David was rejected by his brothers, so Jesus was rejected by His. Just as David bravely entered into battle against Goliath, so Jesus boldly set His face to go to the cross for us. Jesus faced blasphemous, arrogant foes who thought that they could destroy him. Just as Goliath was defeated by David, thus setting the people of Israel free from the **fear** of slavery to the Philistines, so Satan has been conquered by Jesus, **our Anointed Champion**, setting us free from the **fear** of Satan, free from the **fear** of sin, and free from the **fear** of death.

The teaching of the New Testament is clear on this, **Hebrews 2:14-15**, "*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through **fear** of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*"

And that victory is applied to us, **Colossians 2:13-15**, "*And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by **triumphing** over them in Him.*" On the cross, Jesus was our **Champion, our man between**. He stood between us and judgment, between us and death. Judgment and death bear down on us with violent force, threatening to destroy us. **But Jesus stood between**. He bore the full force of their fury. Our future hung on His shoulders as He hung on the cross.

In **Hebrews 11**, these great heroes are listed, "**Remember Abel. Remember Rahab.**

Remember Gideon. Remember Samson. Remember David.” Then finally the Hebrews writer says, **Hebrews 12:2-3**, *“looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter (archegos) of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”*

“Look to Jesus,” “Consider Him,” Some versions say, **“Fix your eyes on Jesus,”** not just remember. *“Remember David, but fix your eyes on Jesus,”* the writer says, *“the founder and perfecter, the archegos of our faith.”* The word *archegos* is a Greek word that’s translated in a number of ways, one of which is ... **champion**. Here’s what the writer of Hebrews is saying. Here’s what the Bible says. God sent **the greater David**, Jesus Christ. He was weak. He was little. He didn’t save us in spite of his weakness, like David did, but **through** His weakness. He didn’t save us from physical death, like David did, but He saved us from eternal death. He didn’t save us at the risk of his life, like David did, but more than that – **at the cost of His life**. David went into the valley of the shadow of death; Jesus Christ went right into death itself. The victory of Christ is breathtaking news. The demands of the Law have been met in the perfect obedience of Jesus. The penalty for sin has been paid in the sin-bearing death of Jesus. The power of death has been broken in the mighty resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

And knowing that Christ is our **champion**, **let us seek** to encourage many a disheartened Christian, showing that even in our weakness the Lord remains mighty to save. Instead of fretting over our own well-being, knowing that our eternal safety is secure in Christ, **let us seek** to strengthen the faith of other believers. **Let us seek** to make known to other churches that the Word of God remains mighty to convert the lost, build up the saints, and guide the church. Let each of us, through the battles that God places before us, encourage one another, and let us together raise tall the banner under which so many believers have stood before us, knowing that, **Revelation 12:10-11**, *“Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. ¹¹ And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.”*

The message of **1 Samuel 17** is not that we’re called to **be like David**.

The message of **1 Samuel 17** is that **we have a David**.

Think about that. You need to pray.

Take a moment to do that, and then I’ll close.

*Heavenly Father, we're amazed at the grace You showed to the people of Israel. They were so undeserving and yet You sent them a champion. We're not nearly so amazed at the grace You've shown to us. It's because we think we're better than the Israelites. But Your Word makes clear that's not the case, we're fully capable of just as much **fear**, just as little faith, just as much doubt, just as little courage. And yet here You are again, showing grace to the undeserving ... to us. Lord thank You that no one is beyond Your grace. Thank You that we're not beyond Your grace. Thank You that on the cross, Christ has already won the victory and that the blood of Jesus covers our sins. Thank you, Father, for bringing us to the place where we are now. We're about to partake of the bread and the cup. With the power of Your Holy Spirit, we're about to take more deeply into our hearts and our minds the realities of what Christ did for us on the cross, and that will make us courageous. For we pray, in the Name of Your Son,*

Jesus, the Son of David, our champion, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.

This message has been lightly edited and formatted for the web page. No attempt has been made to alter the basic extemporaneous delivery style, or to produce a grammatically accurate, publication-ready manuscript conforming to an established style template. There may be slight differences with the audio version. Should there be any questions regarding grammar or theological content, the reader should presume any error to be with the original speaker and should contact him directly. For full copyright, reproduction and permissions information, please visit the PHPC Copyright statement at www.PotomacHills.org.

Acts 13:36-39a

“For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, but He whom God raised up did not see corruption. Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by Him everyone who believes is freed ...”