



Series: 1 Samuel

Date: March 19, 2023

Speaker: Pastor Spence, Lead Pastor

Text: 1 Samuel 17

Title: God's Foundation for Your Courage

Easter Big Give

Hey guys easter is only 3 Sundays away. Pretty awesome! Can't wait to celebrate with you. I hope you will invite your friends and family to join you. We are adding services to make room for them. We are expectant for what God is going to do. We are praying and fasting every Wednesday EXPECTING God to change lives on easter.

Part of our Easter Celebration is going to be giving. We believe God was generous towards us when he gave his only son to us. Romans 6.23 says the wages of sin is

death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Salvation is a gift. And we who have been GIVEN, love to give. And we've got an opportunity to give to some local churches in the country of Turkey who are ministering to their communities that were just devastated by the earthquake that hit.

We are partnering up with a church planting ministry to get disaster relief supplies to these local churches so they can serve their communities with the love of Jesus. Ya'll THIS is the kind of moment...a big natural disaster... that can establish a church's relationship with its community for a generation. And we want to help these churches reach people with the gospel. So, we are creating a special offering to give to on Easter. Our comms team wanted me to call it "Easter Generous Giving" so they could abbreviate it "THE EGG." We'll have more instructions in the weeks to come.

Intro

Today we look at arguably the most well-known story in the whole bible. David versus Goliath. You already heard it this weekend in March Madness - 16 v 1 seed. We've got a real DAVID V GOLIATH on our hands here! It's not two mostly equal strength warriors fighting each other. No, the David v goliath reference is reserved for the LITTLE GUY. For the against all odds scenario. Even if you have never opened the bible in your life, you know the basic gist of the account we are going to cover today.





Like if you had to write a headline for the news article it would read something like
“Young Small David defeats Big Mighty Goliath”

And because you know that much...the inspiration you **could** take away from today is...Hey be courageous like David! You've got giants you are facing right? Be courageous against them! & God can help! Which sounds great and probably could go on one of those inspirational posters. With the image of a hiker standing at the foot of a mountain or something.
The problem is - BE COURAGEOUS is not the ACTUAL point of the story. It's a byproduct of the main point and it only helps you IF you know the main point. Think of understanding the account of David & Goliath like building a wall of Legos. Who likes Legos? everybody. You want to build a Lego wall you need stackable pieces to build a wall...but you also need that big flat piece for the foundation. Because without it, the wall falls really easily.

“Have courage like David” is not the foundation. It's one of the walls. Well, if you don't have the foundation, the

wall might look really good but its gonna fall over really easily.

Now translate that to the idea of courage in our day. We have a massive fear problem don't we. Anxiety is at an all-time high.

- 40% of Americans reported symptoms of anxiety and depression in 2020 compared to just 11% in 2019.¹
- Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health concern in the United States. Over 40 million adults in the U.S. (19.1%) have an anxiety disorder.²
- Anxiety disorders affect 31.9% of adolescents 13 to 18 years old.³
- 61% of Gen Zs report feeling “nervous, anxious, or on edge” in a two-week span⁴
- “Anxiety is a childhood epidemic in America today. I've been counseling children and teenagers for more than 25 years, and I've never

¹<https://www.nssbehavioralhealth.com/nss-blog-the-state-of-mental-health-in-america-2023-adult-prevalence-and-access-to-care/#:~:text=Key%20Takeaways%20from%20the%202023,adults%20experience%20severe%20mental%20illness>

²<https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions/Anxiety-Disorders#:~:text=Anxiety%20disorders%20are%20the%20most,develop%20symptoms%20before%20age%2021.>

³ <https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/facts-statistics>

⁴ <https://murmuration.org/static/Looking-Forward-with-Gen-Z.pdf>



seen anything sweep the lives of kids like worry and anxiety have in the last few years. When I first started counseling, probably 1 out of every 20 kids coming in was dealing with anxiety. Now, at least 16 of every 20 new appointments are for that reason. It is truly an epidemic.”- Sissy Goff ⁵

Listen every time I bring up the word anxiety...every single time...I get emails about how someone was triggered. Just bringing up the idea. Listen if that's you, know we love you and it's always ok to step out of the room. Not judging you & where you are at right now. but I am observing the scope & weight of the problem. It's THAT life dominating right now.

And if all we look at a story like David & Goliath and say SEE - here is the point: BE COURAGEOUS LIKE DAVID! The problem is we are telling you to build up a wall of courage before laying the foundation for it to stand on. And your 'courage' wall is going to fall over when the winds of anxiety and fear start blowing. Not because it's a bad wall, but because it's not built on a sturdy foundational understanding of what David & Goliath is all

⁵ Goff, Sissy, MEd, LPC-MHSP. Raising Worry-Free Girls: Helping Your Daughter Feel Braver, Stronger, and Smarter in an Anxious World. Minneapolis, Minnesota, Baker Publishing Group, 2019.

about.

And as a result - when the wind blows & the wall of courage fails - you are going to start thinking...either my faith is weak, or my faith is strong but it's in a weak God. And the whole time the real problem is you've been treating a wall like it's a foundation. And as any builder will tell you: That's crazy.

So, today we look at 2 things. The Foundational meaning of David v Goliath. And then, how we indeed can build up a wall of courage in our life. But first let's have some fun looking into this incredible account. The chapter is 58 verses so I'm going to do a little summarizing in some parts.

1 The Philistines gathered their forces for war at Socoh in Judah and camped between Socoh and Azekah in Ephes-dammim.

The Philistines...ok these guys are no joke. They are the most technologically advanced army in the known world at the time & the only guys who incorporate iron into their armor & weapons.⁶ We sometimes use philistine as an insult to someone who is culturally antiquated, but they

⁶ The Philistines controlled the 3 major cities along the most popular trade route in the world at that time, called the Via Maris. In our country, think of it like they controlled NY, Miami, and CLT. This is from studies done by Ray Vander Laan. See www.followtherabbi.com.



were not that. And the whole point of the story will be - they were very intimidating.

2 Saul and the men of Israel gathered and camped in the Valley of Elah; then they lined up in battle formation to face the Philistines. 3 The Philistines were standing on one hill, and the Israelites were standing on another hill with a ravine between them.

Perfect iconic battle scene setting right? About a mile between these two hillsides. And onto that setting stomps our villain for today.

4 Then a champion named Goliath, from Gath, came out from the Philistine camp. He was nine feet, nine inches tall 5 and wore a bronze helmet and bronze scale armor (intended to look like a snakes scales) that weighed one hundred twenty-five pounds. 6 There was bronze armor on his shins, and a bronze javelin was slung between his shoulders. 7 His spear shaft was like a weaver's beam, and the iron point of his spear weighed fifteen pounds. In addition, a shield-bearer was walking in front of him.

- That is a big man. there is a theory that says he could be 6'9 not 9'9. But the evidence is in favor of the text. And the point stands regardless of which size he is. He's huge. He's imposing. He's a giant compared to any warrior we've seen in the whole bible.
- And for the READER. For you and me...what lightbulb should be going off? This is the longest

description of military attire in the ENTIRE OLD TESTAMENT. Why would the author go to such detail?

- 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the Lord sees, for humans see what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart." 1 Samuel 16.7
- We are now seeing that this verse...this reminder that God doesn't see as we see...is applied not just to our finest choices but also to our greatest fears. Don't look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. We as bible readers should not be surprised AT ALL that a large imposing figure is on the scene. It's almost too obvious of a plot development.

8 He stood and shouted to the Israelite battle formations, "Why do you come out to line up in battle formation?" He asked them, "Am I not a Philistine and are you not servants of Saul? Choose one of your men and have him come down against me. 9 If he wins in a fight against me and kills me, we will be your servants. But if I win against him and kill him, then you will be our servants and serve us." 10 Then the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel today. Send me a man so we can fight each other!" 11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words from the Philistine, they lost their courage and were terrified.



This is what's called representative warfare. One man from each camp will fight as representatives of the whole camp. If your representative wins...you win. Even though all you did was stand back on the hillside. And in the case of Israel, all they did was stand there terrified because the enemy looked impossible to defeat.

Now back on the farm young David is keeping sheep & making trips to play the lyre for Saul. So, his dad tells him hey take these snacks to your 3 brothers who are old enough to actually fight in the army and check on them. He gets a sheep sitter & heads up to the front lines to give his brothers these kosher lunchables their dad had made.

23 While he was speaking with them, suddenly the champion named Goliath, the Philistine from Gath, came forward from the Philistine battle line and shouted his usual words, which David heard. 24 When all the Israelite men saw Goliath, they retreated from him terrified.

Well David starts asking around about who this oaf is & what kind of reward king Saul has offered to the guy who takes him down.

32 David said to Saul, "Don't let anyone be discouraged by him; your servant will go and fight this Philistine!"

33 But Saul replied, "You can't go fight this Philistine. You're just a youth, and he's been a warrior since he was young."

34 David answered Saul, "Your servant has been tending his father's sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its mouth. If it reared up against me, I would grab it by its fur, strike it down, and kill it. 36 Your servant has killed lions and bears; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 Then David said, "The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine."

Saul said to David, "Go, and may the Lord be with you." In the south what we would say is..." bless your heart." My dude you are going to die.

38 Then Saul had his own military clothes put on David. He put a bronze helmet on David's head and had him put on armor. 39 David strapped his sword on over the military clothes and tried to walk, but he was not used to them. "I can't walk in these," David said to Saul, "I'm not used to them." So, David took them off.

Before you start wondering why...remember this is probably the only metal armor in the army. Philistines had



all the metal. And David is thinking... Can't fight God's battle man's way anyway.

40 Instead, he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the wadi (riverbed) and put them in the pouch, in his shepherd's bag. Then, with his sling in his hand, he approached the Philistine.

42 When the Philistine looked and saw David, he despised him because he was just a youth, healthy and handsome. - remember, he's ruddy. Paul Rudd. early years.

43 He said to David, "Am I a dog that you come against me with sticks?" - Let the trash talking commence. Veteran Battle Tested Goliath knows how to throw shade.

Then he cursed David by his gods. 44 "Come here," the Philistine called to David, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts!"

What you got David?

45 David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with a sword, spear, and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord of Armies, the God of the ranks of Israel — you have defied him. 46 Today, the Lord will hand you over to me. Today, I'll strike you down, remove

your head, and give the corpses of the Philistine camp to the birds of the sky and the wild creatures of the earth.

Not bad for a rookie. Now what he says next matters because he acknowledges the two audiences this will impact.

Then all the world will know that Israel has a God (the whole earth will hear about the God who saved Israel) 47 and this whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord's (God's people will know they can trust him). He will hand you over to us."

48 When the Philistine started forward to attack him, David ran quickly to the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49 David put his hand in the bag, took out a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown to the ground. 50 David defeated the Philistine with a sling and a stone. David overpowered the Philistine and killed him without having a sword. 51 David ran and stood over him. He grabbed the Philistine's sword, pulled it from its sheath, and used it to kill him. Then he cut off his head. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they fled. 52 The men of Israel and Judah rallied, shouting their battle cry, and chased the Philistines to the entrance of the valley and to the gates of Ekron...Philistine bodies were strewn all along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron.



53 When the Israelites returned from the pursuit of the Philistines, they plundered their camps. 54 David took Goliath's head and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put Goliath's weapons in his own tent.

Thus, endeth the story of David & Goliath. Well, now that we have seen it play out the question is in front of us.

What is the foundational meaning of David & Goliath?

- The bigger they are the harder they fall?
- Don't stop believing? Hold on to that fee-eeeling?
- Trust God and he will give you the victory over the giants in your life?

These have long been popular interpretations of David & Goliath. And I'm telling you they are all off.

In reality David v Goliath highlights a deeply important & central principle to how we read the Old Testament.

The foundational purpose of David and Goliath is to lead you to worship the Savior who fought and won your greatest battle for you. **See the primary purpose of the whole bible is not to give you heroes to emulate but to reveal to you a God to worship.**

Think about this account for a second and see if you can see it pointing to the gospel message.

- God's people are terrified because an enemy that is TOO GREAT for anyone to defeat has walked out, wearing the scales of a snake, and started

mocking them. And so, what does God do? He provides a young man from the town of Bethlehem. Who agrees to face the giant snake ON BEHALF of all the rest of God's people. The young man from Bethlehem doesn't go to battle as we expect. He goes out defenseless. In fact, he is MOCKED for his approach to battle. And yet, he takes down the enemy and stands over him victorious. THEN, all of God's people REJOICE because they get to SHARE in HIS victory, HE won over the one that was sure to kill them all.

- ARE YOU CATCHING IT? David is what your English teacher calls an archetype. A foreshadowing of his descendant Jesus. Who goes to face the giant snake as a representative for all mankind. His brothers abandoned him, his enemy mocked him. He was our representative in life - living the perfect life we could not live. He was our representative in death - giving his life as a payment for sin. See David points us to Jesus, the greater David. In Dying for our sin Jesus paid our debt. But then instead of slinging a small stone to avoid death...he rolled a GIANT STONE away and stood over death in victory!
- And the primary purpose of this account is to stir LOVE AND WORSHIP in your heart that the GOD who saved his people then, is the God who sent his son to save us from sin and if you've received Christ, he is the GOD who has defeated your



greatest enemy - HELL ITSELF. Our real goliath is separation from God. owed to us for our sin. That's the foundational enemy. And so, God sent Jesus to defeat that enemy for us.

Now here's the secondary meaning. And how we build up courage. **Because Jesus has defeated our greatest enemy, we can trust him as we face the lesser giants of our lives⁷**

This is courage building in and of itself because it keeps lesser giants where they should be. LESSER. Eternal separation from God is the greater giant. And God has defeated him. But the lesser giants are still there.

So, what are the lesser giants we face? There are some obvious ones, right? **Start with the unknown future** - Well, when I *know* my future is secure, I actually have nothing to fear about the future here on earth. I ground my courage about TOMORROW in my certainty about FOREVER. And I have the promise that God himself is with me.

- So, if I lose my job - Well that's not the END. It's not OVER. Because the God who defeated the real giant of eternal death and separation has said

my future is SECURE and nothing changes about that if my job changes.

- If you get a terminal diagnosis - You don't just say "be courageous like David." You say - My king has defeated death. And has promised me a forever home with no more sickness and no more death. So, I will face this not with bravery but with CERTAINTY that temporary pain WILL NOT SHAKE the kingdom of heaven. I will rejoice in my sufferings because when I suffer IN CHRIST...it produces hope that Romans 5 says will not disappoint.

What about the lesser giant of **approval of others?**

Come on you know you care what other people think. And in Christ you have the approval of the only one whose opinion of you matters. So, you build that courage block onto the foundation of your acceptance by GOD in Christ and THEN you can HANDLE the fear of rejection of anyone.

You can stop living for likes and posing for praise. Because you've got all the love you will ever need!

⁷ I owe this wording to J.D. Greear who said this in a sermon on 1 Samuel 16-17 in a sermon series called "The Whole Bible." I think this captures the Secondary meaning of this passage simply and effectively.



Listen let's take this on the offense now. And talk about courage as we go out into the world with the hope of Christ!

- As you step out and share the gospel...the goliath of Satan himself wants you to fail but you have GOD with you! I think we don't share Christ because we are worried "It won't work" or "I don't have the words." Listen to me, the God who defeated the grave, the God who saved you, HE is the one who does the work of saving others. Go with confidence! Share Christ with EXPECTATION that God is going to win the victory again!
- As we pray for God to heal, pray in confidence that the God who defeated death can HEAL!
- As we pray for God to bless us in our work, pray CONFIDENTLY that he will. Not for our glory but for his!
- As you pray for your marriage that feels SO COLD right now - Or maybe hurting. I'm telling you Goliath is not a problem for God. He loves you, he's stronger than your dysfunctional family. TRUST HIM!

Ya'll it's time to start praying bolder prayers and taking bolder steps not because WE are courageous but because of the foundation our courage is built on.

And there is great beauty & hope in this - that he fights our lesser battles for us too. We don't just stand on Christ; we go behind him into our battles. He's still out in front. He calls us to take up the armor. To join him in battle. Not in our strength, but in his. It's a beautiful thing the Christian life. It's scary, it's hard, it's a REAL struggle sometimes. It's a battle. But a battle being fought IN JESUS, WITH JESUS, FOR JESUS, AND BY JESUS. And one day we will rejoice with Jesus in victory just as Israel rejoiced with David as he stood over goliath.

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus Christ, my righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus name.

On Christ the solid rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand