

Series: Facing the Giants

A CAUSE WORTH FIGHTING FOR

1 SAMUEL 17

Text: 1 Samuel 17:45-47

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⁴⁵ Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. ⁴⁶ This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls 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 all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.

Introduction:

Our text finds both the Israeli and the Philistine armies in well-fortified positions, separated by a ravine called the Valley of Elah. On the north side of that valley or ravine is Israel; on the south side are the Philistines. Whichever army makes the first move is going to have to leave the protection of where they have bunkered themselves down and go out into the open. The first army to move is likely to be the army that loses.

So they are in a stalemate.

After some time a giant named Goliath came down, stood in the middle of the valley and said, and challenged Israel's army.

For forty consecutive days he had gone down and made that challenge.

Apparently he got more strident, harsh and insulting as time went on, until we come to the time where he says, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together."

David was probably considered too young to fight in the army. His father hadn't sent him when his brothers went to fight, but had sent him with some food, some bread, and some parched corn. Just as David got there, here comes Goliath. Forty days now he has come out; now he comes again speaking the same words, "I defy the armies of Israel; give me a man, that I may fight with him.

Verse 24 tells us what the response of the Israelite army was:

1 Samuel 17:24

²⁴ *And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.*

Consider how David defined his times and faced the giant.

1. HE SIZED UP THE PROBLEM

A. A Fierce Foe

David looked and saw a fierce foe. Goliath was an intimidating figure.

- He was 9 ½ feet tall (v.4).

1 Samuel 17:4

⁴ And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

- His armor weighed over 200 pounds and his weapons were immense (vv.5-7).

1 Samuel 17:5-7

⁵ And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. ⁶ And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. ⁷ And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.

Added to his physical appearance was this giant's attitude.

He stood in defiance against Israel (vv.8-10).

1 Samuel 17:8-10

⁸ *And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. ⁹ If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. ¹⁰ And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.*

Not only was he defiant but he had complete disdain for God's people.

Put it all together and David faced a fierce foe in Goliath.

B. Friendly Fire

But Goliath was not really the greatest giant David had to face that day.

Goliath was a fierce foe but it was friendly fire that David would have to watch for most diligently.

In every war there are occasions when soldiers are accidentally killed by friendly fire.

David was getting ready to face some friendly fire but it was not all accidental.

The real enemies of our life are more subtle than Goliath.

Consider four subtle enemies that David and you and I have to face in life.

- The Enemy of Past Carelessness and Failure

Goliath would not have been standing there in defiance against Israel if Israel had not failed to obey God in the past.

Israel could and should have driven the Philistines from the land when they first entered it (Joshua 1:2-6; 3:9-10).

More recently, Saul had led the people to fear the Philistines rather than God (1 Samuel 13).

Saul failed miserably in obeying God and God's prophet, Samuel.

Because of his carelessness and failure, Saul's army quickly dwindled.

Like Saul, many of our giants are the results of past carelessness and failure.

Things we could have dealt with when they were small become giants that seem nearly impossible to drive out of our lives.

- The Enemy of Criticism and Rejection

David also had to face the critical spirit of nearly everyone who claimed to belong to God around him.

Saul had already allowed the people's critical spirit drive him into rebellion against God (1 Samuel 13:4,8-13).

Now David had to face the criticism of his own brothers.

His oldest brother, Eliab rebuked David and said,

1 Samuel 17:28

²⁸ And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

It is hard enough to face criticism of our actions but when our motives are challenged we often turn and run.

David did not!

David handled criticism by doing what God showed him to do.

Your greatest enemy is anything that stands between you and doing what God has called you to do. Defeat that enemy by doing what God called you to do!

- The Enemy of Public Opinion

David also had to face the enemy of the majority.

Everyone else in Israel had already given up in despair (vv.11, 24).

1 Samuel 17:11

¹¹ *When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.*

1 Samuel 17:24

²⁴ *And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.*

When David told Saul of his plans to fight Goliath, the King scolded the young boy and said:

1 Samuel 17:33

³³ *And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.*

Beware of following the majority.

Public approval is a subtle enemy.

Unlike Saul, we cannot afford to let whatever one else thinks and says move us.

We must remember the words of the Lord. He said:

Matthew 10:28

²⁸ *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

In other words, concern yourself only with what God says and not man.

- The Enemy of Selfish Ambition

This may be the hardest of all to see.

David could easily have been swayed by the promises of reward and acclaim.

1 Samuel 17:25

²⁵ And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

Had David gone out to fight Goliath for riches or the hand of a beautiful young woman he would surely have failed.

We must learn this lesson along with David.

We cannot even trust our own hearts when fighting the giants of life.

Our most subtle and dangerous enemies are our own motives and hearts.

Notice not only did “He Size Up the Problem” but also:

2. HE WAS SECURE IN THE PERSON OF GOD

Note:

A. The Focus of the Attack

David sized up the problem and tackled it secure in his knowledge of God.

He saw the real focus of this attack while others did not.

Goliath was not challenging David or Israel; he was challenging God.

David knew that the real focus of Goliath's attack was God Himself (v.36).

1 Samuel 17:36

³⁶ Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

Note David's response:

1 Samuel 17:45

⁴⁵ Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

It is important to remember that this is God's battle not ours.

When we are criticized for simply seeking to obey God – remember, the battle belongs to the Lord.

When following God leads you against the stream of the majority - remember, the battle belongs to the Lord.

Even when your own heart fails you - remember, the battle belongs to the Lord.

B. David's Faith in God

Because David saw the real focus of the attack he rested his faith in God.

He had faith in his past experiences with God.

1 Samuel 17:34-37

³⁴ And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: ³⁵ And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. ³⁶ Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. ³⁷ David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

God is the same yesterday, today, and forever?

Surely, if God was there for you in the past, He is here with you now!

David's faith also rested on proven weapons.

Saul offered his armor and weapons but David didn't trust them. They had not been tested in battle.

1 Samuel 17:38-40

³⁸ And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. ³⁹ And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. ⁴⁰ And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

When you face the giants of life do so with proven weapons.

Look to the God who has always been true. Look to God's people and Word.

David also had faith in the providential oversight of God.

In the end he knew God was fighting this battle in and through him (vv.45-47).

1 Samuel 17:45-47

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Do you have that same confidence in the Lord?

Close:

Have you let the giants of criticism or rejection come between you and what God has called you to do?

Have you let the giant of popular opinion silence the words God has given you to speak?

Have you let past failure come between you and obeying God?

Do like David – Look to the God who has always been there for you as a believer, use the weapons He has given you and trust Him.