

THY SERVANT WILL GO

1 SAMUEL 17:12-40

Text: 1 Samuel 17:32

(1 Sam 17:32) "And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

Introduction:

You could be sitting next to a hero and not even know it.

That's one of the strange things about heroes – usually they are as surprised as everyone else is at their display of courage.

They will tell you that they just happened to be in the right place at the right time and they did what anyone else would have done. I

Illustration:

In May of 1862, a small battle took place in the Shenandoah Valley. General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson had engaged Union troops at the little town of McDowell. Jackson's troops had gained the high ground and were pressing their advantage. At one end was the

12th Georgia, lined up across the crest of a small hill. They were responsible for holding that position. Throughout the day, the battle raged. Then the sun began to set behind the hill – behind the Rebel soldiers. As this happened, the 12th Georgia soldiers were silhouetted against the skyline, creating an easy target for their enemy. The unit began to suffer heavy casualties. Realizing this, the order was given for the Georgia regiment to withdraw. But some of the Georgians refused to give up their ground! Soon, those who had been lead to safety returned to their former positions and resumed the battle.

When the battle ended, the unit had lost 40 men killed and 135 wounded. A commanding officer asked one young recruit why the soldiers continued to fight in spite of the hazard of their position. The proud soldier replied, "Sir, we did not come all the way from Georgia to run from Yankees!"

You don't have to agree with his cause, but you have to admire that young man's courage. He and a few others decided to stand and fight when others were content to withdraw.

We witness the same kind of heroism in the story of David and Goliath. While the entire Israeli army cowered in their trenches, intimidated by the taunts of the giant, David stood apart and asked, "Is there not a cause?"

Think of those two words, "A Cause." They mean that something is a life or death, all or nothing issue. A cause is something that directs our lives and molds our behavior. It is something to stand for, to live for ... and sometimes to die for.

Join a cause with a crisis, and you'll generally produce a hero. That's what happened in the life of David. When he saw the enemy of God walking between the camps uncontested, he was provoked to action. Cause and crisis met, and a hero was born.

There is general agreement today that Christianity is in a crisis. And there is a cause. The circumstances are ideal for producing heroes.

Let's see what David has to teach us about a hero in the making.

1. HEROES ARE FOUND IN UNLIKELY PLACES – VERSES 12-19

To me, these verses emphasize David's insignificance. Look at the details God has chosen to record for eternity about David.

- He was from a little town – Bethlehem. The prophet Micah would later write that the town was "little among the thousands of Judah."

- He was the littlest son of a large family. He had seven older brothers, each of them big enough to persuade the prophet Samuel that they could fill the role of a king.
- He had just a little job to do. While his big brothers were enlisted in the army, David was relegated to the role of an errand boy. He was to deliver a lunch and bring back a report

Perhaps to you and I, David didn't have much to commend him for the job that had to be done. But understand these two things:

- David was chosen for his character, not his credentials.
- David was chosen for his faith, not his physique.

2. HEROES HAVE AN UNCOMMON PERSPECTIVE – VERSES 20-27

David arrived at the battlefield just as the two armies prepared for their daily sparring match. This had been going on for 40 days. This tells me that neither army was really trying very hard. Both sides were interested in an easy victory. I believe that all these "battles" amounted to was a little trash talking and spear waving. You know, "Your mother wears combat boots!"

"Oh yea, well, your daddy was a weightlifter. He raised a bunch of dumbbells!" Or something like that.

About that time, Goliath begins to strut his stuff. He repeats the challenge that he's been rehearsing for the last 40 days. And he gets the exact same results.

- Read verse 11, the Israelite response to his initial challenge. "When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid."
- Read verse 24. And all the men of Israel, when they SAW the man, fled from him, and they were sore afraid.

David's words in verse 26 let us know that David had a different perspective of Goliath than did the average Israeli soldier. There is no trace in him of the fear that gripped the army.

- In David's eyes, Goliath was a reproach against Israel. He was saying that Israel ought to be ashamed for allowing the giant's challenge to go unanswered.
- David didn't see a giant Philistine, but an uncircumcised Philistine.

As Paul would later write, Goliath was a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without

God in the world. Israel had the promises of God. They were the people of God. Yet, they were behaving as if God had abdicated the throne of Heaven and was incapable of taking care of His people.

- David realized that Goliath wasn't challenging just any army, but the armies of the Living God.

3. HEROES OFTEN HAVE TO OVERCOME UNEXPECTED OPPOSITION – VERSES 28-39

Look at the obstacles he had to overcome before he could face Goliath.

- The scorn of his brother. (Verse 28) As a teenager might put it, David was "dissed" by Eliab. His response to David's faith was anger and ridicule.
- The skepticism of his king. (Verses 30-33) When Saul compares David and Goliath, David fails to measure up. In Saul's opinion, David is too young and too inexperienced.
- The status quo. (Verses 38-39) To me, that is what Saul's armor represents. It's tradition, formalism, "The way we've always done things."

There was nothing "wrong" with a brass helmet, a coat of mail, and a steel sword. David would make use of all

those things later. But they were wrong for David at that moment.

God's people had forgotten what kind of God they served. They were underestimating His abilities. They had come to trust in armed and arrayed armies instead of the Living God. They needed to be reminded of the power of God and the potential of faith.

CONCLUSION

So, what does it take to be a hero of the faith? It only takes three qualities – three traits that any of us can possess.

- A sense of purpose Verse 29

If you are going to attempt "the impossible" for God, you have to know your purpose and stick to it. If you listen to the scorn and skepticism of those around you, you are likely to get your feelings hurt, your vision obscured, and your resolve weakened.

- An attitude of expectation Verse 36

You have to know what you can expect God to do.

- Because of His past performance

- Because of His unchanging person
- Because of His sure promises.
- A preparedness to act on faith alone.

Verse 39 "And David put them off him."

Sometimes, you have to step out on a limb and put God to the test.

You have to realize that what works for others will not work for you. You have to be willing to put yourself squarely in the hands of God and face a giant with nothing in your hand but a sling and five little stones.

I want to close with a short poem by George Liddel. Listen carefully, because if it describes you, you could be a hero in the making.

Give me a man of God – one man,
Whose faith is master of his mind,
And I will right all wrongs
And bless the name of all mankind.

Give me a man of God – one man,
Whose tongue is touched with heaven's fire,
And I will flame the darkest hearts
With high resolve and clean desire.

Give me a man of God – one man,
True to the vision that he sees,
And I will build your broken shrines
And bring the nations to their knees.

Be that man.