

The Provision of God

Faithfulness of God

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This morning, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the book of 1 Samuel 17 and today we have the privilege of not only reading but studying probably one of the most famous stories not just in the Bible but in the entirety of the world. Today is that famous story of David and Goliath. It is the story that's been alluded to in the sports world, the business world, the political world, every aspect of it. Why? Because this is one of those stories that so resonates with us what does it look like when the Goliath of our life or the Goliath of our world is taken down by the least qualified and apt of opponents.

Today, as we turn to chapter 17 of the book of 1 Samuel, if you're a guest or visitor, I want to welcome you to a journey through the book of 1 Samuel because what we've been seeing all along are two clashing ideologies: what does it look like when a society or a culture navigates from the sacred to the secular. At the beginning of 1 Samuel, the Israelites who we're going to speak of very clearly in just a moment, they were ruled by the judges, they lived their life according to "Thus saith the Lord," but by the time you get to chapter 8, they no longer wanted God's guidance, they no longer wanted his authority, they wanted to look just like everybody else. They wanted to do it the world's way. No better picture of what happens when you want to do it the world's way than the famous story that we're about to read in chapter 17, but on the other side, we see the faithfulness of God. In spite of the circumstances, in spite of the environment, in spite of what's happening around us, when we are faithful and when we are dedicated and surrendered to the will, the way, and the word of God, just like we see in the life of David today, the Lord can take down that which everybody else says should consume us.

Today, in 1 Samuel 17, we're not going to read the entirety of it, it's one of the most famous stories in all of the world, but we're going to allude to several very critical passages and verses and here's what I want you to see today: who are these participants, who was Goliath, and on the other side, who really was David. On the other side, I want you to see a very unique perspective that David had compared to all the other Israelites including Saul who was the king over them. And finally, what is the power that David utilized to win this famous battle, and when we get there I'm going to make you a promise the power was not in the famous slingshot and in the rock.

In chapter 17, beginning in verse 4, very famous story. The Philistines are on one side, the Israelites are on the other, and a man by the name of Goliath has challenged the Israelites to a fight. Beginning in verse 4 of chapter 17 it says,

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. 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. 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.

Fast forward to verse 42 and I want you to see the description of David. This is the young man who God will use to take down Goliath. Verse 42 says,

42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

Now today when we look at these two very dramatically different individuals, I want to talk about why and how they were so different. Obviously, we know Goliath was massive and we know David not so much. You know, there's an old adage that a picture is worth a thousand words, hopefully today's will be worth more than that, I want to show you a picture of what Goliath would have looked like compared to you. Now I don't know who you are on this picture if you're the average man, boy, girl, whoever, but the Bible, it seems somewhat odd with the measurements we're given here. It says that he was six cubits and a span. Now if we're going to be legalistic about it, a cubit was roughly about 18 inches. Obviously, in some context, it could be a little smaller or a little greater. But today we're just going to hit it right in the middle of the fairway. If you take just a middle conservative perspective, Goliath stood a mere 9 foot 9 inches tall. Now let me put that in perspective. In the United States of America today, if you are over 7 foot tall, which if you did not know, I am not, but if you are over 7 foot tall there is a one in seven chance that you play in the NBA. But if you take even the tallest player, whoever the donned the court of the National Basketball Association, Goliath would stand at least two feet taller than him. Let's put it in perspective: he could simply reach his hand just a few inches above his forehead and grab the rim. He could easily extend his arm and grab the back of the backboard.

This was a mammothly tall man but you and I have seen, we've read the Guinness Book of World Records, and most of these individuals who the Lord has blessed with unbelievable height usually do not have as much girth. They're typically very tall, very thin, very lanky, but that's not the case with Goliath and I know it seems like kind of an enigma here when it says that that which he bore or his armor weighed a certain amount

of shekels, but let me put that in our terminology today: his armor alone would have weighed 270 pounds approximately. Now you do realize that is about the size of a defensive end in the NFL. He carried around with him J. J. Watt, let me put it in perspective. And not only was he able to carry him, but he was able to go into battle, he was able to move freely, he was able to run. And so not only was he almost 10 foot tall, if you do the math, at minimum to move the way he would need to move to do what he needed to do carrying all that weight, he was at a minimum of 650 pounds, most likely he would have been somewhere in the area of 750-800 but we're going to keep it on the conservative side today.

Now don't get me wrong, that's impressive, but did you know we have biblical evidence not just of his height, not just of his weight, but he was ugly. You say, "Well, how do you know Goliath was ugly?" I mean, that's a subjective term, right? Because in the book of 2 Samuel 21, it talks about a battle involving his brothers. Now we're going to get to them more in just a moment. The Bible makes a very specific detail about the family, it says that they all had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. Now the Bible doesn't say anything about the rest of him but if you were 10 foot tall, weighed 800 pounds, and you have 24 digits, you ugly.

This was a mammoth man and then there's David. Now verse 42 gives a very interesting description of him: he is ruddy and a fair countenance. Now unfortunately, there are those that have taken that description and they've gone down a path they need not do so and here's why: that's actually a description that you find in other places in the Bible that would describe the appearance of a woman. Now hear me very clearly: David didn't have an ounce of feminism or femininity in him at all; he wrestled bears and lions. So why would the Bible describe him the similar magnitude of a young lady? It's real simple: he hadn't even gone through puberty yet. He didn't own a razor. He didn't have any leg hair. I could keep going but I'm going to stop. In other words, you had a young man that had not even reached the brink of manhood. He still had that baby face on him. He still had a jaw that wasn't squared. He had no need of a razor. And I want you to think about the illustration here; here is somebody probably half the size of Goliath who hasn't even shaved going up against one of the biggest, ugliest creatures the world has ever known.

But here is what is distinct about David. We're going to talk more specifically at the end of kind of the "how" but I want to talk about the "what was so distinct": the weapon that he utilized. Now Goliath's sword weighed 70 pounds and it says the head or the end of it weighed about 16-18 pounds. I want you to think about how strong Goliath would have been. Sixteen pounds is the size of a professional bowling ball. I want you to imagine taking a bowling ball, putting it on the end of a five foot stick and trying to swing it. But Goliath could do it with ease. What does David show up with? It's a famous story, right? A slingshot and five smooth stones. That slingshot known as a shepherd's sling would have been about 4-5 feet in length, made of rope, leather or such. How many nights had that young man who had yet crested puberty stood out in the middle of the night and seen some type of animal approaching the sheep and he would take that leather and he would swing it, he would let that rock fly and he would keep the fold safe.

It was an instrument that he had great precision with. It was an instrument that he had great confidence in. But one of the things, I think at least in our culture, we don't realize is how powerful it really was, and so today I want to show you a very brief clip of an individual who did a study of this instrument and I think you're going to be as surprised as he is on this video. Watch this.

[Video clip]

So let's have a look at it now using momentum which is a better indicator for penetration and, again, somebody else highlighted the fact of the momentum of a 9mm bullet. So just have a look at that. Now if you take a 9mm Parabellend, obviously there are varieties but let's just say we take a sort of fairly average thing, it gives you, let's say, 1,200 feet per second which is around 380 meters per second. It has a weight of 7 ½ grams, again, I do it metric, and that gives me momentum of 2.85. Now I just threw 115 feet per second so we average that, we metricate that 35 meters a second. My shot that I was shooting, the lead glands, were around 80 grams. So if we put that through the maths, we get a momentum of 2.8. So 2.85 for a 9mm bullet, 2.8 for the lead shot that I threw just now.

So that really is, frankly, I'm surprised. Really surprised, actually. I've heard that these things were very powerful. It's just difficult to contemplate that this bit of string and this bit of leather that I can roll up and pop in my pocket has effectively the penetrating power of a 9mm bullet. Discuss, "I know the 9mm is more, blah, blah, blah." I'm missing out an awful lot of stuff but the point being this thing, this little thing is just an awesomely powerful tool."

[end of video clip]

Puts the story in a whole new light, doesn't it? Basically, David had the firepower of what we know in the modern era as ballistic, and he had the precision of striking him in right the exact moment.

That is the perspective or that are the participants. Let's look at the perspective that David had. Now here's a little backstory by the time we get to verse 29: David didn't just show up to the battlefield with his sling ready to go. I'm sure many of you are familiar with the story so allow me to summarize it for the sake of time. David is the youngest of eight brothers. One of my favorite lines in all the Bible, his dad comes to him and says, "I need you to go to the battlefield and take your brothers some cheeses." That's the exact statement that Jesse gave. I don't know why he thought eating cheese would help you fight Goliath but nonetheless that's what he did. So David shows up, no need to take a razor, he hasn't shaved yet, show up to the army and basically he asks, "What's going on here?" They give him the lowdown, "This big, old, nasty, ugly guy keeps coming down and one of us has been challenged to fight him but none of us are willing to do so because none of us are that crazy." I want you to hear the response that David gives in verse 29, "And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" I want you to understand the difference between David and his brothers, the difference between David and the

other Israelites, and the difference between David and Saul. David believed that there were some things, and in particular this one thing, that were worth risking it all for. He believed that God was bigger, stronger, and more powerful than even that big ugly guy that kept coming down every day threatening the Israelites. Also, this same Goliath, as we're going to see in a moment, didn't just come down and yell and scream, he would curse the name of the one true God, and you get the idea it's almost as if David said, "Would somebody just please shut him up?" Do you see the difference there?

The Israelites, you see back in chapter 8 they said, "Give us a king." Remember why they said, "Give us a king"? There was a really important reason, "because we want him to fight our battles for us." You see, the difference is the Israelites, his own brothers, were waiting for Saul to take care of matters but, remember, this is the same Saul that when God anointed him to be king, he hid among the stuff because he didn't want the job. Now remember, Saul stood head and shoulders above everybody else. Saul probably was about 7 foot tall. Saul was a massive man for his own sake. Not as big as Goliath but bigger than everybody else. In fact, remember he gives his armor to David and he says, "Well, if you're at least going to go into battle wear this." David put it on and he said, "No, this won't do." Do you know one of the reasons I think it wouldn't do? I don't think he could move, it would have weighed so much. Do you see the difference here? Everybody's waiting on Saul because they wanted the world's means. David basically shows up and says, "What are we waiting for? Do you think God enjoys this, is going to put up with this? Why don't we just take this guy out?"

So what is so distinct? What is so distinct about David's statement, "Is there not a cause?" Let me tell you why he was distinct: he did not allow his environment to dictate what was true; he did not allow the volume of voices to change his opinion of what was true. You do realize he was really the only man standing. He was the only one who believed. You do remember we studied a couple of weeks ago he was a man after God's own heart. David was just this side of crazy enough to believe that God could somehow pull this off.

So let's talk about our environment, let's talk about our culture, and if you will allow me on this very strategic day, if you don't mind, let me get just a tad bit transparent and personal. I've lost count of how many people ask me if we're still going to get out tonight and share the gospel. You know what the answer is, right? Is there not a cause? Can you imagine standing before God one day and saying, "No, we didn't share the gospel that night because it was raining." Do you know what David would say? "Is there not a cause?" I mean, I know it's inconvenient and I know it doesn't look good and I know there's a lot going on, but come one. I mean, we go watch football games in this mess. I guarantee you the golf course is full today. Getting a little personal, isn't it?

Let me take you back and show you a little history. I'm going to take you back to January 6, 1850. Now the good news is none of us were actually there. Some of us think we were but we were not there in 1850. On the other side of the pond in the area known as London, that day an unannounced snowstorm came through and the churches around the area began to do what all churches do, "Should we come back tonight, the weather is too bad?" Remember, it's 1850, they don't have a lot of the advantages that we do to alter our

environment like we do today. They made the decision to go ahead and meet that night. A small little Methodist church around the corner gathered, according to the record just a handful of people showed. Well, you know, it's not just Baptists that gripe, we all gripe. They started to say, "Why did we show up? There's not enough people here. This was a waste of time, it was a waste of fuel. I mean, all of this for just a handful of people." That night, there was a young man that strayed into that little small church. He sat under the gospel of Jesus Christ for just a very abbreviated sermon. That night, he records that he was converted, he was saved by the power and the blood of Jesus Christ. That young man was Charles Haddon Spurgeon known as the Prince of Preachers.

You see, when you get the right perspective, it doesn't matter what the quantity is. When you get the right perspective, it doesn't matter what the volume of naysayers are. When you get the right perspective, you ask this very important question: what did God call me to do? And it doesn't matter if anybody, including my own brothers, my own countrymen, or my own king, are not willing to do it, is there not a cause? Now do you see why we hold David in such high esteem? Here's the problem: if we had gone back to the story in chapter 17, unfortunately most of us, and I'm going to go ahead and include myself and use it personally, us, would have looked at this young man and said, "Are you nuts? Are you crazy? I mean, do you not see what...? But why would you go?" He said, "Is there not a cause?" Which leads us to verse 43. I want to read the account of the battle and I want you to see where the power lies. It says,

43 And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. 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 [with a slingshot and a stone, I'm just seeing if you're reading the Bible. What did he say?] He said, 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. 48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. 50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

Now let me share with you the difference and then the distinctiveness of what we just read. Here's what's different: Goliath came out to defeat one man. Remember what he said at the very beginning? "Elect somebody, choose somebody and whoever that person is, we're going to fight it to the death. If your guy wins, we'll serve you. If I most assuredly win, you will serve us." Here's the difference: how many stones did David bring? Five. Do you really think after what we just read about his confidence in the Lord, do you really think he was scared he was going to miss? And to be quite honest with you, based on the description we just read, if he had missed do you really think he had the opportunity to reload? I mean, he had one shot.

You say, "What's so different? Why would he have five stones?" Remember that passage I alluded to in 2 Samuel where it said that they had the six fingers and the six toes? Do you know what we discover? Goliath, big, nasty Goliath had four brothers. Now I can do basic math, $1 + 4 = 5$. You say, "Why is that so important?" Goliath came down and said, "I'm gonna whoop one person." David showed up and he said, "I'm gonna whoop you and your brothers is what I'm gonna do." If you read the rest of the story, the Israelite army chased down after everybody when it was over. It's a little different, isn't it? Goliath said, "I'll just take out one and it'll be done." David said, "No, no, no, we're not gonna do this like we did in the past where we left some of your kinfolks to the side. We're gonna take care of this."

So what's so distinct? What is it about that David did? It wasn't just the fact that he had a weapon that was powerful and precise, as we saw in the video. It's not just the fact that he had the experience of utilizing it in the field at night and God gave him provision that day. I think it goes all the way back to verse 45, it says, "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." Now I want you to notice the last statement of verse 50, "but there was no sword in the hand of David." You know, when you get to the New Testament in the book of Ephesians 6, it talks about the armor of God, the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, all those things. You know there is only one offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit, which is described as the word of God.

What does that mean? That means that all of us at some level have Goliath's and we've all fallen into the Saul syndrome, right? If we don't have the right armor we can't go into battle. We don't have the right strategy we can't go forth. So what does young David exemplify, model for us? He says, "Do you know what? You might not have the right armor, you might not have the right weapon, but if you will just go where God's told you to go and do what God has told you to do, he will take down that Goliath." Here's the problem, most of us say, "But what about this? But what about that?" He says, "No, no, if you do as the Lord has spoken it can change everything."

I want you to think back to those of you that are saved, I want you to think back to the day that you got saved. Why did you call on the name of the Lord? Because you knew it didn't matter how much education you got, it couldn't fix your sin problem. You knew it didn't matter how many connections you had, how many friends you had, it didn't matter

how many things you had, it wasn't going to solve it. So what did you do? You did what Romans 10:13 says, whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Do you know why you did that? Because you believed that the word of God was powerful enough to save you from hell, is it not powerful enough to save you from the Goliath that's staring you in the face? Kind of puts it in perspective, does it not?

As we come to the close of this service, there's some of you here today, you're believers, you're seated in the heavens, you're as saved as I am, but you've got a Goliath and it is staring you down in the face. You've tried everything you know to throw, whatever thing you've got at it. David said, "I come in the name of the Lord." But there's some of you today, that Goliath in your life isn't a struggle, it's not a predicament, it's a sin problem. You've got a sin condition and you've tried the therapy and the rehab and I'm not being disparaging toward that I'm just saying you've tried it in your strength, you've tried it in man's strength. Maybe today you say, "Do you know what? Maybe I ought to unleash the word of God." Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. As we come to this time of decision, maybe you are that individual, maybe you're here in person, maybe you're watching online, you've thrown everything you know at your sin problem but you've never trusted the word of the Lord. The Bible says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Maybe today is the day for the very first time in your life you remove you from the equation and make it all about the Lord. The Bible says that the wages of the result of our sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Maybe today you're that person for the very first time who says, "Do you know what? I need to own it today. I've got a sin problem. I've been places I shouldn't have been. I've done things I shouldn't have done. I've spoken words I should have never spoken.. I've had thoughts I should have never thought. Today I believe. I believe that the wages of the result of my sin is exactly what the Bible says, it will be death for all of eternity. But I also believe that the Lord has given the gift of Jesus Christ for my salvation. So God, today I want you to know I believe. God, I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much that he came on my behalf, he lived a sinless life on my behalf. God, I believe that he died a sacrificial death on his cross to pay the price and punishment of my sin. And God, today I believe that when Jesus Christ rose from the grave he made it possible for my sin to be forgiven and my soul to be saved. God, today I confess I don't have the ability, I don't have the strength, I don't have the resources to fix this sin problem, that's why I'm trusting you. The best way I know how, God, I'm asking you to forgive me, I'm asking you to save me. I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed, maybe you're that person this morning who had that conversation with the Lord for the very first time. Maybe today after I pray and we stand you need to step out and step forward. We've got a whole team of individuals that would love to pray with you, pray for you, and just hear your story. But maybe you're already saved. Maybe today it's not about a decision for Christ Jesus, maybe it's about following in believer's baptism as we saw earlier in the service, maybe it's about being a part of this incredible body of believers known as First Baptist, Opelika, or maybe you just need to be prayed with or prayed for. We're here for you. But for those

today saying, "Do you know what? There's nothing I need to step out and step forward on." I'm firmly convinced every one of us needs to step out of here with a new perspective because every one of us has a Goliath. Nobody may know what your Goliath is, it may just be between you and God, but you know who or what it is and maybe today it's not about stepping out and stepping forward, maybe it's about stepping out of here and maybe for the very first time saying, "I'm going to trust the word of the Lord on this one."

Lord Jesus, as we come to this time of decision, thank you that there is no object, there is no obstacle, there is no obstruction that does not come down at the power of your word. May we simply trust you today. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.