

“WHAT IS YOUR GOLIATH”

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Text: 1 Samuel 17: (1a, 4-11, 19-23) 32-49 NLT

God's Word: Mark 4:35-41 NLT

Certainly the Bible makes it quite clear that God's power is able to come out of the so-called “least of these,” and therefore anyone of us can do mighty things for God through faith! And the story of David defeating the Philistine's giant champion warrior, Goliath—by stepping out in faith is an excellent example of this.

David was the seemingly insignificant youngest son of a farmer. He was a simple shepherd boy and a really good harp player and that is how the world would have seen him, but God saw in him much more.

How do you see yourself and how does God see you? What possibilities does God see that we aren't willing or able to see in ourselves? And what things are getting in the way of us being all that we can be through God working in us?

In our Old Testament Lesson for this morning the Israelites were going about life, struggling to plant their vineyards, raise their families and instill in their children good values to help them navigate through the challenging terrain of life. And just when they think they've hit smooth sailing for a bit, the Philistines rear their ugly heads. Just when the people think that they can relax just a little, just when they think they've finally got it down, they're blinded by something huge, something terrifying, by...Goliath.

Does this sound familiar to any of us? Is this not how this life often goes? Something comes up in this life...threatening our very existence...our very peace of mind. And we, like the Israelites who are confronted with the giant Goliath are in a quandary as to what to do. So...like the Israelites...we sometimes do nothing. The Israelites wrung their hands and hung their heads, and allowed their fear to incapacitate them.

Day after day, Goliath taunted them: “I am bigger than you are. I am stronger than you are. Evil is greater than good. Darkness is stronger than light. I defy the armies—the forces—of your living God!”

Yes, the Israelites were paralyzed by fear. And this went on for forty days. For forty days Goliath taunted the people. And for forty days their fear grew and grew and grew as they were “dismayed and terrified” and growing more so every day.

Could it be that the Israelites were beginning to believe the taunts of Goliath? Were they beginning to believe that Goliath was bigger and stronger than they were? Were they beginning to really believe that darkness was stronger than light and that evil was greater than good?

My friends, “Goliath” is that which threatens to overwhelm us and undo us. And we all have our Goliaths.

What is your Goliath? What is it that throws you into a quandary so that you wring your hands, hang your head and do nothing? What is it that makes you most afraid? What is it that cripples you, paralyzes you? What is it that threatens to undo you? What is it that defies the power of the living God in your life?

Is it the bad news on the front page of the morning newspaper? Is it your addictions or some temptation that taunts you day and night? Is it a lack of self-esteem? Is it peer pressure? Is it your fear of not being able to keep up with the Jones’? Is it your fear of not having job security or of not being able to pay your bills? Is it the fear of being alone? Is it cancer? Is it death? Is it depression? What is your crippling, paralyzing fear?

What is your “Goliath?” And how can we possibly combat such a mighty and mammoth foe?

Well, the answer lies in the last place we’d expect to find it. We would have expected Saul, the king and the military leader of Israel, who stood, as the Bible says, a head and shoulders taller than other men, to go head to head with Goliath.

Or we would have expected one of the Israelite army’s biggest and strongest, bravest and best soldiers to step forward. Or maybe even some brilliant military commander to come up with some wise maneuver, some shrewd strategic game plan—some clever mastermind who could anticipate every possible move the Philistine army could possibly make, like in a giant military chess game. But a kid with a sling shot...well...go figure!

In order to slay the giant Goliath, God chose to use something so small, so insignificant, so seemingly powerless, so every day and so ordinary. A kid with a sling shot!

Yes, what Good News!!!! What Good News indeed!!!! God’s power comes out of “the least of these!” We don’t have to be mighty and wise in the world’s eyes in order to overcome the Goliaths of this life.

In our Old Testament Lesson for this morning we see David stepping out in faith when the most tempting thing to do would have been to cower with the rest of the Israelites—and allow himself to be paralyzed by fear!

And to be paralyzed by fear is the worst thing that we can allow to happen to us. Fear saps the joy out of life. It makes everything a drudgery. Fear, can, indeed, cause this life to be a

living hell! And this living in fear...this allowing the Goliaths of this life to slay us is not within God's plan for our lives.

God wants us to be victorious through our faith in Jesus Christ and what He has done and is able to do on our behalf. It is God's will that we face the things that threaten to undo us, not by using our own strength, but by relying on the love and grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ! And in doing this, any obstacle, and giant, mammoth Goliath can be slain.

Our only chance of being able to get through this life in a victorious manner where we are able to possess the peace that transcends all understanding and the joy that doesn't make any sense is to rely on God to conquer and control the Goliaths! We can't do it on our own. We can't do it by wringing our hands and hanging our heads and hoping that Goliath will just somehow, magically go away!!! We can only overcome our fears by facing them with the faith that God gives us through Jesus Christ our Lord!!!

In verse 32 we see that as the Israelites are in the depths of being paralyzed by fear. David comes up to King Saul and says: "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine, your servant will go and fight him." And when Saul balks at this seemingly ridiculous idea by telling David that David is just a boy and that Goliath is an older man who has been "fighting from his youth,"

David replies by saying basically, *"Yes, Goliath has been fighting with his own strength, using the power of darkness as his shield since his youth...but I have been keeping my father's sheep victoriously through my faith and reliance on God. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it with faith in God. I allowed God's grace to enable me go after it, strike it and rescue the sheep from its mouth. Yes, although I am small and seemingly insignificant, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me! Through the grace of Christ, and the power of Christ working through me I have killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them...The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."*

Goliath was much bigger and stronger than David...but the key is that Goliath was relying on his own strength to get the job done...David was relying on the Lord!!!

And the Lord is able to conquer any Goliath that gets in our way...the Lord is able to conquer any Goliath that threatens to undo us and cause us to run to a corner and hide in fear!!!

Goliath had been a "fighting man from his youth," but David was a man of faith who had witnessed and experienced what God is able to do...even through the least of these!!! And because David had relied on and been victorious in the past through his faith in God, he had no doubt that God would be able to cause him to be victorious this time—even while facing the giant Goliath!!!

We all face Goliath's in this life. We can allow them to defeat us as we wring our hands and hang our heads...living in fear! We can allow them to defeat us by trying to overcome them with our own strength. Or we can be victorious over them by trusting in God to defeat them for us!!!

There is no power too great. There is no tragedy so large. There is no temptation too overwhelming. There is no foe so mammoth in our lives that God cannot defeat through our putting our whole trust and our whole faith in His love for us!

The key is to have faith that God loves us enough that He will enable us to possess the peace which transcends all understanding and the joy that doesn't make any sense no matter what the circumstance! In order to have any chance at all...in order to face our Goliaths and live victoriously we must...we must put our whole faith and trust in God.

In our Gospel Lesson for this morning from Mark that Pastor Mike read earlier we find Jesus and His disciples on a boat on the sea and a huge windstorm comes up. The waves are beating against the boat, and it looks as if this is going to be the end! The disciples are scared to death! They are facing a great big Goliath! And so in terror they go looking for Jesus Who is...of all things able to sleep peacefully through this life-threatening storm!

They wake Jesus up and He rebukes the wind and says to the waves: *"Quiet! Be still!"* And as soon as Jesus did this the wind died down and everything was completely calm! Goliath had been slain. Then Jesus turned to His disciples and asked: "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

Faith, my friends...faith is the key to slaying the Goliaths of this life. Faith in the love of God through Jesus Christ is the only key that will stop the wind and the waves and will give us a quiet and a stillness...a peace deep within our souls.

Don't allow fear to paralyze you! Don't allow Goliath to defeat you! Don't allow yourself to be undone by these things. Put your whole trust in Jesus. Rely on Jesus and Jesus alone to bring you through this life victoriously!

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord through the prophet Jeremiah, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

This is true...This is true! Only Trust Him! Only Trust Him!

When Goliath comes rearing his ugly head, only trust Him to enable you to make it through.