

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 11TH-12TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

GOLIATH (1 SAMUEL 17:1-11)

A CONTRAST OF CHARACTER

We're not sure how much time has passed from chapters 16 to 17, but from this point until the end of 1 Samuel, we see the contrast between Saul's disobedience and David's faithfulness.

- As the Philistines return to threaten peace, we see David is still a young man, probably around 20 years old.

GATHERED AT THE VALLEY OF ELAH

Chapter 14 tells us that Saul won many victories, but here, an odd set of circumstances paralyzes the Israeli army.

- As the Philistines and Israelites were on different hills separated by a ravine, the "champion named Goliath...came out from the Philistine camp" and "terrified" the Jews.

WAS GOLIATH REALLY A GIANT?

Many have debated if the biblical description of Goliath is accurate. Oddly enough, an Egyptian letter (Papyrus Anastasi) from the 13th Century B.C. describes Canaanite warriors who were seven to nine feet tall. Also, two female skeletons over seven feet tall were found dating to the 12th Century B.C. in the East Bank of Israel.

IMPRESSIVE INNOVATION

Goliath's size struck fear in the Jews, as did his impressive weaponry. At this time, metal was scarce, and metallurgy was regulated by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13).

- Goliath wore a bronze helmet, armor, and shin guards while holding an iron javelin and large spear. He also had a "shield-bearer."

SAUL HAD MET HIS MATCH

We will all collide with adversity that looks insurmountable. Saul mistakenly abandoned the God of infinite possibilities and relied on himself.

- Without God's provision, we will reach a point where our ability falls short. We are to be faithful and trust that the battles of life belong to the Lord.**

PROVOCATION

There are several cases in the ancient Near East where battles were decided by individual warriors representing each army. So, Goliath steps out to "defy" (*heap shame on*) Israel.

- There will always be people who demean and ridicule. **Christians are not to let insults provoke them to sinful or fearful responses.**

"SAUL AND ALL ISRAEL...WERE TERRIFIED."

When leadership fails to lead in a godly manner, there is confusion, carelessness, and fear, and people follow suit and suffer.

- Whatever authority we have, we must live obediently to God, and we will have the power to lead with confidence because the Spirit is with us.**

DAVID (1 SAMUEL 17:12-24)

THE NARRATIVE NOW TURNS TO DAVID

We are told David was the youngest of Jesse's eight sons. His oldest brothers "followed Saul to the war," but David went "back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock."

- David was most likely overlooked and viewed as insignificant by his much older brothers.

A 40-DAY STANDOFF

Every day and night for 40 days, Goliath would come into the valley between the hills where the Jews and Philistines were camped and taunt Saul and the Israelite army.

- One day, as David was bringing his brothers' daily provisions to them and getting a report for Jesse, he heard the insults of Goliath.

THE "MEN...RETREATED FROM HIM TERRIFIED."

David not only heard and saw the insults and threats of Goliath, but he also witnessed the fear and lack of courage of the Israelites.

- "Fear not" is the most repeated command in the Bible. Christians are not designed to live in fear. If we're walking with Jesus, nothing can take our reward away from us!**

STANDING IN THE GAP (1 SAMUEL 17:25-32)

A REWARD FOR THE ONE WHO FIGHTS GOLIATH

Because Saul was afraid to fight Goliath, he did what cowardly leaders often do: he offered a reward to any man who would. Saul promised great wealth, his daughter's hand in marriage, and exemption from all taxes.

- Everyone talked about the problem and reward, but no one did anything about it.**

WHAT IN THE HECK ARE WE WAITING FOR?

David responded with incredulity because the king would even offer such a reward. He was also **angry that God's people would sit back and let someone dishonor God.**

- It should upset us when people dishonor God and His people. But should we respond with aggression?

COMMON SENSE AND THE BIBLE

This isolated event required physical defense because innocent people would eventually be harmed if God's people were passive.

- In the absence of violent threats, we're to simply love our enemies, pray for those who persecute us, and "combat" lies with the truth (Matthew 5, Ephesians 4:25).**

"JUST WHO IS THIS UNCIRCUMCISED PHILISTINE?"

David was consumed with the situation because he was **zealous for the honor of God**. He asked men around him what happens with the man who "removes this disgrace" who "def[ies] the army of the living God?"

- The reference to circumcision was spiritual more than physical.

NO ONE COULD DETER DAVID FROM HONORING GOD

David's brother accused him of "evil" and arrogance, probably out of frustration at his own fear and unwillingness to step up to Goliath.

- We mustn't let critics or people too afraid to act hold us back from God's call. We're called to live distinct from the ideology of the world, and we will receive criticism.**

"YOUR SERVANT WILL GO AND FIGHT THIS PHILISTINE!"

David believed he must **stand in the gap and fight for God**. He also had **complete confidence that God would deliver him from his enemy regardless of words or appearance.**

- Christians cannot cower before the challenges of our time. We can't afford to be idle as lies and half-truths destroy people.**

SOCIETAL GOLIATHS

- At this point, Goliath is not David's personal problem, but he does pose a threat to David's people.
- We have many issues today that we may not personally struggle with, but if ignored by the Christians, they will inevitably destroy the people around us.

GOLIATHS TEND TO BE PROVOCATIVE

- Situations and individuals who oppose those walking in a relationship with God often provoke through insult. **We must not regard lies that ultimately come from Hell.**
- Goliaths may also provoke through allure or temptation. This is why **we must guard our hearts and minds** (Ephesians 6).

WE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE IDLE

- To be idle is to avoid work and have no purpose. This is not the design God has for His people.
- We're to not only build a personal relationship with God, but we are to **work for the common good and advance His Kingdom via love and truth.**

WE ARE CALLED TO "STAND IN THE GAP"

- Christians are called to stand in the gap (Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 22, Colossians 1, Matthew 5) for others. We do this through praying for Christians, non-believers, and even those who hate us.
- We also stand in the gap by lovingly sharing and living out the truth of the Word because it is the truth that frees us.

HOW WILL WE RESPOND TO GOLIATHS?

- David was confident in responding to a giant because he already had a relationship with, and knew the character and nature of, God. **If we lack intimacy with God, giants will overpower us.**
- Are we equipped to face the challenges of life and the evils of our enemy, Satan?
- Will we "return evil for evil" or be paralyzed by fear, confusion, or indecisiveness?
- Or will we **go to the Lord in prayer and trust? Will we live a life of obedience that results in confidence and the fruit and gifts of the Spirit? Will we show love and teach and live out the truth?**