

December 10, 2023

“The Faith of David”  
Lesson 2

I Samuel 17:31-37, 45, 48-50

**Intro**

Today’s passage occurs after Samuel has anointed David to be the king of Israel, but before Saul has left that role. He is currently a shepherd, looking after the sheep while his older brothers are off at war. Only there is no war. The Israelites and the Philistines are encamped opposite each other, and the daily routine is Goliath (all 9’9” of him) taunting the Israelites. David comes into this scene to bring food to his brothers, but his oldest brother instead criticizes him for leaving the sheep, a neglect of duty. But David has heard Goliath’s taunt, and also Saul’s promise of reward to anyone who can/will defeat Goliath. This is a big risk, to take on a foe so big. But David has two things Goliath didn’t count on, and two things that were apparently missing in the rest of the Israelite army: courage and faith.

**Read I Samuel Chapter 17**

1. vs. 31: What David said is in vs. 8-10

He volunteered to meet Goliath head-to-head in battle  
Saul had been looking for someone to do this (vs. 25)  
David’s words get passed up the line to the king himself  
Saul seems to send for him very quickly

2. vs. 32: David’s first words to Saul are encouragement

The army is discouraged about Goliath, but David says, “Let no one be discouraged...”  
David says he will go fight the giant, calling himself “your servant” to Saul

3. vs. 33: Saul’s first words to David are limiting and full of doubt

“You are not able to...fight him; you are only a young man”  
David has been in Saul’s service at court before this time  
Saul knows that David is not “of age”—the reason he is not in the army  
An Israelite had to be at least 20 to be in the army; David is somewhat younger  
As a “youth”, he is not physically mature, a big quality heading into a battle  
Saul also notes that Goliath “has been a warrior from his youth”  
As he is a noted warrior now, Goliath has been a warrior for some time  
The implication is that David has no chance against this man

4. vs. 34: David calls himself “your servant”, showing deference to Saul as the king

The example he uses is to counter Saul’s point that David has no chance  
David has encountered lions and bears in the past, and was a youth when he faced them  
As he is still alive, he has shown the ability to defeat a “stronger” foe

5. vs. 35: David explains how he has met these animal foes in the past

He struck it, then rescued the lamb, then killed the enemy animal  
It would have been safer for David to kill the bear or lion, then rescue the lamb  
His choice of action order tells us something about David’s character  
He does what is needed for others without fearing for his own life

6. vs. 36: David makes a comparison between the lions and bears, and Goliath  
“this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them”  
David knows how to act quickly, skillfully, and decisively in battle  
He is qualified to battle Goliath, despite his youth and size  
He is confident he will win because Goliath “defied the armies of the living God”  
God is alive, not a stone or wooden idol like those worshipped by Philistines  
David knows God is alive, and present and powerful in this place and time
7. vs. 37: David concludes with his sure statement  
“The Lord...will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine”  
God has delivered him from bears and lions, natural enemies of lambs  
How much more will he deliver a faithful servant from an unbelieving human enemy?  
Saul is reconciled, even if he doesn’t totally believe David’s thinking  
“Go, and the Lord be with you.”
8. vs. 45: David here contrasts the defenses each combatant will use  
Goliath comes with “sword and spear and javelin”  
David comes “in the name of the LORD Almighty”  
Goliath trusts in his weapons, his strength, and his battle skills  
David trusts in God; he doesn’t say he came with a sling and a stone  
David knows that God is the Creator, the One who is over all things and beings  
Goliath himself said in 17:10 that he was defying the armies of Israel  
This is essentially the same as saying he was defying God Himself
9. vs. 48: Both David and Goliath run toward each other after talking in vs. 44-46  
The weapons they are using call for close combat  
Goliath is using a sword  
He is tall and has long arms, but still must be close enough to use it  
David is using his slingshot  
He doesn’t need to be as close as Goliath does for the slingshot to be effective
10. vs. 49: Two things of note here  
First, David has incredible skill to be able to hit Goliath’s forehead with his stone  
The forehead is only a few square inches compared to how much of him is armored  
Second, this battle is ultimately between God and the false idols of the Philistines  
This is how both of them saw this contest (see 17:43, 45-46)  
Goliath falls *face down* when he dies  
This is similar to the Philistine idol Dagon in chapter 5  
This idol fell face down *twice* in the presence of the ark of God
11. vs. 50: The summary here emphasizes how David won  
He used only a sling and a stone, and no sword, to defeat Goliath  
This victory validates David’s anointing as king in place of Saul

Application: This story in David's life shows two keys aspects of a spiritual life: faith and responsibility. Faith is our decision to follow the Lord; David showed that he had faith by trusting in God and by giving Him the glory and the credit for all his victories. Responsibility is how we live out our faith on this earth. David lived his faith by taking on Goliath, who had blasphemed God and His army. While we are not called to fight physical wars very often, the "giants" in our life that deny God and want to prevent us from following Him must be confronted and overcome, which will only happen when we engage in the fight and rely on God for the victory, as David did.

Prayer: Father God, help us to grow in our faith in You and in our responsibility in living out our faith daily. Help people to see Jesus and His love in what we do and say, and be drawn to You because of it. In Jesus' name, Amen.