

## A VERSE-BY-VERSE SERIES ON THE BOOK OF 1ST SAMUEL DURING WEDNESAY NIGHT SERVICES IN 2024

# Honing in on the Heart!' Sermon Series

## <mark>Sermon #33:</mark>

## 'God's Power in the Battle!'

Wednesday, November 6th, 2024

## Last week in 'Honing in on the Heart:

- Last week we were able to begin our journey through 1st Samuel with the first 30 verses.
  - I preached a sermon last Wednesday entitled *'Give God a Chance!'*
  - I asked the question: *How can you and I give God a chance to do the unthinkable in our lives when we recognize and believe in His power?* 
    - Truth #1: An Unfathomable Situation.
      (V. 1-11)
    - Truth #2: The Unthinkable Son Shows up. (V. 12-18)

- Truth #3: The Unachievable Task Remains. (V. 19-24)
- Truth #4: *The Unreachable Brother*.
  (V. 25-30)
- Based on last week's message, how do you need to give God a chance in your life today?

'God's Power in the Battle!' Ist Samuel 17:31-58

## Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see God's power in the battle with David killing Goliath. We look at the past experiences, problematic armor, the Philistine laughs, plundering ensues, and pedigree matters to Saul.

## Intro:

- In all reality, tonight's sermon does in fact feel like a two-parter from last Wednesday.
  - Last Wednesday we began this narrative that we find in 1st Samuel 17 that we often refer to as 'David killing Goliath'.
    - Last week we were able to find in the scripture how events fell into place that allowed David to be at the battlefield scene, in delivering supplies to his brothers.
- Tonight, we are going to study the details and aspects of the battle and combat that occurred on the

# battlefield that day between an Israelite and a *Philistine*.

- Before we dive into the text, let me share with you the incorrect way (though culturally acceptable) to view this text, and the biblical correct way.
- Incorrect Way (though Culturally acceptable)
  - Many contemporary audiences who read this text and even modern day movies that have been done on this story, pull out the underdog analogy.
    - People love a good underdog story.
  - This way of viewing this narrative looks at how no matter the odds that are against <u>YOU</u>, that <u>YOU</u> can do anything you want to do, <u>YOU</u> just have to believe in yourself.
    - Notice, it's all about you. That's not how the Gospel works.
  - Former President of the SBC, JD Grear said • Christians are as prone as anyone to fall prey to this sort of interpretation, baptizing it with spiritual language: If you trust God, He will give you victory over all the 'giants' in your life-cancer, a lousy job, a broken relationship. Just claim your victory, and God will give it to you.'
    - This kind of mindset and theology that JD Grear is speaking of here is

dangerous but also prevalent in the minds of many Christians...

- Though it may be popular, it is not the theologically correct and Biblically literate way to interpret this text.
- The Correct Way (Biblical Accurate)
  - God did not intend for you and I to read this text and come away with a cocky sense of self-assurance that we can achieve and do anything we set our minds to. No, that's not the point.
  - Yes, as we'll see tonight, David did overcome some insurmountable odds.
    - But the problem we face is not recognizing the odds that David was up against, but when we identify ourselves with David.
  - In this text, we are not David.
    - Who are we?
      - Most often you and I are the cowering, wishy washy, doubting nation of Israel.
    - Who is David?
      - God inside of David. It is not David in and of himself who is able to defeat Goliath, but it is God and in His power in David, who defeat Goliath.

# Now, David shows great faith in God, and is offended when Goliath speaks openly and defiantly against God.

- But, It is God's power.
- As we open up this text and study, please don't forget that David is also a representative, and foreshadowing of Christ Jesus and what He would later come to earth and do on our behalf in the NT.
  - Jesus was our unexpected representative, the One who fought the giant of sin on our behalf while we stood on the sidelines and did noting.
  - Like David, Jesus was opposed by his brothers, and even abandoned by His family (as we've seen in Mark).
    - Jesus ran to the battlefield of sin with confidence in His Heavenly Father, and died for us on the Cross of calvary, winning us a victory we could never achieve on our own.

## \*Read 1st Samuel 17:31-58\*

#### **Question to Ask:**

In this narrative about the killing of Goliath, how do we see God's power on display?

## Point 1: Past Experiences. (vv. 31-37)

• 'When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him. 32 And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

33 And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth." 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, 35 I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. 36 Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

- In verse 32, David reveals that he wants to go and fight the Philistine.
  - In verse 33, Saul looks at his youth, inexperience (stature), and tells him that he can't go and fight the Philistine.
- Even from what David says in verse 32, I find Scholar Robert D. Bergen's words impactful, *'David's faith and courage were as extraordinary as his logic was simple.'* 
  - In verses 34-36, we find that David tells Saul an interesting list of things that have to do with his past.

- I believe this shows us <u>1</u> important truth/application that we can draw.
- God may use your PAST experiences for a FUTURE battle. (vv. 34-36)
  - 'But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, 35 I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. 36 Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God."
  - Notice that Saul had already pointed out the fact that David didn't have credentials or fighting experience. David wasn't even in the army!
  - After the King gave his answer to David, most would've been quiet, but David is not, he speaks up and harps on his experience and credentials.
    - In David's mind, the 'uncircumcised Philistine' had reduced himself to the level of an animal in the way he defied the armies of the Living God. He blasphemed God and them.
  - To David, this is another fight with a wild beast.

- While some scholars try to argue and say there would not have been bears and lions in this part of the world, that is extremely false.
- Even today in the wilderness of the middle east predators of this size and species still exist.
  - David not boasting in and of himself, instead he is boasting in His God who has done all this.
- Look at verse 37:
  - 'And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"
- David admits that God had brought Him through all this, and that God would do it again.
  - This is where you and I differ from David. We look at ourselves, and what we've done, instead of saying look at what God has done and what He will do.
- Saul finally allows David to go and commit what he believes will be military suicide, and fight Goliath. Point 2: Problematic Armor. (vv. 38-40)
  - 'Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail, **39** and David strapped his sword over his

armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them." So David put them off. **40** Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine.'

- Now that someone has volunteered to fight this giant of a man when no one else would, Saul now gets them ready for this battle.
  - The only way he knows how to do this is by using his own armor and weapons.
    - In these verses, we see that Saul, yet again, is more worried about the external thinking that the armor and what he can put ON the boy is going to save him.
      - When David had faith in God, and knew he could not do well with other man's armor. A valuable lesson here.
  - There's just one thing to point out about this problematic armor.
- You can't be comfortable in Armor that was made for someone else. (vv. 38-40)
  - Saul's military gear would have been the finest that the Israelite army would have had to offer.
    - Saul's gear would have included a basic 'tunic' worn next to the skin, then a

# coat of armor over the tunic, a helmet and a sword.

- Notice here the small detail that David allows Saul to put the armor on here. Foreshadowing the fact that David was going to be King.
- I believe there are <u>4</u> reasons as to why David rejected the use of Saul's army, and wanted his regular clothes, staff, slingshot, and stones.
  - #1: Saul was a very tall man, and David was much shorter. In a practical sense, the armor just would not have fitted.
  - #2: David wanted to allow room for God's Divine hand to work in this situation, and not simply rely on human devices.
  - #3: David knew he'd need to be able to move around much more freely in case the battle came to close combat, with Goliath having on as much armor as he did, he couldn't move as well.
  - #4: To symbolize David's rejection of Saul's ways and approach to the kingship.
- Instead, David uses his own weapons that served him well in his vocational work, as a shepherd.
  - David used a stick and stones.
  - These were not products of the human hand, but of God Himself.

- The stick/staff would have provided protection in close combat, in case that were to happen.
- David chose an outfit and weaponry that was similar to the great shepherd-leaders he had read and heard about in the Torah, men who God had used greatly...
  - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.
    Lived by faith but also were herdsmen.

# Point 3: Philistine Laughs. (vv. 41-47)

• 'And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. 42 And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. 43 And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field." 45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds 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 that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."

- David has gone through the wardrobe malfunction, and now he prepares to go out to battle to fight this giant of a man.
  - Goliath will initial laugh at the boy that he was to face for a combat opponent, but, he will get downright ugly and downright mean.
    - There are <u>2</u> things to look at during this exchange.
- Psychological Assault. (vv. 41-44)
  - 'And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. 42 And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. 43 And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field."
  - It was usual in near eastern ancient warfare that insults and curses would be verbally uttered against the enemy during combat.
    - But with Goliath, this is a little more than normal with the unusual circumstances.

- *\*Look at verse 42\** 
  - The text says that Goliath 'disdained' him.
  - \*Word Study\*
    - The english word 'disdained' is translated from a hebrew word '*Bazah*' and this word occurs 44 times in the NT and means to despise, scorn, and ridicule.
- But why is Goliath ridiculing David *other* than the fact this is his military opponent?
  - In verse 42, Goliath lays eyes on David, and sees that they send out a boy to fight him.
- For Goliath, this would have been an insult to him.
  - In Goliath's mind, he would get know honor or great prestige in killing and defeating a boy.
    - So in verse 43, Goliath begins the fighting by doing so physiologically.
- *He ridicules David and calls his staff a stick.* 
  - A very significant part of this though, is when 'the Philistine cursed David by his gods.'
    - The Hebrew word for cursed here, is very theological significant.

- 'Cursed' is translated from the Hebrew word 'Qalal' which is important, because of the 82 times it occurs, when reading the Torah, you will find that to curse a descendant of Abraham, was to bring down the Lord's curse on himself.
- 'I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Genesis 12:3
  - So, Goliath was bringing this on himself.
  - Which further shows and supports the point that we should not insert ourselves as David into this text. This is truly the Lord's Doing.
- In verse 44, Goliath went on to tell David that he would kill him, dishonor his corpse, and he would not be given an honorable burial as a solider.
  - To say that Goliath is mad, would be an understatement.
- Proper Response. (V. 45-47)
  - 'Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give

the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds 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 that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."

- After enduring Goliath's psychological assault, David responds.
  - Notice that he first responds in verse 45 showing that he is not ignorant nor delusional.
- He knows that Goliath has a sword, spear and javelin, but by saying 'I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.' shows that there are no human weapons that can prosper against the Lord.
  - The fact that David comes to fight this battle in the name of God, would trigger in the Israelite nation a reminder of what God had done before.
    - Would remind the people of God how Pharoah had been overthrown, the red sea parting, crossing of the jordan, as well as the destruction of the Amalekites as recently as 1st Samuel 15.

- John Woodhouse had this to say about David's verbiage use to Goliath 'David's language is a mixture of old and new. This is the God who had been with his people Israel since their beginning, but never before had there been an individual who claimed to 'come in the name of the Lord.' This was not just a man of great faith in the Lord God speaking. This was the Lord's King, who came to Goliath 'in the name of the Lord,' as the Lord's representative, as the Lord's own king.'
  - David also divulges that Goliath had committed a capital crime by blaspheming God.
- According to Leviticus 24:16, a Jew or non-Jew who blasphemed God had to be stoned.
  - David was young, but knew His Bible (the Torah) extremely well. There's no excuse at any age for not knowing God's Word.
- Look at verse 47, we see David's motive is not for self glorification...
  - 'and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."
- Warfare in the OT among the Israelites was viewed as a religious event.

- According to 2nd Samuel 5:19, only when the Lord willed, were they allowed to engage in military combat. (Obviously, this is one reason why Saul was not successful, he went against God by fighting when he wanted to instead of when God allowed.)
- So, because the soldiers were performing God's Work, only individuals who were in a clean state of ritual purity were able to participate in 'military' mission.
  - I say all this to say, the Israelites knew, that if and when they won a battle, it was because of God who gave them the victory, which is why David, all throughout his life and military career, will give God the praise and Glory out of being aware that God gave them the victory.
    - This is different from Saul, who did so out of obligation.

#### Point 4: Plundering Ensues. (vv. 48-54)

• 'When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. **49** And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground. **50** So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David. **51** Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. **52** And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath[f] and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron. **53** And the people of Israel came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. **54** And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.'

# • The words being exchanged had now stopped, and it was time for combat to occur.

- Before the plundering that the Isralites would be able to engage in would occur, they first have to actually defeat Goliath, before they can overtake the Philistine nation.
  - And that would come from the small stone of a young, small, man. Whom God had empowered for this task.
- I believe there are **2** things to point out concerning these verses...
- An Unexpected Advantage. (V. 48-49)
  - 'When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward

the battle line to meet the Philistine. **49** And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.'

- We've all heard the phrase before, work smarter and not harder.
  - I can't help but think of that phrase when we see David's strategy here.
- Obviously, David decided not to use the armor that the king offered him to use.
  - Perhaps David knew (or God revealed to him), that physically he couldn't stand against Goliath and win in close combat.
- Instead, God uses David's strengths (a slingshot he would've used regularly as a vocational shepherd), in a way to defeat goliath at long range, instead of close range.
  - There's a valuable lesson for us to learn here: God can use our strengths and weaknesses for His Glory, even if it's an unexpected or even an unconventional way of doing things.
- Another reason that David uses a stone? To fulfill the Torah Law as required in Leviticus 24:16
  - 'Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the

congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.' Leviticus 24:16

- Because Goliath had blasphemed the Lord and the Israelite people, he was to be killed with a stone.
  - While Goliath only focused on making the Hebrews the Philistines slaves, David realized God's Honor was at stake.
- An Unexpected Victory. (vv. 50-54)
  - **'50** So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David. 51 Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. 52 And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath[f] and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron. 53 And the people of Israel came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. 54 And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.'

 Goliath had fallen, just like his false god, dagon had fallen back in 1st Samuel 5:3-4:

- 'And when the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD.' 1st Samuel 5:3a
- This was not an ordinary victory among the ancient means of warfare.
  - As far as the size of the stones, I tend to agree with Robert D. Bergen:
    - 'They probably were about the size of typical ancient Eastern Sling Stones—as big as tennis balls.'
- Goliath Falls, and the writer of 1st Samuel is clear to point out that David has no sword of his own with him.
  - He runs over to Goliath, grabs his sword, and takes off his head.
- Instead of joining in on the early victory celebrations, I believe that David wanted to ensure that Goliath was dead.
  - Many scholars will argue on whether or not Goliath was dead when the stone sunk into his head, or whether he was unconscious.
  - The answer to that, we will never know until we get to Heaven.

• But here's the thing, David didn't know if he was fully dead yet or not.

# So, he runs over and ensures the victory, by cutting off his head.

- David Garland said 'The fact that David 'ran' to the Philistine after him falling indicates that he wanted to kill Goliath before he regained consciousness.'
  - Either way, this shows us that it was not the weapons that won this battle, but the might and power of God that defeated Goliath.

## Point 5: Pedigree Matters. (vv. 55-58)

- 'As soon as Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I do not know." 56 And the king said, "Inquire whose son the boy is." 57 And as soon as David returned from the striking down of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. 58 And Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."
  - Verses 55-56 are actually a flashback. Verses 57-58, will pick back up with the narrative, but in verses 55-56, I believe the narrator (writer of 1st Samuel), strategically puts this here.

- In these verses Saul asks several pointed questions to and about David that can be attributed to Saul's own thinking that David may die, and then afterwards, the rewards for his victory.
- I believe there are 2 things to point out here concerning the pedigree that Saul inquires about...

## • Alert the Family on the loss of their son. (vv. 55-56)

- 'As soon as Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I do not know." 56 And the king said, "Inquire whose son the boy is."
- As I mentioned a moment ago, here is our flashback.
  - Some scholars will argue that the way verses 55-56 are written in the Hebrew, that Saul didn't recognize that this was David who was the harp player in his kingdom, or that he had forgotten.
- I disagree with this as I believe Saul knew David from before, but he couldn't remember whose son he was, in other words, the pedigree of his family.
  - Because the wording says 'Abner, whose son is this youth?'

- Not *WHO* is he, but *WHOSE* son is he.
- Abner was the military commander, and was a cousin of King Saul.
  - Since David is not officially a part of the army, Abner is not sure who he belongs to...
- I believe there were 2 reasons that Saul wanted to know whose son this was:
  - #1: To alert the family that their son had died in military combat. 1 on 1 combat to be exact.
  - #2: To check and see if this was a family of power and prestige, so that they could stop the boy from fighting before he died. If it was a family of power and prestige, that would have consequences for Saul that he'd have to deal with.
- While we don't know this for sure, based on what we've seen from Saul's personality so far in our study of Samuel, I believe that would be pretty congruent.
  - Remember, this request from Saul to Abner was made before David defeated Goliath.
- Alert the Family on their great reward! (vv. 57-58)
  - 'And as soon as David returned from the striking down of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of

the Philistine in his hand. **58** And Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

- Obviously, Abner did not make it far in inquiring who David's father was, because by the time Abner would have started that task, David had already swiftly defeated Goliath.
  - So, Abner takes him, along with Goliath's head (which would have been very big), and presents it to Saul.
- Saul's initial question that was for Abner, is now asked to David himself ("Whose son are you, young man?"), but now, for different reasons...
  - Robert D. Bergen proposes two possible reasons as to why Saul asked this. (Again, I believe David and Saul have a prior relationship, he just doesn't remember who Davi'ds father is.)
    - #1: Saul now wants to know the name of the family David comes from not to announce to them that he had died, but to declare that household exempt from taxes (remember from last week, that was part of the reward).

- #2: This passage could be the escalating truth of the difference between Saul and David.
  - The writer of 1st Samuel is great and comparing and contrasting.
- Some scholars believe since the Lord's Spirit had left Saul, that he was growing incompetent, and that Saul did not remember David, while David remained patient and civil (see verse 58).
- Either way, Saul wanted to know the pedigree of the family from which David came from, for a much different reason this time.

## Conclusion:

- Let me take you back to what we began with in the introduction of our message this evening:
  - Former President of the SBC, JD Grear said • Christians are as prone as anyone to fall prey to this sort of interpretation, baptizing it with spiritual language: If you trust God, He will give you victory over all the 'giants' in your life-cancer, a lousy job, a broken relationship. Just claim your victory, and God will give it to you.'
    - We know we can't just 'claim' a victory and defeat our own giants.

- I hope and pray from tonight's message you are able to see that it's God's divine and supernatural power, who defeats the giants in our lives. Not us, but Him.
- Point 1: Past Experiences. (vv. 31-37)
- Point 2: Problematic Armor. (vv. 38-40)
- Point 3: *Philistine Laughs. (vv. 41-47)*
- Point 4: *Plundering Ensues. (vv. 48-54)*
- Point 5: Pedigree Matters. (vv. 55-58)