

David

Heroes: Amazing Stories of Faith

1 Samuel 17:17-50

September 10, 2017

Welcome again to Germantown UMC.

I don't know about you, but ever since I was a kid, I've loved heroes. Of course, my heroes were mostly fantasy heroes when I was young: Batman, Superman, Spiderman. These superheroes had powers that I wanted to have, especially Superman for me, and what superpower did I wish I had? Can you guess? Yeah, the ability to fly. Of course, this meme might be accurate for me.

READ MEME.

I think a lot of us like heroes. We've created superheroes that can do things we mere mortals cannot.

We also have fantasy heroes. These heroes have been created in the minds of writers in the classic good versus evil stories. They are not superheroes, just ordinary persons. One of my favorites was first introduced 51 years ago this week, and that is Mr. Spock. Star Trek is 51 years old. What are some other fantasy heroes?

When we move into reality, we have heroes by virtue of their profession or position. When we were children, I bet many of you thought that a fireman was a hero just for being a fireman. Larry Gardner, that's probably you. Maybe a police officer. A sports figure or an actor. There used to be a time when the president of the United States has a hero to some, just for his position; maybe not so much anymore. These are heroes as a result of their profession or position.

And then we have heroes for the actions – something they did that was brave or courageous. Maybe it was something out of the ordinary; maybe it was something in the nick of time. We've seen a lot of video for the past few weeks of citizen heroes helping, even saving others during Hurricane Harvey. These are or were persons thrust into a dangerous situation, and through courage and selflessness, put themselves in harm's way to help someone else. Of course, the greatest of these are the ones who gave their life for someone else.

I love the way that God has given us so many wonderful stories in His Word about the ways that He has worked in His people's lives. There is so much we can learn and apply to our lives right now as we look at the different people in the Bible. Even those with flaws can be heroes.

There are all kinds of heroes in the Bible, people that we can learn from. For the next couple months, we are going to look at 8 heroes from the Bible – men and women who demonstrated courage and faith in difficult times. And we will learn important keys to being heroes of the faith in the difficult times we live in today.

We are going to start our series with one of the most famous persons and stories from the Bible. We are going to focus on David. Most of us know something about David.

- He wrote many of the Psalms.
- He was a shepherd boy who became a great king.
- He messed up in a big way with Bathsheba.
- Was still a man after God's own heart.

- The royal lineage of his family was the lineage from which Jesus Himself came.

And the story we are looking at today may be his most well-known experience. It's the story of his encounter with a giant named Goliath. So let's jump into this incredible story and see if we can find some giant-killing courage for our lives today.

I invite you to turn to pages 6-7 in your bulletin as we look at this story.

One of the first things 1 Samuel 17 does is to describe Goliath. Now, according to the Guinness Book of World Records, Robert Wadlow was the tallest man in the world. Born in February 1918, he grew to a height of 8'11" tall before he died at the age of 22. But according to the biblical account, Goliath was bigger than Wadlow. Verse 4 says that Goliath's height was over 9 feet tall. To put it in Southern lingo, Goliath was a big-ole boy!

He had impenetrable armor. Verse 5 tells us "He wore a bronze helmet, and his bronze coat of mail weighed 125 pounds."¹ He also had bronze armor on his legs that protected him from the spikes of any enemy's boots. This is very strong armor worn by a very strong man.

He had an immense weapon. Verses 6-7 tell us that he had a massive javelin-type spear for a weapon, slung between his shoulders. For a 9-ft tall man to have weapon like that, it had to be huge. The "shaft of his spear was as heavy and thick as a weaver's beam, tipped with an iron spearhead that weighed 15 pounds."² How would you like for THAT to be hurled at you by a 9-ft tall madman?

Here's where I want you to start to take notes, for we see 5 things in this passage.

First, Goliath's defiance.

In verses 8-11, we see that Goliath was a big-ole boy with a big, bad attitude! Goliath threw down the gauntlet. Verse 8:

Goliath stood and shouted a taunt across to the Israelites. "Why are you all coming out to fight?" he called. "I am THE Philistine champion, but you are only the servants of Saul. Choose one man to come down here and fight me!"³

He taunted them and ridiculed them because they were terrified and would not send anyone out to meet him. There was a tremendous sense of dishonor in the inability of the armies of Israel to send a warrior out to meet him. God had worked in their favor many times in the past: freedom from Pharaoh, the parting of the Red Sea and the Jordan River, defeating nations that had oppressed them, sometimes for decades. They should have learned by now that they could trust God. But the defiance of Goliath was just too much for them. They were frozen in fear.

The second thing we see in this passage is David's duties.

Now, I didn't include verse 12-18 in the bulletin, but let me summarize them. They remind us that, at this point in his life, David was not the great warrior king that we know about later. He was the youngest of 7 sons of Jesse, and stayed behind to take of his daddy's sheep while the older brothers went to fight in the battle. While tending sheep may not seem as important as fighting in the army of Saul, it was in these times of shepherding that David had encounters with wild animals and predators that were

¹ 1 Samuel 17:5 (NLT)

² 1 Samuel 17:7 (NLT)

³ 1 Samuel 17:8 (NLT)

trying to attack the sheep. God was using David's everyday duties to prepare him for the great battle that was ahead.

Let me pause here to let that sink in and ask you a question: what might God be doing in your life today that, though it seems mundane and trivial, is preparing you for the great battle that is ahead of you. Certainly daily Scripture reading and study, prayer time, and meditation are things we should be doing every day that will help us in the difficult times. Let me give you an example of a passage that I recently gave to someone that could really help you during troubled times: Psalm 46:1-3:

*God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea. Let the oceans roar and foam. Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge!*⁴

Doesn't that sound like a verse we need today? And the Bible is full of them, but you can only be strengthened by this and other passages if you, in the normal day-to-day duties, study and discover them.

Duties done in the doldrums result in triumph in the troubles. Let me repeat that. Duties done in the doldrums result in triumph in the troubles. That's what we will find later in this passage. David triumphs because of his duties.

The third thing we see in this passage is David's declaration.

David finally got tired of the situation. He got tired of Goliath's insults and intimidation. He got tired of the army's inaction and insecurity. He got tired of hearing Goliath insult the people of God, which, in essence meant that he was insulting God. David didn't take too kindly to that. He tired of seeing the soldiers in God's great army doing nothing against this bullying brute. He knew that His God was greater, stronger, and mightier than this mere man, and there was absolutely no reason for the insecurity and discouragement that the army of Israel was displaying.

So he said to King Saul, "I'll go fight him." Saul: "You can't! You're just a kid!" David: "I've whooped lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine is going down, too! He has stepped over the line by defying the armies of MY God, the living God. So let's get ready to rumble, because, verse 37, 'The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!'"⁵

The fourth thing we see in this passage is David's dependence.

After David made his declaration, Saul tried to help David by doing it man's way, the logical way, the normal way. Put some armor on him. Strap a sword to his side. "After all, that's the way we've always done it."

But David's dependence was not in man's ways. His dependence was solely and completely on the Lord God Almighty! He KNEW that God would come through for him.

- He knew God would come through for him because of the past. Verse 36 told us that he had faced life and death situations before, and God had rescued him.
- He knew God would come through for him because they were God's people. Verse 45 says, "You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of Heaven's Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied."⁶

⁴ Psalm 46:1-3 (NLT)

⁵ 1 Samuel 17:37 (NLT)

⁶ 1 Samuel 17:45 (NLT)

- He knew God would come through for him because of God’s power. Verse 46 reads, “Today the LORD will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel!”⁷
- And he knew God would come through for him because the battle was God’s possession. Verse 47b says, “This is the LORD’s battle, and he will give you to us!”⁸

Finally, we see Goliath’s defeat.

It was a quick defeat. Here’s how it went down: Goliath got up and started toward David. David ran toward him, pulling out a stone from his bag and loading up his sling. This stone would probably have been about the size of a tennis ball, and since David was an experienced marksman with his sling, he could probably sling that stone at about 60 mph. He let the stone fly, hitting his target square in the forehead, knocking Goliath facedown to the ground. He very well may have been killed at that moment, but David ran up, stood on top of him as a sign of conquest, drew Goliath’s own sword – another sign of conquest – and cut off his head so he could hold it up as a trophy for both armies to see that the champion of the Philistines was truly dead! What a moment! What a victory! What a God!

So, here is the point. Nail this down: This same God who brought David victory over his giant is here for you as you face your giant. Let me repeat that: This same God who brought David victory over his giant is here for you as you face your giant. Here’s how you can experience victory against your giant and be a hero of the faith:

First, Acknowledge your giant.

You can’t ignore it. You can’t wish it away. You can’t just pretend like it’s not there. You must acknowledge the giant you are up against.

Second, Believe that your God is bigger than your giant.

Believe that your God is bigger than your giant – because HE IS! God is bigger than any giant you might be facing.

COMMENT

Third, Courageously step up and face your giant.

No one can do it for you. Others can assist you, but they can’t do it for you.

Finally, Depend on God completely.

Don’t try to take someone else’s armor or sword. Don’t depend on anything that sounds smart or common sense or logical. Depend on God completely. He will go before you, and He will go with you because He is in you.

David, a hero, and an amazing story of faith.

⁷ 1 Samuel 17:46 (NLT)

⁸ 1 Samuel 17:47 (NLT)