

Finishing Well

Lesson #14

Victory In The Valley Of Elah

April 20, 2022

We are inclined to look at the contest between David and Goliath as something unique.

➤ It is not. God gave specific instructions about such confrontations:

Deut. 20:1-4 When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you. Now it shall come about that when you are approaching the battle, the priest shall come near and speak to the people. And he shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel, you are approaching the battle against your enemies today. Do not be fainthearted. Do not fear, or tremble before them, neither be terrified because of them. For the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.'"

Question: Why does God allow giants in our path?

1. Test us

Judges 2:22 The nations remained "in order TO TEST Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk in it as their fathers did, or not."

2. Teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience

Judges 3:1-6 These are the nations the LORD left TO TEST all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan.

Question: What enemies remain in your life?

Are you given to Hittite fear? Stand in truth.

II Tim. 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Consider: If I am still living with a spirit of fear, I have failed to use my provision in Christ.

3. To provide us an opportunity to grow and mature - Instead of running away in defeat, embrace them, eager to gain all the blessings God has hidden in the difficulties.

4. Allow opportunity to manifest the resurrected, powerful life of Jesus Christ

II Cor. 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Pray for deliverance? God intends to use your struggle to make you stronger.

Key Principle: You'll never become all God wants you to be without giants in your life.

Consider: The very thing that was meant by the enemy to destroy you is the thing God wants to use to give you total victory.

David & Goliath in the valley of Elah

Saul and the armies of Israel view the situation from a human perspective.

- "Have you seen this man?" 17:25

David views the giant from God's perspective.

- "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?" 17:26

Saul had confidence in his armor as long as David was the guy wearing it! 17:38

- David had confidence in his God. 17:45

Saul was concerned about his own image. 18:7-8

- David was concerned with the honor of God & His name. 17:26, 45-47

The name Philistine means *Grievers, Burrowers, Weakeners*. It comes from the verb (*palash*), which originally described the digging of burrows in riverbanks by rodents such as rats. By doing so, these creatures weaken the shore and may ultimately cause it to collapse. In Hebrew, it came to denote the verbal expression of intense grief brought about by a sudden destruction:

- Goliath challenges and terrorizes God's people in their inheritance that God had given to them. A battle for control
- the Uncoverer or Exposer; to expose the weakness of Israel and God's people

Goliath and his Philistine forces illustrate Satan and his fallen angels.

We are like Saul and his Israelite army - seemingly powerless to overcome the enemy.

David, God's chosen king, is the one whose seed will be the promised Messiah, whose kingdom will have no end.

David, a kind of prototype of Jesus Christ, had no obligation to come to our aid, but He did.

What we cannot do for ourselves, Christ has done for us, just as David fought Goliath for Saul and the Israelites.

God Enabled David > David Acted on His Belief

Key concepts: God wants to use His people to magnify His name to all the nations of the earth.

- David came to the battle in the name of the Lord God of Israel.
- This was a contest between the true God of Israel and the false gods of the Philistines.
- The LORD God is victorious.

I Sam. 17:40-44 And he took his staff in his hand and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. ⁴¹ And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.

⁴² And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

- First, Eliab had taunted, then Saul had sought to discourage, and now Goliath scorns him.

⁴³ And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?

And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴ And the Philistine said to David,

Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

Imagery of feeding the dead body of the enemy to the birds and beasts
Curses of Disobedience: Deut. 28:25-26 The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. ²⁶ And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away.
Rev. 19:17-21 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Strengthened by past experiences:

I Sam. 17:45-47a Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. ⁴⁶ This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls 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 all this assembly shall know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear:

God desires to use His people to magnify His name to all the nations of the earth.

Deut. 28:9-10 The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself, as He hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in His ways.

And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. [Ex. 19:4-6]

Ex. 9:16 And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee My power; and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth.

➤ God's purpose for Israel's sojourn in Egypt and the judgments God sent against Pharaoh.

Consider: Parting of the Red Sea; Opening of the River Jordan; Building of the Temple

➤ Witness to all the nations that Israel's God was the true God.

I Sam. 17:47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give all of you into our hands.

David articulates a basic principle of faith.

➤ God will act on our behalf when we trust in Him and are obedient to His voice.

This same principle is reiterated time after time throughout scripture:

- I Sam. 14:6b; II Chron. 20:15; II Chron. 32:8; Ps. 33:16-18, 20; Ps. 44:6-8
Prov. 21:30-31; Hosea 1:7; Rom. 8:31, 37; I John 4:4

Key Point : Goliath was a tool used to glorify God. Therefore, when a giant challenges me, I should embrace it, let God work it so He receives the glory and draws people to Him.

This Battle Is Also David's Victory

Despite their unbelief and rejection, David kills the giant and provides freedom for the Israelites.

I Sam. 17:48-51a, 54 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came, and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

⁴⁹ And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

The sling is the perfect weapon. Goliath is stationed behind the shield held by his armor bearer. He is armor-plated from his feet to his head, with an opening only around his eyes so that he can see. This is the exposed part of his body. This is David's target, which he hits dead center. David sent it out; God guided it; The intended target received it perfectly.

The stone sinks deeply into the skull of Goliath, bringing him down like a falling tree.

The enemy is now bird food.

I Sam. 17:54 Therefore, David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith.

The struggle of David and Goliath seems to point to the future struggle the Lord Jesus Christ had on the cross of Calvary with Satan himself.

- Goliath as his personal antagonist signifies and illustrates that which is opposed to the work of God. He is a type or picture of the evil one, Satan.

The Lord Jesus Christ's struggle on Calvary's cross is more than once related to Satan.

- The first promise of the gospel is a promise that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent.

- A fundamental dealing of the cross of Christ is the dealing of the Son of God with Satan.

Col. 2:13-15 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened [made you alive] together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

¹⁴ Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, [having canceled the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us] and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross;

¹⁵ And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. [When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.]

Satan has the whole world trembling in fear of him and of death.

Heb. 2:14-15 Since then children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."

Key Points: God uses His prepared servants.

- Alone as a shepherd boy, David had learned to trust God.
- As a faithful guardian of the flock, David had mastered the use of a sling.
- David had confident faith in God because he had found Him dependable in the crises of life. David knew God would not forsake him.
- The Spirit of the Lord was upon David and would enable him to win the battle.

Ps. 18:32, 34 It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. He teaches my hands to make war so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

Ps. 144:1 Blessed be the Lord my strength which, teaches my hands for war, and my fingers to fight.

David took the sword that was designed to destroy him, and with it cut off Goliath's head.

- The very thing that was meant by the enemy to destroy you is the thing God wants to use to give you total victory.

I Pet. 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: *He will make your simple faithfulness great in His time.*

Truth: Never fight the Lord's battles in Saul's armor. Many Christians seek to rely upon the flesh and upon the strength of human nature when they fight the Lord's battles.

Zech. 4:6b Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

Those who trust in Jesus will follow Him into the spiritual warfare that is ours to win, empowered by God's Spirit.

After The Defeat Of Goliath: Israel Enjoys The Fruit Of David's Victory

The Philistines did not keep their part of the bargain and submit to Israel. This must have been one agonizing moment in time when the whole world seemed to stand still and keep silent.

The Philistines are paralyzed for that one moment, minds racing to take in what has just happened before their eyes as they begin to realize its implications.

With the loss of their champion, all courage and will to fight are gone.

And then, after this one moment of paralysis, the Philistines take off on the run.

I Sam. 17:51b And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

I Sam. 17:52 And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines [~10 miles], until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

I Sam. 17:53 And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. [plundered their possessions]

The Israelite soldiers seize the moment and take out after the retreating enemy. There is no better place from which to fight such a foe than from behind, where there is no armor to protect and the sheer weight of their armor hinders their retreat. Armor, swords, anything which slows down the enemy's escape is cast aside. Bodies of slain Philistines are strewn from the battle site to the very gates of their cities. On their way back, the Israelite soldiers are laden with the booty they plunder from the Philistine camps.

David was successful in his conflict by faith alone. "There was no sword in David's hand..." He knew that the victory was not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of God.

- David's victory opened the way so the Israelites could share in the victory.
- The very weakest became a conqueror that day because of David's victory.

By virtue of what Christ has done, have become conquerors.

Romans 8:37 "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Key Points:

1. *Both fear and faith are contagious.*

- Saul's fear undermined the faith and courage of the rest of his army.
- David's faith and courage had a positive impact on Saul and the entire Israelite army.
- Leaders do not merely lead by command, or even by inducements, but by example.
- Bad leaders discourage; good leaders encourage.

When Saul leads, his troops flee.

I Samuel 13:5-7

- Saul's soldiers are frightened because Saul is terrified. I Sam. 17:11, 24

David, a lowly shepherd boy too young to be a soldier in Saul's army, enters the camp.

David needed victory over Goliath to gain the confidence of the people; that he was qualified to be their king. The people had to know the man they followed was worthy of their trust.

Because of his faith and courage, God works through David to kill Goliath and give Israel the victory which inspires others to trust in God

II Sam. 23: David is now Israel's King

Due in part to the faith and courage David personally demonstrated, there are many mighty men of valor and heroes among Israel's soldiers.

- Once David stands up to Goliath, other mighty men of valor take on Goliath's family members.

God did not intend for there be one giant who would be killed by David so that no Israelite had to face such a problem again. God purposed that David would stand up to the giant and kill him, giving other men the example and the faith to do likewise.

2. Sometimes leaders have to be willing to stand alone.

When David arrived at the battlefield, there was not one man who was willing to stand alone against Goliath, yet this is what was required. It is easy to lead when every follower is eager and committed to the task. But leadership can be a very lonely road.

Sometimes a leader must be out front, by himself, for a time.

3. Leadership is about stepping forward in faith at a time of need.

David did not need a formal position or title in order to be a leader; he needed only to step forward at a time of need. And so he did.

4. Leaders are not made in times of crisis. They are revealed in times of crisis.

God had been preparing David for this moment in time for many years. God had selected David to be Israel's king, He had empowered him with His Spirit, He had shown His power to be sufficient to deliver David from his enemies [including lions and bears].

➤ David had learned to trust God.

➤ He had developed skills and godly habits that emerged at this time of crisis.

II Chron. 16:9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him.

➤ God is constantly looking for those who are wholly devoted to Him, because He will strengthen such people to give them great victories.

David Spoils The Giant After His Victory.

I Sam. 17:54 And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent. [stripped the giant of his armor]

The Lord Jesus Christ not only overcame Satan who had the power of death, but by virtue of what He accomplished gained for Himself the keys of Hades and death.

Rev. 1:17-18 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: ¹⁸ I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

By virtue of what He has done on the cross, He has stripped Satan from the power that God gave him, the power of death. Now the power rests in the hands of our great representative the Lord Jesus who has offered the atoning sacrifice. The keys of death and Hades are now in His hands, just as David has the head of Goliath and the weapons in his tent.

I Sam. 17:5-7 Goliath, about 10' feet tall, had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of mail which weighed ~ 125 lbs. He had a bronze skin armor on his legs and a bronze javelin. The shaft of his huge spear was about 3" in diameter with the spear's head weighing ~ 15 lbs.

The Trophies Inside David's Tent Created The Atmosphere Of Worship!

With all of Goliath's armor in David's tent he would never forget what the Lord had done for him and the nation of Israel.

Imagine: What else may have been in David's tent causing it to be stretched into a tent of thanksgiving and praise? Memories of the legacy of Israel's past history of crossing that Jordan river overflowing all of its banks lingered in his tent. [Joshua 3:7]

The testimony of those 'stones of remembrance' was commanded by the Lord to be handed down through Israel's generations. [Joshua 4:7]

David heard about those 'stones of remembrance' from his father.

As he picked up the 5 stones, did he relive the miracle of the Red Sea & crossing of Jordan?

Did he remember the bear which was now dead? A dead lion?

As he picked up another stone, did he see Goliath's name written all over it?

'Remembering' was perhaps the most powerful weapon David had as his armor.

His remembrance made him a giant killer.

It seems reasonable to believe that David had to keep stretching the curtains of his dwelling place and lengthening his tent stakes to hold all the weapons and trophies the Lord was giving him through his enemies. David's tent became a tabernacle of ongoing praise and worship. Even in times of discouragement, his past victories caused him to "believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

Two responses to David's mission > Negative & Positive

Eliab: The response of Pride: We don't need a champion like this little shepherd boy.

When our Lord appeared, they said, "Away with him, away with him. We have no king but Caesar.

Just like with Goliath, there was no one found who could set us free from Satan until the Savior was born in Bethlehem who came to His own people, but they despised and rejected Him.

Isa. 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isa. 53:12b because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

This battle paints an incredible picture of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

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Jonathan: Was won by the things he saw in David.

I Sam. 18:1 "Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself."

From trembling when David arrived

➤ to hopeful when David went forth

❖ to delivered when Goliath was slain

• to enriched when they were able to take the spoils

✓ to finally a devoted covenant relationship to young David.

David's work wrought peace in the heart of Jonathan.

Notice further in I Sam. 18:4: Jonathan stripped himself of his robe, his garments "even to his sword and to his girdle" and gave them to David.

He saw the principle of victory lay in identifying himself with the same principle by which David had won. He gave away all the carnal weapons of Saul's armor that he might cast himself in faith upon David's God.