

David and the Dwarf pt. 2
1 Samuel 17

Introduction:

(Show David and Goliath cartoon on screen)

We all love a story where the underdog wins against overwhelming odds, unless you're on the side that should have won. Sometimes the underdog wins because of subterfuge. Fritz Klingenberg and his group of five Germans captured the whole city of Belgrade and its Yugoslav army of thousands using captured troops and trucks and pretending to be a much larger force.

Sometimes a superior force loses due to mismanagement or miscommunication. On January 1, 1863 Confederate troops expelled a much stronger Union army from Galveston, Texas. The Union Fleet commander had scuttled a stranded ship to keep it from falling into enemy hands. However, troops on the shore thought the fleet was surrendering and laid down their arms.

Sometimes, the superior force loses because of overconfidence and complacency. In the 16th Century 2,000 to 3,000 Oda Clan Samurai warriors attacked an entrenched force of nearly 25,000. But this much larger army had been drinking and celebrating a string of easy victories, and in the summer heat, most had removed their armor. They were completely routed.

However, when you add faith in an all-powerful God into the mix, then no odds are insurmountable. Every factor comes into play. Last week we began looking at the greatest underdog story of all time – David and Goliath. In human terms, Goliath certainly is a giant at well over nine feet tall, but the Philistine is not the biggest giant in the passage.

We saw the first of the true giants last week, and that is God. God was bigger than Goliath, he was bigger than David's lack of experience and training, He was bigger than what nearly everyone thought possible. In fact, compared to God, Goliath was just a dwarf.

There's also another giant in this passage that towers over Goliath, and that's David's faith. Goliath's puny stature shrinks in the face of the power of David's faith in God. It was David's giant faith in a giant God that showed Goliath for the pipsqueak little runt he was.

Let me just quickly set the scene for you. The Philistines are the longtime foes of the Israelites and have invaded once again. As was sometimes customary in ancient times, the Philistines had warrior named Goliath, who challenged Israel to send someone to take him on in individual combat. These two champions would represent their kings, their armies, indeed their entire nation in a one on one fight to the death for all the marbles.

Goliath. Goliath is a behemoth of a man, measuring in at 9'9". He has an armspan of nearly 10' and a reach of 5'. He is an imposing and intimidating presence.

The two armies are encamped on opposite sides of a valley about a mile apart. For forty days, Goliath crosses the valley, issues his challenge and heckles the Israelite army. For more than five weeks, the Israelites are frozen in fear. They don't know what to do or how to respond.

On day number 40 though, David, still a shepherd boy, arrives in camp with supplies from home. He hears Goliath's taunts and can't believe his ears. He can't believe that no one has responded to the challenge, and so he tells King Saul that he will fight Goliath himself.

Though young, inexperienced and untrained, David displays a remarkable faith in God, a faith that is about to make him a national hero. This morning we're going to look at four things that empowered David's faith in God. These are four things that each one of us can have and build in our own lives, and if we do, it will help us face our own giants.

We all face giants of different kinds. We have financial giants, relationship giants, career giants and spiritual giants. There are giant decisions, giant failures, giant tragedies, and giant fears that hold us in their grip. The way we face these giants is with a faith in an even bigger God.

I. Deepen Your God Confidence

The first thing that empowers faith in God is what we'll call God-confidence. Notice that I said God confidence, not self-confidence. I'm not saying that self-confidence is bad, but it can only get you so far. The world often gives this message that if you just believe in yourself anything can happen. You can do anything. That's the stuff of movies and fairytales, but it's a bunch of baloney. We can't do anything just because we set our minds to it. We can't overcome any challenge just because we have big enough dreams and hope enough.

The world would have us believe that the choice is between believing in yourself and not believing in yourself. We have to choose between self-confidence and low self-esteem. But there is a third choice – believing in more than yourself. We all have limitations. We have weaknesses. We have blind spots and vulnerabilities, and there are some giants that can only be conquered by faith in something –someone- bigger than and beyond ourselves.

David is brimming with confidence in this passage. In verse 32, David assuredly tells King Saul, *"Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."* At first, David might sound a bit cocky. But David's confidence didn't come from pride in himself. His confidence came from God. Listen to what David tells Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:45-46:

(2 Slides) *45 David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. (Next Slide) 46 This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel."*

Three times in these two sentences David roots his confidence in God, *“I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel,” “the LORD will hand you over to me,”* and *“the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.”* That’s not just self-confidence or self-esteem. It’s not pride or arrogance. That’s God-confidence.

Sometimes, self-confidence can become like Goliath who is with filled with all sorts of pride. Listen to his arrogant overconfidence in 1 Samuel 17:41-44:

(2 Slides) *41 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. (Next Slide) 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.”*

Goliath’s confidence was all in himself, in his size, in his strength, his weapons and armor. David, however, possessed a calm, stabilizing assurance that flowed from his faith in God.

Remember, when you are facing a giant in your own life it isn’t just about your own abilities, your experience, your knowledge or strengths. It isn’t just about what sort of armor you can wrap yourself in. It’s about what you’re willing to let God do in and through you. You need to have God-confidence.

II. Use the Gifts God Gave You.

The second thing that feeds a fully-developed faith in God is to use the gifts God gave you. We need this to balance our understanding of the first point. Having God-confidence doesn’t mean we don’t do anything. A strong faith doesn’t mean you aren’t involved. God has created us all natural strengths, skills, and abilities. He’s allowed us to grow through a variety of life experiences. These life experiences help shape and grow us.

The Bible also asserts that every Christian has been given a spiritual gift as well. Your spiritual gift is a spiritual endowment that equips you to serve within the body of Christ.

God gives us these things for a reason. He expects us to use them, to understand them and develop them. Having God-confidence doesn’t mean our own talents and gifts don’t matter. Rather, understanding, developing and using our abilities, life-experiences and gifts helps us have a proper confidence in God. We understand that God is ultimately the provider of these gifts. Even skills that we have trained and developed ourselves, we couldn’t do if God didn’t give us the intelligence and natural capacity to develop these abilities.

We can’t put all our confidence here. This is what Saul wanted David to do. Now King Saul tried to give David a false confidence. He thought well, if you’re gonna fight the giant, you gotta have the best weapons and armor money can buy. We read in verses 38 and 39,

Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.

Saul thought David could have confidence, if he just wrapped himself up in the right armor. Saul thought David could face Goliath on Goliath's terms.

(Next Slide) But often we are like Saul. We think if we can just wrap ourselves up in the right armor then we can face our giant. Now that armor comes in many forms. We think if we just get the right degree, or get the right job, or live in the right town, or find the right relationship then we can do it on our own. And so we wrap ourselves up in our education, or in our accomplishments, in our money, in our position, in who or what we know and then we march off into battle thinking we can beat the giant. But then the giant defeats us time after time. Anytime we think we can face the giant on the giant's own terms, we will likely lose.

Fortunately, David realized that his real confidence came not from weapons or armor, but from God. Now, that doesn't mean David ignored his natural abilities, his acquired skills, or the practical knowledge he had gained through life's experiences. While we can't just wrap ourselves up in the right armor, a proper understanding and use of the strengths we do have works in tandem with our faith in God.

Gene Getz has great insight here:

David knew he had unusual skills. He also knew his limitations. Saul's armor would interfere, not help. He knew he could throw a stone with accuracy. He had honed that skill for years while guarding his father's sheep. He believed his faith in God- combined with his ability to use the sling- would enable him to win the battle against Goliath...On the one hand, he knew the battle was the Lord's. On the other hand, he had confidence he could defeat Goliath with his skill with a slingshot. Some Christians go to one of two extremes. Either they sit around and wait for God to fight their battles, or they are out trying to win all by themselves. God wants us to balance faith and work in our lives- but always operating in the strength of the Lord!

A healthy faith involves a proper balance of confidence in God and confidence in our own strengths. Using the natural abilities, the life-experiences, and the spiritual gifts God has given you isn't a lack of faith, it's an expression of true faith, because you're using what God gave you.

III. Be Faithful in the Little Things

The third way to develop your faith in the face of giants is to be faithful in the little things. We will never have the chance to show faith in the big, dramatic moments, if we don't first show it in the small, seemingly less significant times. Faith for the big trials is forged in the small tests. Jesus taught this principle in the parable of the talents where the faithful servants who had been entrusted with a few things were rewarded by their master, *"Well done, good and faithful*

servant! You have been faithful with a few things ; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

David was able to show great faith in the face of a giant, because he had showed faith in the face of many other smaller challenges. Listen to what David tells King Saul in verses 34-37 when he's trying to convince him that he indeed can face Goliath:

(2 Slides) 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. (Next Slide) 36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 37 The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

(Next Slide) When you trust God to deal with the lions and bears, it's easier to trust him when we face a giant. The reason we sometimes so intimidated and paralyzed with fear in the face of giants, is that we haven't trusted Him with the lions and the bears. Too many times we don't think we need faith for the small stuff. We think we can do it on our own. We do it on our own, and we get by with it in the small stuff. But the problem is that we have trained ourselves to rely only on our own strengths and abilities.

Then when we face something that's beyond our capability, we don't know what to do. We panic, we're paralyzed with fear, we make foolish decisions, we say stupid things, all because we don't know how to live by faith. That happens when we learn to live by faith in the little things. This leads right into the last thing that empowers your faith.

IV. Remember What God Has Done For You.

And that is remember what God has done for you. As we develop faith in the little things, we will have a track record to remember how God provided for us. We will have more God-confidence in facing the giants. David remembered the lion. He remembered the bear, so he was better able to face Goliath. We all should have lion and bear stories, examples and illustrations of how God has been faithful to us.

But we shouldn't just remember the little victories. We need to celebrate them. We need to keep trophies. As soon as David kills Goliath he takes a trophy.

1 Sam 17:51

David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.

After the Israelites finish routing the Philistines, here's what David does with his trophies.

1 Sam 17:54

54 David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, and he put the Philistine's weapons in his own tent.

(Next Slide) Now this all seems to be gruesome stuff to us, but look beyond the gory details and see the importance of what David is doing here. Goliath's head is put on display as a reminder to all of Israel of what God did. The faith of an entire nation was lifted. We should celebrate victories as a church. We should put our successes on display, not as an act of pride or arrogance, but to advertise the glory of God and remind us of what He can do. We might find it disgusting, but I really believe the display of Goliath's head in Jerusalem was an act of praise and worship. It was meant to inspire all of Israel to be moved with awe at what God can do.

But it wasn't just Goliath's head. David keeps some personal trophies as well. These were very private and personal reminders of what God can do. Every time David went home he would see those weapons. Every time he looked at Goliath's weapons he would remember that God is faithful. He would remember that God could help him face the giants in his life.

Winning victories is extremely significant. We need to remember them! When God pulls off something only He could do, we can't forget that. It is something that should be celebrated and treasured. We need to give these victories prominent places in our conscious memories. We need to hang on to something from successes that will remind us that God is able.

Listen to what Chuck Swindoll writes here,

So often, when facing our own giants, we forget what we ought to remember and we remember what we ought to forget. We remember our defeats and we forget the victories. Most of us can recite the failures of our lives in vivid detail, but we're hard-pressed to name the specific, remarkable victories God has pulled off in our past.

So where do you keep your trophies of God-given victories? Like David's trophies, your trophies can be physical trophies. Hopefully, they aren't swords and heads, but they may be physical objects that remind you of the victory. For a long time I had a piece of barbed wire that I kept as a reminder of an important day of prayer and fasting. Even this sermon reminded me of a trophy. The first time I did any sort of preaching and teaching on the life of David was a tag-team series I did with a family life minister at a previous church. Before we hired him on staff, he was an over-the-road trucker with a passionate love for the Lord. We'd take whole days to go to Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park, and fast and hike and dream and study and worship. This is a picture from the spot we would go. It's one of my trophies. My original notes on David are from those times we spent up in the mountains. I built one of my closest friendships out of those times. He decided to go into the ministry, in part, because of those times. God's hand moved greatly through those moments, so I wanted a trophy.

-Baptism in the Jordan River

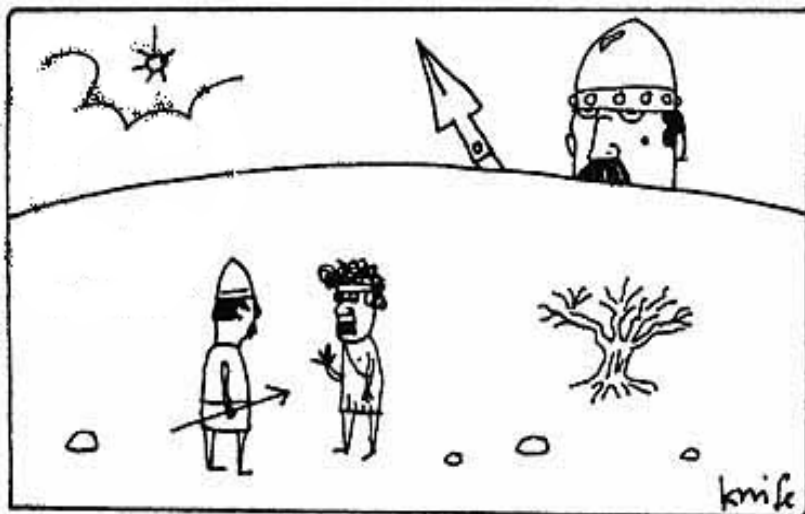
-Cards

But your trophies can be all sorts of things. One of the roles a spiritual journal can fill is to be a trophy display case. It is a way to reflect on the enemies you've faced, the battles you've fought, and the victories God has given you. Trophies can be personal or family traditions that you share.

Your trophies can be stories you tell, cards you keep in your wallet, special songs you sing at times you need to remember, Significant verses that you memorize and recite at times of remembering. Of course, there is one trophy, we all share in, a trophy given to us by Jesus Himself. We share in this time of remembering every Sunday. It's called the Lord's Supper, and it celebrates the greatest spiritual victory over the biggest giant ever. So, what are your trophies, and where do you keep them? We each need ways to remember what God has done for us.

Conclusion:

Facing giants in your life isn't about how small you are or how big the giant is. It's about how big your God is and how big is your faith that you have in Him. Jesus said that even with faith the size of a mustard seed we could move mountains. In fact, it isn't the size of our faith that makes things happen. It's the size of the God in whom we have faith. A little faith in a big God goes a long way. But the greater our trust in Him, the more we will be able to see Him do in our lives.



"I mean - How big can this Goliath guy be?"