

David and Goliath: God Created You

King of Glory Lutheran Church

People of Faith – God's Story

David and Goliath: 1 Samuel 17:37-51

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³⁷David said, "The LORD, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine." So Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you!"

³⁸Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a bronze helmet on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail. ³⁹David strapped Saul's sword over the armor, and he tried in vain to walk, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them." So David removed them. ⁴⁰Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the wadi, and put them in his shepherd's bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.

⁴¹The Philistine came on and drew near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. ⁴²When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was only a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. ⁴³The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the field." ⁴⁵But David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword and spear and 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. ⁴⁶This very 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 Philistine army this very day to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's and he will give you into our hand."

⁴⁸When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. ⁴⁹David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.

⁵⁰So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, striking down the Philistine and killing him; there was no sword in David's hand. ⁵¹Then David ran and stood over the Philistine; he grasped his sword, drew it out of its sheath, and killed him; then he cut off his head with it.

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

God creates us with specific gifts for use in God's Kingdom. God doesn't want us to be someone we're not for then, God can work through us and the glory is the Lord's!

In the name of the Living Lord, who is here today and has given each one of us gifts for God's Kingdom, may God's Word come alive in our hearts. Amen.

David and Goliath! Do we remember learning this one in Sunday school? Ever seen a musical of it? Ever watch it on Veggie-Tales, the DVD series for kids? They name the story "Dave and the Pickle"...truly...you can google it for yourself!

This is one of the most beloved Bible stories, because who doesn't love the story of an underdog? Whether it's Buster Douglas knocking out Mike Tyson (1990) or Cinderella upsets during March Madness, we love to cheer on the underdog.

But this wasn't a simple underdog – it was a huge mismatch!

The text in 1 Samuel tells us that Goliath was a Philistine. The Philistines were fighting peoples, drumming up skirmishes from Syria to Egypt. Not only that but Goliath was the greatest warrior of them all, skilled with spear and hand-hand combat. Goliath was a giant...quite literally. Goliath was one of four remaining Nephilim. These Nephilim came to be from angel and human parents. They were huge beings. (See Genesis 6:1-4)

For forty days, Goliath, came out to shout his challenge to the Israelites. "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us. Today I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man, that we may fight together." All the Hebrews were terrified – rightly so – of this massive hulk.

David's father Jesse, wanted to learn what was happening at the front lines of the battle, for he has other sons already there. He sends David with food for the troops and asks for a report back. David leaves his daily task of caring for his dad's sheep in the wilderness surrounding Bethlehem and arrives as Goliath is shouting out the daily taunt.

Because he has protected the sheep in the wild, David already has skills for this battle. He uses what works for him – stones and his sling. With the Lord at his side, and those simple tools, David has killed lions and bears. That argument convinces Saul, David could truly defeat Goliath. Saul gives David a blessing.

What really tugged at my holy imagination, was the description of Saul dressing David and then David pulling it all off! On went the bronze helmet. Then the coat of mail. A coat of mail is clothing made of metal chains or scales. Think Medieval times and that mesh, made of metal, that had long arms and a hood. Then David strapped Saul's sword over that.

First of all, David is a youth. We don't know his exact age, but he is wearing an adult's fighting gear. The text doesn't include these details, but perhaps the helmet is falling down over his eyes. Maybe the mesh clothing is taller than he and covers his shoes – which he could trip on. The sword was likely two-edged and made of iron, about 30" long.

What elementary aged boy or teenager is going to be strong enough to do any damage with that?!

David says, "I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them." (repeat)

Put a kid who has never ridden a bike, on a bike without training wheels, they are going to fall off. Guaranteed. Put them in adult skis and boots when they've only skied twice, that kid is going to say, "I cannot ski with these. I am not used to them."

David says, "I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them."

David has been anointed and will one day actually rule as king. Symbolically, he is saying to Saul, I am my own person and I will not rule like you.

But on a very practical level, David would surely die at Goliath's hands if he left the armor on! David knew the battle was the Lord's. He knew the Lord was going to use him, young boy David, to fell the giant. With the Lord at his side, David needed the tools he was used to and not be encumbered by someone else's weapons.

(Vs 40) Then (David) took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the wadi, and put them in his shepherd's bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.

None of us need try to be who we are not! God made each of us, with gifts and talents. God designed each of us to use our God given talents in the world. We can walk around trying to be something or someone we're not, but we'll only end up frustrated. It's also harder for God to work through us, when we're not being who God created us to be.

We all remember the days of our youth, when we were learning these lessons. If you ever walk through a junior high or high school, you'll see this playing out in real time. Kids trying to figure out if they're a nerd, or a goth, a jock, a bandie, or whatever else is trending. It's healthy, it's good.

David already knew who he was in the Lord. He, David, son of Jesse, had a job to do for God.

David took the stuff off and with the Lord at his side, he did the deed. Goliath was dead.

Do you ever watch videos of Golden Buzzers from America's Got Talent or Britain's Got Talent? Susan Boyle wouldn't have had the career she did, had she not started off as the unknown, cheeky 47-year-old from a tiny English village; shocking the judges and the world. What about Courtney Hadwin, Nightbirde, or Kodi Lee? When you're standing on a stage in front of millions of viewers, there's nothing to hide behind.

God creates us with specific gifts for use in God's Kingdom. God doesn't want us to be someone we're not. God can work through us, and the glory will be the Lord's!

The last point of the sermon is this. David knew this was the Lord's battle and not his own. He had to show up, yes. But David's confidence in winning wasn't in his own skills. His confidence was in God. Hear it again.

David says, "I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶This very day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head; ...so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷and that all this assembly may

know that the LORD does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's and he will give you into our hand." (Vs 45-47)

When we pray, we can commit our battles to the Lord. Whether the enemy is our illness, or addiction, or a dying spouse, or fighting for justice, or even making the commitment to live faithfully each day. The battle is the Lord's.

Show up authentically and with trust. Show up ready to use your gifts. But show up knowing God's grace and mercy is towards you each day.

God, I know you are with me as I go to chemo. You are the great physician. This is your battle in my body. Heal me, oh God, I know you can.

Lord, you know my inner turmoil. You know me better than myself. Show me the way. Teach me your paths.

Jesus, you realize the systemic racism that is in our community. We commit it to you, asking you cut out the unnamed giants in our path. Take down the barriers that hold racism in place. We ask in your name, asking you to help us love and win this battle day by day.

The battle is the Lord's. God simply asks us to show up to the fight, being the people God created us and gifted us to be. Amen.