

Faith in the Face of a Giant (Feb. 22)

Text: 1 Samuel 17:1-54, especially v.45

Introduction:

Don't you love the fresh-faced enthusiasm and confidence of a kid who has just joined the little league baseball team? He hasn't even played his first game but he wants to sleep in his uniform. Though inexperienced he believes there's no ball that can get by him. David was like that. He was the youngest of his brothers, the runt, the shepherd with a few sheep, yet he was called a man after God's own heart. Against all odds, David had faith, even to face a giant. David was sent to give food to his brothers as they fought against the Philistines. As he approached the battle scene, he saw the Israelites standing opposite to the Philistines with a dried up riverbank between. The Philistine champion, Goliath, about 9 feet 9 inches tall, taunted and challenged the Israelites to send a champion to fight. How do we react to giants in our lives? We need three things:

1. Simple Faith (v.26)

There is never a thought in David's mind that this Philistine wouldn't be defeated. He only asked about what good would come to the one who killed Goliath. Where did David get this mindset? He was probably raised hearing stories of God's victory: the parting of the Red Sea, or Israel's victory at the walls of Jericho. It never occurred to David that this pagan could possibly defeat the soldiers of God. We should teach our children that God cannot be defeated. We must believe it as well.

2. Living Faith (v.32).

Faith matters not only at church, but when your bills are due and you have no money, when a loved one dies or when you're persecuted at work; faith through life's circumstances is living faith. David's faith was born from defending his sheep against a lion and a bear, so David knew God would also fight Goliath through him (vv. 34-37). Without every day use of our talents and abilities for God, we cannot face big projects or obstacles. Many of us disobey, refusing to be baptized or to tithe. We will never grow if we consistently refuse to live out our faith.

3. Crisis Faith (vv.45-47)

God gives us the ability to stand when no one else will during a moment of crisis. David was granted this type of faith as he faced

Goliath, saying, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts...” (v.45). “Lord of Hosts” can be translated, “The Lord of our extremity.” When we’ve reached the end of our human abilities, we come to the Lord of hosts, asking for His strength. Overcoming, overwhelming faith bears forth in the moment of crisis from the foundation of simple, living faith. What giant are you facing? A financial giant? A hurting relationship? An addiction? Whatever it is, take these practical steps from David’s example.

- a. **Your encouragement cannot come from the defeated.** As David faced the Philistines, he saw the Israelites afraid (v.24), so they were no help. If you have a drug or alcohol problem, get away from other addicts. If you have a relationship problem, don’t hang around divorced people who tell you how great it is. Seek encouragement from victorious Christians.
- b. **Remember your past victories.** The enemy is quick to oppose us, and we tend to be quick to tremble in fear. David called on his past victories for confidence (vv. 34-37). We need to remember times when God has answered our prayers, when He has pulled us from hard situations, when He has provided.
- c. **You cannot simply accept someone else’s weapons.** Someone else’s strategy may not work for you. Saul tried to give David his armor. It wouldn’t work. He wouldn’t use a spear or a javelin, but preferred a simple shepherd’s sling. God wants to take your history, your abilities, your talents, and your spiritual gifts to add His power to accomplish His purposes.
- d. **The threats of the enemy are just that – threats.** God granted David success in the face of the enemy’s mockery! Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

Conclusion:

We must become people after God’s heart through simple, living faith, faith which will not fail in crisis. Practically, we must gain encouragement from the victorious, remembering our victories, allowing God to use our genuine selves, despite circumstances or obstacles.

Pray with me. “Lord, we believe! Help our unbelief. Give us greater faith – simple faith, living faith, crisis faith – faith to move mountains this week. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”