

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 30, 2013 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

DAVID... A MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART "David and the Dwarf" *1 Samuel 17*

All of us are more familiar with the names of believers in Scripture than unbelievers... with one exception, Goliath. Hands down, Goliath is doubtless the most well-known unbeliever in the entire Bible. Ask almost anyone on the street, churching or un-churching, and they will pretty much have heard of the story of David and Goliath, and they will know that Goliath was the giant that David defeated with nothing but a sling-shot and a stone. It is such an oft told tale that most every Christian and non-Christian alike have at least heard some version of the story, and not only that most are at least somewhat, on some level, able to relate the story of what transpired in the valley of Elah centuries ago to their lives or life in general. But there is so much more to be noticed than simply a young shepherd boy who killed a giant and seasoned warrior. Between the lines of the account in 1 Samuel 17 are relevant, usable principles that apply to us today as we face "giants" of our own world... "giants" in our own lives... sometimes on a daily basis... "giants" that are nothing more than dwarfs when compared to the One who empowers us.

Now notice that I have titled this particular study by an unusual title, "David and the Dwarf," perhaps the most unusual title you've ever heard for this particular Bible story and one that you believe may contradict everything you have ever been taught and told about this story. Almost without exception when you come to this great Bible story it is given the usual title... right?

2 Usual Titles for the Bible Story Recorded in 1 Samuel 17:

1. **"The Story of David and Goliath"** – This is the title given as the heading in most every translation of Scripture. If you look at your Bible, the heading over 1 Samuel 17 is probably this one.
2. **"The Story of David and the Giant"** – This is the title given in most children's renditions of the story... at least in most of more secular renditions of the story. In most Children's Christian literature the name "Goliath" is commonly used rather than "giant."

Why the title "David and the Dwarf" then? Let me give you the great truth behind this unusual title and then tell you what this unusual title does not imply... what I am not saying with this title.

The Truth Behing the Title, "David and the Dwarf": "The giant, Goliath, and the giants we may face in this life are dwarfed in comparison to the surpassing greatness and power of Holy God."

- Although Goliath was a giant of a man, by human standards and imposing, he was very much a dwarf by divine standards. As big and imposing as Goliath may have seemed to King Saul and the Israelite army he truly was dwarfed by miniscule proportions compared to the awesome majesty and power of Sovereign God. Likewise the “giants” we may face in this life, and there are many, are no match for our God and ability to handle them. Remember that!

Now with that said, let me tell you what is not being implied by that statement, just in case there is any misunderstanding here:

What the title, “David and the Dwarf” does not mean:

1. **The title, “David and the Dwarf” does not mean to imply that the Biblical account inaccurately portrays Goliath as a giant –** Goliath was literally a giant of a man by human standards, who stood approximately 9’9” tall according to the Bible. His huge size should certainly be accepted as literally true. There is no reason to believe otherwise. He wasn’t a dwarf by physical standards, but certainly one by spiritual standards... right?
2. **The title, “David and the Dwarf” does not mean to imply that as a literal giant, Goliath did not pose a very real and present danger to God’s people, the Israelites –** The title “David and the Dwarf” does not mean to give the idea that this whole episode was no big deal, that the Israelites were just blowing it out of proportion, that Goliath was really not any kind of a threat really, there was no reason to fear, they were just exaggerating the situation. Listen, Scripture goes into great detail in 1 Samuel 17 to reveal the reality of the threat that this giant posed to the Israelites and to King Saul and his army.
3. **The title, “David and the Dwarf” does not mean to imply that the giants in our lives should be taken lightly –**
4. **The title, “David and the Dwarf” does not mean to imply that the giants we face in our own lives are not fearful things -**
5. **The title, “David and the Dwarf” does not mean to imply that the giants we face in our own lives are not very real and imposing challenges and obstacles to be overcome –**

I. THE BACKGROUND (1 Samuel 17:1-11)

The Battleground (vv.1-3)

In ancient times, the geography played an important role in warfare, particularly because fighting was restricted to ground combat. In this confrontation, a valley (canyon) about a mile wide and located within Judah’s borders separated two mountain slopes. Down the center was a brook and a ravine. The Philistines, camped between Socoh and Azekah, stood prepared for battle “on the mountain on one side”; the Israelites, settled in the valley of Elah, had drawn up in battle array “on the mountain on the other side.” The battle essentially focused on two individuals... representatives from each side.



The Champion (vv.4-10, 16)

1. **Goliath's military advantage (v.4a)** – At first glance, it seems obvious that Goliath's size was his greatest military advantage, but that was not his only advantage. The Philistine military machine represented a continuous threat to Israel and its surrounding countries. Around 1200 BC, iron came into use in that area, and the Philistines, with their knowledge of smelting, gained a quick monopoly on the metal. They could forge various military weapons; thus they became the prominent fighting force in the region.
2. **Goliath's person and weaponry (vv.4b-7)** – Goliath from Gath had become the Philistine's champion warrior. Verse 4 even calls him by that title,, *“⁴ A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall.”* The Hebrew word translated here as “champion” literally means “the man between two” and was an appropriate designation as Goliath stood between the two armies of the Philistines and Israel, and offered his challenge to a “duel” of hand-to-hand combat, the outcome of which would settle the battle for both sides. This was a common mode of battle in that day called “representative warfare.” Many King and commanders preferred it because it spared their men, however as happened in this case the side that won the “duel” often turned and slaughtered the other side when the “duel” was over. Goliath's height was six cubits and one span (approximately 9'9"). His helmet, shin guards (greaves), and spear, and javelin were manufactured of bronze. His scale coat weighted approximately 175-200 pounds. The shaft of his spear was like a “weaver's beam” and the spear head weighted approximately 20-25 pounds. He was an imposing figure to say the least.
3. **His tactics (vv.8-10)** – Not only did the Philistines and their hero, Goliath, use “representative warfare” with an apparent obvious advantage (Goliath's size), they also used what today is identified as “psychological warfare.” **How? Do you see it?** He used his words as instruments of intimidation to send his enemy running. Notice verse 8, *“⁸ Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, ‘Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me.’”* This activity occurred daily for more than a month (40 days).

The Jews (v.11)

Goliath's contender should naturally have been Saul, Israel's tallest warrior (1 Samuel 9:2, *“² He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites—a head taller than any of the others.”*). Saul, as some have suggested may have possibly been as tall as 7' himself. That would have made the size difference between him and Goliath not nearly as imposing as it was for David. And it is estimated that David, at this point in his life was only about 5'2" making him only half Goliath's size. Not only were Saul's troops gripped by fear, but so was he (Saul). There was none to take up the giant's challenge.

II. THE GIANT... DAVID (1 Samuel 17:12-39)

The scene shifts suddenly from the battle front to the quiet village of Bethlehem.

1. **At Home (vv.12-15)** – Of Jesse’s eight sons, the three oldest... Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah... were off with Saul in battle. David had been traveling back and forth between Saul and his father’s flock, most Biblical scholars place his age somewhere around 12 or 16 years old. He was a young person, to say the least. David, on leave, apparently knew nothing of the Philistine conflict.
2. **With the Soldiers (vv.17-30)** – Jesse knew of the events in the valley of Elah. Too old to travel and anxious about the boys’ welfare, he dispatched David to see how they were. His mission took him to the battle line, where he found his brothers. While talking with them, Goliath, across the valley and coming into the Jew’s territory, made his daily appearance. As usual, the Israelites retreated in fear. David’s curiosity prompted him to ask in **verse 26**, “*What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel?...*” David’s oldest brother, Eliab, became incensed with him and accused him of insolence and shirking his responsibilities with his flock back home. Without defending himself, David continued asking questions. NOTE: Saul, who neglected his responsibility, had offered an incentive to anyone who would do his job of facing the Philistine champion. The incentive included a financial reward... the king’s daughter... and freedom from taxation for his father’s household (v.25). Notice **verse 25**, “*25 Now the Israelites had been saying, ‘Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his father’s family from taxes in Israel.’*”
3. **Before Saul (vv.31-39)** – Confidently the youthful David told Saul that no one’s heart should fail them on the giants account. David’s offer to fight Goliath encounter resistance from King Saul in **verse 33**, “*You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.*”
 - (1) **Previous experience (vv.34-36)** – David reported that on different occasions while protecting sheep, he had attacked a lion and a bear and killed each. To him the Philistine was no greater a challenge.
 - (2) **Optimistic faith (v.37a)** – Here David put it on the line. Notice what David says in the first part of **verse 37**, “*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.*” Paws... hands. It made no difference to him when God occupied the front edge of his perspective.
Saul gave in, adorned David with his own cumbersome metal “skin,” and sent him off. David couldn’t walk, so he peeled off the armor to fight his own way. David’s trust was not in armor... but in his God... the Lord and His might.

10 Things That Made David a Giant: Despite his young age and limited battle experience (not withstanding his killing of a lion and a bear)... despite his inadequacies God used Him in a giant way.

***NOTE:** The following is called “THE 10 DAVID PRINCIPLES---10 THINGS DAVID DID TO DEFEAT GOLIATH AND THINGS TO GIVE YOU A BETTER CHANCE FOR SUCCESS” by former Baylor Coach, the great Grant Teaff. Thanks to my brother, Glen Jones, for providing these to me.

1. **Obedience before God (or as Grant Teaff says “Obedience”)** - David was obedient to his parents (those in authority older and wiser than him) and took the food to his

brothers thus giving him the opportunity for his greatest day. Had he not done what his parents asked him to do...??? But David was also obedient to God, and God's call on his life... and that leads us into the next one.

2. **Commitment to his call (or as Grant Teaff says "Find a cause")** - David discovered that anyone who would fight the giant would have the king's daughter's hand in marriage and would never have to pay taxes again. David found a reason to fight, but that was not his greatest reason to fight. His real cause was God! He could not believe that anyone would come against God and his people in such a defiant way. For David his commitment was to God and God's call on his life. David was committed to God's call on his life... remember that David had been anointed as King of Israel... it was the true King of God's People who was to represent them before Goliath. David did that. He was obedient to God and God's call on his life, even at this young age
3. **Concern or Compassion for those around you (or as Grant Teaff says "Make a Commitment to yourself and your teammates")** – David, I am convinced was a giant among God people because, well he was willing to go to bat for them, he put his life on the line for them, he cared about those around him enough to put himself out there. He took a risk for the sake of the Kingdom for others.
4. **Don't try to be someone you're not (or as Grant Teaff says "Use your own talents and abilities")** - Don't worry about the enemy and their weapons. You have no control over that. Concern yourself with your own talent and work ethic (slingshot). Notice **verses 38-40** of our passage... this is one of my favorite part of the story, ³⁸ *Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. ³⁹ David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. ⁴⁰ Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.* Remember that Saul may have been 7' tall and David only 5'2". David couldn't be Saul. He could only be David, and who God has called him to be.

3 Quick Lessons On What God Demands of You:

- (1) **God only demands that you be who He made you to be**
 - (2) **God only demands that you use what gift and abilities He gave you to use**
 - (3) **God only demands that you do what He has called you to do**
5. **Refuse to listen to the naysayers (or as Grant Teaff says "Don't listen to the naysayers")** - This one is self-explanatory. For David, there were whole host of them, Saul, the Israelite army, Goliath, and yes even his own family. Sometimes standing for God is standing alone. But don't allow anyone, ever to keep you from what God wants to do with your life... even if they don't understand.
 6. **Have faith (That's how Grant Teaff says it)** – Have faith in God, in yourself and God's call on your life, and in others that He has placed in your life for your benefit and His glory.
 7. **Was wise in choices (That's how Grant Teaff says it)** – **He chose God's way over man's way, even though it didn't make sense to everyone else.** David chose 5 smooth, round, aerodynamically sound stones... grounding stones if you will... his

faith God, his trust in God's promises, his reliance upon God's ability to do it, his commitment of his life to his God, his determination to live for God or die trying.

8. **He took action (or as Grant Teaff says "Take action")** - Don't just talk about what you are about to do...do it!!!! Don't just talk about being a Christian. Talk is cheap. Do it! Live it! Walk by faith, live by faith, do my faith.
9. **Finish the job (That's how Grant Teaff says it)** - When David hit Goliath with the stone, he could have made a stage out of that battlefield. Instead, he "finished the job" in a mighty way by cutting off the head of Goliath and then routing the entire Philistine army. No half-hearted commitment will do, go all the way with God. No "today I'm with Him and when the way get's tough and inconvenient I'm out." Stay the course! Finish the race whatever obstacles lay before you.
10. **Overcome defeat (That's how Grant Teaff says it)** - Even though David was a hero this day, he had many, many defeats in his life. While he was overcoming those defeats he was becoming the greatest king in the history of Israel.

III. THE DWARF... GOLIATH (1 Samuel 17:40-54)

The encounter was brief, but brilliant...

1. **Warming up (vv.40-45)** – The young Israelite went down the slope and chose stones from the brook, shoving them into his pouch. With stones as ammunition, he rushed the Philistine.
2. **Looking up (vv.46-47)** – He first declared his objective in verse 46, *"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."* Then he announced his philosophy in verse 47, *"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."*
3. **Wrapping up (vv.48-51)** – Verses 48-49 tell us, *"⁴⁸ As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. ⁴⁹ Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face-down on the ground."* The giant, after falling face down, was decapitated by David with his own sword.
4. **Mopping up (vv.52-54)** – The Philistines fled and the Israelites pursued. Catching up with them, the Israelites annihilated Goliath's fellow warriors. The giant's head, David took to Jerusalem; Goliath's weapons he took to his tent as trophies of a battle the Lord had won.

IV. FINAL: LESSONS FOR TODAY'S BATTLES

We all have "giants" of different kinds; nonetheless, they are significant. We must keep in mind the follow four (4) reality lessons for doing battle with the giants in our lives.

4 Lessons for Battling the Giants in Our Lives:

1. **Facing giants is an intimidating experience –**
2. **Doing battle is a lonely experience –**
3. **Trusting God is a stabilizing experience –**
4. **Winning victories is a memorable experience –**