

Message for April 15, 2018

"Overcoming the Fear of the Bully"

**1 Samuel 17:4-11 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>4</sup> A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>5</sup> He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels<sup>[b]</sup>; <sup>6</sup> on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. <sup>7</sup> His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels.<sup>[c]</sup> His shield bearer went ahead of him.

<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." <sup>10</sup> Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." <sup>11</sup> On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

**1 Samuel 17:19-23 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>19</sup> They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines." <sup>20</sup> Early in the morning David left the flock in the care of a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry. <sup>21</sup> Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other. <sup>22</sup> David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and asked his brothers how they were. <sup>23</sup> As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it.

**1 Samuel 17:32-49 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>32</sup> David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him."

<sup>33</sup> Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth."

<sup>34</sup> 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, <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine."

Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you."

*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.*

*41 Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. 42 He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. 43 He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!"*

*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.*

*46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 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."*

*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 facedown on the ground.*

Prayer:

1. Video
2. What we are doing for the next several weeks – working with very familiar Bible Stories that we have told our children and our grandchildren. These stories are well known and very much a part of our secular society. All of the stories have a very basic message about how God works in mysterious ways.
3. A few years ago, when I was in Israel, we drove to the Valley of Elah where David battled with Goliath. People wanted to get off the tour bus and collect pebbles to commemorate the battle. A person turned to me and whispered: *"Those pebbles aren't really from here. So many tourists take pebbles that the Israeli Board of Tourism sends a truck down to the coast at night to haul in more pebbles."*
  - a. So, Christians were leaving with a pocketful of pebble fueled inspiration based on a wrong belief.
  - b. I wonder if we do the same thing with the story of David and Goliath – we collect inspirational pebbles based on wrong beliefs.

- c. We have all read the story, heard children's Sunday School lessons, watched videos, and preached sermons on it, right? But are we teaching the correct lesson? Let's see!
- 4. The story of David and Goliath is wonderful on many levels. The face value of the story is that God works through God's people to do amazing things. But there is so much more we can learn from 1 Samuel 17 and this magnificent story.
- 5. Here are some practical life lessons that we can share with our grandchildren that come from David's submission to God.

## 6. Obedience

- a. From our scripture lesson today and the video, David obeyed his father without complaint when Jesse asked David to take food to his brothers and check on them.
- b. Apparently, David didn't have a great relationship with his brothers. The way Eliab (the eldest) spoke to David when he arrived at the Israelite camp seems to indicate there was a great deal of tension among the siblings.
  - i. My this sounds familiar—remember the OT Joseph who was the youngest son of Jacob and the brothers despised him because of the favoritism that Jacob showed him.
- c. **When David's father asked him to do a job, David obeyed.** When David was prompted by his spirit to take a stand for the Lord, he did it without hesitation.
- d. When Saul asked David to take his armor for the battle, David apparently tried to comply, but had to respectfully decline (1 Samuel 17:38, 39).
- e. God has placed authorities over each one of us. My UMC boss is the District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Ann LaPrade who visited us in September.
- 7. All of us have struggles in being willing to obey in every situation and it does not depend upon our age. As we grow older, our children and dear friends begin to give us directions that we may want to resist. Maybe their comments are in our best interest.
  - a. There are times when obedience is not possible, Peter spoke of this in Acts 5:29 -- *Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings!"* But submission is necessary in these cases.
  - b. **For example, while Daniel could not obey the king's command to refrain from worshiping God, he did submit to the punishment that was enacted upon him. God gained a great victory before the people of Babylon because of Daniel's submission, not because of his refusal to worship the king.**
- 8. In this story of David and Goliath, we see David as a young man of obedience.
  - a. God calls us to be obedient servants, not disobeying rebels.

## 9. **Second: Take a Stand on an issue that is right.**

- a. When David arrived at the camp he was shocked to hear the words of Goliath.
- b. He immediately thought that something should be done to stop the blaspheming giant (1 Samuel 17:26).
- c. It almost seems like David did not notice that everyone else was cowering in fear.
- d. His first reaction was that there was a cause for which to fight.
- e. We have to believe that something in our life – or some issues are wrong and we take a stand in defending our position – even though our friends may not think that we are on the right path.
- f. We have to ask ourselves – is this what God wants?

## 10. **Third – can we Trust God?**

- a. David believed that God would gain the victory (1 Samuel 17:26, 32, 37). David wanted to be part of God's plan. He trusted that God could and would use him.
- b. How refreshing to think that someone would volunteer to give his service to the Lord.**

11. Today we hear so many people say that they can't do this or that for the Lord because they are too busy or don't want to get involved. It is easier to say NO than it is to say – "I will give it a try"

- a. David didn't wait to be called. David volunteered to put his life on the line for God's honor.
- b. I absolutely believe that God calls people into God's service.
- c. But, I also think that many people hide behind the phrase, "God has not called me to do that." It is important to discern what God is calling us to do.**

**12. but I have heard the sentiment that asks, "has God called you to sit at home and not take the Gospel to a dying world?"** Many people must believe that is what God has called them to do because that is exactly the way they have responded to Christ's call to carry His Word to the world and make disciples.

## 13. **Fourth, Look at Past times in our lives when we have seen God at work**

14. David was able to trust the Lord because the Lord had led in many ways in the past. David knew that he could fight Goliath even though he had never faced a giant in the past. David used the past victories over a bear and a lion to give confidence that God would continue to work in and through him.

15. You may be facing some great obstacles in your life today, but what have you seen God accomplish in the past? Don't you think God is able to continue to work in greater ways in the future?
- a. Allow those past God given successes to encourage you to attempt greater things for the Lord.
    - i. Maybe gaining new ground in your spiritual life is not what you need right now.
    - ii. Maybe you just need to get back to where you once were in your relationship with God.
    - iii. Get back there by being inspired by God's faithfulness to you in the past. Then boldly step forward into new victories God wants to give you.
16. **Make use of what you already have**
- a. Many people complain about:
    - i. What they don't have
    - ii. Why not having what they don't have is a problem
    - iii. Why they need "that thing" before they can get started
    - iv. Why not having "that thing" is holding them back
17. But the truth is you have to make USE of what you've already got to get what you want.
- a. Compared to the armor and the weapons Goliath had, David seemed insignificant.
  - b. After all he only had a sling, 5 stones and a staff (Even though he turned down armor that was offered to him).
  - c. Yet he made use of the 5 stones and it happen to be more than enough to get the job done.
    - i. He still defeated Goliath regardless of the comparison in weight, strength, Armory, weapons, etc.
    - ii. David didn't moan or whine because of the differences like the Israelite's would have.
    - iii. He had a "so what?" attitude and left everyone in shock after defeating Goliath so effortlessly. With nothing but a sling and a stone.
18. Basic lessons of life radiate from the story of David and Goliath. – Obedience, Faithfulness, taking a stand for something that is right. Trusting God when everything seems falling apart in our lives.
19. Thanks be to God.