

## **Slaying Your Goliaths**

**1 Samuel 17: 1-11 and 20-50**

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In 1952, Florence Chadwick attempted to set a long-distance record for swimming from California's Catalina Island to Avalon, a total of 22 miles. As Florence swam on that particular day, a heavy fog covered the ocean and she could not see what was in front of her. Blinded by the fog, she had become disoriented and discouraged. And when she decided she couldn't go on, rescuers reluctantly pulled her out of the water.

However, the people in the rescue boat were afraid to tell her she was less than 300 yards from land. And when she learned how close she was, Florence said, "All I could see was nothing and it was hopeless." The fog clouded her vision and kept her from the prize.

My text is 1 Samuel 17 and it is perhaps one of the most famous stories in the entire Bible. It is how David's faith gave him the courage to face the giant. And when we have the Lord in our lives, he is there to help us face our giants.

My text is 1 **Samuel 17:1-11;20-50.**

**Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Sokoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Sokoh and Azekah. <sup>2</sup> Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. <sup>3</sup> The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them.**

**<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.**

**<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. <sup>24</sup> Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him in great fear.**

**<sup>25</sup> 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 family from taxes in Israel."**

**<sup>26</sup> David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"**

**<sup>27</sup> They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, "This is what will be done for the man who kills him."**

**<sup>28</sup> When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle."**

**<sup>29</sup> "Now what have I done?" said David. "Can't I even speak?" <sup>30</sup> He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before. <sup>31</sup> What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him.**

**<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."**

**<sup>38</sup> Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> 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.**

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

**<sup>45</sup> 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. <sup>46</sup> 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. <sup>47</sup> 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."**

**<sup>48</sup> As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. <sup>49</sup> 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.**

**<sup>50</sup> So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand, he struck down the Philistine and killed him.**

1 Samuel 17 is also one of the most famous of all military battles in history. It is believed that Goliath had a thyroid problem which would explain why he was as tall as he was. Perhaps 8'5" to 9'2". I saw in the Ripley's Believe It or Not Museum" in Orlando, FL a life size picture of Robert Pershing Wadlow who was 8'11". He was 22 years old when he died in 1940.

Archeologists tell us Goliath wore a bronze helmet that protected the top, the sides and the back of his head. With a man of his strength his chest plate that weighed close to 125 pounds and bronze like leggings he had good protection.

The weapons Goliath carried were a javelin and a spear. He also had a strong young soldier who served as his armor bearer. This young man had a shield to protect his master along with extra spears and javelins. With Goliath's massive height and weight advantage and his arsenal of offensive weapons, it was thought he could not be defeated.

It reminds me of the Titanic. Experts thought in 1912 that the HMS Titanic was unsinkable and we all know what happened there.

And as David faced his giant, we must face ours. In life, we can't avoid them. Our "giants" could be a number of things, but we need to remember that our "giants" can either be obstacles or opportunities.

When manufacturing companies first made golf balls, the golf ball cover was smooth like a hard ping pong ball. But when it was discovered that when a ball had been roughed up by a golf club, the golfer would get a better flight pattern and easier to

control. So, companies started to do was make golf balls with inward, concave dimpled covers.

And so it is with life. When we go through rough spots, life has an uncanny ability to make us tougher and more resilient.

Now here is another way we can look at it. When God created humans, it can be compared to a rubber band. A rubber band is made to stretch. When it is not stretched, it is small and relaxed, but as long as it remains in that shape, it does not fulfill its purpose.

But when the rubber band is stretched; it becomes tense and dynamic, and does what it was made to do. When we are stretched and go through difficult times, we become stronger because of it. People that have the most depth in their lives are the ones who have gone through a lot of suffering.

In our scripture text for today, the Israelite army was afraid of this giant of a man. We can imagine Goliath's deep bass voice that reverberated against the hills. Which struck fear into the heart of everyone.

But David was able to face this challenge because he had learned all through his young life to trust in God. Even though he was skillful with the sling, had success in defeating a bear and lion, he still needed to trust in the Lord for the final deliverance.

Though the giant had the advantage of height, size, strength, but that was all negated with David's bold faith in the Lord. God had equipped David with bravery, speed, agility, and a good aim to do the job. It only took one rock hurled and implanted in a crucial spot in the head and the giant fell. Along with him, fell his pride, arrogance and unbelief in God.

Some of you may be facing giants. And perhaps you feel so overwhelmed that you just can't see how God can help you. Perhaps your "giant" is a person, not that they are 8 feet tall, but circumstances make you feel like a mental midget. You see "giants" in your lives and they are real and we can be discouraged.

If you are to travel to Rockefeller Plaza in NYC you will see this two-ton statue of Atlas holding the universe in the form of a sphere. Atlas defied Zeus, his punishment was to carry the world upon his shoulders.

And sometimes when we face our giants, we might feel like we are carrying the world on our shoulders.

But there is something else that is curious about the location of this statue.

Directly across the street is St. Patrick's Cathedral and there is a statue of Mary and young Jesus who has in his little hand a circular globe of the world. This is quite a contrast. Atlas strains to hold up the world while Jesus calmly holds it in the palm of his hand.

From a spiritual standpoint, we have a choice. When we face our giants, we can either carry our own burdens or we can let Jesus help us? I think the normal reaction when we face our giants is to try to carry them ourselves but we need to trust and put them back into the hands of Jesus.

When you think about it, we will always have "giants", but with the help of the Lord and our efforts, we can get the upper hand.

There is a hymn called, *By My Spirit* written by Almeda Herrick. Let me read to you the words.

V1. Is there a mountain in your way? Do doubts and fears abound. Press on; o hear the Spirit say, this mountain shall come down.

V2. Is there a river in your path, a river deep and wide? Step in the waters will roll back; you'll reach the other side.

V3. Is there a fiery furnace trial, far more than you can bear? Behold the blessed Son of god is walking with you there.

V4. Then trust alone the mighty god, he speaks the winds obey. Take courage, then of fainting heart, for you He'll make a way.

Chorus: Not by might; not by power. By my spirit saith the Lord of Hosts. Not by might, not by power, by my spirit saith the Lord. This mountain shall be removed. This mountain shall be removed. This mountain shall be removed, by my Spirit saith the Lord. Let us ask God to help us defeat our giants.

May God help us as we face our giants like David did with his bold faith in the Lord.