

The Pastor's Corner Vol. 40

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“Remember Your Lion or Bear”



*.... I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith
that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Jude 1:3 NIV*

“Remember Your Lion or Bear”

1Samuel 17:32-37 (NIV) *“³²David said to Saul, ‘Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.’ ³³Saul replied, ‘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.’ ³⁴But 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, ³⁵I 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. ³⁶Your 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. ³⁷The 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.’ Saul said to David, ‘Go, and the LORD be with you.’”*

Malachi 3:6 (NIV) *“I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.”*

An elderly Christian man was in the hospital recovering from surgery to remove part of his intestine that doctors found to be riddled with cancer. Six months prior to his surgery he was laid-off from his job of 40 years without any advance warning. His wife was a housewife and never needed to work since his salary was enough to pay all their bills and save money. However, through the years as his wife aged, she became sickly and needed expensive medical treatment to maintain a relatively normal life.

Needless to say, with no paycheck coming in, the expenses for his wife’s medical treatments quickly wiped out all of their savings. While in the hospital, the elderly man’s wife had only her husband’s unemployment check to live on, which only covered the cost of her medicine, food, and utility bills; nothing was left to pay their mortgage which was already behind. The mortgage company began to send letters and calling the wife telling her they were going to foreclose on the house because of their non-payment of the mortgage.

Because her husband was in the hospital recovering from surgery, the wife did not want to bother him with the mortgage situation. However, the letters from the mortgage company started coming three times a week and the phone calls came everyday, leaving the wife no choice but to tell her husband that they might be losing their house soon.

Desperately needing her husband’s input, and to avoid him being shocked by seeing their house boarded up when he came home, she decided to tell him how critical things had become. So on

her next visit, she sat next to her husband's bed, held his hand and told him everything. Expecting him to react to the news, she was shocked when he showed no emotion or concern. The wife thinking that maybe he didn't understand her the first time, told him everything again and then asked him if he understood. "Of course I understood you. You couldn't have been clearer," he replied. The wife now curious asked, "Well why don't you seem concerned or troubled by the fact that we're about to lose our house?" The husband replied, "Because I remember our lion and our bear from the past." The wife, now really concerned and thinking some of the pain medication had taken its toll on her husband, began to ask him some basic questions to see if he was in his right mind. She asked him his name, address, age, telephone number, the year he graduated high school, his mother's name, etc. To her surprise he answered all of her questions correctly and without hesitation.

Still curious about her husband's "lion and bear" she said, "Honey, you've answered all the questions I've asked you correctly so I know you're in your right mind. However, we've known each other since childhood, have been married for 45 years, and we've never had a lion or a bear. To be honest honey, I'm a bit concerned to say the least that you think we had a lion or bear when I'm sure we never did." The husband replied, "Oh no dear, I wasn't saying we literally had a 'lion' or a 'bear,' I was simply calling the two most difficult times in our lives a lion and a bear. Let me explain. You see, when you told me about the mortgage situation, I already knew about it and had been praying about it because to me it is our Goliath. Then while I was in here doing my daily Bible reading, I came across the story of David and Goliath. To my surprise, I noticed something in that story that I had passed over time after time when I read it. You see, David knew he could depend on God to give him the victory over Goliath because of what God had done for him in the past when the lion or bear came and carried off one of his father's sheep. David was able to rescue the sheep and kill both the lion and the bear without injury, something impossible to do without the power of God. David knew that God does not change, people change. So when David decided to go out and fight Goliath, the trained fighter from his youth who was over nine feet tall, David remembered how God delivered him from the lion and the bear and he was sure God would give him the victory over Goliath, even without armor, only with five smooth stones and his sling."

"Dear," he said, "when you became ill ten years ago and had to be rushed to the hospital, I was told by three (3) doctors you would never make it out of the hospital alive, and if you did, you would be a vegetable. That was our 'lion.' I began to pray about it, and I asked our church to pray about it. Two weeks later, I brought you home from the hospital and you walked out of our car and into our house without any help."

"Six years ago I had a stroke and was told I would never return to my job since it required physical labor. Six months later I was back to work and three months after that we were caught up on our bills and did not lose our house. That was our 'bear.' So when you came and told me about the mortgage situation, which I believe is our 'Goliath,' I showed no emotions because I

remembered our lion and our bear.” I said to myself, “Didn’t God deliver us from our lion and bear? So why should I be troubled by our Goliath?”

“I admit, I do not know what we’re going to do or where we’ll get the money to save our house, but I do know who owns the cattle upon a thousand hills. Besides, we’ve been faithful to God in our tithing, prayer, Bible studying, church attendance and most of all, our lifestyle. Call me an old fool, but I just believe God will make a way for us, just like he did with the ‘lion’ and ‘bear’ we faced in the past.”

Two weeks later, this elderly Christian man was released from the hospital. The next morning, the mailman delivered the mail and in it was a check. The amount of the check was enough to pay the entire balance of his mortgage plus buy him a new car and hold him and his wife over until his social security and pension kicked in.

The check he received came from a cancer insurance policy he signed up for on his job years before his layoff. Unbeknownst to him, his employer had paid his insurance in full for the remainder of the year when he was laid-off.

Although most of the preaching and teaching heard today is geared towards leading Christians to believe that they should not and/or will not experience Goliaths, lions or bears in their lives, the plain truth is that most Christians will. In fact, I am sure somebody reading this may have either a “Goliath,” “lion” or “bear” (we’ll call them) in their life even as they’re reading this.

However, like David and the elderly Christian man in the story, I recommend that you remember their lion and bear, those things that God brought them through in the past; remember God has not lost his power or the ability to deliver you and/or change your situation. So whatever your “Goliath” may be right now, remember our God who delivered you before from the lion and bear, and believe he will do it again!!

So don’t be discouraged by the lions or the bears in your life – they only serve to help you stand firm and trust God when your Goliaths come.

God Bless,
Pastor D. M. Duncan

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