

**Sermon Notes – June 21, 2020**  
**“Facing the Giants of Life”**  
*(I Samuel 17)*

Have you ever pulled for “the underdog” in sports? In the 2020 Super Bowl the Kansas Chiefs played against the San Francisco 49ers. San Francisco was predicted to be the winner but the Kansas City Chiefs won the Super Bowl, and it was their first time winning in almost thirty years. I have to admit that I pulled for “the underdog” – the Kansas City Chiefs, and I was so happy for their victory.

When you read the story of little David defeating the mammoth giant, Goliath, you might just think it’s a story about “the underdog” winning. But, it’s more than that – it is a story of God’s power and His faithfulness to his children. It’s a story of how God used David’s faith and his skills to bring the Israelites to victory and to remind them that through God’s power, the impossible could be achieved.

Look with me closer at the story recorded in I Samuel 17. David is one of eight sons born to Jesse of Bethlehem. David’s three oldest brothers have gone to fight in King Saul’s Army of Israelites against the Philistines camped in the Valley of Elah. David’s father has sent him to check on his brothers and to take them food and snacks. When David gets to the battlefield, he overhears the Philistine giant, Goliath, taunting the Israelite army – “Send out a man to fight me. Are you scared? If your man wins and kills me, we, the Philistines, will be your servants. But, if I kill your soldier, you, Israelites, will be our servants.” David volunteers to fight this giant of a man – and it’s reported back to King Saul. King Saul sees David, and in essence says, “You’re just a kid, a shepherd. This Goliath has been a soldier since his teenage years – and you can’t fight him like you are. Here, put on my helmet and armor and take my sword.” David tried on all the King’s armor and decided it was too heavy and cumbersome. “I can’t fight with this stuff.” He went out from King Saul’s tent with his shepherd pouch with five smooth stones and his slingshot to fight Goliath. *(David was an outstanding slinger – he could knock*

*someone down or kill them from 200 yards away.)* David decided he had to fight this battle with his particular physical skills.

**Sometimes when we try to face big problems or adversities, we try to fight it like someone else does and that doesn't work.** Some of you will remember the name of Billy Conn. In the 1940's, he wanted to be the heavyweight boxing champion of the world. He fought against Joe Louis and for twelve rounds, Billy Conn was winning in points (for his quickness and speed). But, for some reason, in round thirteen, he decided he was going to slug it out with Joe Louis - and you know who won - Joe Louis. If Billy Conn had continued to fight with his skills and uniqueness, he might have been the heavyweight champion of the world at that time - instead of Joe Louis. **David faced his adversity with the physical skills and talents God gave him.** You and I don't always face and deal with things like others and that's okay.

Notice also in this story that David reminded King Saul and the Israelites something they had forgotten - **that Yahweh God was with them and had helped them in the past and he would do it again.** The Israelites had forgotten how God led them out of Egyptian bondage, helped them to cross the Red Sea, provided food and water in the wilderness, etc. David said to King Saul, "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." David had faith in God, and he remembered how God had been there for him in the past - and he would be there now. **David's faith in God gave him the courage, the strength, and the confidence to face this incredible nine-foot tall giant, Goliath.**

Phyllis Schumacher and her husband lived in the country. They didn't have any close neighbors and their children were grown and lived out of town. One summer morning, when Phyllis' husband was at work, she came in the house to find a four-foot bull snake slithering across her kitchen floor - heading toward the living room. She saw the snake stop under the coffee table. Phyllis was scared to death of snakes and immediately started praying - "Lord, help me. You know how much I hate snakes and am terrified of them. My husband's at work and the

neighbors are too far away. Please help me! Don't let that snake get in the bedroom - there's too many hiding places." All of a sudden, Phyllis remembered a verse of scripture: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." She went to the kitchen, got a big brown grocery paper bag and placed it in front of the snake's head and flickering tongue. She grabbed her husband's walking cane and touched the snake's tail with it - which prodded the snake to go into the brown bag. She grabbed that bag, ran out of the house, and threw the bag and the snake into the edge of the woods. She ran back into the house and collapsed on the floor. "Thank you, Jesus! Thank you!" Phyllis later shared with a friend - **"God showed me that day, in spite of my fear and in Christ's strength, I could handle that situation."** Young David knew that his faith in God gave him the strength and courage to face Goliath.

Something else stands out in this story and that is something David said: "This battle is not yours alone. **Sometimes when we face difficult situations or persons, we tend to forget that we are not alone - God is with us all the way.**"

A few years ago, a little nine year old boy was being bullied at school. These kids would belittle and demean him verbally, but also knock him off his bicycle, etc. One day, he had a terrible day at school and at his dinner time, his father noticed something was wrong. The son proceeded to tell his dad about the boys bullying him at school. After dinner, the dad took his son to the basement and showed him some self-defense maneuvers. He also talked to the son about befriending the boys. The next morning, he ate breakfast with his son, gave him a pep-talk, prayed with him, and sent him off to school. The boy left on his bicycle for school. What the son didn't know was that his father followed him in the car all the way to school - just in case his son needed any assistance with those menacing boys. **What a comfort it is to know that God is with us, even when we're not even aware of it.**

I want you to observe something else in this story. At the end of I Samuel 17, when David has defeated Goliath and the Israelites had defeated the Philistine army, King Saul looks over at his commanding officer and says,

“Who is this guy?” He is referring to young David. Up until this time, King Saul was unfamiliar with David - but from now on, he would know David - the young shepherd boy who defeated the giant and led the Israelites to victory. This also reminded King Saul to remember the power of God at work in what seemed like impossible odds to the Israelites. People took note of David’s faith in God and his physical skills with a slingshot and a smooth stone.

**Have you ever thought about the fact that people observe you and me and how we face adversity and difficult situations?** The world wants to see how people of faith cope with the difficulties of life. When you and I allow our faith in God to make a difference and to prevail, people take note. You and I will face some giants in life. They may not be physical, like the Philistine, Goliath - but may come in the form of cancer, divorce, the loss of a job we loved, abuse, addiction, the death of a loved one, etc. The giant may come suddenly or unexpectedly. That problem or issue may last a while. (Goliath taunted the Israelities for forty days.) But when you and I face those persons or situations that seem so big and impossible to overcome, may we remember God is with us - and just as he helped us in the past, He will do it again. May we remember that even the small amount of faith we have is enough to give us the courage, strength, and confidence to face our incredible hurdles. And may we remember, when we come through adversity with our faith intact, God is glorified and we serve as an encouragement and inspiration to others.