

The Life of David, 1 Samuel 17:1-40, Overcoming Negative Influences, 1/12/25

We just started a new series last Sunday, The Life of David, following the life of the central figure of the OT who, more than any other person, points to the Ultimate King Jesus. And we said last week that of all the inscriptions that we could give to David, the one that God gave David was **"A man after God's Own Heart."** And want that for my life, and for our church. And so through this series we will be chasing down what this means and last week we learned it starts with a heart of humility. This week we are going to look at another quality that made David a man after God's own heart.

Let's review our context for a moment- David first comes on the scene in 1 Samuel 16, when the Prophet Samuel anoints a new future king from one of the sons of Jesse. And to everyone's surprise, it's not the first born Eliab who checks all the boxes in first impressions, in fact, it's none of the 7 brothers, instead it's the forgotten youngest son, the runt shepherd boy, to be the future king. And here we learn something critical about God. **7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him."**

The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. And this verse really tees up the next chapter as we will see, because height and an impressive outward appearance is really the theme of one of the most famous stories in the Bible, David and Goliath. This story is so widely-known it has become a cultural metaphor for any individual or group who overcomes seemingly insurmountable odds to defeat an opponent. We think Buster Douglas knocking out Mike Tyson, the Miracle on Ice, or my personal favorite the 2017 Superbowl champion Philadelphia Eagles with backup QB Nick Foles defeating the Dynasty of the New England Patriots and the GOAT Tom Brady. But we need to dig under the surface of this story, it's about much more than the human triumph of an underdog. In fact, there is so much in this story that we need to split it into two weeks.

Did you know that David faces not one giant, but three giants, three men who are at least a foot and a half taller than him and stand in opposition to David? Each represents a threat to the life that God has purposed for David and His covenant people, Israel. The first two giants don't present a physical threat to his life, yet, but they threaten David's identity, calling, tempting to put shame, doubt and fear into him. But David, in the strength of the Lord, overcomes each giant. And even though this story is 3000 years old, do you know we face the same giants today? Do you ever struggle with feelings of inadequacy and shame because of voices from your past spoken over you? Do you at times live out a false-self to impress others or to fake it because of family members or a boss's expectations of you? Have you ever struggled to speak the truth but didn't because you were afraid of what others may think? Well, then I'm glad you are here today, God wants you here today.

In 1 Samuel 17 war has broken out between Israel and their historic foe, the Philistines in the valley of Elah, the details of which we will examine next week. And instead of both armies battling it out, the Philistines have a different tactic. **4 A champion named Goliath, who was**

from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. Out comes big, bad Goliath and he challenges Israel to a one-on-one, champion vs. champion, winner-take-all duel to the death. And for 40 days, Goliath comes out to taunt Israel and their God with this challenge. And for 40 days, **11** *On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.* Who was Israel's champion? King Saul! The tall, strapping, valiant warrior king of Israel? He should have been the one to come out and challenge Goliath, but instead he's terrified, cowering behind his army. Can you imagine in Brave Heart if William Wallace in his famous speech to his troops would have instead said, "Who among you will lead our troops, while I go back home because I'm terrified?" Doesn't exactly instill confidence. That's the state of things, meanwhile, v. **17** *Now Jesse said to his son David, "Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers*

and hurry to their camp. 18 Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. Into this battle context comes an unsuspecting David delivering bread and cheese. David wasn't in the army, but his three oldest brothers were. David was still tending sheep, remember, he was just a youth. But because the army was camped for 40 days, the food rations are starting to run out, that's the only reason he's there, but God had other purposes. **20** *Early in the morning David left the flock in the care of a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed.*

22 *David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and asked his brothers how they were.*

23 *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.*

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

26 *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?"

Can you imagine? Everyone is terrified except for this one kid carrying a cheese board! Well Eliab, David's oldest brother sees David, hears his words and he's just livid. **28** *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." You would think Eliab would be happy to see his kid brother, give him a big hug. Not this brother. Instead he questions his motives, he paints him kind of in a sick way, like he just wants to see blood. See Eliab represents **the giant of judgment**. Do you have anyone in your life that always assumes the worst in you? Always putting you down, telling you that you are a bad person or you can't do anything right? That's Eliab. Eliab also represents **the giant of ridicule**. Listen to the tone- "Who's watching those few sheep in the wilderness?" He's demeaning his job. "Here we are defending our country...important work, you are just a meaningless nobody

shepherd with a few sheep. You don't belong here." Do you have people who make you feel small, unseen, silly, stupid or insignificant? That's Eliab.

And while we might be tempted to say well that's just because Eliab is jealous, that might be true, but that's not what it feels like when you are in it. All David can muster is **29 "Now what have I done?" said David. "Can't I even speak?"** You get the sense that this has been the script from Eliab spoken on David his whole life. Put yourself in David's shoes? Your oldest brother, the brother you probably long to accept you, completely judges you and burns you. What would you be feeling? Discouragement, loneliness, hurt...maybe you would be tempted to believe him and say, "Maybe he is right, I don't belong, I am a nobody, I am a bad person. I'm heading back to the sheep, back to the bench."

But that isn't how David responded, **30 He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before.** I love this. David feels the hurt, but he doesn't let it define him, when the mud gets thrown at him, he doesn't let it stick to him and he doesn't mud wrestle with his own burn back. He wipes it off and keeps pursuing what God purposed in his heart.

And so word gets out that while everyone else is terrified and dismayed, there is one person who isn't, the cheeseboard boy. And word travels all the way up the ranks to King Saul who sends for him. **32 David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him."** I picture in my mind, just staring at him for a moment and then bursting out in laughter and responding. **33 "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a youth, and he has been a warrior from his youth."** "You must be joking. You can't do it. Look at you! Who do you think you are? You're just a shepherd...are you going to beat him with your staff? You are too young, too weak and too inexperienced. No, not you, definitely not you!" Imagine how David felt. The king, whom you look up to and admire, who you probably grew up singing songs of victory about and admiring for his battles and conquests, and this king doesn't believe in you, doesn't take you seriously, dismisses you. Can you blame him? Saul represents **the giant of rejection.** Have you ever had people laugh...not with you but at you? You don't have what it takes? Have you had someone make you feel like you don't matter? It's devastating when someone, especially people you look up to, of power and influence reject you. And while that would cause most people to be dejected and turn away, David doesn't allow himself to be defined by Saul's rejection. **34 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,**

35 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.

36 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.

37 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." Man, I love this guy! Instead of allowing the giant of rejection

to put him back on the bench, he stands up for himself because he knows that God hasn't rejected him. David is basing his present faith on his past victory in the Lord. "I've seen the Lord move in my life, King Saul. I've watched God before. He delivered me out of some pretty nasty situations with a lion and a bear, predatory animals." And he reasons, "Isn't God the same yesterday, today and forever? If God rescued me from those enemies, won't he do the same with this enemy?"

The Spirit must have been so powerfully present in David when he said this that he changed the King's mind. *Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."* This may be the most godly decision that Saul ever made as King. Saul goes on to attempt to put his armor on David to fight Goliath, but David says, "Nah this isn't me." He knows who he is, he's a shepherd, he takes off the armor, he is going to stick his staff and sandals. That's as far as we want to go in the story, we will leave you on a cliffhanger, you have to come back next week. Let's talk about you and me.

They say sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me. But we all know that's just not true. I don't know about you, but I'd rather have someone I look up to hit me with a stick than reject me. I'd take a punch to the stomach over someone assuming my worst motives and telling me I have a wicked heart. The Bible agrees, *Proverbs 18:21 The tongue has the power of life and death.* And the Bible is filled with cautions and commands about how we use our words, to build up never to tear down. Words are powerful. Words of judgment, ridicule, rejection paint on the canvas of our lives, especially when spoken by giants, people who hold power, influence in your life. Maybe for you it was the constant criticism of a parent, or belittling sibling, or you felt rejected by peers in school, or a boyfriend or girlfriend, husband or wife. Maybe it was a teacher, coach, a boss. Throughout our lives these words spoken to us become scripts, voices in our head that are spoken over us and we often believe them. You know the ones that say, "I'm only worthy of love if I perform to the standard." "I have to pretend, because if people really knew me they wouldn't like me." "They are right. God couldn't possibly love me, I'm a bad person." "If I was more like _____ then I'd be accepted." "I deserve to be rejected and alone." "No one will miss me if I'm gone." "I will never overcome this addiction, I'll never change." "There's nothing I can contribute to God's work, I will just sit on the bench." On and on... Any of you relate to these? And our spiritual enemy, the ultimate giant, Satan tailors these negative scripts, these lies and shoots them like an arrow to our greatest inadequacies and doubts about God. These negative scripts threaten to define us, keep us from victory over sin, make us defeated Christians who sit on the bench never availing ourselves to be used by God in the church or sharing our faith, keeping us from the life that God really has for us.

You know, David was human just like us, he had these same voices that were hurtful and tempted him to give up and yet he didn't succumb to them. He didn't let them define him, rule his emotions, or influence his decisions. Why? Here we see another reason David had a heart after God's own heart. There are two spiritual weapons that David used to overcome these giants, and they are the same weapons we must use to overcome giants in our lives. We are going to just look at the first one today.

David's heart was secured by God's Word. When his brother judged his motives and belittled him, it hurt, but he didn't let it become a script that he believed and acted out. When King Saul rejected him, it must have felt like a punch to the stomach, but he didn't let it knock him down. He didn't need to try to be like Saul acting out of a false-self by fighting in his armor, he was fully secure in his identity as a shepherd as God made him to be. The reason his heart was secured is because the voice of God and what God said about him was bigger than the voices of the giants of Eliab and Saul. The Psalms give us so many glimpses into how secure David was in what God said about Him. He was secure in how God made him and his calling. *Psalm 139:14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

He was secure in God's unconditional love and forgiveness. *Psalm 86:5,13 You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you.*

For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths. David was secure, not needing to have other people fulfill him. *Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

Do you know who you are? Do you know what God says about you? **When it comes to what we believe about ourselves, the bigger voice wins.** Is it the negative scripts? The lies from the so-called giants? Or is it the voice of God? Who is bigger? Do you know that under the new covenant of the gospel grace in Jesus, the Bible says that you are chosen as a son or daughter of God the Father who loves you with the very same love he has for Jesus? (1 Thessalonians 1:4, John 1:12). Is that the bigger voice than the voice of ridicule and criticism? Do you know that God does not hold your past against you and completely forgives you? (Ephesians 1:7, Romans 8:1). Do you know that when God sees you he sees a masterpiece whom he has created purposefully to accomplish the good works he has set before you? (Ephesians 2:10). Friends, when the whisper of the enemy comes into your ear, or the whisper of your boss, or your ex-wife threatens to knock you down. Do you hear the whisper of Jesus? "You are loved, accepted, and secured in me, the only one whose opinion ultimately matters." This is so freeing. So many of us live chained to what everyone else thinks about us.

Growing up I so desperately wanted to be accepted by my peers, to be desired by the opposite sex, to be seen as somebody. I lived out of a false-self, a projection...not really knowing who I was, certainly not living out of what God says about me. And I was reflecting recently, saying, "I'm so glad I do struggle with that anymore and I'm secure in Christ." And then I found myself sitting at the Celebration of Life service for Bill Bergey, the Eagles HOF linebacker, who passed away after his battle with cancer in December. He and his wife Micky are part of our church family. And the sanctuary was filled with the who's-who of Eagles past fame, literal giants that are heroes and legends to me. And I'm about to go up and give the message. And in that moment, there was a script, a voice whispered, "You do you think you are? You can't get up there and share the gospel with these people? What will they think of you? They are going to

reject you.” And there was a temptation to cower and soft-peddle it, and not talk about Jesus as the only way to heaven. But then there was another voice, it was the voice of the Holy Spirit whispering. “You are my chosen servant for such a time as this. Even if everyone else rejects you I will never reject you. Who do you care more about pleasing, me or them?” In the strength of the Lord, He won the battle that day in me. What voice is going to be bigger this week when you hear the voice of judgment, ridicule, or rejection. God? Or these so-called giants?

Let me leave you with three practical ways to grow the voice of God bigger than the giants of judgment, ridicule, and rejection.

1. Meditate on what God says about you in His Word
2. Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you courage to overcome.
3. Find trusted Christian companions who will speak life and truth, who will build you up. Mens, Womens, Couples Small groups, Classes here, Men’s Breakfast coming up Slide.

Listen, we are going to fail. Sometimes we are going to lose those battles against those giants and give up and sit back down on the bench in discouragement. But the good news of Christianity is that Jesus wins the war against the Giants of Satan, Sin and Death. David points to Jesus. Jesus was the ultimate one whose heart was secured in the Father’s Word. Jesus never lived out of a false-self or other’s expectations or opinions. In the face of the judgment and rejection of the religious giants, the Pharisees, Jesus heard the voice of the Father- you are my son, in whom I am well-pleased. When he faced the ridicule and mockery of the powerful Roman giants at his trial and crucifixion from Pilate who condemned him to death and the soldiers who abused him, spit on him and mocked him, Jesus heard the voice of the Father who called him to endure suffering for the sake of our salvation. Look to Jesus.