

“Courage” // 1 Samuel 17:1–54 // #5, *Search for a King*

Announce: Christmas Mission Offering

- Largest goal we’ve ever had
- I’ve been praying that this is where our treasure is... that we each become people whose joy is in lost people saved and rescued and we show that by our sacrificing at strategic times like this one

1 Samuel 17: I’m going to talk to you this weekend about courage:

- I want to be a little transparent with you... I have struggled for years to find courage. Sometimes that surprises people because I appear to be a guy of such diesel bravado...
- That’s most a veneer.
- In high school I struggled to find the courage to stand up to my friends when they were doing things I believed was wrong. I didn’t want to be the outcast. I could hear them, “Seriously, Greear, you’re not going to do this? What, is this not on the SS approved list?”
- Sometimes it’s been in the courage to share Christ with people, or the courage to confront a friend who is wrong.
- Then, just the plain old fear of pain and death...
 - One of the things I’ve been most embarrassed about in my life happened when I lived overseas in a predominantly Muslim country.
 - Some friends of mine were supposed to be distributing some Bibles to people... make a long story short, they got caught. A mob of nearly 2500 people collapsed on them, the police put them into prison; the mob burned their cars. There was a gun battle. US Embassy tried to send in a helicopter to get them out but could not land because the people were shooting at the helicopter.
- The police in the area hadn’t discovered any direct evidence linking me with them but they suspected it, so I was placed under the watchful custody of the vice-mayor, whose house I lived in. I kept having police and investigators come to our house...
- I slipped out and managed to get on a secure line and I called my boss and said, “I’ve got to get out of here... They are suspecting us and I think they may come for us and they’ll put us in jail or if the mob gets to us 1st they might kill us.” I’ll never forget he said, “You can’t run...they’ll know that you’re connected...”
- Essentially: “Kingdom of God is bigger than you. You’re expendable.” I’ve never forgiven him for that. I remember walking out on my balcony and considered jumping.” I had the same Bible these guys were giving out and I hid them or buried them in case they came...
- I’ve always felt embarrassed about that... because I was the guy who told people, “I’d be willing to go and die for Christ.” *It’s one thing to say that to your small group; it’s another thing when you are living among a people who just might take you up on that offer.*
- Always been embarrassed about that... until I realize that some of the greatest men in history have struggled to find courage... Peter. CS Lewis said one of the greatest struggles of his life was to find courage.
- Maybe you can relate. Maybe you struggle with courage.
- Maybe you’ve gotten good at acting tough on the outside, putting up a good front... But on the inside...
 - Maybe you’re worried about the future. Your job.
 - Maybe some painful trial that is ahead... Maybe you have been diagnosed with a cancer...
 - Maybe your marriage is not going well, and you’re afraid of the future; or you’re scared to death of being a parent, or you’re really afraid of the decisions your kids are making.

- Maybe it is the courage to enter into a new relationship. I encounter single people here at the Summit all the time who've got some looming relationship that they think seems to be from God, but you're afraid because you've been hurt before. (Some of you guys are hesitant because you're lazy or just scared of commitment— I'm not sympathizing with you guys... Look, she's obviously the right girl. you just need to get your backbone out of your momma's purse and get with it...)
- Maybe it's the courage to own up to something you did wrong, or to admit a struggle you have: with pornography, or a drug. What's on the outside is not the same on the sides...
- Or from time to time people approach me feeling the need for the courage to stand up to their boss... Boss is acting you to do something unethical...
- Maybe it's confronting someone with truth they need to hear. Telling them about Jesus... You are afraid.
- Or maybe, God has called you to go somewhere... a UPG. You are scared about leaving your family, or going over there and dying.

Where does real courage come from? I want to show you the surprising answer to that.

To do so we're going to look at 1 of the most famous Bible stories of all time. David and Goliath. 1 Sam 17

- Now, everybody thinks they know this story. We think of it as a kid's story. I still get images of flannel graph...
- This story has become an icon for all kinds of things in our culture... used on ESPN all the time; means pull for the underdog; don't underestimate the little guy; bigger they are the harder they fall
- But I want to suggest to you that there are some deep Bible things in this at work in this passage that get to the heart of what it means to have godly courage and where it comes from.

17 *Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle.*

- First, who are the Philistines?
 - Group of people living in the land of Canaan. They weren't supposed to be there. God had given the land to Israel, and they were supposed to drive out all the inhabitants.
 - But the Philistines were strong. They were technologically advanced. They were the first civilization to work with bronze and iron, and use that to make weaponry.
 - (This is the period of history called "the iron age," when men really began to use metal, and the Philistines are at the front of that.¹)
 - The Philistines controlled the 3 major cities along the most popular trade route in the world at that time, called the Via Maris. They controlled Gezer, Megiddo, and Hazor. They controlled the NY, Miami, and RDU of the ancient world...
- But God was not intimidated by the Philistines size or strength or ability to work with metal... "Ooh... they work with metal..." He would say, "I created metal."
- Israel had just never believed the promise of God.
- That promise is the backbone of this story. God has promised to give the Israelites the land.

³ *And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.*

- I've been to this place. It's about a mile wide.

⁴ *And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.*

- That would make him 9' 6".
- Now, just so you are aware... There are some scholars who say that this is a scribal error and should read 4 cubits & a span, which would make him 6'9". (Sometimes when these texts were copied

¹ This is from studies done by Ray Vander Laan. See www.followtherabbi.com.

someone would get a number backwards... it's usually pretty obvious to spot and they don't make any real difference...

- I tell you that for 2 reasons... 1, if you professor points that out and says, "See, he's not really that big of a giant, what you heard in SS was wrong," I want you to say, "Yawn, my pastor already told me that was a possibility."
- And, 2, even if he's only 6'9", he's a big dude, especially to David. David was a Hebrew, and they were pretty short, and remember he was called a runt, so he was probably about 5'3" (about the same size as our David).²

⁵ *He (Goliath) had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, (not, of course, like a bunch of postcards attached to him, but like the metal meshing—in case you're a moron and didn't know that) and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze.*

⁶ *And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. (why keep bringing that up? Philistines are the only ones... Israelites have leather and rocks) ⁷ The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And his shield-bearer went before him.*

- That was something we never had in the flannel graph. Little guy out carrying the shield.

⁸ *He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. ⁹ If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us."*

- This is what they called "Representative warfare." One person fights on behalf of the army and the battle is decided that way.

Vs. 16 says every morning and evening he did this, for 40 days
At breakfast: ¹⁰ *And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together."*

At night as they are smoking their pipes. "Give me a man."

- Do you think this was intimidating?

¹¹ *When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.*

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Jesse sends David out to visit his brothers on the battlefields with some lunchables.

²⁰ *And David rose early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper (David's conscientious. He found a sheep sitter) and he took the lunchables provisions and went, (just like his daddy had commanded) as Jesse had commanded him.*

- He's still a little teenager making a donut run for his daddy, and he brings the stuff to his brothers who are in the battle fighting.
- (Well, actually fighting is probably not the best word to use here. Their fighting consists of yelling stuff, "Oh yeah, we'll you're dumb. Your momma's a giant.")

And (David) came to the encampment as the army was going out to the battle line (notice, not to the battle, but the battle line—like a 7th grade dance where all the girls and guys line up on either side and just stare... then look at this, it says they were) *shouting the war cry.*

- I read that and thought, "What war cry?" They've been avoiding the war cry for 40 days.
- They're like, "We got spirit yes we do... how about you?" And the Philistines are like, "Well, we got Goliath, yes we do."
- They're like, "Yeah, good point. We're all going to go back to our tent now."

² For this, and a lot of the interpretation of various verses, I have followed the lead of James MacDonald from his message on 1 Sam 17.

Who should have been going out? Saul, but, oh no, he's too busy in his tent making a paper machet monument to himself.

²³ *As (David) talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him.*

²⁴ *All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were much afraid.* went back to their tents and changed their loin cloths. (that's the literal Hebrew)

²⁶ *And David said to the men who stood by him, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"*

- 2 questions there: (1) What's the reward for the man who takes care of this; and (2) who is this big oaf that is mouthing off about God?
- The 2nd question is much more important than the 1st... and, is David's real motivation, which you'll see at the end of the story.
- But the 1st question is in there to show you how scared everyone is. This is some serious loot that's being offered! Vs. 25: They are like, "Well, for 1 the king will make you rich. And (2), you get the king's hot daughter Michal in marriage (and you get to be his son in law). And (3), your family is free in Israel which means they don't have to pay any taxes ever for the rest of your life. (scene in Armageddon)?
- No taxes? SOLD!
- Listen: What stands out from those questions is that he assumes victory... Everybody else is thinking... "What good is being rich and the king's hot daughter and no taxes, if you're dead?" We are all tax free after we're dead. Sort of.
- David assumes victory, "Of course whoever fights him will win. Didn't God promise us victory over the Philistines?" Remember that promise?

- Why has nobody just believed that promise?

²⁸ *Now Eliab his eldest brother (remember him? He's the guy that only looked like a king) heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep (Hear the insult? How are your sheep, Davey?) in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle."*

- Someone is still a little bitter about not being chosen as king.
- Isn't it true that the most discouraging opposition comes from the people who should be on God's side? Goliath is big enough as it is, but then you got a bunch of supposed believers telling you that you are crazy.
 - William Carey, the father of the missions movement, when he suggested in a leadership meeting that they should be taking the Gospel to the rest of the world, was told by an older leader, "Young man, sit down. If God wants to reach the lost nations, He'll do it Himself."
 - The cowardly people of God are always the biggest obstacle to the mission of God.
 - Goliath is not really problem. Leather strap and a little rock can fix him.
 - It's the giant of unbelief that dominates the hearts of the people of God that keep God from doing His great work on earth.
 - The hesitation is not in God, it's in us.
- And let me ask you this: **What do you think insulted God more? Goliath's blasphemous insults of God, or Israel's blasphemous refusal to believe God?** I would suggest Israel's unbelief is a bigger insult to God than Goliath's defiance. You kind of expect Goliath to be that way, but the people of God should know better.
- The biggest opposition to God working in a place is often the unbelief of the church.

- I've told people in other places about our vision to plant 1000 churches and reach RDU, and also plant a bunch of campuses throughout the Triangle and saturate the area with the Gospel so that it's truly hard to go to hell from RDU... I've had people laugh! "Whoa, little ambitious, don't you think, J.D... Sit down, young man." I always want to say, "Sit down, Eliab."
- One of the things I love about our church is that that rarely happens here. I've never had our elders be Eliab. They always say, "Let's go, Pastor."

²⁹ *And David said, "What have I done now? Was it not but a word?"*

- Didn't I just point out the truth?

³⁰ *And he turned away from him toward another,* Abinadab the brother with the bad name and then Shamoo the portly brother *and spoke in the same way,*

Everybody keeps telling David he's crazy and David finally puts his fingers in his ears and says, "NONONONO."

- Sometimes you have to do that in Jesus' name. Stop up your ears in Jesus' name to the people with no faith.
- I want people around me who tell me to believe God, not who point out the size of giants.

³¹ *When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and Saul sent for him.* ³² *And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."*

³³ *And Saul said to David, (condescending tone) "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth."* Sheez. Talk about more discouragement?

- BTW, here's how we know David's age. In Israel, you had to be 20 to be in the army. So we know David is not even 20 years old yet.

³⁴ *But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, ³⁵ I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him.* Beard?

³⁶ *Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God."*

- Where did he learn all that courage? The pasture.
- Real courage, real character, is never learned in the moment on the battlefield, it's always learned in the pasture. *Don't despise your pasture.* You won't be ready for Goliath until God has developed you in the pasture.

³⁷ *"The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."*

And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!" "I'm going to go back and work on my next monument."

So, next verse, Saul gives David his armor.

- Now remember, Saul is **head and shoulders** above the average man. David is a runt. So, this thing looks like a clown outfit on him.
- And of course, Saul's armor is **brand new**... it's all stiff. Pretty sure it still had the price tag on it; Saul's never worn it in battle..

⁴⁰ *Then David took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch.* (and... if you've ever heard someone try to tell you what these 5 stones represent— worship, prayer, Bible reading... that's all completely ridiculous. It just meant he had 5 rocks, and they represent nothing more than 5 rocks). *His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine.*

⁴¹ *And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him.* feel it coming?

⁴² And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance.

⁴³ And the Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” (seriously, you sent out Kurt from Glee out to fight me? You think was a “So you think you can dance” contest?) And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. Which means, of course, by nothing.

⁴⁴ The Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.”

Now’s when the music starts... ***Rocky theme***

⁴⁵ Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me (...just kidding. David had probably gone through puberty) with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. (In other words, I’ll see your ‘birds of the air’ and raise you one severed cranium)

And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷ and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hand.” (you know that line got twittered... but, did you see that last line? Whose hand? Our hand. This is not about David, this is about God’s promises to Israel. David is acting on their behalf.)

⁴⁸ When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.

- First video I’m getting off the shelf in heaven

⁴⁹ And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

- This is the part you rewind... and watch in slow mo. Slow motion replay... anyone do this with Mr. T and Rocky III? Slobber...

⁵⁰ So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David. ⁵¹ Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

⁵² And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout (OUR HOUSE, OUR HOUSE) and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath... ⁵³ And the people of Israel came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp.

⁵⁴ And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.

OK, so what’s the main point of this story? The bigger they are, the harder they fall? There is always hope for the underdog, so never stop believing in yourself? How about, “If you trust God, God will give you victory over all the “giants” in your life—cancer, a lousy job.” “If you trust God, you can go forward and claim your destiny...”

Let me ask you a very important question, first:

Who do you identify with in this story?

David... Yeah, David, that’s me. Me vs. the giants. Bad news: In this story, you are not primarily David.

You are Israel.

Jesus is David.

- Jesus was our unexpected representative who fought the giant on our behalf while we stood on the sidelines and did nothing to help him.
- Jesus was opposed by all his brothers and abandoned by all of us, his friends, at the moment of battle.
- Jesus was the only one who really believed the promises of God.
- Jesus ran onto the field with perfect confidence and He won the victory on our behalf that we all get to share in even though we didn't lift a finger to help Him.

The real giant in our lives, our real Goliath, was our alienation from God and the penalty we owed for our sin.

- Mankind's greatest and most fundamental problem, ***the problem behind all of our problems***, is our separation from God, **and there was nothing that any of us** could do about that. **We didn't want to do anything about it.** We were headed, hopelessly, to hell.
- Jesus came to earth and lived the life we were supposed to have lived, as our representative, and then died, as our representative, the death we had been condemned to die. He took into Himself the full penalty of our sin.
- There was something you and I could never overcome, something we stood hopeless in front of—God's judgment. Jesus took that for you and did something for you that you could never do for yourself.
- Reading a book right now on tsunamis...³
 - I talked to an Indonesian friend who was actually sleeping on that beach the morning the tragedy happened. He and about 15 of his friends had spent the night camping out on the beach, and about 8:00 they were woken up by the 7.0

³ When a massive earthquake occurs in the ocean, it usually sends a wave, usually about 10 feet in height, racing away from the epicenter at about 150–200 miles per hour. As it approaches land, the wave slows, and the water begins to pile onto itself, pulling water from the shore into itself. By the time it land, this wave is nearly 70 feet high and travelling at 60 miles per hour. *From Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded.*

earthquake that rocked the island. Unaware of what was happening, they walked outside of their tents and noticed that the water from the beach was rapidly receding out into the ocean.

- My friend decided to get on his motorcycle and go home to check on his parents. His friends, however, curious about what was happening, walked out onto the sand where previously there had been ocean (the waters receded nearly ½ a mile!). A few minutes later, the tsunami wave crashed into the shore, killing every single one of the guys, except my friend who by that time was on higher ground.
- Can you imagine standing on the shore when you see a 7-story wall of water, as wide as your eye can see, approaching you at the speed of a racing car? There is nowhere to run. Death is certain.
- Imagine, though, that right before the wave swept you away, the ground in front of you opened up and the earth swallowed up every bit of the water coming toward you.
- The Bible teaches us that the righteous wrath of God was racing toward us and Jesus stepped into its path and swallowed up every ounce into Himself. As one theologian said, "He drank the cup of God's wrath to the dregs, turned it over, and said 'It is finished'."

The real giant, my separation from God...⁴ has been defeated by Christ for me... (most people totally overlook that here...) because He has defeated that giant for me, I can have real courage in the rest of my life.

You see, **(1) Because Jesus took out the real giant in my life, I can bravely face all the lesser giants**

- ***In Christ, I don't have to be afraid of death***

⁴ See Tim Keller, "The Hero of Heroes," 1 Sam 17.

- When cancer comes, I don't have to be afraid of it, because even if it kills me, Jesus has taken out the sting of it. I can say, like Paul, for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."
- Hebrews 2:15 talks about how Christ has freed people who all their lives were held captive to the fear of death... I am not afraid of death anymore.
- **In Christ, I don't have to be afraid of the future flying out of control**
 - When you lose your job, or something falls through financially, you've got something even more secure than a job.
 - What you really fear when you lose your job is not being taken care of...
 - But because Jesus has absorbed into Himself anything that would keep God from being reconciled to you, you have the assurance of a God who watches over you the way a good, loving shepherd watches over sheep.
 - You can say, **"Even when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for THOU ART WITH ME."** (*Say it, church*)
 - Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life (because Jesus is goodness and mercy personified and He is with me) and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever
 - I'll never be abandoned, not in life or death!
 - So I don't have to worry about the future financially... I know that if God loved me so much that He did send His Son to die for me when I was in rebellion, do I really doubt that He'll care of me?
 - Sometimes people will have an obsessive fear of their spouse dying...
 - Yes, that would be terrible, and yes, I "fear" that for my family... but Christ has taken the "sting" out of death, I know that even when I walk through the

valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil...
 "What is the difference between the valley of the shadow of death and the valley of death?" **Would you rather get hit by a shadow of a truck or the truck itself? Jesus got hit by the truck so that I'd only get hit by the shadow.**⁵

- Being in a relationship... "maybe I'll get hurt" you can go into it, because if you got hurt, that wouldn't be the end of the world. Christ took into Himself "the end of the world" for you (separation from God), so that you never have to face it again.
- **In Christ, I don't have to fear the disapproval of others, I have the absolute approval of the only One whose opinion really matters**
 - Even if people reject me, I have the absolute approval of the only One whose opinion really matters, anyway.
 - You ever think about that? The God who created all this with just a word; the God who rules eternity, who has all power in His hand; If that God is for you; if that God treasures you and approves of you, who can be against us?
 - I used to be so afraid of what everyone thought about me... Even now... I want you guys to like me. I don't like nasty emails. **Example:** God looking at me from heaven....
 - If I have His smile, I can endure your frown.
 - If God is for me, who cares what my know-nothing, no-account friends think?
 - I can take *their* scorn if I have *His* approval.
 - This is how you gain the courage to be honest about your faults... I can appear weak before you because I don't need your approval any longer. I don't need you to think I'm amazing. The God of the universe loves and accepts me.

Real courage comes not from knowing everything is going to go smoothly. Courage is not assurance of every victory, or the absence of

⁵ Adapted from an illustration by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

fear. Courage comes from having something more valuable to you than life that you know death cannot threaten.⁶

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. [2] He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. [3] He restores my soul... [4] Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; And your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

[5] You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. [6] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

So, in Christ, the real giants in my life have been overcome. Therefore I can have undaunted courage...

- Do you know Christ like this? Have you ever received Him as your representative? It's a free gift to all who will surrender their lives to Jesus and receive it.

...but, **(2) In this story of David and Goliath, God also gives His people a pattern for how they too will overcome the giants they face.**

- OT stories do two things: they point us to Jesus (Luke 24)
- They also give us an example for how we should live (1 Cor 10)
- See the pattern? Worship, then go! Worship Jesus for being the real giant slayer, and then in His name go slay giants yourself.

Real quick: What is a giant in your life? A giant is anything that prohibits the Kingdom of God going forward in the lives of those He loves.

How do we overcome those giants? Being confident in God's goodness and His promises.

- My kids' salvation are giants to me. Jesus died for them, but it doesn't do them any good until they believe it. Knowing how to bring them to Christ; knowing how I can make them grow and turn out right, that's a giant. I throw myself on God's infinite love and compassion and promise to help me when I call to Him for wisdom.
 - Some of you are dealing with that right now...
- Knowing how God is going to take care of you financially in the midst of very uncertain times. Leaning back on God's goodness and His ability and willingness to provide.
- Breaking a sinful habit
- Seeing God's power flow into a place you want to see reached... your high school; your college campus; an unreached people group.
 - Jesus gave his disciples a blank check...
 - Matt 21:22: Ask anything
 - Saddest verse in the NT: Matt 13:58
 - There are people who are unreached who will remain unreached not because God wasn't willing but because we weren't believing
 - I've told our missionaries... The tidal wave of salvation...
 - Some of you, the power of God will not flow into your families, schools, not because God is not willing, but because you are not believing!

Where do you see the Kingdom of God needing to advance? Have courage. Don't look at the size of the giant. Stop listening to unbelieving Christians. Stop your ears up to them in Jesus' name. Think about the size and love of God.

One last thought here: Are you experiencing this kind of stuff? Don't settle in like the Israelite and watch someone else... at every stage of your life you are supposed to be seeing God's victories like this.

⁶ Both of these lines inspired by Keller from 1 Sam 17 sermon, "The Hero of Heroes."

- **David is a teenager.** We want champions. We want them to see them saved at an early age, and emerge from grade school into high school with a vision like this. To change their high schools now... not later. One of the greatest and neediest mission fields on earth is the American public high school. This is why we put the emphasis here on children's and student ministries like we do. You need to prioritize it for your kids!
- **Housewives...** you want to see these kinds of victories with your kids; people in your neighborhood; answers to prayer
- **Businessmen...** you too. Seeing God's provision when you take a stand on integrity. When you step out to tell someone about Christ. Watching God provide for you as you trust Him with your future put Him first by things like tithing, stopping work to be with your family, your wife
- **Retirees:** this is David, a teenager. This book also contains stories about men in their 80's, like Caleb, who were still doing great things for God.
 - You need to be like, "Moreover, teenagers, you don't have a monopoly on the power of God.
 - And point your walker or whatever you got toward some unclaimed mountain and say, "I want *that* mountain!"
 - Go retire in a UPG and be there on location to believe God for its salvation! (that is radical). Don't waste the last 15 years of your life on your front porch in a rocking chair playing golf and taking RV trips to Yellowstone (nothing wrong with that, btw). Is that how you want to spend the last 15 years of your life before you meet King Jesus?

Do not settle for mediocrity.

Listen: Giants are not a problem to God. They never have been. What is a problem is the mediocrity that comes from your lack of faith.

What was a bigger insult to God? Goliath's blasphemous insult or Israel's blasphemous lack of faith in the goodness and willingness of God to do what He said?

As Christians, we're made at Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens for insulting God. Perhaps God is more offended by an anemic church who doesn't believe God can save their culture than He is by Richard Dawkins running his mouth.

What amazing thing are you trusting God to do? What is it that scares you, and makes others laugh? If the answer is nothing, you are probably still on the sidelines with Israel.

Write this down: If what you are looking for God to do in and through your life doesn't scare you and blow other people's minds, it probably insults God.⁷

The size of the giant is not the problem (it never is); **the smallness of our confidence in God is the problem.** It's always the problem.

2 questions: 1. have you received Christ? 2. are you experiencing this kind of power in your life.

⁷ Adapted from a phrase I heard thrown out by Steven Furtick.

Bullpen:

You are trying to get your son to go the youth group and he's resisting and you're pushing and finally he's like, "Dad, I don't want to go to youth group. I don't believe like you anymore." That's a giant. Trust the goodness of God and willingness to help you.

You don't get the strength to fight on the day... but in the pasture.

God's willingness to help you was demonstrated at the cross; His ability to help you was measured by the resurrection. The God who bled and died for you cares about your kids and your marriage and your lost friends; the God who raised Jesus from the dead is able to do something about it.

COURAGE TO DO THINGS IN THE POWER OF GOD TO BRING GLORY TO GOD
WHO INSULTED GOD MORE? THE PHILISTINES OR THE ISRAELITES?

James MacDonald:

- Reason to fight: name of God
- Resolve to fight: the strength of God
- Resource: faith in God
- One of the core issues this story deals with is courage. PICTURE. Our version...

- 3 men in this story
 - Goliath: A man with false courage. He is confident because he is a giant
 - Saul and the Israelite army: men with no courage. They compare themselves to Goliath and are terrified.
 - David: a teenage shepherd with godly courage

Why are you afraid? Goliath's words are boasting, but is he any match for the promise of God? Hasn't God promised to give us all this land? What are boasting words before the promises of God? They are comparing the size of Goliath, David is comparing strength of words

- Psalm 73: Whom have I in heaven but you; there's no one on earth I need beside you.
 - Or, as Paul would say, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"
- In Christ, I don't have to fear not being taken care of. I've been reconciled to the Father who will provide for all my need.
 - His eye is on the sparrow.
 -
 - As Paul said,
- That's kind of a confusing phrase in Hebrew. I think the implication of that phrase is, "Aren't the words I'm saying correct ones?"
- The point is that everyone else is focused on the size of the giant and strength of His armor; David is focused on the strength of God's word and the size and willingness of God to back it up.
 - I can look at death and say, "It's OK. Because Christ has taken the sting out of death."
 - Death is not tragic, it is heaven.
 - David: even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me (not fear b/c he thinks he'll never die... but because he is assure God is with him... Surely goodness and mercy will

follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

- Paul, "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain."
- Christian courage is not being sure you won't die, but being sure that even if death does come to you, it has no sting.
- Cancer is not the primary giant to be overcome. You've overcome the real giant when you can look at cancer and say, "Even if you take my health and my life, you can't separate me from God, and so I can have joy in the midst of suffering because I have something better than life and that death cannot take away."
- Paul talks about people who don't know God has been held captive by the fear of death. We are no longer captive to the fear of death.

- God looks at me the way a good shepherd watches over the sheep; the way a good father tenderly looks after his son.
- David said... Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I know I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
- Christian courage is not knowing how the future works out. Christian courage is knowing that a loving, all powerful God is in control of the future, and even if you have to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, He is with you.
- Paul would say, "If God spared not His own son, will He also not freely give us all things?" If God came after me to the cross, He's going to take care of me financially? Does it make sense that God would give Himself for you at the cross but not provide for your day to day needs?

- Remember how I talked about how I was always so afraid of what everyone thought about me? Standing up in front of my friends? In Christ, I have the absolute approval of the only one whose opinion really matters.