

# **The Life of David**

## **David and Goliath—Part 2**

*1 Samuel 17:31-40*

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## David and Goliath—Part 2

### Scripture

We continue our sermon series on “The Life of David.” Today I want to examine the story of “David and Goliath—Part 2.”

Israel’s first king was a man named Saul. He was head and shoulders taller than anyone else in Israel. However, because of his blatant disobedience of the Lord’s command, the Bible says that “the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him” (1 Samuel 16:14).

The Lord then sent the prophet Samuel to anoint David to be the next king over Israel. At the time of his anointing, David was perhaps as young as twelve years old.

Later, Saul summoned David to play the lyre to calm his spirit. Presumably, for a number of years, David alternated between the king’s residence, where he served as a musician, and his own father’s home, where he served as a shepherd.

Then the Philistines gathered their armies for battle against Israel. But, instead of the two armies slugging it out, the Philistines put forward a champion named Goliath of Gath, who was nine feet nine inches tall. The Israelites thought that Saul was tall, but Goliath was probably still more than three feet taller than their tall Saul! Goliath 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. 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” (1 Samuel 17:8-9). Goliath shouted his

challenge to the Israelites twice a day for forty days. But no-one, not even King Saul, was willing to accept Goliath's challenge. Indeed, all the men of Israel, when they saw Goliath, fled from him and were much afraid (17:24).

Meanwhile, David's father Jesse sent him to find out how his three brothers were doing. When David arrived at the camp, he heard Goliath's challenge. He was shocked to hear Goliath's defiance. 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?" (17:26). This sets the scene for what happens next.

Let's read about David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:31-40:

<sup>31</sup>When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him. <sup>32</sup>And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." <sup>33</sup>And Saul said to David, "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." <sup>34</sup>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, <sup>35</sup>I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. <sup>36</sup>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." <sup>37</sup>And David said, "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!"

<sup>38</sup>Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail, <sup>39</sup>and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.” So David put them off. <sup>40</sup>Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd’s pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine. (1 Samuel 17:31-40)

## Introduction

Jim Nicodem writes that Dr. Gerald Hawthorne was his favorite professor in college. He was a good professor because he loved teaching and he loved his students. He so communicated that you were his favorite student, no matter who you were, that you wanted to do your best for him. In fact, when he would call on a student and a student would shrug his shoulders and say he didn’t do the homework, everybody would look at that person like, *You slug. How could you not do your homework for Dr. Hawthorne?*

Then, Jim Nicodem asks, “Have you ever had someone in your life like that, someone for whom you wanted to do your best? I hope that’s how you feel about your relationship with God, that you want to give him your best.”<sup>1</sup>

Young David felt like that about his relationship with God. Even though he was still young, perhaps a late teenager, he had a deep and personal relationship with the Lord.

And so when David arrived at the Valley of Elah and heard Goliath’s defiance against the Lord, he was stunned. And

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/sermons/2006/february/passionforgod-shonor.html>.

I think what stunned him more than Goliath's defiance was the fact that no-one, not even Israel's champion King Saul, was willing to take away the reproach from Israel and lead the armies of the living God against Goliath.

## Lesson

And so in today's lesson, in 1 Samuel 17:31-40, we learn that God raises up a savior against those who defy him.

Let's use the following outline:

1. David's Readiness for the Battle (17:31-33)
2. David's Reasons for the Battle (17:34-37a)
3. David's Resources for the Battle (17:37b-40)

### I. **David's Readiness for the Battle (17:31-33)**

First, let's look at David's readiness for the battle.

The Philistines and the Israelites had been standing off against each other for forty days (17:16). Morning and evening Goliath had come and issued a challenge to the Israelites to send a champion to fight against him. Presumably because of his enormous size, the Israelites were terrified and no-one was willing to fight against Goliath.

It seems that David had spent the previous forty days at his father's house in Bethlehem before Jesse sent him to see how his brothers were doing. David took provisions and went to the Valley of Elah. That is when he heard Goliath speak.

As David wandered around the men who served in the armies of Israel, having heard the taunt of Goliath, he wanted to know what would be done for the man who killed this Philistine and took away the reproach from Israel. He was astonished that an uncircumcised Philistine should defy the armies

of the living God. Then, verse 31 says, **“When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him.”**

David knew Saul, of course, because “whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him” (16:23). Interestingly, when David entered into Saul’s presence, David spoke first. David had apparently been told that his words had been shared with Saul, and so he knew that Saul was aware of his thoughts. So, when David arrived before Saul, he **said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail because of him [i.e., Goliath]. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine”** (17:32). For the first time in almost six weeks, someone in Israel volunteered to go and fight against Goliath! David affirmed his readiness to fight against an uncircumcised Philistine who was defying the armies of the living God. David’s readiness was not in his size or stature but his trust in God.

But, instead of affirming David’s readiness to go and fight against Goliath, **Saul said to David, “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”** (17:33). Saul looked at David, and what he saw did not inspire confidence that he could conquer Goliath. We are reminded of what God said to Samuel when he was seeking to anoint one of Jesse’s sons as the next king over Israel. The Lord said in 1 Samuel 16:7b, “For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” You see, the Lord had raised up David as a savior of his people against those who defy him.

David was like his greater Son, Jesus, whom the Lord later sent to be the savior of sinners. People looked at Jesus and

doubted his readiness to save his people. This was Pontius Pilate's view when he asked Jesus, somewhat incredulously, "Are you the King of the Jews?" (John 18:33). Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world" (18:36). But, Jesus' readiness to save sinners was expressed in his prayer to his Father the night before, when he said, "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do" (17:4).

## II. David's Reasons for the Battle (17:34-37a)

Second, let's note David's reasons for the battle.

*The first reason for David's readiness to battle Goliath was zeal for the glory of God.* David was outraged about Goliath's challenge. He said in verse 36, **"...this uncircumcised Philistine...has defied the armies of the living God."** David could not believe his ears that someone...anyone...Goliath could defy the living God. David understood clearly what everyone else in Israel had forgotten: that we live in order to glorify God. Because the Israelites had forgotten their primary reason for existence, they were paralyzed when Goliath challenged them. David would heartily affirm the answer to the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* Question 1: "Man's chief end is to glorify God." As Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones has written:

The whole purpose of your salvation and mine is that we should glorify the Father....People come and talk to me, and it is generally put in that way: "What will salvation do for me?" they ask. And the answer that is given so often in our evangelism is, "Believe the gospel, and it will do some marvelous things for you." I say, thank God that that is true, but, my dear friends, we should not put that first. The ultimate aim and object of our salvation is that we may glorify God.... The essence of salvation is to bring us into the state in which we

do glorify God.<sup>2</sup>

*The second reason for David's readiness to battle Goliath was to deliver God's people from danger.* David was a shepherd, and part of his responsibility was to deliver the flock from danger, as he explained 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, I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him”** (17:34-35). Clearly, David was not intimidated by ferocious beasts. He had killed a lion and a bear in order to deliver the flock from danger. He would do the same thing to Goliath.

*And the third reason for David's readiness to battle Goliath was his full confidence in the Lord's deliverance.* David did not trust in his own ability and strength. His confidence was in the Lord, as he said in verse 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.”**

David's reasons for his readiness to go to battle were reflected in his greater Son, Jesus. Jesus lived and died to glorify his Father, to deliver his people from danger, and because of his full confidence in the Lord. Jesus prayed, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him” (John 17:1-2).

### III. David's Resources for the Battle (17:37b-40)

And third, let's observe David's resources for the battle.

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<sup>2</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Saved in Eternity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988), 44–45.



At this point, Saul was apparently willing to let David go into battle with Goliath. **Saul said to David, “Go, and the Lord be with you!”** (17:37b). What is striking is that the Lord was already with David. The Lord had departed from Saul because of his disobedience and his unwillingness to repent.

Verse 38a says, **“Then Saul clothed David with his armor.”** Don’t forget that Saul was head and shoulders taller than anyone else in Israel. So, I am a bit baffled why he thought that his armor would even fit anyone, let alone young David.

What is even more surprising is that David tried on Saul’s armor. Richard Phillips make the following insightful comment:

We should probably consider the offer of Saul’s armor as one of the greatest trials of David’s faith. The sight of Goliath did not daunt the young hero: he knew how God would handle a blaspheming Philistine, just like a bear or lion seeking after God’s sheep. But by far the more subtle temptation was the offer to step into the shoes—that is, the armor—of the disgraced king. David’s faith knew how to say “Yes” to a daunting challenge: it was equally important that his faith knew how to say “No” to worldly compromise and unbelieving help.<sup>3</sup>

Verse 39b says, **“So David put them off.”** He said “No” to Saul’s armor. Instead, **“he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd’s pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine”** (17:40). Roger Ellsworth says that David went into battle against Goliath with the following

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<sup>3</sup> Richard D. Phillips, *1 Samuel*, ed. Philip Graham Ryken and Richard D. Phillips, Duguid Iain M., 1st ed., Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2012), 298.

resources, “He went to the conflict with a blazing concern for the honor of God, with confidence in the certainty of his promises and with the power of the Spirit of God.”<sup>4</sup>

David’s resources for the battle were not what one would expect. The resources of David’s greater Son, Jesus, were also not what one would expect. Just as David would defeat Goliath and rescue the people of God, so Jesus would defeat Satan, and rescue his people, as Peter explained in 1 Peter 1:18–19, “...you were ransomed...not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”

## Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed David and Goliath as set forth in 1 Samuel 17:31-40, we should thank God for Jesus who is our Savior.

In our text for today, we examined David’s readiness, reasons, and resources for the battle against Goliath. Goliath represents Satan. Goliath represents opposition and defiance against the people of God.

However, David points us to his greater Son, Jesus. Jesus willingly went to battle against Satan on behalf of his people. He was completely victorious in his battle against Satan because the Father raised his Son back to life on the third day after his death.

In his recent book titled *(Re)union*, Bruxy Cavey writes:

The Victoria Cross is Canada’s highest military honor, similar to the Medal of Honor in the United States. These

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<sup>4</sup> Roger Ellsworth, *The Shepherd King: Learning from the Life of David* (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 1998), 31.

medals are awarded for personal acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty. Of the thousands awarded to date, more citations have been bestowed for falling on grenades to save comrades than any other single act.

The first Victoria Cross of World War II was awarded to Company Sergeant-Major John Robert Osborn. The sergeant-major and his men were cut off from their battalion and under heavy attack. When the enemy came close enough, the Canadian soldiers were subjected to a concentrated barrage of grenades. Several times Osborn protected his men by picking up live grenades and throwing them back, but eventually one fell in just the wrong position to pick up in time. With only a split second to decide, Osborn shouted a warning and threw himself on top of the grenade. It exploded, killing him instantly. The rest of his company survived that battle because of Osborn's selfless other-centeredness.

I love stories of this kind of bravery and self-sacrifice. They give me hope for humanity and offer us all a glimpse of God's goodness reflected in his image-bearers. But no matter how beautiful that heroic act may be, through Jesus we see an even greater love at the heart of God. You see, soldiers who fall on grenades do so out of love for their friends while they are on the battlefield trying to kill their enemies. Jesus died for his friends, *and his enemies*, and for everyone in between.<sup>5</sup>

Let us thank God for a Savior who is willing to save sinners such as ourselves. Amen.

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<sup>5</sup> Bruxy Cavey, *(Re)union* (Herald Press, 2017), 87-88.

# Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church  
is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ  
and membership in his church family,  
develop them to Christlike maturity,  
equip them for their ministry in the church  
and life mission in the world,  
in order to magnify God's name.*

## Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

This sermon, and other sermons, by the Rev. Freddy Fritz can  
be found at:

1. [www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/sermons](http://www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/sermons).
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