

LESSONS FROM DAVID AND GOLIATH—THE REALITY OF THE BATTLE

Pretty hard to **preach from Colossians** when you have **Goliath in the background**, right? It's also hard to **preach from Colossians** when I spent all week **teaching the kids** about David and Goliath during VBS!

I obviously have no way of verifying this, but the historical account of David and Goliath is probably **referred to more** than any other "story" in the Bible. **Why** do I say that?

--Because if a small, **badly outnumbered military** unit defeats a larger, more well-equipped army, we refer to it as "David defeating Goliath."

--Or if a tiny High School—or college—**football team** takes down a perennial powerhouse it is "David defeating Goliath."

--And if an **unknown politician** comes out of nowhere and defeats someone with a "household name," we call it "David defeating Goliath."

--There are numerous other examples, but you get the picture.

But God's **primary reason** for having this event recorded in the Bible was not to encourage small **armies...** or small **sports teams...** or long-shot **politicians** to "fight the giant." There are **spiritual lessons** that God wants us to learn and that is why He had **this battle recorded** in His Word!

Who are those lessons for? They obviously applied to those who **saw the actual death** of Goliath. But those spiritual lessons **also apply to us today**—3000 years after-the-fact!

What are the lessons that apply to us today? **Way too many** to cover in one sermon! So over the course of the next couple of weeks, we are going to be digging into the similarities—and differences—between the very familiar **battle of David and Goliath**—and the battle we as **God's people** face today. As you already know from your outline, today's focus is going to be on "The Reality of the Battle."

Please take your Bibles and turn to I Samuel 17.

First, let's consider...**1. The Essence (nature) of the battle**

David's battle was against a **literal, physical** giant that was between 9'6" and 9'9" tall. His height is given in vs 4: "six cubits and a span." A cubit was roughly 18 inches—but sometimes slightly less—thus the variance between 9'6 and 9'9.

On Monday I asked the kids if the "Goliath" behind me was tall enough. Some of them **correctly** said he is **too short!** In order for the wooden Goliath to be 9'9", his feet should be on the floor, and the top of his head would be roughly 6 inches down from the top of the board near the ceiling.

The "Goliath" behind me—besides *being cartoon-like*—is not "**mean-looking**" enough, either! And—if you want to get technical—the **armor** our "Goliath" is wearing does not quite match how the **Bible describes his armor**. In vs 5, we read that Goliath's coat of mail—armor—weighed what 5000 shekels of brass weighs—approximately **125 pounds!** To give the kids an idea of what 125 pounds would feel like, I brought a 20-pound landscaping block, put it in a rucksack, and had them try running with it. I obviously wasn't going to have them try to lift **six** 20-pound blocks, but at least they got the idea!

But... most of us don't know someone **named** Goliath—and we certainly don't know someone who **meets the physical description** of this giant Philistine! And even if there is someone we know who is **bigger** than us...and **stronger** than us...and **hates** us...and **mocks God**, God does not tell us to **physically kill** them!

So the obvious point is this: the **essence** of the battle we are in—the **nature** of it—is that it is a **spiritual** battle, not a physical one. **Ephesians 6:12** "For we wrestle **not against flesh and blood**, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, **against spiritual wickedness** in high places."

Paul makes a similar statement in **II Corinthians 10:3** "For though we walk in the flesh [bodily existence], **we do not war after the flesh** [in the bodily, physical realm]:" Some suggest that "flesh" in the second half of the verse refers to not fighting according to **sinful, man-centered methods**.

It certainly **could** mean that, but since the first “flesh” in the verse refers to the **physical** realm, why not the **second**?

We also know the battle we are in is **spiritual** from what God had **Peter** write! The children learned I Peter 5:8 this week during VBS – **I Peter 5:8** “Be sober, be vigilant; because your **adversary the devil**, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”

The devil is obviously not a **physical lion** waiting outside for us to get done with church! And he doesn’t have a **red coat with a pitchfork** in his hand and horns on his head! He is a **spiritual being** that doesn’t have a body and doesn’t have to wait **outside** the church because he could be **in the church**!

Next, let’s consider... **2. The entrance into the battle**

When did David enter the battle? When he **walked onto the battlefield**, right?

--In vs 15, we see that David is feeding his father’s sheep at Bethlehem. Was that the battlefield? No!

--In vs 17-18, David’s father Jesse tells David to go visit his 3 brothers that are in Saul’s army.

--In vs 22, it says that David found his brothers and saluted—meaning greeted—them.

--Now look at **vs 23**. David now—for the first time—hears what Saul’s army has been hearing for 40 days: “I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.”

--Has David **entered** the battle yet? Nope! He could have gone home, told his father what was happening with brothers, and gone back to tending his father’s sheep.

--Jump ahead to **vs 32**. Here we see... **A. David volunteered to go into battle**

David hadn’t been **personally attacked** by Goliath—and David **hadn’t been drafted** into Saul’s army. He **volunteered**: “thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” Was he in the battle yet? In one sense, we could say “no” because he was **talking to** King Saul—not “**eyeing up the forehead**” of Goliath!

On the **other hand**, you could say “yes”—**he was in the battle**—because people were trying to talk him out of the decision he had made! Regardless of which way you look at it, he wasn’t on the literal, physical battlefield until verse 41.

What about us? **When**—and how—do we enter the **spiritual** battlefield?

And the answer is? **B. We are born into the spiritual battle!**

Did you catch that? We don’t have to **volunteer** to get on the spiritual battlefield because we **are born into it!**

--The Bible says that mankind is **born in the image** of God—meaning we are **more like Him** than any of His other created beings. One of those characteristics is that in addition to having a **physical** body, we also have **an invisible, immaterial** part of us. Some call it a “soul.” Some call it a “spirit.” And some call it a “soul-spirit!”

But regardless of what you call it, there is a **spiritual part** of each of us that **will live forever**—in either heaven or hell—after our **physical body** dies.

Satan wants to **blind you...** and **deceive you...** and **keep you away from hearing** the truth of God’s Word. Why? Because he hates **God...** and he hates **you...** and he wants to **drag you to hell** with him!

God, of course, wants you to hear of **your sin...** and your **inability to save yourself...** and your need for **the Savior...** and that Jesus **died in your place** and wants to **save you from the punishment** you deserve. And so we are **born into a battle** that is waged over us and **our eternal destiny**.

And that brings us to... **3. The enemies in the battle**

First, let’s consider... **A. David’s enemies.** Who are David’s enemies?

1) The obvious one is Goliath, of course! But **why** was David so willing **to fight** this giant? Goliath hadn’t personally attacked David...or his family...or even the army of Israel—at least not **physically**.

Did David just **hate giants** in general? No; there was a **specific reason** for David’s righteous anger: **Goliath was mocking God!** Gill (Biblehub) points out two things that would have “fired David up”: the kind of man Goliath was, and **the people** Goliath was mocking.

--**What kind** of man was Goliath? An idol-worshipping, God-hating, God-mocking pagan who had no ounce of the fear of God in him!

--**Who was** Goliath mocking? The armies of the living God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! But in reality, Goliath was really mocking **God Himself**—the One who created him and held Goliath's very breath in His hand! But—sadly—David was **not just fighting Goliath**. He was also fighting... **2) King Saul!**

Please know that I am not saying David hated Saul and looked at him the same way he looked at Goliath. What I am saying is this: King Saul **discouraged** David instead of **encouraging** him!

--We see that in **vs 33**.

--And in vs 38—whether realizing it or not—Saul wants David to **depend on Saul's armor** to help him defeat Goliath. My thought? "Hey Saul, if your armor is so effective, use it yourself and go kill Goliath!"

3) His own brother Eliab!

Look at the **first part** of vs 28: "And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he [David] spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David..." Once again, **I'm not saying** that David and his oldest brother were enemies! What I am saying, though, is that a person who should have been **encouraging him**—his own brother—was **angry** with David and **discouraging** him!

So **why was** Eliab so angry? He accuses David of **being there** when he wasn't supposed to be when he said—"why camest thou down hither"—even when he knew that **their father had sent him** there!

--And he accuses David of **shirking his responsibility** of taking care of the family's sheep!

--He also accuses David of being **overly eager to see bloodshed!** "...for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle."

But several commentators suggest it may have been because Eliab was **feeling convicted** by David's **willingness** to stand against the giant—even though **David hadn't yet declared** that intent! Pretty safe to say that Eliab knew David well because he was the oldest son—and David was the youngest!

--He would have **known of David killing** the lion and the bear.

--He had a **front-row seat** when the prophet Samuel **passed over Eliab himself**—and all his other brothers—and anointed **David to be the next king**. So there very well could have **been some jealousy**.

--And he knew David well enough to realize that **the way David was asking around**—and getting more and more upset about this giant defying the armies of God—that David was thinking about fighting Goliath himself!

B. Our enemies. **Who** are **our enemies** in the spiritual battle we are in?

1) We already talked about one, didn't we—**Satan!** He is "as a roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour." He has **two goals** concerning every boy, girl, man, and woman who has ever been born.

What are those goals? **Goal one** is to do what he can to keep you from **hearing the gospel and receiving Christ** as your Savior! But the battle **isn't over** when you are born again and become a child of God!

Goal two—if you become a child of God—is to do what he can to keep you from **living for** God...and **pleasing** God...and **serving** God! He wants **you to sin**—and **bring shame** to God's name.

--The devil will send Goliath's **to mock you**—and **dare you** to stand up against him.

--The devil will do what he can to make you **fear him**—and **doubt God**—instead of **trusting God** and putting him on the run!

But Satan isn't our **only** enemy! Sadly, **other angels** followed Satan when he rebelled against God, so he now has demon helpers!

2) But the list of those that oppose us **doesn't end** with Satan and his demon helpers. Like David's brother discouraged and opposed him, **other believers** sometimes discourage us—instead of helping us—in our spiritual battle.

3) And just like **Saul** discouraged David, **I'm sure there are times that I fail to do** what I'm supposed to do—**like warn and teach**—the way Paul stated pastors are to do in Colossians 1:28!

4) And yet another enemy—one we can **never get away from**—is our own selfish, sin nature!

Romans 7:18-20 "For I know that in me (that is, **in my flesh [my nature]**,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

Galatians 5:17 “For the **flesh [sin nature]** lusteth against [fights against] the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh [sin nature]: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

Each of us has a **nature that rebels** against God. We want to be **pleased...** and **served...** and even **worshipped!** We want to be the “God” in our life—and **refuse to let God** rule over us!

Lastly, let’s consider... **4. The ending of the battle**

First... A. The ending of the battle for David

--David’s battle with Goliath ended very decisively—and very **permanently!** Notice what it says in vss 49-51.

But—in II Samuel 21—we learn that there **were more giants** that David and his men killed. II Samuel 21:22 says, “**These four were born to the giant in Gath**, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.” In addition to those four giants, David and his men **fought the Philistines** for pretty much the entirety of David’s reign as king!

--David’s **relationship with King Saul** was great for a while—but it **didn’t stay that way!** King Saul went from **appreciating and rewarding** David for killing Goliath...to **becoming jealous** of him...to eventually **trying to kill** David on several occasions!

--And—just like us—David had a **sin nature** to battle. And just like us, he won some battles over his sin nature.

On at least two different occasions he had the **opportunity to kill Saul**, but refrained from doing so—even though he knew Saul was trying to kill him.

--**But he lost** a major battle with **his sin nature** when he stole another man’s wife—from one of his faithful soldiers, no less—and then had Uriah “set up” so he would be killed in battle! And so the man who defeated a **literal, physical giant** could not defeat the **lustful giant of sin** within him!

What about us? What is... **B. The ending of the battle for us**

Will the spiritual battle we are in **ever** be over? **No...** but yes!

--**Satan** will meet an eventual **permanent** defeat—but **not by us** and **not in our lifetime!** Satan’s demise is at least 1007 years in the future—seven years for Daniel’s 70th week, also known as the Tribulation—and 1000 years for **Jesus’ literal, physical reign** here on earth. After that, Revelation 20:10 will be fulfilled “**And the devil that deceived them** was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and **shall be tormented day and night** for ever and ever.”

--So our battle with Satan and his demon helpers **will not end** until our life does. But **he can be resisted**—and put on the run! James 4:7 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

--We can resist the devil—and he will flee from us! But... just as the devil left Jesus “for a season”—and came back—he will only flee from us “for a season.”

--And the news isn’t any better when it comes to our **sin nature!** The battle will continue until we die! In **literal, physical battles** we can step away from the battlefield, so to speak, and take a rest.

The military refers to it as “R&R”—rest and recuperation (or rest and relaxation).

--But in the **spiritual battle** we are in, there is no getting away from the battlefield. We are **always in it!**

Some of you might be thinking, “Hey Pastor, do you have any good news for us?” I really don’t—but **God does!** Just as our battle with Satan will be over—for ever—**after we die**, our battle with our sin nature will be over—for ever—after we die! I John 3:2 says, “We will be like Him; for we shall see Him [Jesus] as He is.”

But—like David over Goliath—**we can also have victory now!** God has given us **all the promises...and resources... and weapons we need** to have a victorious Christian life. I’m not promoting or suggesting **sinless perfection**, but I am saying we can have **growth**—and more “wins” than losses.

But we need to **know the promises**—and use the weapons—that God has provided. And that is what we will be looking at next week.

The main take-away from today, though, is this: you are in an unending war with your adversary, ***the devil***—and the ***sinful nature*** that dwells within you!

And because we are, we need to be sober—meaning serious minded and thoughtful—as well as vigilant, meaning alert and watchful. And—praise God—“greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

So what does God want you to do with what you heard this morning?

1) First, you must absolutely believe there is a spiritual battle taking place over your soul!

We are more than just a body that spends a short time here on earth—we have a soul that will spend eternity somewhere!

--And if you don't have Christ as your Savior, you will die unforgiven!

--And if you die unforgiven, you will hear from Jesus Himself: “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

2) Second, if you are a child of God, you also need to believe there is a spiritual battle taking place—every single day! You have giants outside of you that are more powerful than you are—and you have the sin nature within you that is more powerful than you are!

But neither “giant” is too big for God! So we need to count on Him and His strength, not our own.

Was it exciting to see the giant fall? It sure was! And God wants us to have those same kinds of victories!

So don't give up—and don't be discouraged—because “greater is He that is in you (meaning the Holy Spirit) than he that is in the world!”