

David versus Goliath

1 Samuel 16,17

The Philistines are stirring

The chariots are rattling

The battle lines drawing

Israel's assembling

Soldiers are preparing

Samuel's praying

The enemy's grinning

Intent on winning

There's a man standing. Intimidating.

An impression making

Goliath is raging

God's people are shaking

Quaking, waiting

Is there a saviour coming?

Saul is procrastinating

But David is watching
To the king going
A submission making
The people are laughing
The boy is JOKING
And the armour's..... not wearing
But God is working
David's faith is growing
The spirit's rushing

Goliathstill raging. Pounding. Threatening.
Israel's army defying
The living God denying

But there's a boy standing
For the battle preparing
God's honour defending
The challenge taking
A saviour becoming

And Goliath is toppling
A thud making
To the ground falling
no longer shouting. Intimidating. Defying.
From his headdeparting

Israel is cheering
And chase giving
No longer fearing
To the Lord bringing
The praise owing
A victory winning
Now seeing
And understanding
It's the Lord they're serving
The messiah saving

That's it in a nutshell. David versus Goliath. What a great story. You already know it.

Even if you've never been to church. Or read the bible. You know it. Which is why. You'll probably never come across a Goliath. The name's been tainted for all

time. That's what we're looking at today. David and Goliath. It's got everything. The villain the hero. The action. The little guy beating the big guy. And I don't know if you know this. But in the end..... the guy gets the girl. Did you know that. David gets king's daughter's hand in marriage.

So that's a handy thing. You're not going to be bored with a story like this. But you're not just meant to be entertained either. You're meant to be drawn into the action. And you're meant to learn something from it. But you'll notice there's no little teaching point at the end of the story. It doesn't get to the end. And say. So here's what we learned today. Saul learned this. And Goliath learned this.

It's only as you immerse yourself. And let yourself be taken along. And try to forget you know the outcome. That you'll get the point. And the story's written so well. It's easy to do that.

Last year Cathy and I went to the tennis and the new Queensland Centre and it was really great. But you know more often than not. I prefer to be at home and watch it on the TV. Not just because you don't have to queue up for everything. Not just because you have to pay five dollars for a bucket of chips.

But at home. When you watch it on TV. You get to see the same thing. From a whole heap of different angles. While you just sit there. You get the close up. They take you from end to end. You go courtside. Sometimes they give you the blimp view. And you can see the whole stadium.

And that's what happens here. One minute you see the whole battlefield. With the two armies sizing each other up. The next minute. You're zooming up to the middle of the field and you're looking up at a hulking goliath and it's a bit scary. Then you're back cowering with the ranks. Then you're back on the farm with David. And back to the battlefield. You see it from every angle. And you hear it from every angle too. Goliath's threats. The long silences. You hear from the army. From Saul. From David.

And you're drawn in.....but here's the question. Where are you?

Subconsciously you've placed yourself in the picture. And I guess if you already know the outcome. You've sided with David. But what if you didn't? Where would you place yourself.

Behind Goliath? With him. Shouting your taunts at God and his people. Or maybe just because they seem to be the strongest side? Or maybe you're for the underdog. And you're with the rank and file. Hoping for that saviour to show up. Maybe you're Saul. So much responsibility and so many challenges. And you're saying that's me. Or maybe you're the egotistical type who always has to be the hero!

Well I'm going to come back to that at the end. But whoever you are in this story. There's a lesson to learn. A thread that comes out over and over again. And it's got to do with how you judge things. Or more literally. How you see things.

And of all people. Samuel's the first one to get the message. Up till now Samuel's the unchallenged star of the book named after him. But as he goes to anoint God's new choice for king. Samuel gets it just a little bit wrong.

You remember from last week. God's in the process of replacing Saul as king. You have rejected the word of the Lord. And the Lord has rejected you as king. God's harsh words to Saul through Samuel.

"The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors-- to one better than you.

And now Samuel's off to anoint the better man. And he comes to the house of Jesse. Who's got 8 sons. And the three eldest are right there. And they're fine specimens. Especially Eliab the eldest.

And as he catches sight of Eliab. There in verse 6. You hear Samuel's thoughts.

1 Samuel 16:6 ⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."

Samuel looks up at Eliab. Cha ching. There he is right there Samuel says. HELLO. HERE WE GO.But Samuel's thinking with his EYES. And he's got it dead wrong.

1 Samuel 16:7 ⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him.

The last tall guy wasn't that great. And Samuel's the first one to get this lesson.

The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

It was Samuel's MUM back in chapter 2. Hannah prayed those words. It is not by strength that one prevails.

So the better man's not the one you might think.

Samuel it's not him. And it's not him or him. None of the first three. Ok Jesse. Wheel in the other brothers. God says no. no. no. None of them either. Is there anyone else? Reminds me a bit of Cinderella.

Strange question. Are you sure you don't have any other sons?

As if maybe Jesse had forgotten the other one. But it hadn't even occurred to Jesse that THE BOY.... would even come into the equation. Which is the same point. Don't just go by how things LOOK.

Even his own dad doesn't rate young David.

But he's the one. And Samuel anoints David. An unlikely king. An even more unlikely saviour. By all appearances.

And Samuel anoints David with oil. And God's Spirit comes on David. From that day on.

But lets get to the battle. Chapter 17.

The Philistines line up for battle well and truly inside Israel's territory. In Judah.

So Saul and his troops line up as well.

But it's a strange sort of battle because there's no fighting. Only this pattern day after day after day.

You see it there verse 4.

A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall.

Let's get up close. OVER nine feet tall. And everything about this guy is scary. His helmet. Bronze. His armour – heavy bronze. Bronze leg armour and a huge bronze javelin slung on his back.

He's got a great big spear with a ridiculously heavy, iron point. And

Out he comes day after day after day. And if his APPEARANCE isn't scary enough.

Listen to what he has to say.

Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel.

Why do you come out and line up for battle?

And I bet there's a good spot for a pause and a long, uncomfortable silence.

Why do you come out and line up for battle?

Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul?

And here's the challenge.

Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, fat chance – we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.

And that's the challenge. Day after day after day. And you can imagine the Philistines. You wouldn't miss it. Day after day. I defy the ranks of Israel. Go GOLIATH. Give me a man and let us fight each other. As if anyone will.

And Saul and his men. Are terrified.

Now you need to see the irony of what's happening here. Remember. God's people asked for a king for THIS... VERY... PURPOSE. You remember what they said to Samuel. Give us a king. That he can go out and fight our battles for us. Well here's the perfect opportunity.

But as Goliath shouts his challenge. The silence is deafening. And Saul's under a rock somewhere.

And unknowingly Goliath even uses the same words Samuel used back in chapter 8. Samuel presents Saul. Here is your king, the one you have ***chosen for yourselves.***

Now Goliath says. CHOOSE....FORYOURSELVES.. a man. But their chosen man...is wetting his pants/ as scared stiff.....Just as much as anyone else.

And things don't LOOK VERY GOOD. They don't LOOK very good.

But remember what God said to Samuel. Don't look on the appearance of things.

And we turn to David.

Who's running errands – David's three oldest brothers are in the army and they're at the front lines. And David's taking his brothers food from dad.

Which is pretty much the equivalent of your mum bringing your lunch up to school for you when you forgot it. And they're not too happy to see the boy at the front lines.

But there he is. And just as he gets there the actions hotting up. The armies are lining up for battle. And David drops his stuff off and heads up to see the action. And there it is again. Goliath and his taunts. And his challenge. And again verse 24 to make the point. The response from Israel.

When the Israelites saw the man, they all ran from him in great fear.

What they see, what they hear – is terrifying.

But notice, Halfway through verse 26 David sees things a bit differently.

Who's this guy he says? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? He's got a cheek!

Who's he think he is? Everyone else sees an UNASSAILABLE ENEMY. But David sees is a little man. Defying a BIG GOD. And his people.

Which could easily be just big talk. Except for what happens next.

Because Saul hears about the way David's talking. And he sends for him.

So here's the boy. Talking to the king. The shepherd errand boy talking to a veteran of at least a couple of wars by now.

And David says two things. Verse 32. Here's number one. And this has been called David's gospel. He says

Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine;

Don't be afraid mister the king of Israel. Don't be afraid of this guy.

And maybe you'd think this is the time David lets you in on some secret weakness. Or some cunning plan he's got in mind.

But no. Don't be afraid.

Your servant will go. And fight him.

And I'm imagining Saul's head in his hands. So that's your cunning plan.

David versus Goliath, it's ridiculous.

David versus Goliath, it's IMPOSSIBLE.

But it depends on how you see things. And Saul sees things like everybody else. He says you can't go. And he points out the obvious. You're a boy. And he's a war hardened man eating Goliath.

And to make the point a bit more there's this comical picture of little David clunking around in Saul's armour.

But in the end. It's the boy with no armour. With a sling and some rocks against the fully decked out war hardened exterminator.

David versus GOLIATH.

Now I asked before – where do you fit here?

Who do you associate with in this story? It's an important question. Because it's going to determine what you think it's saying to you.

See if you think you're David. Then you're going to think. Here's a story about how I defeat my enemies. No matter how big they are. And so the lesson's all about DEFEATING YOUR GOLIATHS.

And you'll analyse David. And you'll copy him. Get it right. And who knows what you can do?

So people preaching on this passage talk about the FIVE SMOOTH STONES of David. Because David picks up five stones from the creek.

Talk about the smoothing effect of having to be a shepherd like Moses.

Talk about shedding the excess baggage like David.

Well can I say. NO NO NO.

David's faith may well be worth emulating.

But here's the point.

David cannot defeat Goliath. That's the point. I'll say it again. David CAN'T WIN. He's too small. He's TOO YOUNG. He's got NO EXPERIENCE. And no hope. On his own.

It's God who wins the victory. That's the point. Trust God - HE is your saviour.

Just like David. Listen to what David says to Saul in verse 37. Here's the logic.

The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.

And as he fronts up. Goliath snorts - am I a dog that you come at me with sticks.

But listen to David. Down to 45 now. HE says.

You come at me with sword and spear and javelin. But I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

You big dufus.

David doesn't brag about his rocks. I've got five smooth stones you know. You better watch out!! His confidence..... is in his great big God.

This day. The Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head.

Which he does.

And the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.

That's the point!

All those here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's and he will give all of you into our hands.

David is not demonstrating techniques to beat your own personal Goliaths. He's showing that God delivers. Specifically that God saves his people. Specifically the God saves his people through his appointed saviour.

Remember what David said to Saul. Do not be afraid. I will go.

Not here's how you can win. Not here are some good strategies. I will save you.

Hannah pointed out the same thing back in chapter 2.

1 Samuel 2:9-10 It is not by strength that one prevails; ¹⁰ those who oppose the LORD will be shattered. He will thunder against them from heaven; the LORD will judge the ends of the earth. "He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed."

His Messiah.

Who just for the record. May not look like you expect.

So if you're not David. Then who are you and I? Well can I suggest. That we're simply people who need a rescuer.

We're part Philistine. Because our sinful nature makes us God's enemies.

And we need rescuing from that. And the good news says that we can change sides. We can turn to the savior and be God's friends. And as a result. Take a hold of the promises to his people.

But we're also a bit like God's people. Because at the same time as our sin makes us God's enemies. Sin itself is also our worst enemy. As is death. It's the enemy we can't defeat. We're helpless.....and we need someone to deal with it. And that's what Jesus does. He goes into battle for us.

Listen to what the apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians. He's got a few taunts of his own. He says.

1 Corinthians 15:55-58 ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul can say I'm forgiven for my sin. He can say I've got peace with God. Instead of being his enemy. He can say. Salvation and eternal security is mine. And DEATH...has no hold on me. Because Jesus is my Lord and Saviour.

Which is a great thing. And that's what Paul spends himself on for the rest of his life once he grasps that truth. Puts up with hunger and rejection and prison and all sorts of troubles to tell anyone who'll listen to Turn to Jesus.

Now of course. The enemy's been decapitated in a sense. But it doesn't necessarily seem that way. The writer to the Hebrews says that God put everything under Jesus' feet...

Hebrews 2:8 yet.....at present we do not see everything subject to him.

But again. Don't go by how things seem. Keep looking to the savior. Because he's overcome. That's what Jesus says to his disciples in John's gospel. He says. Take heart. For I have overcome the world.

Feel like the world's against you? Take heart. Jesus has overcome the world.

You suffering? Take heart. Jesus has overcome the world. Those people who throw you in prison. Who taunt you. Who mock you.

Marriage breakdown, dysfunctional family, loneliness, fear, depression? Take heart. Jesus has overcome the world. Keep looking to him. The end's near.