

**II Samuel**  
**“The Battle is the Lord's”**  
**I Samuel 17**

Chapter 17 verses 1 to 10.

*17 Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. And they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephesdamim. <sup>2</sup> And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in line of battle against the Philistines. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six<sup>[a]</sup> cubits<sup>[b]</sup> and a span. <sup>5</sup> He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels<sup>[c]</sup> of bronze. <sup>6</sup> And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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.” <sup>10</sup> And the Philistine said, “I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together.”*

And then verse 25, the Israelites had been saying, do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy or heap shame upon Israel. The King will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter marriage and will exempt his father's family from taxes in Israel. David asked the men standing near him, what will be done for the man who kills the Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel?

Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy or heap shame on the armies of the living God? Now you know the rest of the story. I'm to skip the part where he gets his armor and goes out with the sling. Go to verse 40. Then he, David, took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag, and with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

Meanwhile, the Philistine in front of him kept coming closer to David. He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. He said to David, am I a dog that you come at me with sticks? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. Come here, he

said, and I'll give your flesh to the birds, the air, and the beasts of the field. And David said to the Philistine, you come against 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. This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel, and all those gathered 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.

Let's pray for a moment.

Lord, give us ears. We pray to hear what you're saying to us, your servants. In Jesus name, Amen. Please be seated.

It is sports season NCAA. Basketball season. But I'm gonna tell you a football story. The story goes like this I went to a football game a number of years ago, and as the people left the stadium cheerful because of the victory of the home team, they began to walk to their parking lots. And as they did, they had to come to a five point intersection that required a traffic policeman.

The traffic policeman was very good at what he did, and he kept long streams of cars going. Just keep going and going and going. Hundreds of cars would wait for us, make other cars wait and make pedestrians wait. Then they would have their turn. And then everybody went from the five directions. And then he blew everyone to a stop.

And with a magnificent wave of the hand, he told the pedestrians to cross at their leisure with a gesture. The intersection is now yours. Now one of the traits of football games is cheering. But another trait of football games is drinking. And there was someone in the crowd of cars who had evidently had a little bit too much to drink and didn't understand what stop your car meant, and he began to creep across the intersection with the people, driving with the people, as if no one would notice that a car was going with hundreds of people across this intersection, and the policeman blew his whistle, ordered the man to stop, and the man, instead of stopping, picked up speed a little bit and began to go a little faster. And the pedestrians who had been okay, I guess with him going 2.5 miles an hour with them, were a little alarmed as he was going five six, seven, eight miles an hour, and then the policeman blew his whistle harder and ran up to the car and grabbed the handle of the car and was running beside the car and implored the man to stop, and he wouldn't. And so the policeman unleashed a titanic kick with his steel toed boot on a new expensive car, which finally stopped and the man roll down the window and said, what are you doing? And the policeman pulled him out of the window and told him exactly what he was doing in a language that was equal parts emphatic and unrepeatable in this church. The

crowd burst into applause at this demonstration of roadside justice. Now, why do we applaud? We applaud it because of the man's zeal for something. Because he took very bold action to do justice, as he understood justice as a traffic policeman, to protect people, to damage property, in order to make it clear we will be safe under my watch.

I tell you this story for obvious reasons. David is a man who said, I have a zeal for God's cause that is going to impel me to do something about a travesty that I see unfolding in front of me. Now, you know the story pretty well, but I just want to make sure we have a few basics in our minds.

The Philistines and the Israelites were enemies for decades and decades, and the Philistines, who lived by the coast of the Mediterranean Sea that live right in the coast, and a very small sliver of land, wanted to expand as they were potent and growing in numbers, and they wanted to expand into Israel. Now, Israel is not a big country.

You've heard it many times, but from the Mediterranean Sea to Jerusalem, as the crow flies, it's about 37 miles, that's all. And we may have a map of it up here, and we may not. I'm not quite sure, but if we do, we're going to have a map that has a little town there. You go. There's the distance from the coast to Jerusalem.

In that little box is 37 miles. And now maybe we're going to see the town of Soka, the town of Soka is in the hills at almost exactly half the way from the Mediterranean Sea to Jerusalem, which means this invasion was halfway across Israel. It'd be a little bit like saying the Mexicans and Canadians decided to attack America, and American forces met them in Oklahoma City and Memphis to the south, and.

How about Saint Louis to the north or maybe Denver to the north? It's a very serious invasion. Thank you so much for that map. It's a very serious invasion. It's not just a battle between a tall man and a short man, a warrior and a boy. It is a geopolitical event and David is coming to the rescue of his people.

This is, in the end, a satanic attack on God's people. If the Philistines prevail, which God would not allow, they would wipe Israel off the face of the earth. And David is protecting his people as the Lord's anointed. It's much more my friends, therefore, than a story about little people fighting giants or about little basketball teams fighting big, strong basketball teams.

It is a story about a warrior king who points ultimately to Jesus in his courage and his strength, and his zeal for God is trusting God. The battle is the Lord's and a zeal for God's honor, which is what I want to emphasize today. Now, in first Samuel chapter 16, we know that David became the anointed of the Lord.

He was, as I said last week, you might have been here. He was probably 19, maybe 18 years old. If he had been 20, he would have gone with his brothers to this battle. But instead he's bringing food because not everybody had provisions with them. He's bringing food to his brothers. That's why he's there. God chose David above his older brother, especially Eliab, who's mentioned a couple of times in this passage.

And he comes as a man who's driven by faith to rekindle an interest in God's honor in the land of Israel. Now, I say that because that's something that the passage actually emphasizes over and over again in chapter 17, verse 23, it says, David came just as he heard Goliath taunting the Israelites, defying the Israelites. And David says, as he hears this taunt, he says, who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy or heap shame on Israel?

The shame is not ultimately upon Israel, but ultimately upon the Lord, whose people cower in unbelief, unwilling to fight this giant. Now why is he fighting a giant? some of you probably have been to Israel, and if you have, you probably did not go to Soka or the Valley of Elah. Just a just a short distance away.

Because honestly, it's just a farm today. It's just a tomato farm. And you wouldn't go there, but I told the guide, we're going to go to the Valley of Elah. I want to see this spot. And if you go there, it's not very impressive. But there is a ridge on each side. And the two armies, pulled up in battle array, ready to meet each other.

And no one wanted to fight a literal, not metaphorical, a literal uphill battle. We use the word uphill battle, almost always metaphorically today. But in the days when people fought hand-to-hand, nobody wants to try to strike with a spear, a javelin or sword while on the downward slope. And so each, each side is standing there hoping the other side will attack.

It's an impasse. And so Goliath says, I have a proposition. How about if you send out a champion and we'll send out a champion, we'll see who wins. Now, Goliath might have had a little bit of confidence on his side, right? Because he was nine foot nine, if he had a lot of hair, is here, would have scraped the bottom of a basketball rim.

And his armor just on his chest weighed 125 pounds. Some of you, some of you as a whole person, weigh 125 pounds. He could carry armor just here that weighed 125 pounds plus armor on his legs. And did you hear how heavy is the tip of his spear was? The tip of the spear weighed 15 pounds. The shot put in the Olympics weighs 12 pounds.

But that's all they throw. That was the tip of his spear. He was truly a giant. And so he thinks this is a wonderful idea. And no one will dare to go to battle against me. No one will imagine they could kill me. so David comes as Goliath is heaping shame on the Israeli army, saying, essentially, if you believe in your God, why don't you fight me?

I'm cursing you, my by my gods. And you don't even have an answer to me. Now David arrives, and as he does, he says, who's this Philistine to defy the armies of the living God? He also asked a question about secondary rewards. I'm assuming you know the story. Read a little bit of it. When he gets here, he says, what's going to happen for the person who kills the giant?

What will the reward be? And the answer is, the man who kills the giant will get the king's daughter in marriage, and his whole family will be free of taxes in Israel. That's quite a motivation, isn't it? What do you think? But of course, the problem, as the soldiers realize, is that dead men don't enjoy their conjugal rights and dead men don't pay taxes.

So no one's claiming the reward because they're all thinking, I'll be killed. Eliab, David's older brother, says, you, David, what are you doing here? This is in verses 28 to 30. I know you just came to see the blood and the warfare, and we hear sibling rivalry between them. Well, David is moved. He says, I'll take this giant on.

And before too long, as you know, David starts to say, I'll fight him. And the report leads to Saul. Saul brings them over. Saul says, here, try, try on my armaments and put on my shielding devices. And he tries them on. He says, I can't go in these. And he says, what I'm going to do is pick up five smooth stones from this dry riverbed, and I'm going to go out and fight.

Now, the battle itself actually lasts two verses. There's 71 verses and the battle itself last two verses. The conversation about the battle is entirely different because these guys talk trash to each other, right? Goliath says you're a pretty boy. You come to me as a man who's young, ruddy, handsome. Unscarred are you a dog? You come up with sticks.

I'm going to kill you. I'm gonna feed your body. No one's gonna even bury your body, Kirsten. By God's, the Bible said. And David is inspired by God to give some real insults, but they give real insults in God's name. He says, you come against me. I know I'm reading again. It was sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God, the armies of Israel, whom you have defied upon you, whom you have heaped shame, you have dishonored him.

And so I'm going to hand you over, and I'm a strike you down. I'm a cut off your head, and I'm not going to give your carcass, but I'm going to give the carcasses of the entire enemy army, the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. Your whole army will be scattered and will be dog food, and the whole world's going to know it.

Well, then the battle occurs. May I read it to you in chapter 17? And you see how anticlimactic the battle itself is? The talking is the real conflict. And then it says very simply, verse 48, the Philistines started forward to attack him. David ran quickly to the battle line to meet the Philistine. David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine on his forehead.

The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground. So David defeated the Philistine with a sling. It takes about 20s to read it. 30s. Maybe the real issue is the battle between the gods. Who is the warrior? Who's the king who rules what God is alive? In fact, this interest in God the warrior God, the Mighty One, is first and last in the book of first Samuel.

Almost the first thing in Samuel, first Samuel chapter two. Hannah's song after she has the gift of a son, Samuel by the Lord. Hannah says, it is not by strength that one who prevails the ones sorry, those who oppose the king will be shattered. He will give strength to his king. And at the end David sings, the Lord is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, you army with strength for battle.

It's all about God, the Mighty One. And so David is fighting, willing to fight against the man who would crush Israel. In this he is the one who foreshadows the work of Christ. There's David, there's a son of David. David fights the Lord's battles. David fights and wins and kills the enemy. But Jesus turns it upside down, makes actually prayed this way for us a few moments ago.

Because Jesus did not strike down as enemy, Jesus allowed the enemy to strike him down, and by dying he destroyed the one who holds the power of death, that is, the devil. By dying and rising again. And the people who saw this didn't quite know what to make of it all the time. The women in chapter 18 sing and dance.

Saul has slain his thousands. David has slain his tens of thousands. Let's just say Saul was a hero. And David is an even greater hero. They have no idea what's been happening in front of them. And Saul. Saul, after David wins his victory, says, who's this man's daddy? What's the name of his father? Does he come from a powerful family in Israel?

Is he a danger to me? He's not praising God. He's jealous for his throne in Eliab. Who's jealous of his brother, says, you just came here to see blood. Only Jonathan. Chapter 18. Only Jonathan understands what's happening. And in chapter 18, Jonathan gives David his weaponry as a sign that he's recognizing the devil be the king. He knows he's the son of Saul, but David be the king because he believes and knows that David is the Lord's anointed.

Then we'll just go back and talk again about Goliath and his taunt. He's defying the ranks of Israel, and the response is so dismal. The people just stand there. No one responds. They just stand there in line. Day after day, the giant defies and shames Israel is no one willing to fight. Well, finally, there is someone who's willing to fight, and he asks the question, are.

Who fight the giant? Well, obviously I will. Now the question is, how is it that he comes to fight the giant? And the answer is because everybody's crippled by the lack of faith, by the unbelief

that Saul has, has spread as a kind of a shadow over Israel. All he cares about is his reign, his kingdom, his power.

And he's afraid he's the tallest man in Israel. He's the best weaponry. He won't fight Saul. And when the leader won't fight, the people, tragically, are following along. But David, arriving at the last moment, says, I see what's happening here. God himself is suffering shame. God is defying, saying, sorry, Goliath is defying God, defying God's armies. And I'm going to stand up because it's an affront against the Lord.

Do you see affronts against the Lord? You see them. You spend time with friends and they just take God's name in vain casually. Coworkers shaming God's name by using it as a curse word. I watch television to some degree, maybe not as much as the average person, but I certainly watch. And, you know, I'm a person who watches Netflix from time to time, and I watch Netflix and I watch the shows, and I watch the shows in which people just take God's name in vain and take God's name in vain, and take God's name in vain.

And I stop watching the shows because I can't stand it anymore. I wrote a letter to Netflix not too long ago. and I'm thinking I may let you all sign along with me. Be my coast signatories if you would like to do so. And the letter goes kind of like this. I was watching one of your shows the other day, and, I'm going to ask you to rein in the blasphemy.

I'm a pastor and a theologian, I admit it. And so you can read me from that perspective. But really, you need to stop using the name of Jesus as an expletive, as a curse word, or as a signal that someone in the show is startled or angry or irreligious, or maybe rough in their character. I said, I get it, I understand people talk crudely and rudely in this world, and if you want to use rough and crude language for bodily functions, I'm not going to object too much.

I mean, you're not going to listen to me anyway. if you want to talk about bodily functions with rude words, we're adults. We've heard it before. Probably some of us use those words ourselves at some point. But blasphemy is different. Blasphemy is another thing. Blasphemy is to us, worse than the crudest racist epithets you can imagine. You think you just have somebody talking and to us you are cursing our God, the Lord of the universe.

And I'm asking you to stop because it's wrong. Friends, there's a time and a place to take a stand. And David took a stand. He said, no more blasphemy, dishonor defying, cursing. God, you are going to fight me and you're going to die for what you just did. And so David fights the battle that is the Lord's. He says.

You all been thinking something like this? Who will dare to fight? Who will dare to fight the giant? Who has enough courage to go out and fight this guy? And David says, you know, the way

I see it is the Israelite who fights Goliath is not a fool. The fool is Goliath who thinks he can defeat a member of the armies of the living God.

Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should define the armies of the living God? So he goes on fighting and he goes out and fights him, not in some casual manner. If you know the story, and I know you do, if you know the story, you know that David has been fighting for the Lord before, in a quiet way.

As a shepherd. He says, I've killed a lion. I've killed a bear. Actually, the translation smooth it out. It's plural. I've killed lions and bears, meaning, at least for with his hands, because I'm defending the Lord's flock. This whole land is the Lord's. And everything that happens, this world is happening to God's people and God's flocks and the well-being of God's people is on the line.

That's why we fight lions of bears. And it's going to be just the same in this case. David's not saying I think I can defeat the giant. David is saying I must stand against blasphemy, against God's name. Now, David says this sort of thing in other places. In Psalm 69 he says, zeal for your house consumes me. Jesus quotes this, and the insults of those who insult you fall upon me.

Do you hear that? The believer says, When God is insulted, I'm insulted. The insults of those who insult you fall upon me. In Psalm 119, David says, streams of tears flow from my eyes, because your law is not obeyed. Paul says in one place who sins, and I do not inwardly burn. Now, of course, the question is, what does this have to say to us?

And I have to admit that I taught on this passage for the first time when I was 22 years old, in a seminary student in my home church, in a Sunday school class with, believe it or not, four of my professors in the room. Yikes.

And afterward, a man said to me, so what do I do? I thought, well, ask the professors, don't ask me what are ways? What am I supposed to do with the story of David and Goliath? Am I supposed to go out and fight giants? I don't know, he was a man who seemed very sincere and kind of timid to what am I supposed to go to battle against people?

And I tell you, I think the answer is yes. I don't mean that this story tells us to fight a physical battle and go challenge people with, you know, stones against spears or something like that.

But people do harm other people physically, and we should stand up. I gotta tell you, I try to avoid politics, but I have to say, I think we should stand up against Russia invading Ukraine. So people are dying. Christians are being murdered, according to the reports, because they're evangelical Christians. We got to stand soldiers. Christian soldiers are doing God's work.



And if you have an evil boss, a cruel boss, a mean boss, you should resist it. Not with a sling, but go to the authorities. You have the ability, the right to complain, to lodge a complaint. If there's dishonesty or theft or unjust treatment of coworkers, make a plan. Address it. Now, of course, you know, there's a lot of talk about the workplace these days.

And die is supposed to stop mistreatment of minorities and women, and there has been mistreatment of minorities and women. And then, on the other hand, there's people who think dad's gone too far and ordinary people can hardly get a promotion or be treated well if they're not in a certain people group. I'm not trying to discuss that globally, but if you believe that injustice is occurring in the workplace, we have a right.

I believe as Christians to say this isn't right, to stand not only for ourselves, but to stand in God's name. To say it differently, there is a place for passion, for God's name. God's is God's righteousness. God's people to this day in this world. Now, of course, David goes out and he fights Goliath and he kills them really fast, because the story really is not essentially about the battle about a young lad.

He wasn't so young, were a small person killing a big person. It's really a story about this one question who rules the universe? Goliath thinks that might rules the universe, that physical strength, rules of the universe, and whoever has more power can have their way. That's what he thinks. And that's what godless people think. To this day. And we know that there's a God who rules the world.

And if we are following him, we are his agents to do justice and righteousness in this world, and to do it, at least internally, in his name and sometimes externally in his name, in the name of God, the Lord of hosts, and the name of Jesus, the Lord and Savior, the great and greater Son of David. Because after all, what did Jesus do?

He fought someone greater than the Goliath, didn't he? He fought a foe that we've seen over and over again. What did the serpent want to do in the Garden of Eden? He wanted to get God's people to rebel and be destroyed. What the Pharaoh want to do, he wanted to wipe out the people of Israel by killing every single male child.

What does Goliath want to do? He wants to take the Philistine army and wipe Israel off the face of the earth, as did the Assyrians and the Amalekites and the Syrians and the Babylonians. And God keeps on fighting against them, raising up judges and kings and warriors in his name, until finally the warrior came. And that's Jesus.

And he inverts everything. He says, I'm going to stand against evil. I'm a stand against the religious leaders of Israel who want to kill Jesus, and the Roman armies who want to kill Jesus. And he says, do your worst. I stand against you. I stand in God's name. I tell you that I am the truth and the life.

I tell you that I am the Son of God. And they kill him. And he rises again in the final and greatest victory of the history we'll ever know, because of his very courage, because his victory and our union to him, we can fight the Lord's battles in his name until that last day comes when he will fight the great enemy which is death, and set all things right. Praise his name. Until then, he's on our side and we're on his. And there is a place to fight in his name.

Let's pray.

Heavenly father, I pray that you would give us courage to have zeal for your name, to fight your battles in your name, for your honor and your glory. Lord, we admit that sometimes we are quiet when we should speak, that we watch blasphemy or hear blasphemy and do nothing and care nothing, that we see injustice in the world, that we see injustice right in front of us. That we hear about persecution of Christians throughout the world and are quiet. Or maybe we pray a little. We could do more. Lord, I pray that you would show us how we can indeed show that we're on your side because you first weren't ours. And so, Lord, we thank you. We thank you for the story of David fighting not a giant, but a blasphemer who wanted to destroy your people. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you finally defeated the greatest enemy, Satan and death by your death, by your resurrection. Give us courage. Yes, Lord, even to fight in your name. We pray it all in Jesus name, Amen.