

Message #40**I Samuel 17:40-51**

We come now to one of the most famous stories in the Bible and one of the most famous stories in the world. In fact, this is a story that has been depicted and celebrated in art, literature and movies. Michelangelo took a block, made of marble, that had been thrown away by another sculptor, and made a 14 foot statue of David that stands today on a hilltop in Florence, Italy, in part because of this story. There have been over 12 Hollywood movies made about this story. There is a song written about this story, which we sang, "Only a Boy Named David." This story is one that is exciting to a small child and it is exciting to the oldest adult.

This story is very important for each of us because if you purpose to live for God and obey the word of God, and be a good soldier for Jesus Christ, at some point you will face your own Goliath and when you do, you can win. Every believer who wants to accomplish something for the Lord will face enemies. There is no point trying to dodge this reality because this is reality. There will be times when you think you are the underdog with no chance of winning and it is precisely at that moment when we need to remember the story of David and Goliath.

What we do see here in living color is this:

GOD GIVES GREAT VICTORY TO THE BELIEVER WHO TOTALLY TRUSTS HIM AND IS WILLING TO STAND AGAINST AND FIGHT AGAINST A GIANT ENEMY BY USING THE WEAPONS HE HAS SEEN GOD BLESS.

It will not ever be the majority of people who have enough faith to take on the big boys. It will always be a minority. But for that minority, if they are willing to trust God, they will experience great victory. This is clear from this amazing and famous text.

This is a major event in Israel's history and it is a major turning point in Israel's history.

We want to carefully analyze every bit of this famous inspired story and we will do it by making a series of eight observations:

OBSERVATION #1 – David chooses to use his own physical weapons. 17:40a

This is where the story begins and this is a very important point. In order to fight and win, you must be you and not someone else. David was not interested in using Saul's fancy and heavy weapons. He wanted to take what he knew to be his own tried and tested weapons into this fight. He knew this was all he needed.

There are those who want the church to use worldly marketing weapons to reach the world. They want to use programs and seminars and entertainment. But we say well we will simply use the Bible and its doctrines and we will pray. Those are the simple weapons we will use. We will go to war with these weapons and we will see what God will do.

Now David used three weapons:

Weapon #1 - In one hand he had his stick. **17:40a**

The stick was typically a shepherd's staff that was not so much used for support as it was a combat weapon. This staff was important because it could fend off a predator animal in close combat. It could also be used to find and kill deadly snakes.

Weapon #2 - In his shepherds pouch he put five stones. **17:40b**

During the rainy season in the Valley of Elah, a brook flows down the center, which was obviously flowing at this time. The bed of the stream is filled with smooth white stones, even today.

The valley itself is about ¼ mile wide which rises steeply on each side to a height of about 500 feet above the valley. David went to the stream and selected five white stones. He picked these stones carefully. He knew exactly what the best stones were for his sling. Smooth stones are the best for accuracy.

There are various views as to the actual size and shape of these stones. Some say they were somewhat flat and a little longer than a golf ball. Some say they were round and the size of a tennis ball and other says the size of a baseball. We don't know exactly how big the stones were, but David knew exactly what he needed. He was meticulous in his selection of stone-bullets. He knew the caliber he needed.

Now it is specifically stated that he picked up five of these stones. There have been many views as to why he chose five. We do know from II Samuel 21:22 that Goliath had four warrior sons and it may be that David was thinking when I drop Goliath, those four may come after me.

I am not certain why David chose 5 stones, but what we do see is he was well-prepared. He took enough ammo to get the job done. When guys go hunting, all they really need is one bullet, but usually they take more than that just in case one is not enough.

I read an interesting article last week on the use of concealed weapons. The writer said that he had researched all of the stories he could find about times when people used their concealed weapons to defend themselves. He said there was no record of any of them emptying a clip and putting another clip in a gun. He said most instances featured one or two shots. That is all you need. If you carry a semi, you need a clip of five bullets. If you carry a revolver, you need five bullets. David felt five bullet-stones would be enough.

He picked up the stones and put them in a pouch. The pouch in which he put the stones is made of leather and tied to his belt. **Israel's perception of Goliath is that he is too big to hit and David's perspective is he is too big to miss.**

Weapon #3 - In one hand he had his sling. **17:40c**

A sling was a favorite weapon of shepherds. In fact, it is often called a “shepherd’s sling.” It is still used today in war to sling grenades. Saul’s own tribe of Benjamin were experts with a sling and even their left-handed slingers could literally hit a hair with great precision (Judges 20:16). Shepherds practiced slinging rocks and they had extra-ordinary accuracy ability. The typical sling was made of rope with a piece of leather in the center. The length of your own personal sling is your wingspan or arm span, with the leather pouch in the center. Usually there was a loop around one end so you could slip it over a hand or wrist or finger. The sling is swung in different patterns, off to side and overhead. However, in Israel, many conclude that the most accurate way to use a sling is by using a figure eight in front of you. This gives you steadiness, momentum and accuracy and it enables you to keep your eyes fixed on the target.

David was very skilled with this weapon and it was his weapon of choice when going against Goliath. He would rather take that weapon more than any sword or spear or bow or arrow.

When you find yourself facing an enemy, use what you know from the word of God and not what you don’t know or have never used. Stick to the Bible and stand your ground.

OBSERVATION #2 – David approached the Philistine by himself. **17:40b**

David started moving toward Goliath. He is looking at a man who is almost 10 feet tall and is completely covered with armor and carrying a spear that most people could not even lift.

I am not certain of the distance here between the two, but there is enough distance for him to actually run toward Goliath. If the valley is ¼ mile (440 yards), we may assume the distance between the two is well over 200 yards.

David is walking straight at Goliath. He is going to fight him straight up and head on. If he is approaching him like a lion or bear, he is moving straight at him in a slow and deliberate way.

OBSERVATION #3 – Goliath approaches David with his shield bearer. **17:41**

As David started moving toward Goliath, Goliath started moving toward David. But carefully notice, he has his armor bearer in front of him. So as David moved toward Goliath, he must be thinking I have to get past this shield bearer before I can get to Goliath.

Here is David, a 15-year-old teenager who is wearing no armor, and a 10 foot giant is moving toward him with his armor bearer out in front.

This takes tremendous courage and trust in God just to face this. David’s courage is not delusional. He does have experience fighting intimidating enemies—lion and bear—but this undoubtedly is the most intimidating of all.

OBSERVATION #4 – Goliath looks at David and despises him. **17:42**

When Goliath got within range of David so he could get a good look at him, he could not believe what he saw. The text says he “distained” (bazah) him. That Hebrew word means Goliath arrogantly despised David and held him in total contempt and viewed him as something he could trample with his feet (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 110).

He was offended by this puny, punk shepherd boy teenager. He didn’t look like some battle scarred soldier. David did not look like a hardened, well-trained soldier. Goliath noticed he was a young, ruddy, handsome, baby-faced teenager. The mistake Goliath is making is basing his view on what he sees physically, not what is real spiritually. Goliath is underestimating David’s skills and power because he is underestimating his relationship with God.

David is a young, thin mountaineer who has both stamina and strength and skill. He may look like a razor-thin teenager, but he is in much better condition than this ten foot monster. David has something that this Goliath never had; he had God on his side. Enemies always judge by how things look and they underestimate the power of one right with God.

OBSERVATION #5 – Goliath mocks, curses and threatens David. **17:43-44**

Goliath was totally angered by just the sight of David, and he makes three derogatory statements to David.

Derogatory Statement #1 - Goliath mocks David’s weapons. **17:43a**

Goliath has big impressive weapons and an armor bearer in front of him and he is looking at a teenager who has a stick and a sling. He says, do you think I am some dog you can defeat with a stick? I am not sure he even sees the sling.

David looks totally unarmed to this giant, but what the giant doesn’t know is that he is armed with the Godhead.

Ever seen this in your warfare moments? You mean all you have is your Bible and your doctrines? You think you and your Bible can beat our sophisticated education?

Derogatory Statement #2 - Goliath curses David. **17:43b**

Goliath started cursing David by their false deities like Dagon. This is like someone pronouncing some curse in the name of Allah. It doesn’t mean a thing.

Derogatory Statement #3 - Goliath threatens to kill David. **17:44**

Goliath started telling David to come on and fight him so he can kill him and feed him and his dead body to the birds and beasts.

This is an important point that God's people need to see. Intimidation is the major threat that giant enemies will use against God's people.

Before enemies are about to be destroyed by God, they have big arrogant mouths that boast intimidating threats.

OBSERVATION #6 – David verbally responds to Goliath. **17:45-47**

David had heard enough of this big-mouthed God-mocker. He responded in two ways:

Response #1 - You are coming to fight me with the power of your human weapons. **17:45a**

David says you are coming to fight me with your puny weapons of sword, spear and javelin. In David's mind he was not the one outnumbered and outgunned, Goliath was.

Response #2 - I am coming to fight you with the power of the LORD God. **17:45b-47**

David said I am coming to fight you relying on the LORD of hosts, the covenant God of Israel, who controls all forces in heaven and on earth. David says you are mocking God and today God is going to strike you down.

In **verse 47**, we get a good look at David's motive. **The motive for David fighting Goliath is not egotistical or political; it is theological.** David had a staff and sling, but he was not relying on that for victory; he was relying on God and his weapon to defeat this arrogant God-mocker.

Victory belongs to the Lord always. God would show both the Philistines and the Israelites that victory is determined by Him.

OBSERVATION #7 – Goliath starts moving toward David and David runs toward him.
17:48-49a

Goliath arose and started moving toward David, and when David saw that, he ran straight toward him. The conjunction "and" that begins **verse 49** indicates that while David is running, he puts his hand into his bag and took one of those smooth stones, put it into the sling and let it fly.

The series of "and" conjunctions are all waw consecutives which indicate there is no break in the action. This is consecutive, sequential action. So David is running and loading his sling and firing the stone while on the move.

In the military, there is what is called the SSKP, which means single-shot-kill-probability. The odds of a single-shot-kill-probability when you are running at a high speed and firing a stone from a sling are very low, unless God is in it.

Try running and shooting a gun and see how accurate you are. David is running and firing a stone at the same time and God caused that stone to hit the only vulnerable spot on this massive giant; that stone hit his forehead and caused him to fall face down to the ground. When David let that stone fly, it was like a laser-guided missile and it was being guided by God.

Not only did the stone hit his forehead, but it imbedded itself in his forehead and he fell face down just like that idol of the Philistines Dagon had fallen face down (I Sam. 5:4). It may be the stone did cause a brain contusion that knocked him out and would cause death. He fell flat on his face.

OBSERVATION #8 – David kills Goliath and decapitates him. **17:49b-51**

As soon as Goliath hit the ground, David was like a cat on his feet. He ran as fast as a gazelle, grabbed Goliath's sword out of its sheath and cut off his head.

When the Philistines saw this, they took off running.

SOME PRACTICAL LESSONS:

- 1) When you face some intimidating enemy, use the weapon you know, the word of God.**
- 2) When your enemy is about to fall, he will be proud, arrogant, mouthy and intimidating.**
- 3) Always remember victory is from God and one with God is a victorious majority, even when outnumbered and out-gunned.**