**August 1, 2021 1 Samuel 17:25-40**

 ***Where Are You Headed***

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 17:25-40 NRSV

*(25)The Israelites said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel. The king will greatly enrich the man who kills him, and will give him his daughter and make his family free in Israel." (26)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?" (27)The people answered him in the same way, "So shall it be done for the man who kills him." (28)His eldest brother Eliab heard him talking to the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David. He said, "Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart; for you have come down just to see the battle." (29)David said, "What have I done now? It was only a question." (30)He turned away from him toward another and spoke in the same way; and the people answered him again as before. (31)When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul; and he sent for him. (32)David said to Saul, "Let no one's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." (33)Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth." (34)But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock, (35)I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it. (36)Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God." (37)David said, "The LORD, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine." So Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you!" (38)Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a bronze helmet on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail. (39)David strapped Saul's sword over the armor, and he tried in vain to walk, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them." So David removed them. (40)Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the wadi, and put them in his shepherd's bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.*

**Notes:**

1. The ***Philistines*** have been at odds with the Israelites for years.
	1. Abraham dug wells and the ***Philistines*** filled them with dirt.
	2. Moses sent spies into the promised land, occupied by ***Philistine Giants***.
	3. ***Joshua*** killed and drove out his opponents.
	4. They are on a field of battle, against the ***Philistines***.
	5. David volunteers to defeat this uncircumcised ***Philistine***.
	6. With one smooth stone and a sling, the ***giant*** goes down.
2. What more can we ***glean*** from this story?
	1. When you encounter ***sin***, deal with it the first time.
	2. When we encounter a ***problem***, remember it is not as big as it initially appears.
	3. When you encounter the ***threats*** of the enemy, don’t stop and settle in.
	4. When you encounter ***criticism***, whether from family or friends, don’t let them tear you down.
		1. “*What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel?*”
		2. “*Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart; for you have come down just to see the battle.*”
3. When you encounter the ***battle***, let the ***Rock*** crush the enemy.
	1. Jesus Christ is our ***Solid*** ***Rock***.
	2. You too can have victory over your ***enemies***.
	3. By ***trusting*** in and ***following*** Jesus, you can have it back.
	4. By ***moving*** ***forward*** in Jesus’ name, you can have it back.
	5. David ***won*** the battle, but Saul doesn’t ***know*** him.
	6. Plant your feet on the ***Solid*** ***Rock***, and move ***forward*** in Jesus’ name.

**Script:**

Traveling through this life, we end up in many different places. Some places we intended to go, others we found ourself in as we came to important intersections in our travel. But we all have an idea of where we want to go, and how we will get there. As children we are just learning our interests and where we would like to go; in our teens we focus on more realistic ideas of where we want to go; and after we finish our educational years it is up to us to do what is necessary to get to that place.

Where are you headed? Where is it that you would like to be and at what age do you intend to get there? Where do you want to end up at the end of this journey we call life? What would it take for you to say to yourself and your friends, “I ran a good race, I fought the good fight”? There may be a few of us here today who feel that they have aimlessly stumbled through life; stumbling into one situation after another, some good, some bad, but never really focusing on a destination or a method of getting there.

As we travel this path we are on, whether we are on the path we desired or some other path that we happened to fall upon, we will encounter obstacles; Potholes, difficult terrain, roadblocks, flat tires; you name we will probably encounter it. These obstacles make us to stop in our travels and reconsider our plans; how are we going to get there, should we enlist the help of others, can we truly trust the road signs, and is this trip really worth the effort. What we have done to more than just make it, what we have done to thrive in the process. When you face an obstacle, how do you overcome it and get through it? We all encounter obstacles, but many times there are those who quit in the midst of the difficulty. It is how we face the adversity that determines how we are able to emerge from the obstacles we face.

This week we are going to look a little further into the story of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17 and discover a few lessons from this passage. Lessons that we may miss in an initial read. Stand with me as we read from 1 Samuel 17:25-40:

*1 Samuel 17:25-40 NRSV (25)The Israelites said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel. The king will greatly enrich the man who kills him, and will give him his daughter and make his family free in Israel." (26)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?" (27)The people answered him in the same way, "So shall it be done for the man who kills him." (28)His eldest brother Eliab heard him talking to the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David. He said, "Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart; for you have come down just to see the battle." (29)David said, "What have I done now? It was only a question." (30)He turned away from him toward another and spoke in the same way; and the people answered him again as before. (31)When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul; and he sent for him. (32)David said to Saul, "Let no one's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." (33)Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth." (34)But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock, (35)I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it. (36)Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God." (37)David said, "The LORD, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine." So Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you!" (38)Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a bronze helmet on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail. (39)David strapped Saul's sword over the armor, and he tried in vain to walk, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them." So David removed them. (40)Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the wadi, and put them in his shepherd's bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.*

Surely, we all have heard the story of David and Goliath, how the youthful boy slayed the nine-foot-tall seasoned warrior and champion. But many times, we do not see the things that lead to events such as this. As we looked at this story, we many times miss the events that lead up to this very moment. The Philistines have been at odds with the Israelites for years, since Isaac, Israel’s father, lived in the region controlled by the Philistine’s. Isaac’s father, Abraham had dug wells and the Philistine’s filled the wells with dirt in order to run this family out of the area. Isaac dug more wells, and the Philistines filled them also. So the descendants of Abraham have not been well liked by the Philistines since.

When the Israelites were escaping the Egyptians on the Exodus, Moses sent spies over into the promised land, and it was occupied by the Philistines, and some of these philistines were giants. In fear the Israelites were afraid to enter the promised land and lay claim to it; so they were left to wonder in the desert for forty years.

Finally, after the passing of Moses and Aaron, the next generation of Israelites, followed Joshua into the promised land. They took the land, killing those who opposed them and driving out the survivors. In the days of the Judges, the Philistines were always at odds with the Israelites; even being dominated by them. Samson even went as far as to marry a Philistine woman, only to be victi9mized at their hands. As we have learned over the past few weeks, the Israelites wanted a King to reign over them and to lead them against their enemies. Saul was chosen, and for a while he was victorious and blessed by God. But eventually he thought that he was able to do it on his own; how foolish we can be at times thinking that we are able to live successfully without God’s blessing. Now Saul had turned away from God and the Spirit of the Lord had left Saul. David is brought in to play soothing music; Saul asks Jesse, David’s father, if David could stay at Saul’s dwelling to play for him when needed. But now they are on a field of battle, once more against their nemesis the Philistines.

For forty days the Army of Israel, cowered away from any confrontation with their champion, Goliath. When David comes bearing supplies from his father he sees and hears Goliath’s pleas, threats, and derogatory remarks. David volunteers to defeat this uncircumcised Philistine. Equipped with a staff, sling, and 5 smooth stones, he enters the into a duel with Goliath. With only one smooth stone and his sling, he knocks the giant down, takes the giants sword, and severs the giants head from his body. The army of Israelites rise up and chase the remaining Philistines back to their home in Gath; slaying those who could not keep up or fell along the way.

We learned a few things last week from this story about seeing God in the things that are going on around us, So what more can we glean from this story? First, when you encounter sin, deal with it the first time. Goliath was from the city of Gath in the land of Anakites. The Anakites were a race of Giant people who were decimated by Joshua when he entered the promised land and while he was in the process of driving them out. Joshua destroyed all of the Anakites while taking the promised land, except for those in three cities; one of those being Gath. Had Joshua taken care of the Anakites when they first encountered them, perhaps the Israelites would never had an issue with the Philistines, and Goliath would not have been there to challenge Saul and his armies. We need to understand that the sin we allow to remain in our world and life, will fester and grow. If we allow that sin to continue, it may become the giant that will taunt us as we face it in the future. We cannot risk allowing giants to remain in the recesses of our life, where they are able to rear their ugly heads and challenge us when we least expect it.

Next, when we encounter a problem, remember it is not as big as it initially appears. Goliath in all of his armor was an intimidating site, he had the entire Israelite army shaking in their boots. He stood over nine feet tall, topped with a bronze helmet. He wore a coat of mail with 5000 shekels of bronze equaling 125 lbs. of metal on his coat. He had leggings on his shins made of bronze as well as a javelin of bronze slung over a shoulder. His spear was massive as well, the shaft compared to a weaver’s beam, large and sturdy. The head of the spear weighing in at around 15 lbs. And to top this all off he had an assistant who carried his shield in front of him for protection. When fully equipped it is estimated that Goliath weighed in at approximately 900 lbs. So, we see David, this youth maybe 14 years old going out to face the 9 foot tall 900 pound warrior, yes things are looking pretty grim.

When David told Saul, he was going to fight Goliath, Saul’s first response is, “You can’t, because Goliath is an experienced fighter.” We must wonder how Saul knew this; unless Saul, who stood a head above every other member of his force, had sent others out to meet Goliath. Of course one could assume that because Goliath was the one who came out to challenge the army, that he was experienced in this sort of thing.

We often give the enemy much more credit and power than he really possesses. Goliath seemed indestructible, undefeatable; but if Goliath really believed that he would not have been standing on the other side of his armor bearer; so I do not think he believed he was unkillable. That is why he sent the armor bearer out first, every time they made an appearance. Goliath wanted somebody else to take the initial assault if there were to be one. The enemy knows that he can be defeated, so he puts others out ahead of him to take the initial shots for him. The enemy knows that it can be defeated, otherwise they would already be standing across the battle lines in the Israelite territory. I wonder, if you are not working for the Lord, are you bearing the armor for Satan? The enemy is not as big as it appears, and the enemy knows that it can be defeated.

Thirdly, when you encounter the threats of the enemy, don’t stop and settle in. The enemy’s true goal is to make you believe that you don’t have a chance; that you are going to fail; that you will fall. Remember when Goliath came out to confront the Israelite army, he hurled insults at them. As he strutted around yelling and posturing, he ridiculed them, he made them feel weak and ill-equipped to handle the task. The men in the camp began to consider what the king would do for the man who ended this siege; perhaps a monetary reward, perhaps an increase in status, maybe even offer the hand of his daughter as the prize. All of this to defeat Goliath. The men were afraid, to go into battle and to confront this giant alone. So they sat around trying to concoct aa plan that would be effective. The louder and more obnoxious Goliath became, the more they believed him. Isn’t it that way for us too? The louder and more obnoxious our enemy is, the more we believe him and try to find ways around what we are called to. The enemy wants, or should I see needs us to stop and do nothing but thing of a possible solution, while they have their way in our world. Living to survive is not really a life; we must learn to live and thrive in our life and calling.

When you encounter criticism, whether from family, friends, or strangers, don’t let them tear you down. Sometimes, the enemy can use those you love to discourage you. David’s brother tore into him right there in front of all the other men. He accused David of being selfish, of showing off, of just coming to watch the show. There’s nothing worse than somebody you care about, somebody who should be encouraging you, tearing you down with ridicule and mean-spirited words. People who will take the words one person says, and they twist them with attitude and anger to make their meaning something completely different than they were intended to be. David inquires, “"*What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel?*” and then Eliab, who is already angry, overhears the conversation and responds, “*Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart; for you have come down just to see the battle.*” As Christians, we sometimes face that older brother who tells us we can’t, or we aren’t doing it right, or we are doing it for the wrong reason, or that what you have said has some evil intent. You know the truth, if your intentions are good, then don’t worry about it. Don’t let them tear you down.

Finally, when you encounter the battle, let the Rock crush the enemy. David destroyed the enemy with one smooth stone, a rock. We also have a rock that is able to defeat any enemy we encounter. Jesus Christ is our Solid Rock and when we let Jesus fight our battles, we will always win. The victory may not look or appear as we may imagine, but we will be victorious.

David had victory over Goliath; the Israelites had a great victory that day as well. David placed Goliath’s weapons and armor in his own tent, and carried Goliath’s head to Jerusalem. You too can have victory over your enemies; but even more, you can take back what has been stolen from you, your dignity, your confidence, perhaps even a relationship. This morning, ask yourself if you are ready to slay the giants and take back that which belongs to you? Has the enemy robbed you of your joy? By trusting in and following Jesus, you can have it back. Has the enemy robbed you of peace? By moving forward in Jesus name, you can have it back.

David won the battle, but all of a sudden Saul doesn’t even know who he is. In the chapter earlier, David is playing music for Saul to ease the spirit that troubles him, in the chapter before David is training as Saul’s armor bearer, and here David goes out and conquers Goliath; yet Saul acts as if he has no clue who David is. There will be times when we are not recognized for the things we do; do not allow this to bring you down and discourage you. Remember we serve the Lord because of our love for Him and what he as done for us. Continue to plant your feet on the Solid Rock, and move forward in Jesus’ name.