

Life Lesson 64
David and Goliath
Text: I Samuel 17

Introduction

“Son, I want you to take these loaves of bread and these cheeses to your brothers who are fighting in King Saul’s army,” Jesse said.

“Yes, sir!” David replied.

David had returned from the palace where he had served King Saul by playing the harp for him. Saul was troubled by evil spirits, and David’s songs about God always calmed him. Now he was back taking care of the sheep. It must have seemed dull to him after living in the king’s house. He must have been glad for such an exciting errand. Now, at least he would get to see the battle.

The Story

But when he arrived, no one was fighting. The Philistines were gathered on the top of one mountain. Across the valley the Israelites were camped on another mountain. In the valley between there were no troops of soldiers. Only one man could be seen – and heard.

What a man he was! He stood over nine feet tall. He wore a helmet of brass and wore heavy brass armor. His spear was long and heavy, and a man came before him carrying his shield. His name was Goliath.

“Why should our armies fight?” the huge man roared. “I am a Philistine and you are servants of Saul. Just send a man out to fight me. If he wins, we will be your servants. If I win, you will be our servants. Who will fight me?”

Goliath went on and on, shouting and mocking the Israelites. He even made fun of God!

What do you think the Israelite soldiers were doing? They were keeping out of sight! They were afraid to fight Goliath and they were ashamed of their fear.

What about King Saul? He would be the natural choice to fight the giant. After all, he was the king. Besides, he was a big man, too. He was head and shoulders taller than anyone else, so he must have been closer to Goliath's size than the others.

No, King Saul was afraid, too. He didn't want to fight the giant, Goliath, and he couldn't find any of his soldiers who were willing to fight, either.

So Goliath was still roaring threats and blasphemies when David arrived with the supplies.

"Who is this Philistine that he should mock the army of the living God?" David exclaimed. "Who is going to fight him?"

Eliab, David's oldest brother, was angry – probably because he was ashamed.

"What are you doing here anyway?" he demanded. "I know how proud and wicked you are. You left the sheep by themselves so you could come and see the battle."

That wasn't true at all. Eliab probably knew it wasn't true. When people aren't happy with themselves, they often take their anger out on others.

David talked to other soldiers the same way.

"Why should this Philistine be allowed to mock God? He's big, but he's not as big as God. We can trust God to defeat that giant."

Someone told Saul what David had been saying. Saul called David to talk to him.

"Don't worry, King Saul," David told him. "I'll fight that giant myself."

"You!" King Saul exclaimed. "You can't fight him. You are just a young man. He's been a warrior since he was a boy."

"When I was watching my father's sheep," David told him, "a lion came and took a lamb from the flock. God gave me the strength and courage to fight that lion and kill him. Another time a bear took a lamb, and I killed him, too. I know that God who delivered me from the lion and the bear will deliver me from this Philistine."

At last Saul agreed to let David go. He tried to give David his armor, but David refused. It was way too big for him. Instead he picked five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in his shepherd's bag. In his hand he carried his sling. With only those weapons, and the weapon of his faith in God, he went to meet the giant.

Goliath, clanking in his heavy armor, came to meet David. When he saw that David was just a very young man, he was angry.

“What!” he roared. “Am I a dog that you have sent a little boy to kill me with a stick?”

Goliath cursed David by his gods and shouted, “All right, come on! I'll give your dead body to the vultures and wolves to eat.”

David wouldn't be scared off.

“You come to me with a sword and a spear and a shield,” David shouted back. “I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts. He will give me the victory, and it will be your dead body that will be bird food today! Then everyone here will know that there is a God in Israel. They will see that He doesn't need a sword and spear to win a battle. He will give you into our hands.”

Hearing that, the giant lunged toward David. David ran to meet him.

While he ran, he took one of the stones from his bag and put it into his sling. He twirled it around and around and sent the stone flying through the air.

Whap! It struck the giant smack on the forehead. Goliath fell unconscious, face down on the ground.

David didn't have a sword, so he took Goliath's sword and chopped off that wicked man's head.

When the Philistine army saw that their champion had been killed, they took off running. The Israelites gave a great shout and chased after them. They won a great victory that day.

That was the end of Goliath's career, but it was the beginning of David's. From that day on, he served King Saul as a captain of the army. He never returned to being a shepherd.

The Life Lesson

God has a purpose and a time for everything. The lion and the bear came to prepare David to fight with a giant. The time David spent watching the sheep wasn't wasted time. God was preparing him to watch over His people.

Your "growing up" time isn't wasted time either. Maybe there are "lions" and "bears" that come into your life. That means, maybe you have some troubles and problems. Perhaps God is training you as He did David. He is teaching you to trust Him with small problems now. When you are grown up, you will know how to trust God for giant-sized problems.

God was bigger than that big Philistine, wasn't He? And God is bigger than any problem or difficulty. Once we realize that, we can have true courage – confidence that God will give us the victory.

Review Questions

Why did Jesse send David to the battle ground?

To take supplies to the brothers who were in the army.

Why was no one fighting?

Everyone was afraid of the Philistine champion.

What was David's response to the giant's threats?

"I will fight him myself."

What did David take with him into the battle?

A slingshot and five smooth stones.

What did David tell the giant?

"You come with a sword and a spear and a shield, but I come in the name of the Lord my God."

How did David kill the giant?

He knocked the giant down with a stone thrown from his sling. Then he cut off Goliath's head with Goliath's own sword.

Who won the battle that day?

The Israelites