

**Pastor Kyle Mercer**  
David: The Warrior

June 26, 2022  
Series: David  
1 Samuel 17:1-54

**BIG IDEA - WE MUST FIGHT OUR OWN GIANTS WHILE  
REMEMBERING WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY DONE ON OUR BEHALF**

Good morning, church. How's everyone doing? Good? All right. It has been a full and fun week. It's Kids Week, if you're new, or maybe you don't have kids, and you're like, "What's Kids Week?" Well, it's not VBS. We're not against VBS. VBS is great. A lot of great churches in our city do VBS. Kids Week is something different. Kids Week is when families serve our city in Jesus' name.

This is cool. We had over 160 families. Some of you have a lot of kids, so we had over 350 kids. We partnered with over a dozen organizations. Let me just tell you why we do this. There are a couple of reasons. First, we want to help families help their kids taste mission and mercy at a young age.

Maybe you don't know this. If you grew up in a Christian home or are raising Christian kids, it's very easy for them to think Christianity is about what they don't do. Right? "We don't say those words. We don't go to those places. We don't listen to that music. We don't watch those movies." It's like, "Well, what *do* we do? Is all we're known for what we *don't* do? Is my life just less fun than the other kids' lives? Is that what Christianity is?"

It's like, "No. We want you to taste mission. We want you to taste adventure. We want you to meet needs in Jesus' name." Another reason we do it is our kids need to see what real need is. Real need is not "I don't have an iPad." Agree? Real need is "Wow! There are people, there are kids, and they don't know if they're going to get their next meal." *That's* real need. Great. We want them to know that. Also, we just love our city.

So, here's what we're doing. We partner with 13 organizations, and why we do this is we think of collaboration as a necessity, not a nicety. There are a lot of needs in our city. What are you going to do about poverty? What are you going to do about homelessness? What are you going to do about the unborn? The answer is usually you don't know, and I don't know.

So, we partner with organizations who go, "We have the systems. We have the structures. We have the strategies, and we need help." We're like, "Great. We're going to help you." Guys, it was incredible. My family did HOPE. *HOPE* stands for Helping Our People Eat. It's an organization in an under-resourced area, a beautiful opportunity.

We went there. We helped with the garden that's going to give food to that area. We helped organize produce. We prayed for the people there. Then the kids got to wash the vans outside. I walked out there, and my 6-year-old son was washing the van with his stomach. That's the whole point. The kids had a ton of fun. We met needs in Jesus' name.

We want to express to our city... We love our city. We do. We love the quarter million people in our city. We want to serve and bless and reach our city. So, let's pray for the families in our church, that our kids would taste mission and mercy at a young age, and let's pray for our city, and then we're going to dive into 1 Samuel.

Lord, we pray for our city. We love Winston-Salem. We love the quarter million people who live here. People grew up here. People moved here. People are here for all different types of reasons. Lord, we have a city vision, not a church vision. We want to reach every man, woman, and child in our city, and that means we have to collaborate with all expressions of the body of Christ.

So, we thank you for all of the nonprofits who are meeting felt and forever needs in Jesus' name, Lord. We pray for our families in our church, that our kids would grow up and genuinely think following Jesus and helping others find and follow Jesus is the greatest thing they could do with their lives, and that when they leave here, if they go off to college or somewhere else, they would think, "How can I connect to a local church to follow Christ in college?" We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

All right. Type to or turn to 1 Samuel 17. We're in a series on King David. He's the most famous person, outside of Jesus, in the whole Bible. He's mentioned over 1,000 times. He's mentioned in 66 chapters. We're in week two of a seven-week series called *David*.

By the way, if you're new, let me encourage you to stay for the whole series. If you came today, there are only five weeks left. One sermon, one Sunday, one song... I mean, you can't know what our church is about. You have to come for four, five, or six weeks to get the big picture, what we really believe, who's really here, and what we are really like. So, we hope you'll come back.

Then let me say this to some of you who have been coming around for a while. I don't know how else to say this. If you're not in a Community Group, you're not going to get everything you could out of this series or, really, *any* series, because we're a church *of* Community Groups; we're not a church *with* Community Groups.

You go, "How's that different?" Well, a church *with* Community Groups says, "This is something we do. We've added it on. It's a program. We've duct taped it on. It's optional. If you have time, go and do that, but there are other things you can do if you don't want to do that." That's not us.

We are a church *of* Community Groups. Basically, it means our Community Groups are an essential extension and expression of our church. They're sermon guided. Throughout the week, we're talking about the sermon and the Scripture. It creates alignment in our church, and it helps you with the parts you really need.

Do you need more Bible knowledge? Probably not. I mean, it'll be helpful, and you're going to get some when you're here, but really what we need is we need help applying what we already know. By the way, if you're like, "How do I get in a Community Group?" you have to go through our Weekender to get into a Community Group. Our Weekender is July 8 and 9, which is two weeks away. You'll be hearing more about that at the end of the service.

So, turn to 1 Samuel 17. This is a series on David. If you have one of those real Bibles, open it up and turn left. You'll eventually get to a book called 1 Samuel. If you have a device, Google it. Okay. David is the most famous person in the Bible, outside of Jesus, and now we're talking about the most famous story, maybe the most familiar story, maybe the favorite story...the story of David and Goliath.

I have two boys. I also have an older daughter, but I have two boys. They're 8 and 6. For both of them, their favorite story is David and Goliath, which is kind of scary for me. I'm like, "Why do you like the story about a little person cutting a big person's head off so much? I'm going to be sleeping with one eye open as I think about you guys." No, but you'll see this. A lot of young boys love Daniel in the lions' den. They love David and Goliath. These stories speak deeply to us.

It's a hero story. We love hero stories, but more than a hero story, it's an underdog story. You love *Rudy*, don't you? You love *Remember the Titans*. We love the movie *Miracle* when the US hockey team wins against all odds. We love it when the last seeded and most odds against it horse just won the Kentucky Derby. We love it when a 15 seed beats a number 2 seed in March Madness. Everything in us is like, "Yes!" It's an underdog story.

What we're going to see today is David, as the underdog, is going to move in this story from obscurity to popularity. That's what's going to happen. Before this, no one knows who David is. He's a shepherd. He's somebody else's son. He's somebody else's brother. After today, after he kills Goliath, he can't go out to eat with his family anymore. There's no more private life. He only has a public life after this.

Here's the big idea for today. You've heard the story. You know where I'm going. We're going to read 50 verses. It's a lot of text. You know the story, basically. It's David versus Goliath. We're going to approach this three ways. We're going to approach this *historically*. David was a real person. Goliath was a real person. This is a real battle. It's historical. We're going to talk about it.

We're going to deal with it, what we would call, *theologically*. In other words, it points us to Christ. We'll see that in how Christ fights the battles for us. But then it's very *personal* and *practical*. I came here this morning to tell you that the point of this passage for you is that you need to face the giants in your life, and you need to fight them. Goliath is a real giant, but we're going to see you have giants metaphorically and spiritually.

Let me tell you what a giant is. A giant is anything that stands between you and what God wants for your life. A giant is anything that stands between you and what God has promised for your life. Isn't that what Goliath is? What is Goliath? Well, he's this massive giant who stands in the way of the Promised Land, what God has promised them, and their victory over the Philistines, which is what God promised them.

I want to encourage you today, because some of you have been avoiding and ignoring the giants in your life. The giant could be a person. It probably is for you. It's your dad. You haven't talked to him in a while or you're so overwhelmed or intimidated. It's your ex-whatever. For some of you, it's a sin in your life, and it is just massive. It's overwhelming, and it's defining you.

For some of you, it's something in your past. This happens to people all the time. You can't tell anybody. Your spouse doesn't even know, but you wake up at 2:00 in the morning when everybody else is sleeping, and it haunts you. "Why did I do that?"

Sometimes it's something that happened *to* you. Sometimes it's just something you've been avoiding.

What happens when you avoid something? It grows. Do you think Goliath came out of the womb 9'6"? His mother would not have been very happy about that. No. He grew. When we avoid things, they grow. I promise you this. I tell you these things so you know them now. When you avoid things, they grow. Anybody who's in our office, and they've been married for 12 years, and their marriage is falling apart...

It's like, "Oh gosh! We're going to try to help, and we're going to try to get you the best counseling, but part of the problem is there are 10 years of lying in this marriage. Part of the problem is there's lack of love and lack of respect that started in year two and has never been talked about. Part of it is there's terrible communication between the two of you. Part of it is there's lack of trust across eight years."

The idea is you have to fight your giants when they're small because they only keep growing. What happens if a tax bill shows up to your house, and you're like, "I don't want to look at this"? You don't even want to open it. You ever get one of those? "What's in here?" What's going to happen if you avoid or ignore that? It'll go away, sure. No. It comes back with more and more and more bills.

So, I want us to read this story, understand it's something that happened historically, understand it's going to point us to Christ, and I'll show you how. You need to understand this. For 2,000 years, the church has been encouraged by this passage to face the giants in their life. So let's do that.

## **01 BACKGROUND BEFORE THE BATTLE**

All right. Verse 1. Here's what it says: *"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 Ephes-dammim."* Those are hard words to say. Don't worry about those words. Don't worry about those places. Look at the two words *Philistines* and *battle*. Those are the two words I want us to focus on.

It's in the context of war. Israel is at war all the time. I don't have time to get into it. Christians have written articles on just war theory. Sometimes it's needed and necessary to get into war. What we see here is this is an ancient battle. We glamorize ancient battles...*300, Braveheart, Gladiator*. We romanticize, glamorize, and sanitize battles.

War is always horrible. Right? We've had people in our church who've had to walk through PTSD because they were in the war in the Middle East. They saw things, and they experienced things. War is horrible enough now when you're dropping bombs at a distance and shooting at a distance and being shot at from a distance, but war back then... You stabbed your enemy and watched them die right in front of you and smelled their breath and knew what they had for breakfast.

Even though they didn't understand disease and infection at great length, in almost all of these battles, the men fought completely naked, because they knew it was less likely they were going to get infected (they didn't understand all this) and die afterward. When a battle would end, the first thing they would do was try to figure out what blood was theirs and what blood was their enemy's, and they were hoping more blood was their enemy's than was theirs.

You have to understand this is a scary environment we're parachuting into and reading about here. They're in a battle. Then they're in a battle with the Philistines. Now who are the Philistines? Well, they showed up in Genesis 10. They've been God's enemies and these people's enemies for a long time. Do you ever feel like you have the same enemies? We're using this kind of metaphorically, spiritually speaking.

Some of you have been dealing with love of money forever. You thought, "I'm dealing with love of money because I don't have a job yet. When I get a job, I won't have love of money." Then you're like, "Well, I have a job, but I don't make that much money, so I only love money because I don't have a lot of money, but when I have a lot of money, I won't love money." Then you have a lot of money, and you love money.

How many people have thought, "That's it. I'm going to fight this giant of lust. I'm in middle school. I'm going to fight it"? Oh, no. There it is in high school. Have you heard *this* one before? "It'll go away when I get married." People think that all the time. No. Lust is that which is forbidden. That never goes away, because that's different than sex in marriage. This is something completely different.

People find that, all of a sudden, they're sneaking, and they're giving in to behaviors in their 50s that they started doing in their teens, and it's the same enemies...money, sex, power. So, they're fighting these enemies, and I want you to see what happens. Verse 2: ***"And Saul..."*** He was yesterday's man. We talked about him last week. He's the current king. He no longer has the anointing of God, but he has the title of king.

***"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. 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."***

Don't think massive mountains. Think hills. Neither wanted to give up the high ground. That's why they stayed up on the mountains. Verse 4. Now we're introduced to Goliath. Again, a historical figure, yes, but what is said about him as a giant speaks to the giants in our lives. I want you to see this.

***"And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. 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 of bronze. And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders."***

There are a couple of things I want us to notice about the giant Goliath, which points to the giants in our lives. First of all, they have names that terrify us. First of all, his name is the *champion*. Does anyone here want to fight the champion? I want to fight the loser. That's who I want to fight.

On a serious note, here's what happens. The reason giants are so intimidating in our lives is they've taken so many other people down. For some of you, alcoholism is a giant in your life, for sure. You're like, "Yeah. It took Dad down, and it took Uncle Frank down, and it took Grandpa down. I have watched this." You'll see this.

Anxiety. "Oh, it's a giant. Mom has always been anxious, and Grandma was always anxious, and Aunt Sally was always anxious." It'll discourage you from even fighting it, because you're like, "This giant is so massive. Everybody in my family has always struggled with it, and it has taken down so many other people."

The second thing we're told about is his size. Our giants look massive. It says "six cubits and a span." Depending on what text you read in Hebrew and how you translate *cubit* and *span*, it's somewhere between 6'9" and 9'6". I know that's a big difference. The whole point is even if he's 6'9", that's LeBron James. The average Israeli man at that time was 5'3", so think Danny DeVito. Danny DeVito does not want to fight LeBron James under any circumstances. So, these giants are massive.

Then there's his appearance. He's wearing bronze. This was the bronze era. The Philistines were some of the first adopters and users of bronze. In the Hebrew it's more clear. People who understand Hebrew say the language of how he's dressed... It's describing him as almost looking like a reptile.

If you know the Bible, you go, "This is interesting." Why? Because our first battle was with a reptile, the Serpent. This is why we're always scared of reptiles. When aliens in movies come, are they fuzzy bears? No. They're always reptilian in characteristic.

There's something deep in us that is afraid of reptiles. So, he looks like this scary reptile, and then watch what happens.

Verse 7: ***"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."*** It's not just his size. The size of our giants is intimidating, the name of our giants is intimidating, and what they've done in the past is intimidating, but look at verse 8. It's what they say to us that's the most intimidating.

***"He stood and shouted..."*** They're so loud in our lives. Sometimes they say, "You will never..." or "You can't..." or "You shouldn't..." They're loud. ***"He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, 'Why have you come out to draw up for battle?'"*** We're going to talk about it. The first thing our giants say is, "Why are you even trying to fight?"

***"Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me."*** Notice he calls them servants of Saul. He doesn't say, "Servants of God." Our giants always say, "Why are you even trying to fight?" and our giants never mention God.

Verse 9: ***"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."*** The third thing he basically says is, "If you try to fight, you're going to lose, and you're going to serve us."

Satan's greatest strategy for the non-Christian is to deceive that person so they can't come to an understanding of the gospel and do not understand the Word of God and are deceived about their own sinful condition and their own spiritual condition. That's Satan's number-one strategy for the non-Christian: deception. Satan's number-one strategy for the believer is discouragement.

All you have to do is think about it for about five minutes, and it makes sense. If I have the Holy Spirit (that's good) and the Word of God (okay, I have God's Word) and the power of the gospel (that's great) and spiritual gifts and forgiveness, and I have mission and purpose in *this* life and am heading to heaven, and then I have the church as my family, what's wrong? I have everything I need. "Then I will discourage you from doing anything about any of it."

How many of you... It's like, "Don't even try to fight this giant." Have you ever felt that before? Here's what it might sound like to you: "Listen, man. Sorry. Your marriage is always going to be a 5 out of 10. That's just how it is. Deal with it. It has been like that for a decade. There are people who have good marriages. You're not one of them."



You just get discouraged. You're like, "Why would I even try? Why would I even fight? Why would I even bring this up? Why would we even try to do date night again? Why would I even try to apologize? Why would we even plan a vacation? It's not even going to work."

"Stop praying for your prodigal kid. There are prodigal kids who come home. Yours is not one of them. You've messed them up too badly. Quit reaching out to them, because it only makes things worse." It's like, "Oh gosh." By the way, when you first try to make something better, it often does get worse first, because you're dealing with something you've never dealt with before.

There's something in your marriage you've been avoiding and need to talk about, and you've never talked about it. What's going to happen when you talk about it? Obviously, it's going to make the marriage worse immediately, because your spouse is going to be like, "What's up with you? Why are you bringing *this* up?" You're going to have to go through all of these hard things.

Goliath is basically saying, "Hey, listen." First, he doesn't mention God. He doesn't want us to think about God. He doesn't want us to have a grace-centered, God-centered view of it. Secondly, he wants us to not even show up for the battle. Thirdly, he wants us to feel like if we fight it, it's going to be worthless.

"If you fight this, here's what's going to happen. It's going to cost you a lot of time. Counseling is going to be expensive. It's going to cost you a lot of energy. It's going to cost you a lot of effort, and in the end, you'll probably basically be in the same place, if not a worse place."

This is what he says. I want you to see what happens next. Verse 10: ***"And the Philistine said, 'I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together.'"*** Here's what's happening. This is what they call *representative warfare*. This doesn't happen anymore, but instead of nation fighting against nation... When you do that, hundreds die on *this* side and hundreds die on *this* side or thousands die on *this* side and thousands die on *this* side.

Instead, they say, "Hey, why don't we each pick one person from each side, and why don't they fight each other, and each one will represent each side. So, why don't you have somebody who represents Israel and fights for God's people, and if that person wins, his victory will count for all of those people."

Now, when I just said that, if you're a Christian and you know your Bible at all, you should go, "This sounds familiar." Somebody fights for us against our Enemy, and

when he wins, his victory is counted as our victory. Yeah, that's what Jesus did. I mean, this is why David... Yes, he's a historical person, but he points to Jesus.

Is it a coincidence that we have a shepherd here who's misunderstood by his brothers, who stands between God's enemy and God's people and wins a decisive victory for them? No. This is exactly the heart of the gospel. David is going to be a hero. He's going to be a savior. He's going to be a substitute. He's going to do something for the people of Israel and in their place, and that's exactly what Jesus does for us.

Now, we don't do this representative warfare anymore, but in the movie *Troy*, this is what happens at the beginning of the movie with Brad Pitt. He's fighting another man. This is what... I think he was partly kidding, but when Russia went to war with Ukraine, Elon Musk tweeted out that he wanted to go to combat one-on-one with Vladimir Putin. This is that idea of a representative warfare.

Look at what happens in verse 11. ***"When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid."*** This is one of two times we're told how afraid they are. We'll revisit that.

## **02 DAVID COMES ON TO THE SCENE THROUGH SERVICE**

Now, in verse 12, David is mentioned for the first time. David is going to come on the scene through service. ***"Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years. The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah."***

You recognize those names because those are the three oldest sons who, when Samuel came in chapter 16, he passed by and said, "The Lord did not choose these." Verse 17: ***"David was the youngest."*** Again mentioned, he's the littlest, the youngest, the least. ***"The three eldest followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem."***

What we're going to see is David is going to come on the scene right now through service. We've said this before, but when you serve, you get to see things no one else gets to see. When you decide, "I'm going to serve," oftentimes, open doors and opportunities that otherwise would never be there are going to be there. David is going to go from delivery boy to deliverer in a moment. Watch this.

His dad basically says, "I need you to go down and bring some food." Look. This is verse 16. ***"For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening. And Jesse said to David his son, 'Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers. Also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand.'"***

This is the first charcuterie board in Scripture. Do you see it? It's right there...bread and cheese and all this. I mean, David is working for DoorDash. David is working for Uber Eats. That's what he's doing. ***"See if your brothers are well, and bring some token from them."*** So David goes down.

Look at what it says next. It tells the story of him going down there and seeing his brothers. Let's pick the story up in verse 23. He finally gets down and sees his brothers. ***"As he talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him."***

This is the transition. David is going to see what everybody else sees but see it differently. He's going to hear what everybody else hears but hear it differently. David is going to make a difference because he's able to see and hear things differently. Look at what happens.

In contrast to David, one last time, we're told how fearful everybody else is. Look at this. ***"All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were much afraid."*** This is a story about many things. It's about fighting our giants. One of the things we're going to have to do to fight our giants is to step forward with courage even when we're afraid.

The Bible says fear is not just a feeling. I mean, fear *is* a feeling, but fear is a spirit, and God did not give us a spirit of fear but of love and power and self-control. What happens here is all of Saul's men are afraid, so much so they run away. What we need is courage. Now, here's what courage is. Someone said this. Courage is fear that has said its prayers.

Do you ever see a story on the news...? Like, somebody runs into a building and saves people or somebody gets back from war, and they saved some of their band of brothers on the field. It's always the same thing. Everyone is like, "How did you do it? You must have been so afraid." They're all like, "Yeah. I was so unbelievably afraid, but I moved forward in spite of being unbelievably afraid."

I'm going to show you from Scripture how to have courage. People who have thought about this say courage is the virtue under every other virtue. For example, say you

want to be an honest person. I think we want to be honest, and we probably want to raise our kids to be honest. We're like, "Okay. Be honest." Well, good luck being honest if you don't have courage. Good luck. On the way to being honest, you're going to have to actually stand forward and say...

Okay. That's that. Then you say, "Okay. I would actually like to be the kind of person who has hard conversations." Well, good luck with that if you don't have courage. "I'd like to be the kind of person who shares Jesus with other people, because I love Jesus, and I love people, and I want to be an evangelist." Good luck with that if you don't have courage. For everything in your life, you need to have courage.

Now, the Bible, interestingly enough... At the end of the book of Revelation, it has this huge list of people who get thrown in the lake of fire. It's all of the people you'd think, the liars and the adulterers. It goes on and on and on. In the final list it says, "And the cowards." You're not going to hear this anywhere else outside of churches. The Bible says being a coward is a sin.

It is not okay for you to be a weak, pathetic, passive coward. There is way too much at stake in your life and everybody else you're connected to. So, I want us to see the story of David, because he's going to be contrasted with Saul. The reason Saul, in part, stays yesterday's man (we talked about that last week) is because he's unwilling to fight the battles of today.

I want you to see what happens. David decides, "I'm going to do something." Look at this. Verse 25: **"And the men of Israel said, 'Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel.'"** Here's what happens. Saul is afraid to fight the battle, so he tries to motivate other people to fight the battle. Look. **"And the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches..."**

What's the one motivation he's going to use to get the guy to fight? "Here. You'll be rich." How about this? **"...and will give him his daughter..."** Great. So, you get money, and you get sex, and you get to be in the king's family. **"...and make his father's house free in Israel."** None of your family ever has to pay taxes again. And everybody said, "Amen."

What's interesting is these are what are called *secondary motivations*. Secondary motivations are good motivations, but they're not enough. What we're going to see with David... This sounds so cliché and so trite, and if you've been in church, you know what I'm going to say. David is going to share his heart as he battles against Goliath. He's going to say why he's doing what he's doing.

His answer is "I'm doing this because I genuinely want God to be seen as great and because I love people." Let me tell you that the deepest motivations in the human heart for genuine transformation to fight the giants in your life are God's glory and others' good. Let me give you a classic low-level example.

Say you want to lose weight. You need to get in shape. You need to be healthy. Well, you could have secondary motivations. A secondary motivation is "I want to have a beach body." A secondary motivation is "I'd like people to look at me and think I'm the kind of person who takes care of myself. I'd like to be attractive to other people." Fair enough. We're not saying those are all bad.

Those are secondary motivations. They're not going to be enough across time. The person who really changes their weight is the person who says, "I am dishonoring God with the way I approach food and exercise, and I have been a horrible steward of my body. I need to repent of this, because God does not look great with how I take care of my body." It's like, "Ooh!"

The second one is "And you know what? I'd like to be around for my kids and my grandkids. I'm not going to be able to be the active father and the engaged grandfather I want to be if I don't get my health under control."

If you want to talk to someone who's deeply motivated to do the right thing, that's a little different than "I'd like a beach body, and I want to lose 10 pounds so I look a little lighter on the scale." That's a completely different motivation. We need primary motivations in our lives, not just secondary. God will use both, but we need the primary. David is primarily motivated.

### **03 HOW TO FIGHT THE BATTLES IN YOUR LIFE**

Verse 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?' And the people answered him in the same way, 'So shall it be done to the man who kills him.'"*

This is interesting. If you remember chapter 16 last week (this is why it's good to come for the whole series and read the whole section we're talking about: you'll see how it's connected), everybody only sees David's appearance, except God sees his heart. Remember that? His brothers, his dad, and even Samuel only see the appearance of David, and then God says, "Nope. He's a man after my own heart. That's who I want."

What's interesting is in *this* story (here we are on the next page, the next chapter), everybody only sees the appearance of Goliath. He's big. He has this armor on. David is the only one who sees his heart. This guy doesn't know God. He's an uncircumcised Philistine. He's defying God. David is the first person in the whole story to mention God. Saul forgets about God. The army forgets about God. Goliath doesn't know about God.

Then if you look at what I just read you there, David is also the only person who asks some questions nobody else has been asking. If you want to know how spiritual leadership takes place in a place, here's how it happens. Men and women show up somewhere and ask questions that everybody else in that city, in that neighborhood, in that business, in that apartment complex, or on that college campus has never asked.

You'll see this. You'll see spiritual leaders show up somewhere every once in a while, and they'll say something like, "Why hasn't anyone talked to her? She's a gossip. She has been here for 10 years and nobody has said anything to her? Why hasn't somebody done something about this?" It's like the new family members, like the brother-in-law or the father-in-law or the sister-in-law. They enter the family, and they say, "Why hasn't anyone talked to Grandpa about drinking?"

"Oh, he always does that."

"Why hasn't anyone said anything to him? Why hasn't anyone stepped up?"

It's the woman who moves into a new neighborhood and says, "There are six Christian women in this neighborhood. Why hasn't anyone started a Bible study for non-Christians in this neighborhood?" This is how the gospel has always gone forward. It's usually young people who say, "Why haven't we done this?"

How does the gospel get to North Africa? Well, I don't know the whole story, but somebody sometime said, "Why haven't we gone there?" Everyone else went, "I don't know why we haven't gone there," and then that person said, "Well, then I'll go there."

I love the city of Winston-Salem, but our city is sick. It's behind. It's spiritually weak, and it's of decades and decades and decades and decades of nobody saying, "Why hasn't anyone done anything about this?" So, my question to you is...*What are you passionate about?* We're not all passionate about the same things. What problem do you want to solve? We don't all want to solve the same problem.

What bothers you? What bothers you doesn't bother everybody else. I mean, God is doing something in *your* life. What do you want to do? That's the adventure of your

life. Following Christ and helping others find and follow Christ and figuring out what problems you'd like to solve and what suffering you would like to alleviate... That would be a great thing to do.

So, David starts asking questions. But you know what's going to happen. As soon as you step out to do anything for God, guess who's going to discourage you: the people closest to you, unfortunately. Look at verse 28. **"Now Eliab..."** It's like, "Man, could you just be a good older brother for one time? Can you just step up and encourage your younger brother? He wants to do something about Goliath."

***"Now Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, 'Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness?'"***

Do you see the passive-aggressive way...? "You're a shepherd. There are some good shepherds, and there are shepherds who have a lot of sheep, and then there's you. You just have a few sheep. What you're doing is insignificant, and you're on the bottom rung of even what you're doing."

***"And 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 to see the battle."*** Here's what they do as well: they question our motives. It's like, "Dude, I'm trying. I'm not doing this for money. I'm checking my heart, trying to keep my conscience clear."

Look at what happens. Have you ever felt this? ***"And David said, 'What have I done now?'"*** "I'm just trying to make my marriage better. What are you doing? I'm just trying to fight this giant in my life. I'm just trying to obey God. What have I done? Why are you giving me such a hard time?"

***"And David said, 'What have I done now? Was it not but a word?' And he turned away from him toward another, and spoke in the same way, and the people answered him again as before."*** So, here's what happens. David's faith seemed strange in a world of unbelief. David's courage seemed strange in a world of fear. David's conviction seemed strange in a world of tolerance. This is what's happening with David.

You might ask, "Why is Eliab against him?" This happens all the time. If you're going to fix your marriage or you're going to try to get healthy or you're going to try to read your Bible consistently or you're going to try to make disciples or you're going to try to evangelize someone or you're going to try to be generous or you're going to try to live on less money, watch what happens to everybody else around you. They won't like it.

It doesn't make sense at first. You're like, "Why don't they like it?" Because it exposes and reveals what they're lacking. It exposes and reveals what they're unwilling to do themselves. Eliab is like, "David having all this courage basically shows my lack of courage. David having all this belief shows my lack of belief." So they discourage him.

Oftentimes, we'll see this when somebody wants to go into full-time ministry. Sometimes the people closest to them... It's wealthy Mom and Dad who spent their whole lives in materialism and a love for money and making their kids super comfortable, and their kid is like, "I want to be a Journeyman," which is a two-year mission thing. "I'm going to have to raise support, and I'm going to have to go out." Mom and Dad spend almost all of their time trying to discourage them.

The way the church has gone forward for generations has been young people taking steps of faith, often challenging the older, comfortable generation to do something about the problems we see. So, I want you to see what happens next. Now he moves, and he interacts with Saul for the first time.

Verse 31: *"When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him. And David said to Saul, 'Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.' And Saul said to David, 'You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth.'" He's even discouraged by the leader of the army, by the king himself.*

#### **04 GOD'S PAST VICTORIES GIVE YOU COURAGE IN YOUR CURRENT BATTLES**

Verse 34: *"But David said to Saul, 'Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.'"*

How powerful is this? You have David reminding Saul of God. This is one of the final interactions we see between David and Saul before he goes off to battle. What we see here is David reminds Saul of God. Some of you need this. This is why we get in Community Groups, have Christian community.



Sometimes your marriage is a complete wreck, and you're about to use the *D* word, and you're just done. You already have the lawyers, or whatever it is, and somebody comes in and says, "Hold on. Have you forgotten about God in this whole situation?" You're like, "Oh my gosh. Yes." Some of us get in some kind of addiction. We just feel completely trapped. It's like we have completely thought about the future and our lives apart from the grace of God and apart from God.

David reminds Saul of God. Look at this. ***"And David said, 'The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.'"*** This is one of the last good things we ever see Saul do. Saul, in response to hearing about God, blesses David to fight the battle before him. ***"And Saul said to David, 'Go, and the LORD be with you!'"***

By the way, this is what every parent hopes eventually to be able to say to their kids. You can't keep your kids safe forever. You don't want to make your kids safe; you want to make them strong. What are you going to do? Are you going to bubble wrap them and put Styrofoam all around them, keep them in their room, and order all their food in? Some people wouldn't mind doing that to keep their kids safe. What kind of life is that?

What would be better is "How do I make my kids strong so I don't have to worry about their safety? I can't protect them forever, so how do I prepare them for the future?" We all need people in our lives who bless and say, "Go fight that battle. That's worth fighting." That's what Saul does. He blesses David for the battle he needs to fight.

Now, here's what's interesting. This is one of the things I want us to understand when it comes to motivation. How do we get the motivation? How did David get the courage to fight Goliath? The answer is not grit your teeth. This is not a self-help sermon. This is not "Just don't think about it and jump. Run off the cliff and jump into the water. Don't even think about it. Just do it." This isn't what I'm saying here.

What we see with David is the reason he had the courage and the strength to fight the battles of tomorrow and today is because he remembered God's past victories for him. He said, "Hey, listen. There was a lion. There was a bear. God delivered me out of the hands of both."

I have seen a bear in person, not in a zoo, one time. He was about 200 yards away. We saw each other, and I went running. I don't do that whole "If you see a bear, stand still." I think the bears wrote that. I don't do that. I went running in the opposite direction. But he says, "I killed a bear. I killed a lion."

This is so important to get. I hope you'll get it. He's saying, "The reason I can trust God in the future is I've seen God be faithful in the past." All he had was his own life and a little bit of Scripture. We have the whole testimony of Scripture, and we have the cross of Christ.

Here's how this works. When you look and you realize that Jesus Christ has already won the war, it encourages you to fight all of your battles. Let me show you how they're connected. We can look to the past, and we can look to what Christ has done on the cross, and it can encourage us for future battles. Let me give you a couple of examples.

Because Jesus defeated the Devil (which we're told in Colossians 2 and other places he did), now I can fight against the Devil and say no to temptation. It's rooted in what God has already done in the past, so I can fight the battles of today. Because Jesus overcame death, I can face death and dying (which we're all going to eventually face) with hope.

Because Jesus fulfilled the legal requirements of the law, I can now have a new relationship with the law and enjoy it and obey it. Because Jesus overcame darkness at the cross, I can now walk in the light. When you see those connections, you're encouraged. So, David, based on what God has done in the past, is encouraged to go into the future. I want you to see what happens next.

Verse 38: *"Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail, and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, 'I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.' So David put them off."* He couldn't fight the battle the way Saul was trying to fight it.

*"Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine."* He used what God gave him. I don't know what God has put in *your* hand, but what he had was a staff and some stones and a sling. Not a slingshot. A sling was a little different.

They say the stones in this area, when you go there, are the size and weight of billiard balls. So, imagine a billiard ball. They would say an average guy who's good with a sling can throw a stone of that weight about 100 miles an hour. Would anyone like to get hit in the forehead with a billiard ball at 100 miles an hour? Pass. No thank you.

## 05 THE ACTUAL BATTLE

So, we see the background here. He's going to have this sling, and then watch what happens. Verse 41: *"And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance.*

*And the Philistine said to David, 'Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?' And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine said to David, 'Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.' Then David said to the Philistine..."*

You may want to mark this down and say your own version of this to whatever giant you're fighting. *"You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.*

*This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."* You can see this great humble confidence and belief in God.

Verse 48: *"When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead..."* That was the last thing that went through his mind.

*"...and he fell on his face to the ground. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it."*

Why, after clearly killing him with the stone, do you have to cut the head off? You want to make sure the thing is dead. If it's a picture of a giant in your life, how many of you are trying to manage a giant in your life? We try to manage sin instead of kill sin. David says, "I'm going to sever it. I'm going to cut it off."

*"When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far*

*as Gath and Ekron. And the people of Israel came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent."*

I want us to see a couple of things as we close here. The first is I want you to see that when David won the victory, it was a blessing for everybody. This is going to be how it is in your own life. When David decides, "I'm going to step up and fight this giant in my life," guess who benefits.

First of all, God is seen as great. By the way, that's what's going to happen. You begin to stand up, you fight some of these giants in your life, and you're going to glorify God. By the way, when we say "glorify God," all we mean is make God look great.

The second thing is we see it was a blessing to David. So, it honors God and it blesses David. Now David is a public figure. Now David is on his way to king. Now David is a hero. Now everyone knows who he is. Now it's going to even be easier as he transitions later to being a king.

Then it is a blessing to everybody he's connected with. It ends up being a blessing to all of Israel. This is exactly what Christ has done for us. When Christ won the decisive battle through his sinless life, his substitutionary death, and his victorious resurrection, the most amazing thing is that he won this victory...

He could have just won it and kept it for himself, but he won this victory, and then he decided, "I think I'm going to share this with you." Isn't that so powerful? It's like, "Okay. What am I going to do with all of this forgiveness? Here, you can have some. Would you like some? You can have some."

"What am I going to do? Okay. I'm going to save millions and millions and millions of people across time. They're going to be my brothers and sisters. Guess what. They're also going to be *your* brothers and sisters." Part of what you get from the cross is a massive family. It's yours. It's going to take you all eternity to get to know these millions of people.

"What am I going to do with the Holy Spirit, because now I have the Holy Spirit? Oh, I'll give the Holy Spirit to every Christian." Every good gift you have is from the cross, if you're a Christian. It's the grace of God in your life, and it's the joy that Christ wins a victory and shares it with us.

Do you know that's the oldest story anyone ever tells? It's the story of David and Goliath, but it's the story they found in caves. Do you know that? The oldest story that

we know written down is this story: Man fights dragon. Dragon is hiding gold. Man kills dragon, gets gold, brings it back, and shares it with everyone he loves.

If you're rightly oriented in the world, that will hit you, and you'll say, "That's exactly what I would do. That would be the best thing for me to do. There's nothing better for me to do than to fight the things in my life, get what they've been withholding from me and everyone I love, and bring it back and share it with everyone."

David fights a battle other people *could* not fight and other people *would* not fight. We need you to fight battles other people can't fight and other people won't fight. This week, we celebrated (God bless it) the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Let me tell you the story of that.

The story of that is 50 years of mostly women (God bless you)... Tip of the spear, women fighting for the unborn for 50 years. Why do you fight for the unborn? Because we can't see them. They were invisible until the ultrasound. You can't see them. They don't have a voice, so somebody else has to fight for them.

You need to fight for your kids. You need to make some decisions today. You need to fight some generational battles so you don't wake up and your 17-year-old son is dealing with the exact same thing *you* dealt with at 17, and it's because you never dealt with it.

What are we doing as a church? Building this building downtown... I don't talk about it too much. It's hard. It's expensive. There's a lot of red tape. There are a lot of people who don't want us there, but we are fighting this battle for the next generation.

Whoever the next pastor is, it's like, "Here are the keys. It's paid off. You're welcome. People back in 2022 fought a battle so we would have a lighthouse and an ark in downtown and you don't have to worry about it." Here's the thing. David cuts off the head of this giant in his life. He severs it, and then he brings it home.

What heads do you need to cut off and bring home? Some of you need to go home this week... You need to do it somehow in your own life, and you need to go home to your wife and your kids and hold it up. "This is the head of alcoholism. It took down Grandma, and it took down Grandpa, and it took down my dad. I want to tell you guys I cut it off."

For others of you, it's materialism and the love of money. You just go home and go, "I'm sorry. This is how Mom and Dad raised me. It's all I ever knew. I have had a love for money, and it has affected my decision-making as a dad. It has affected my work schedule, and I'm sorry. I cut it off."

Some of you need to hold it up and go, "It's anxiety. All COVID did was amplify it and magnify it, and I've been so scared. I'm not going to be an anxious person. We're not going to do this." For others of you, it's passivity...passivity, men, and abdicating responsibility. It's the story of your family, and you go, "I cut it off."

I heard a story last night. A lady from our church... She's sitting here just like you are, and she goes home. She says, "We have to have dinner as a family. We have to sit around the table tonight, and we have to talk." She sits the kids and the husband down. She says, "Guys, I've noticed in our family there has been a lack of respect for authority."

She says, "You know what I've realized? It's my problem. I don't respect Dad. The way I've treated him in front of you guys is wrong, and I'm sorry. It's stopping tonight. It's ending with me." What does that have to be for you guys? We know what happens. I'll tell you the story. Here's the story.

If you don't fight the giants in your life, you end up in the wilderness for the rest of your life. Same with everybody who's connected to you. That's what happens. "We don't want to go into the Promised Land. We don't want to fight the giants." Well, then 40 years in the wilderness for you, walking in a circle, walking in a cul-de-sac.

Listen. We are here to help you. If there is a giant you want to fight, we're going to fight with you. We're going to pray with you. We're going to resource you. We're going to get you what you need, but you have to fight the giants in your life, and then you share that blessing with everybody who you know and love.

I'm going to pray for us, and then we're going to sing a song called "The Battle Belongs to the Lord." It's a song about fighting our giants. It's a song about fighting our battles, doing it on our knees, and doing it together, because the battle belongs to the Lord. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you that the story of King David points us to Christ, our great Savior, our great hero, our great Lord, our great King, our great Shepherd, who has fought every battle for us. We thank you. Lord, I pray that whatever the battles are that we need to fight, whatever heads we need to bring home and say, "This is done in my life and in our family," you would give us the grace, that we would see because you fought the greatest battle and won the greatest war, we now don't fight *for* victory but we fight *from* victory. We pray this in Christ's name, amen.