

## 1 Samuel 17 – The Gospel of David

### 1. The only thing we have to fear is fear itself

In line with our Trivia from last night – Who's Quote is this

– “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself....” << Ppt – read speech >>

Franklin D Roosevelt – in his inaugural address, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March 1933.

<< Ppt – second slide about FDR >>

The great enemy was the Great Depression.

Incomes fell by 20-50%, but debts remained at the same dollar amount.

In the first 10 months of 1933 – 744 US Banks had failed.

Unemployment had sky rocketed to 25%.

FRD asked Congress for the broad executive powers given to the President during a time of emergency.

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself...

## 2. Be afraid, be very afraid (vv. 1-30)

So in Samuel's day, there was another enemy that was greatly feared.  
This enemy was not the carnage of financial crisis,  
but the very real and present danger of the Philistine army.

### a. The Enemy & The Fear (vv. 1-11)

The location is the valley of Elah.  
The valley of Elah being part of the region of Palestine known as Shephalah.  
The strategic value of this region of Shephalah  
is that it provided access from the coastal Mediterranean plain  
to the cities of Hebron, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem in the Judean highlands.

So the battle lines are drawn – The Philistines camped on the southern ridge of Elah.

The Philistines are the aggressors – for they actively gathered – v. 1.

The Israelites encamped on the northern side.

The Israelites are the defenders – for the passively 'were gathered' – v. 2.

The terrifying presence of the Philistine army is personified in Goliath.

Not just his overwhelming physical presence, but the title given to him – 'champion'

Literally, champion means 'the man of the in between',

The name given to the person that comes forward from the front line to be their challenger.

The man who willingly steps into no-mans-land, possibly the first to die, but also the first to glory.

Goliath was a colossal, powerful, apparently indestructible, human war machine.

Goliath simply stood – as the hero, the man of the in between.

His presence so daunting – they simply call him, 'the Philistine'.

And Israel were petrified.

And not only Israel, but their own chosen king, the one who was meant to be like the other nations – Saul.

Saul was terrified. And "dismayed" is too nice a term – Israel were 'shattered'.

Israel were 'dashed to pieces' even before any combat had begun!

### b. David Hears & David Speaks (vv. 12-30)

But before we find out what happens next on the battle field.

The story cuts back to David, the little boy who was anointed by Samuel in the previous chapter.

David was the errand boy, running back and forth.

Running from Bethlehem, as he cared for sheep, and running to Elah, giving food to his brothers.

And as David approaches the battle front, let's briefly see what happened. << vv. 22-24 >>

Just like before, the Israelites are shattered and scared before this man of the inbetween.

And yet, David's reaction differs radically from everyone at the battle front. << v. 26 >>

David asks two questions – "What shall be done for the man who kills the Philistine?"

And "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?"

### 3. The Gospel of David (vv. 31-40)

David's words are then repeated before King Saul, and Saul sends for David.

Unlike the rest of Israel who have fallen to pieces before the fearsome Goliath, David sees thing differently. David then declares his 'gospel', his message to Saul.

#### a. Do not be afraid

First, the boy from Bethlehem issues a preposterous proposition

– “Let no one's heart fail because of him” << v. 32 >>

In fact, the language is too polite,

David actually issues a stronger command – “Do not let the heart of man fail because of him!”

And whilst the scene before us is ridiculous

- This tiny shepherd boy, standing before the grand King of Israel,
- More, this boy from Bethlehem, giving commands to the mighty leader of God's people.

These words remind us of what we discovered last week.

There are two very different perspectives at play.

The normal human perspective – as Saul, and the rest of Israel see – this mighty, unstoppable enemy.

Then there's the perspective of God's king – the one who sees according to the heart of God.

David, chosen by God, for God's own heart, sees the battle front very differently.

#### b. I will fight

The reason why David can issue such a command is because David will go and fight.

David will stand in between Israel and the man of the in between.

And as outlandish as that proposal seems, David has logic to his argument.

But before we get to that logic, note also the title that David uses for himself – “Your servant”.

David does not present himself as God's chosen successor to Saul.

David does not give Saul any reason to doubt his allegiance to Saul.

Quite the opposite – David, throughout all his interactions with Saul, gives complete devotion to the king.

#### c. The Lord will save

But David's rationale, David's reason for going up against “the Philistine” is this. << vv. 34-37 – 2 slides >>

This is the first time in the chapter that God's special name has been invoked – “Yahweh will save me”

Unlike Saul, and unlike all the Israelites gathered, whose hearts fail at the clear and present danger,

David comprehends the great and awesome God whom Saul and Israel serve.

David saw the battle from a completely different perspective because he knew Yahweh would deliver him!

David saw differently, because he knew the God whom he served – “Yahweh” the God who delivers!

#### 4. The Anointed vs. The Champion (vv. 41-58)

And so, the battle is set, Israel and the Lord's anointed on one side.

And the Philistines, and their Goliath, their man of the in between on the other.

In this crucible of military conflict, the interchange between Goliath and David

Reinforces the clash of two fundamentally opposed world-views. << vv. 42-47 >>

So who will prevail?

On face value, David is about to be slaughtered by Goliath.

On face value, there is absolutely no way that the shepherd boy has any chance against the man mountain.

But on a deeper level, who will prevail?

The Lord's anointed, the one chosen by God, after God's own heart?

Or the champion, the one who stands opposed to the Lord's anointed and opposed to Yahweh himself?

Well, before there is a majestic battle scene, with the Lord's anointed and Goliath going blow for blow,

The battle is over. << vv. 48-50 >>

What David had been saying all along, has been brought into reality.

Yahweh will deliver David, Yahweh will defeat Goliath, Yahweh will prevail against his enemies.

Everyone at the battle front that day, would've thought a young boy was about to be slaughtered.

Both Philistine and Israelite would've thought David was a dead man...

## 5. The Gospel of Jesus

And yet, that's exactly what everyone thought of Jesus as he hung on the cross.

And yet, that's exactly why the disciples fled when Jesus died on the cross.

In the face of the greatest opposition, death itself, God's ultimate king would seemingly fail.

### a. Do not be afraid (Matthew 28:5-7)

And yet, three days later, the gospel of Jesus would be announced in this way. << Matthew 28:5-7 >>

Just as David issued the command – “Do not let the heart of man fail because of him”

So now, the angel issues the command – “Do not be afraid” for the crucified Lord has been raised.

### b. I will be *handed over* (Matthew 26:1-2)

However, unlike the gospel of David, and David's directive – that he would fight for Israel.

The path of God's ultimate king, would be even more surprising than a shepherd boy against a warrior.

<< Matthew 26:1-2 >>

The path for Jesus was not one of glorious military victory.

No. Jesus knew the path laid before him was the path of suffering, crucifixion, and death.

### c. The Lord will save (Acts 2:29-32)

And yet, even though the path for Jesus was overwhelmingly horrifying for God's ultimate king, Jesus knew exactly the same thing David did.

Jesus' perspective was exactly the same as David's perspective.

Yahweh saved David, and more intimately, God the Father would save God the Son. << Acts 2:29-32 >>

The gospel of David provides for us the embryonic form of the gospel of Jesus.

More the gospel of David provides for us the prophetic framework for understanding the gospel of Jesus.

That is, David spoke – “Do not be afraid” – to Israel about the Philistine threat

But Jesus speaks – “Do not be afraid” – to the world about the power of sin and death.

David spoke – “I will fight” – against the champion of the Philistines

But Jesus spoke – “I will be delivered” – over to death itself.

David spoke – “Yahweh will save” – Israel against the overwhelming presence of the Philistines.

But Jesus spoke – “I will save you” – from sin and death, from judgment and condemnation.

## 6. Fear vs. Faith Today (1Peter 4)

Therefore, the question for us today – do we live by fear, or do we live by faith?

The world seems to be totally oblivious to matters relating to Jesus.

The world seems to be ruled by those who speak the loudest, or those who speak with the most voices.

So how are we to follow the gospel of Jesus in a world increasingly vocal in opposition to God?

The Apostle Peter says this.

### a. Arm Yourselves (vv. 1-4)

First, Arm yourselves. << vv. 1-2 >>

Prepare to suffer for the name of Christ, in the same way that Jesus was prepared to suffer.

But remember, this is not simply some kind of masochistic suffering because we should enjoy suffering.

No. This suffering comes because we seek to do the will of God, rather than be ruled by human desires.

### b. Serve One Another (vv. 7-11)

Second. Serve one another. << v. 10 >>

Whatever gifts God has given you. Whatever abilities, skills.

Whatever character, whatever way God has wired you, use them for the service of others.

### c. Shout for joy when his glory is revealed (vv. 12-14, 19)

Third, and finally. Shout for joy. << vv. 12-13 >>

Shout for joy!

How much more will we shout for joy, when Jesus is revealed in all his glory!

Let's pray.