

Faith Overcomes Overwhelming Odds

1 Samuel 17:1-58

¹ Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Sokoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Sokoh and Azekah. ² Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. ³ The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them.

⁴ A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span. ⁵ He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; ⁶ on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. ⁷ His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him.

⁸ Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. ⁹ If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." ¹⁰ Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." ¹¹ On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

¹² Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul's time he was very old. ¹³ Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah. ¹⁴ David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, ¹⁵ but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

¹⁶ For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand. ¹⁷ Now Jesse said to his son David, "Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. ¹⁸ Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them. ¹⁹ They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines."

²⁰ Early in the morning David left the flock in the care of a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry. ²¹ Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other. ²² David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and asked his brothers how they were. ²³ As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. ²⁴ Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him in great fear.

²⁵ Now the Israelites had been saying, "Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his family from taxes in Israel."

²⁶ David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

²⁷ They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, "This is what will be done for the man who kills him."

²⁸ When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle."

²⁹ “Now what have I done?” said David. “Can’t I even speak?” ³⁰ He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before. ³¹ What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him.

³² David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.”

³³ Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth.”

³⁴ But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, ³⁵ I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. ³⁶ Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. ³⁷ The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you.”

³⁸ Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. ³⁹ David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.

“I cannot go in these,” he said to Saul, “because I am not used to them.” So he took them off. ⁴⁰ Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd’s bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

⁴¹ Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. ⁴² He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. ⁴³ He said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴ “Come here,” he said, “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!”

⁴⁵ David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷ All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”

⁴⁸ As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. ⁴⁹ Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.

⁵⁰ So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

⁵¹ David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine’s sword and drew it from the sheath. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.

When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. ⁵² Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath and to the gates of Ekron. Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron. ⁵³ When the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp.

⁵⁴ David took the Philistine’s head and brought it to Jerusalem; he put the Philistine’s weapons in his own tent.

⁵⁵ As Saul watched David going out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner, commander of the army, “Abner, whose son is that young man?”

Abner replied, “As surely as you live, Your Majesty, I don’t know.”

⁵⁶ *The king said, "Find out whose son this young man is."*

⁵⁷ *As soon as David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with David still holding the Philistine's head.*

⁵⁸ *"Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked him.*

David said, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem."

Background

Saul turned from one who trusted the Lord to one who disobeyed God. Because of Saul's persistent pride and disobedience, God rejected Saul, and God chose a man after His own heart, which was David, to replace Saul as king. In chapter 16, Samuel anointed David as king, but David is not immediately put on the throne as king of Israel. Saul was still the king at that time. This is a time of transition of kingship from Saul to David.

The Challenge

1 Samuel 17:4-11

⁴ *A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span [about 3 meters].* ⁵ *He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels [about 58 kilograms];* ⁶ *on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back.* ⁷ *His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels [about 6.9 kilograms]. His shield bearer went ahead of him.*

⁸ *Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me.* ⁹ *If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us."* ¹⁰ *Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other."* ¹¹ *On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.*

- Israel has been in battles with the Ammonites, the Amalekites and the Philistines in the previous chapters, and at each time God has brought victory to them. Israel is facing the Philistines again. Goliath is a huge man, carrying great armour and weapons; and he was challenging Israel. Because of his great built, he was arrogant, so he defied the armies of Israel. Saul and his army were intimidated by Goliath and his challenge, and they were dismayed and terrified (vv. 11 & 24). That challenge went on for 40 days (v. 16).
- Saul and Israel seemed to have forgotten that they worship and serve the Living God, who created the universe and is able to do all things. They seemed to have forgotten that it was the Lord who have brought victory to their previous battles, and that God would be able to give them victory again.
- Being the king of Israel, Saul should be seeking the Lord and representing Him to Israel and the other nations. Saul should be leading his people and showing them who God is and what God can and will do for His people. But, instead, he hid himself from Goliath, from the Philistines, and he tried to motivate or bribe people to fight Goliath by offering wealth and status (v. 25). The very thing he should be doing, to seek and

trust in the Lord, he did not do; instead, he did the opposite, he put his trust in wealth and status, and wanted to use them to get what he wants.

David's Zealous Courage

1 Samuel 17:26

²⁶ David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

- In contrast to Saul's fear, David is fearless and willing to fight the great Goliath. David is a shepherd boy, still in his youth. He was not even one of the soldiers. By divine appointment, he came to the battlefield, following his father's instruction in bringing food to his elder brothers in the army camp (vv. 17-23).
- As David hears the challenge and taunting of Goliath, he got angry because Goliath was defying Israel's army and in doing so, Goliath is defying Israel's God. David was also upset with his fellow Israelites that no one was willing to stand up to Goliath. No one was doing anything to stand up for their God. They allowed Goliath to defy Yahweh for 40 days, and they did nothing.
- They did nothing because they were stricken with great fear, they were terrified by Goliath. David, in contrast, was not intimidated, he had no fear; he saw Goliath as a man who defied Yahweh, and he was zealous to defend the name of the Lord. David's courage came from his love for God and his trust in God. The Lord has delivered Israel in the past, the Lord will deliver Israel if she seeks Him.

The Lord was with David

1 Samuel 16:13, 18

¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David.

¹⁸ One of the servants answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the LORD is with him."

David was a brave man and a warrior. David's courage came from the Lord, it comes from knowing that the Lord was with him. While Saul and the Israelites were terrified because all they saw was a giant taunting and intimidating them, David was courageous because he realized that the Lord is in this battle (v. 47).

1 Samuel 17:31-37

³¹ What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him.

³² David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him."

³³ Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth."

³⁴ But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, ³⁵ I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and

killed it. ³⁶ Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. ³⁷ The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”

- As a shepherd, he saw how the Lord helped and rescued him from lions and bears. He recognized that his victories over the lions and the bears were from the Lord, and similarly, the Lord will rescue him from Goliath and bring victory.
- David’s experience as a shepherd boy prepared him to face Goliath courageously, trusting in the Lord. Because David has developed his faith and trust in the Lord, David did not see Goliath as an intimidation but a nuisance who was defaming the Lord. God used David’s shepherding days to prepare him for the things that he would face later. David’s faith and trust in the Lord grew as he was doing his routine, his roles in his everyday life. God uses all things to help us grow our faith and trust in Him.

Reflect: How is God preparing you: moulding, building, and training you through your everyday life?

The Overwhelming Odds: David vs. Goliath

- In contrast to Goliath (huge man with really great and advanced armour and weapon), David goes into battle with a staff, 5 stones in his shepherd’s bag, and a sling. The contrast shows the overwhelming odds David face in fighting Goliath. He was the obvious underdog. No one had faith in David:

David’s eldest brother, Eliab, got angry with him for coming and decides that David is conceited and wicked to come to watch the battle (v. 28).

When David volunteers to fight Goliath, Saul doubted his ability (v. 33).

Even Goliath was offended that Israel sent David to fight him. Goliath was furious that they sent a boy. Goliath despised and cursed David (vv. 41-44).

- But, David, knowing that the Lord is with him, and the Lord will bring victory, went with confidence. He was without fear. He was not bothered about the odds.
- The overwhelming odds bears a powerful testimony that it was the Lord who delivered David and Israel from Goliath and the Philistines.

David’s Overwhelming Faith

1 Samuel 17:45-47

⁴⁵ David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷ All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”

- David had such overwhelming faith in the Lord because the Lord was with him. Both Saul and Jonathan had such faith in the Lord in their previous battles, when they were convinced that the Lord was with them. Due to Saul's persistent pride and disobedience, the Lord has rejected him, and the spirit of the Lord has departed from him. Saul never repented, and he knew that the Lord is no longer with him.
- In chapter 16, with the departure of the spirit of God, Saul was tormented by an evil spirit. The absence of God brought constant pain and fear into Saul's life. He was fearful of the enemies, he was fearful of losing his kingdom, he was fearful of losing his popularity and glory. In the next few chapters, we will see how Saul gets jealous of David and wants to kill David, because he is fearful that David would be more popular and take his place. Saul knew that the Lord had rejected him, but instead of returning to the Lord, out of fear, he tried to secure his position by his own means.
- In facing Goliath, Saul and the Israelites saw a great opposition, and instead of looking to God, they looked at their own ability, and they were overwhelmed. In comparison to Goliath, they were like grasshoppers to giants. It is no wonder they were intimidated and terrified. David saw the same overwhelming opposition, but he looked to God who is greater than the opposition. He knew he could put his hope in the Lord, instead of his own abilities. His faith was in the Lord, not himself.
- Without God, fear controls us. We are intimidated by the challenges and oppositions we face. It haunts us and it taunts us. We have no peace, no rest, no joy. We are in constant fear of what could happen. We are tempted to hide or run away like Saul.
- With God, the overwhelming challenge that we face may not change, but our perspective changes. We know that our faith is not in what we can do in those situations, but our trust and hope is in the Lord. We can be assured that God will see us through, that He will rescue us, that He will deliver us, and He will bring victory. It doesn't matter how big our challenge is, the Lord is greater, He is stronger, He is our Almighty God.

Victory in Jesus Christ

- The Lord brought victory to David and Israel. The Lord used David to kill Goliath, and the Israelites manage to win the battle against the Philistines (vv. 48-53).

Romans 8:1-2

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you^[a] free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:10-11

¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of^[e] his Spirit who lives in you.

1 Corinthians 15:56-57

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- In His death and resurrection, Jesus has won the victory for all our battles. We are no longer victims of sin; we are victorious in Christ. He delivers us from evil. And He promises to be with us at all times. How overwhelming our circumstances may seem; we can be assured of that God is with us and He gives us victory because of what Christ has done.
- When Peter was walking on water with Jesus and he started to sink, Jesus told Peter to put his eyes on Jesus, and Peter stopped sinking. That is what we are called to do, to put our eyes on Jesus.

In his final days, the apostle Paul was imprisoned for his faith. He was in suffering. He was missing the fellowship of the church; he was facing persecution from those who were from the inside and the outside of the church; and he was facing martyrdom for his faith in Christ. He was facing overwhelming challenges. Yet, he was able to continue to speak about Christ, about love, peace, joy and hope. His confidence, his courage, came from the assurance that Christ was with him. Rather than being overwhelmed by his situation, Paul's focus was on Christ. His eyes were on the One who have died to rescue and deliver him from his greatest enemy: sin. Paul knew that the Lord was with Him, and the Lord would deliver him.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Philippians 4:13

¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Prayer Items

Faith Overcomes Overwhelming Odds

- Awareness and confidence in the presence of God with us
- Allow God to work in and through us in our daily routines
- Courage that comes from our faith in the Lord
- Assured of our victory in Christ

Life Church

- Online services: God will bless and nurture the church
- Prayer meeting: The Lord will bestow upon us the spirit of intercession
- Wisdom and discernment
- The word of God will bring transformation and breakthrough
- Those who are going through challenges: grace, strength and courage
- Unity in Jesus Christ: love and care for each other
- Light, salt, city on a hill: represent Christ to those around us
- Salvation
- Ministries: Life Explorer, Redeeming Roses, Destiny Kids & Teens, Sunday School, Lifeline, Worship, Life Seed, Cell

Healing

- Bro Harold
- Si Yun, Jayden & Ee Khai

Covid-19 Pandemic

- Healing & deliverance
- Protection
- Front-liners
- Resources
- Economy
- Salvation

Malaysia

- Leaders
- Churches
- Unity