

Title: And the LORD Be with You
Text: 1 Samuel 17:31-40
Theme: When the LORD is with you
Series: 1 Samuel
Prop Stmt:

David came to the field of battle to bring some food to his brothers. While he was there, he heard Goliath speak and David knew that a gauntlet had been thrown down. It did not make sense to him that no one in the Israel army was willing to pick it up. If our God is the true and living God, then why is Goliath an issue? That is a great question to ask isn't it? If our God is the true and living God, then how are we supposed to view our world? So, David began asking questions. His older brother wanted him to shut-up and go away. Eliab may have given lip-service to God, but he clearly did not believe that God had anything to do with the battle at hand and David's convictions were infuriating. But David wouldn't shut-up, nor would he go away. It became obvious, pretty quickly that David was alone. Finding someone, anyone who believes God is not a given. They stand out simply because they don't fit in. However, if you are willing to stand alone with God, you will never actually be alone. There are plenty of loners who are loners for bad reasons, but there are times when people who really believe God simply don't fit in. Noah, Joseph, Moses, Samuel and now David. We know their names because we name our kids after them. We tell their stories to our kids before bed and we sing their songs. You don't make a difference by fitting in, when in, is wrong. Being willing to stand alone with God means that you will never be alone.

Read Text:

900 years after this event occurred, single combat fighting still occurred. Two sides would each set forth a champion (the man between) to represent their side. Winner would take all. The Roman historian, Quintus Claudius Quadrigarius records one of them. A soldier from Gaul (modern day France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Switzerland) was mocking the Roman army. This set-off a young warrior by the name of Titus Manlius (great name, huh?) who challenged the man to a duel. *"He (Manlius) stepped forward, and would not suffer Roman valour to be shamefully tarnished by a Gaul. Armed with a legionary's shield and a Spanish sword, he confronted the Gaul. Their fight took place on the very bridge [over the Anio River] in the presence of both armies, amid great apprehension. Thus, they confronted each other: the Gaul, according to his method of fighting, with shield advanced and awaiting an attack; Manlius, relying on courage rather than skill, struck shield against shield and threw the Gaul off balance. While the Gaul was trying to regain the same position, Manlius again struck shield against shield and again forced the man to change his ground. In this fashion he slipped under the Gaul's sword and stabbed him in the chest with his Spanish blade.... After he had slain him, Manlius cut off the Gaul's head, tore off his tongue and put it, covered as it was with blood, around his own neck."* (David and Goliath, Malcom Gladwell, pp.6-7)

This is the kind of battle that Goliath called for. Champion against champion not only representing the respective armies, but more importantly, representing the respective gods.

The Philistines had a champion who believed in his god. The supposed followers of the true and living God, did not. Until David came on the scene. David believed God and therefore, the Lord was with him. Are we fools to believe that the true and living God is true and living? Are we ignorant buffoons to believe that the true and living God will make a difference? Are we a pitiful lot to stake our lives and souls upon the promises of God? We would be pitiful and ignorant fools not to. The Lord was with him and provided for him exactly what he needed. Paul reminded Timothy that, "The Lord knows those who are his (2 Timothy 2.19). That doesn't mean that the Lord is simply aware of who is on a list. It means that the Lord has a relationship with, a bond with, a commitment to those who are his. David's belief and actions are an OT answer to a NT question. If God be for us, who can be against us? Well, there can be plenty of people like Eliabs in our own families or Goliaths in the world, but do they count? Do they really matter? Not really. When the Lord is with you...

1. **You are free to really believe God.** (31-32)

David heard Goliath (v.23), now others start to hear David. David's words are big and bold. Little boys with big mouths are not impressive because a lot of guys write checks with their mouths, their bodies are not able to cash. But David's boldness is not in himself, but in God. That is what makes his words so compelling. If David was bragging about himself, he could and should be ignored as being a fool. If what David was saying about God and our responsibility to God is true, then people would be fools to ignore him. David's words are different than anyone else in the story and they are repeated to the king. It sounds like someone has volunteered to take on Goliath. David is sent for. Ok, we'll see how tough he talks now. Anyone can talk trash in the stands or the bleachers. It doesn't cost us anything to sing "Your Great Name" here. But, what will you say when you have to back up your words?

David has come to realize that no one is willing to fight Goliath. When you examine what David says in the previous text, he is challenging the soldiers to be bold and step up. But, no one does, so David does. Consider the dynamics of that. You are in the army and you have been fighting for Saul for a while now. A kid comes along and calls you out for not being brave and trusting God. Do you hate the kid for his faith? Do you laugh at him for his cute, but unrealistic beliefs? Or does your heart ache, just a bit, because you remember back when you used to believe like that? Before the real world taught you differently? (story?)

Word did get back to Saul that there is someone who sounds as if he is willing to fight Goliath. The man is sent for, but it is a boy who comes. A boy! And he is not even dressed for war! He looks like a shepherd. He has no sword, but he has a staff. If Saul and his officers had their hopes raised, this had to look like a complete waste of time. However, this time, David is the one who speaks first. He is so confident in God that he tells Saul not to worry. "Let no man's heart fail because of him (Goliath)." Then he adds, "Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." For about 6 weeks now, Saul has been frozen with fear, and cannot find a solution. But, now, in less than a day, this kid looks at the dilemma and concludes that this is not even worth being concerned about. "Hey King, this is an easy one. You can relax, I'll take care of it and be back in a few. Again, think about what is at stake. For 40 days, morning and evening,

Goliath has been calling for a representative of Israel to come forward, man-up and fight. No one knows what to do. Saul does not respond; therefore no one responds. Anyone who does step up now is not only going against Goliath, but if they win, they are going up against Saul. It's a no-win situation. David seems to have that figured out and refers to himself as "your servant." David is not only literally Saul's servant, but his posture of humility and submission takes the sting out of how his courage would reflect upon Saul. By saying, "your servant" David offers to go into this fight as the representative of Saul, doing his bidding. The kid is so completely given to God, that he has no ego in this and is free to honor the king, even when the king isn't very honorable. When you really believe God at the heart level, it is so freeing and liberating because you do not have to manage every situation. (application) When your confidence is completely in God...

2. You can kindly stand your ground. (33-36)

David's confidence in God is not shared by Saul. Man looks at the outward appearance and Saul sees what everybody else can see, but not what God sees. David is but a youth. This situation is dire, but sending a boy to fight Goliath? What kind of a king would send in a boy to do a man's job? And this is a man's man's job. What kind of king would put the entire fate of the army into the hands of a boy? What kind of a king would stake his reputation to a boy? Saul would have to be crazy to let this boy do this. This will never work. Saul shouldn't even waste time with this kid. And yet, the kid is so convincing, isn't he?

Notice how v.34 begins. There it is again. "your servant." David says this 4x in the chapter and every time he does, he says it to Saul and he says it in a way that honors him in a situation that could otherwise show him up. Here David gives compelling evidence as to why he is so confident that he can defeat Goliath. But, notice the rest of his opening line. "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father." David says this 1,000 years before Christ. But this sounds like Jesus, doesn't it? It's really fascinating, because that is exactly what Jesus is doing right now. He is keeping sheep for his Father. So, when we read these words, our ears perk up, because even though David is speaking about himself, we know that his life on so many levels prepares us for and points us to the ultimate king and ultimate shepherd - Christ. (read vs. 34-35)

And what he says is so matter of fact, as if it's no big deal and as if this was something that happened all the time. Look at v.34. David does not say, "once this lion came..." but "when there came a lion or a bear" ... I'd go strike him and get my lamb back and if he arose against me, I caught him by the beard and struck him and killed him. What's he saying? He's saying, I don't care who you are or what you are, if you try to mess with my sheep, then you are going to mess with me and if you mess with me, you're going down because I will die for my sheep.

You can't help but love this kid, can you? If you are one of Saul's officers and you hear David say this and you watch his demeanor and composure, it is not only an enormous contrast to Saul, but you find yourself being swayed. You find yourself thinking that, this kid could do it. I don't know how, but he could do it. I don't know how he killed lions and bears, but here he is living to talk about it. And, if I was a sheep, I'd want to be in his flock because if my soul and my life ever

got into that much trouble, I'd want a shepherd like that to come after me. Wouldn't you? Wouldn't you want a shepherd who was willing to lay down his life so that you could live? Wouldn't you want a shepherd who loved you so much that he knew you by name, knew when you were missing, knew that you had wandered off, knew that you were in trouble, knew that you couldn't rescue yourself, knew that you were alone, frightened, in danger and without hope, and was willing to leave his comforts and track you down all the days of your life and fight your enemies in order to lead you beside still waters, restore your soul, lead you in paths of righteousness for his name sake knowing that one day, you will dwell in his house forever? Wouldn't you want a shepherd like that? You have one. His name is Jesus.

The story of David is a great story, but it prepares us for the greatest story, the greatest king and the greatest battle. Jesus Christ came to this earth, in the line of David. He lived a perfect life in your place. Then he died on the cross in your place and in so doing he absorbed all of the righteous wrath of the Father that should have been poured out on you. Jesus took it all. When you trust in Christ you get credit for what Christ did. You get credit for his life and for his death and you get the promise of his resurrection. Your Goliath of sin, death and judgment is dead.

I can't help but think that when David said this to Saul, that God the Father and the Son looked at each other and smiled. This is why the Son of God would choose to come as the son of David. This is the heart of a king.

In verse 36, gives the closing argument that leaves no room for doubt. "Your servant (there it is again) has struck down both lions (plural) and bears (plural) and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of **the living God.**" Those big animals and this mouthy giant share the same fate. David's hope that enables him to kindly stand his ground is not only a belief in the promises of what God would do, it is an experiential hope that is fueled by what God has already done.

Think about the ways that God has delivered you. Think about Christ! Think about the coming of Christ, his life, his death, his resurrection and his promise to return. Think about how he opened the eyes of your heart to see this and hear it in your soul and believe in Christ alone as your Savior. Think about his promise to get you home before its dark to keep you forever as his own. The voice of God's promises and evidence of God's promises was so much louder to David than the voice of Goliath. No wonder David did not tremble when he heard Goliath talk. He couldn't imagine why Goliath did not tremble because, truth be told, Goliath's mouth was writing checks that he could not cash. But, in that moment, Goliath did not know it, Saul did not know it, and the army of Israel did not know it. The army of Israel had forgotten that they were the army of the living God. But, if one little boy had anything to do with it, they were about to remember. When your confidence is completely in God...

3. You are free to trust God with future grace. (37)

There are three things that I want you to see in verse 37. First, notice the comparison that David makes between the paw of the lion and the bear and the hand of the Philistine. Both

lions and bears use their paws to attack. Victims will have claw marks all over the body. David, may have had a scar or two that he could have pointed to as evidence of the truthfulness of his stories. Lions will knock their prey over then pounce and devour, while bears will claw and maul, then bite the neck. Sometimes that isn't necessary since a bear is so strong that it can break a spine. "The hand of the Philistine" is his ability to attack and kill. By saying this, David is addressing Saul's challenge that David cannot go up against the Philistine. The second thing to note is the confidence that David has in God. We call it future grace. God who delivered me yesterday will deliver me tomorrow. He will not let my soul be lost. David knows that it was **the Lord** who delivered him repeatedly from the lions and bears.

I think that a casual reading of 1 Samuel 17 may tempt us to think that David is young and idealistic. He really doesn't yet know how the real-world works. He doesn't know that it just doesn't work this way. You cannot really trust God like that. If you did, it would be dangerous. Well, if you did, it would be dangerous, but not to you, but to the world. While the world has tried to rid itself of those who trust God like that, they are at the same time tremendously compelling. Even fearful Saul, the king of unbelief is moved and he utters the word David has been waiting to hear. "Go."

The third thing to note are the last words Saul says to David before the battle. "And the LORD be with you." Was it a customary greeting/blessing? Probably. Was it a prayer that David would be successful? Probably. But what we know is that the LORD was with David. The Lord had chosen David to be the next king. David had been anointed king with oil, and the Lord was about to give Israel a preview of his coronation and to the world a preview of the final king. Oh Saul, your prayer has been answered more than you know. The Lord is with him in a way that he would have been with you, if you would only have believed.

Two men stood before one another that day in the tent. The one was about to ascend to greatness and the other about to descend into despair. The one literally hoped in God and staked his life to the promises of God. The other trusted in himself which proved, as it does every time, not worthy of trust and worship. When your confidence is completely in God...

4. You are free to use the skills the Lord has given you. (38-40)

When the Lord is with you then you can rest knowing that the Lord will use whatever gifts and abilities that he has given you to accomplish his plan. You do not need to waste your life dreaming of being something that you are not. Be who the Lord made you to be and do not fret about trying to be someone else. Saul put his armor on David. David was gracious to his king and allowed himself to be dressed in it, though this was clearly not David's idea. David tried in vain to go, but not having any experience in fighting with armor on, it would have been disastrous for David. Besides, and this was the big point for David, he did not need someone else's armor when he had the Lord. David did not go without any weapons. He had his staff and he had his sling and off he went. Along the way, he chose 5 smooth stones from the brook. And he did what no one else had ever done. He approached the Philistine.

Are you comfortable in your own skin? There is a lot of conversation about finding your identity, etc. The further people unhinge life from God the further away they get from knowing who they are. And it has become really bizarre. I can choose my gender? Do people actually believe that? I mean really believe that they can be the Creator and recreate themselves? Our world is so ignorant and broken and rebellious that when someone like me points out the truth that you cannot successfully do that, I am accused of abuse. The truth is, it is horrendous abuse to suggest to a kid that he or she can choose their own gender and then watch that child be co-signed to a life of internal torment. I can choose my identity? I can change from day to day what I am and you have to pretend that it is true and if you don't then I will have you named, shamed and punished for not going along with my fantasy. How can people come up with such blatant nonsense? You were designed by your Creator to live in harmony with him by submitting to his gracious authority. If you try to define yourself, then you have to defend yourself. Good luck with that. If you know God and you therefore, know that he made you, defines you, knows you, is with you will defend you, will be with you and is with you keeping you, will come for you and keep you forever, you are at peace and there is nothing more eternally important than being at peace with God through Christ.