

Title: The Battle is the Lord's (and so is the kingdom)  
Text: 1 Samuel 17:41-49  
Theme: Faithfulness under pressure  
Series: 1 Samuel  
Prop Stmtnt: Faithfulness under pressure reveals faith

Why do some people fear, even resent authority and other people respect it? One of the contributing factors is people's experience with authority. If someone in authority sacrificed their life in order to save yours, then you would have good reason to respect it. If someone in authority sacrificed your brother's life in order to save their own, then you have good reason to resent it. The story line of the Bible is the story of two ways to live and your choice. Those two ways are marked by two different types of authority and therefore, two different types of followers. 1 Samuel 17 is one of the clearest examples of the contrast between those two ways, two kings, two kingdoms, two value systems and two worlds.

I want to read something to you: *"First responders to the active shooter scene will usually be required to place themselves in harm's way and display uncommon acts of courage to save the innocent." "As first responders we must recognize that innocent life must be defended. A first responder unwilling to place the lives of the innocent above their own safety should consider another career field."*

Those statements were taken directly from the Uvalde, Texas police training documents. David French says it well. "When a man or woman puts on a uniform and straps on a gun – whether they're a police officer or a soldier – they should be making a profound declaration. They're willing to die to protect their community and their nation. They don't want to die, of course. But they're willing to pay the "last full measure of devotion" if that moment arrives. That's why we respect men and women in uniform. In some cultures, the uniform is a symbol of authority, not sacrifice, and those who wear uniforms are feared far more than they're respected. In our culture, we thank soldiers for their service and "back the blue" because in theory, they've placed our lives above their own." The tragedy in Uvalde is compounded by the inexplicable failure of the local police on the scene and the lies they told in a pathetic attempt to defend their indefensible actions. What happened locally in Uvalde, was happening nationally in Israel. The people sworn to defend, cowered in fear. The nation was in desperate need for a hero.

Read Text:

Let's work through the account and then see how the contrast of two kingdoms and two kings is displayed. 1 Samuel 17 begins like the book does. We need to be rescued. We need a Savior. We need a true leader who will love us, defend us, and place our needs ahead of his own. In this chapter, the army of the Philistines, Israel's neighbor in the Gaza strip, keeps terrorizing Israel and has launched an invasion into the land. Israel's king and army respond and there is a stand-off in the valley of Elah, which is about 13 miles west of Bethlehem. The army of Israel occupies the high ground on the north side of the valley and the army of the Philistines occupy the high ground on the south side. The Philistines send forth their mightiest warrior, a giant of a

man named Goliath to represent them. He challenges Israel to respond in like kind and when they don't, he mocks them. Goliath is not only mocking Israel, he is mocking the God of Israel, the king of Israel and everything Israel with what appears to be good reason. No one in Israel is willing to stand up for God, or for the nation, not even the king. No one, until a boy named David witnessed the scene. David could not believe that no one in Israel had the courage to confront the Philistine. So, David volunteered. Soon, he had an audience with Saul and was able to convince Saul to let him fight the Philistine. I know how this text has been treated by many, so I have tried to carefully disavow you of the idea that this story is about how to defeat the giants in your life. This is not how to be a giant-killer. This story is about 2 kings and 2 kingdoms and which one you belong to.

Goliath is named twice in the entire chapter (vs. 4, 23). The rest of the time he is referred to as "the Philistine" (19x) or "this Philistine" (1x). David never refers to him by name. I think by doing it this way, the writer of 1 Samuel is stylistically capturing what David says and believes. This adversary is nothing compared to God. He's not even worth naming because the enemies of God are no account. They are like chaff which the wind blows away. When the Philistine sees David, he sees what everyone else initially sees; a rather little guy. The Philistine is outraged and offended at the mockery. Instead of sending a champion, Israel sent a boy and Goliath takes it personal. "Am I a dog?" Is this what you think of me? You are disrespecting me. Then, after cursing David by his gods (think Dagon) he commands David to come and fight in what promises to be a very short and easy victory. At this point, David delivers the speech that defines his life. This is David's Gettysburg address. In this moment, when the eyes of the nation are on him, he believes what they all should believe, he says what they all should say and he does what they all should do. We call it David and Goliath, but it's not. It's the kingdom of God vs the kingdom of man and somehow David knows that. That is why, David represents the real king. David is not there for his own honor, but for the fame of God and he comes in his name. David does not trust in his own power and skill, but trusts in God. His confidence in God is unflappable and convinced that God will defend his own honor, David is not intimidated by Goliath's words, but answers him back and not only tells him what is going to happen to his carcass, but David explains what this is about. This event is an opportunity for God to demonstrate his glory by using a small vessel to accomplish an astounding victory so that "all the earth" may know that there is a God in Israel and that all those gathered (armies of Israel and the Philistines) will know that salvation is ultimately not based on the man's weapons but on God's power. This is where the battle is. He is a boy without a sword speaking as a seasoned and wise warrior for God. At this point the Philistine starts to approach David, who ran quickly toward him. David took out one of the stones (approximately the size of a tennis ball) he had gathered, put it into his sling and after whirling it around a few times, released one of the strings and launched it. The stone was probably going anywhere from 100-150 m.p.h. hit the Philistine directly in the forehead. A stone like that, released from a sling of that nature is deadly and Goliath was probably dead before he hit the ground. Oh yea, don't miss the fact that he fell, like his god, Dagon, on his face (1 Samuel 5). You almost expect Al Michaels to yell, "Do you believe in miracles?" Everyone is stunned, except David. He really expected this to happen. His trust in God was not a show. In that moment, the world seemed to change. But,

more than that, that event crystalizes the story line of the bible: two ways, two kings, two kingdoms, two value systems, two worlds and two fates. Which one are you in?

### **1. Each kingdom has a different view of authority.**

In man's kingdom the leader says, "You die so I can live and enjoy my power." In fact, I will kill anyone whom I deem to be a threat to my reign. We see it and will see it a lot more in Saul. In God's kingdom the leader says, "I will die so you can live and reign with me." We see that and experience that in Christ. In man's kingdom the king kills to protect himself while in God's kingdom the king is willing to be killed so that his kingdom, his people, his sheep are protected.

Because the king lives for himself, and rules through fear, the culture of man's kingdom is to live for self, your own glory, your own power, your own pleasure. Your body, your choice. Your life, your values. Your name, your glory. Don't let anybody get in your way or try to reign you in. Don't let anybody define you. You be you – whatever that is. Oh, yea, by the way, I almost forgot to tell you that everybody else is doing the same thing. And all those people that you are running over when they get in your way? Well, they are running you over too because you are getting in their way. We all talk tough but, on the inside, we are a mess because there is no loyalty, no trust, no truth, no commitments, but a lot of loneliness and heartache.

Whereas, in God's kingdom the king lives for his people and rules through love, therefore, the culture of God's kingdom is to live for others and use your glory and strength for their good, their joy, and their eternal pleasure. In man's kingdom, the ultimate loyalty is self. People make and break promises based on what is convenient in the moment. In God's kingdom people make and keep promises based on what is right and true forever.

### **2. Each kingdom is in opposition to the other.**

Man's kingdom hates God's kingdom and God's kingdom is comprised of those who rebel against man's kingdom and swear allegiance to the real king. There is genuine conflict and hostility between the two and you can't be citizens of both. You have to choose. Man's kingdom is a fraud because there is only one true king. Every kingdom and king that sets itself up against God is a fraud and is threatened by God's kingdom and will do everything it can to destroy it. But it won't because it can't. God's Kingdom will out love, outlive, outlast and outlaugh Man's kingdom. When the kings of this earth die, they stay dead. When the true king was killed, he rose again. How ya gonna stop that?

Israel was supposed to represent God's kingdom, but Israel looked more like, lived more like man's kingdom and Israel had a king who looked like and followed the rules of man's kingdom. Therefore, before Israel could defeat her enemies without, she had to face her enemy within. She had to face her enemy of unbelief. Her failure to trust in God rendered her indefensible to the world. Goliath was everything that most of Israel was trusting in. David had to face Eliab, then Saul before he faced the Philistine. The fate of man's kingdom is hopelessness. It may look powerful and sound intimidating. It may have all of the pundits of the world on its side, and be

enticing to a point, but in the end, it will share the same fate as every enemy of God has ever experienced. It will lose. It will be destroyed and will be exposed as a fraud.

My aim in this message is to recruit you to the kingdom of God and to help you recruit others to the kingdom of God. But that is not easy because the kingdom of this world is what most people want to be part of. It seems to have the upper hand. It looks to be the dominant movement. The who's who are part of it. The elite, the powerful, the insiders, the popular, but it won't last. It is doomed. While the ship looks like a giant party, there are holes in the bottom and it is taking on water and will go down and take everyone on it, with it. But there is another kingdom, led by another king. To the untrained eye, it looks like the loser kingdom with a shepherd for a king. But, to those who have eyes to see, this shepherd is none other than the King of Glory and of grace. In this text, both Saul and Goliath represent man's kingdom. David is the surprise king, the underground and underdog king, who represents the kingdom of God. The kingdom of this world is marked by cowardice or self-confidence both of which are the result of living for yourself. David is a threat to Saul's cowardice and an outrageous offense to Goliath's ego. David is hated by both.

### 3. **Each kingdom trusts in different sources for power.** (42-47)

Man's kingdom is based, in large part on materialism. It is based on what you can see. What you have and what you look like. Therefore, man looks at the outward appearance and he places a lot of emphasis and attention on the outward appearance.

Aaron Peck

#### A. **Man's kingdom trusts in man's weapons and strategy.**

Both Saul and Goliath trusted in weapons and armor. We noted a few weeks back that Goliath was like a one-man fortress. David pointed out that Goliath had a sword, a spear and a javelin, plus he had his own armor-bearer to carry his shield. Saul wanted David to at least wear his armor and take his sword because Saul could not actually comprehend what David was saying and believing. On paper this was not even a fight. What is a staff and sling going to do?

#### B. **God's kingdom trusts in God and his promises.**

Look at v.45. *"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."*

The sword, spear and javelin are not toys. These are legitimate weapons of war. But David came in the name of the LORD of hosts. The hosts refer to the angelic forces of God whom number in the millions. One angel took out 185,000 Assyrian soldiers one night. Besides that, the Philistine has defied God. The Philistine has publicly mocked God. That is just not a good place to be. I have two questions for you. 1) What are the weapons and strategies of man's kingdom? 2) What do you tend to trust in?

Literally, weapons are weapons, like our Navy, Air Force, Marines, Army, Coast Guard and all of their weapon systems. But power is also political. So, we have political weapons like politicians, judges and government officials. We view power as certain people being elected so certain laws can be passed or defended, and certain ideas or movements be encouraged or crushed. I need to challenge some of you, if not most of you. In the last presidential election, some of you just about lost your mind. Please listen carefully. I think that it is right to do everything in life as consistently as possible with a biblical worldview. However, do not confuse the kingdom of God with a political party. No political party is going to usher in the kingdom of God. Political parties are part of the weapons and strategies of man's kingdom are going to inherently be in conflict with God's kingdom. As members of God's kingdom, we may find more compatibility with one over the other, but do not be deceived and enticed into thinking that our primary source of influence in this world is political. When we allow ourselves to be deceived into thinking that our real power is political, then we are David putting on Saul's armor, trying to fight a battle that God has already guaranteed victory in. Beloved, vote. Vote in a manner that is consistent with a biblical worldview, but just don't put your hope in this kingdom. Our superpower is not a political office. It is a cross, an empty tomb and a returning King.

What did Jesus teach about the kingdom in Matthew 13? It's like a seed that is planted, like leaven that is put into dough. Under the ground and behind the scenes, it grows and changes the world around it. One by one people become followers of Christ and by the saltiness of their lives and the light of their character they influence others around them.

#### 4. **Each kingdom is based on completely different values.** (42-47)

Man's kingdom is all about man. The people in Man's kingdom are offended when they are not taken seriously. Therefore, they think that they always have to take matters into their own hands and defend their own honor, fight for their own reputation and threaten anyone whom they feel disrespected them. They think that the world is all about them. Even when the kingdom of man thinks about God, it thinks about how it can use God to help it advance its own cause. Man thinks that God exists to make much of him, instead of making much of God who is truly glorious.

The people in God's kingdom are in God's kingdom because they realize that the world is about God. In living for his glory, they are offended when God's reputation is being shamed. David was not offended that he was disdained by Goliath, he was offended that God's honor was being defamed by Goliath and Israel for that matter. This was not about David, but about God, therefore announced that the battle belonged to God.

#### 5. **Each kingdom has eternally different outcomes.** (48-49)

In most superhero movies, the final fight scene is the colossal apex of the movie and can occupy a significant portion of it. Here, the actual fight is almost over before it starts. It's like missing a grand slam because you checked your phone for a text. What happened? The Philistine is dead!

**A. Man's kingdom is doomed to fail, forever.**

Abraham Lincoln quoted Jesus when he said that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. That is why all the kingdoms of this world will fail. There is nothing about them that is sticky enough to hold them together. Man's kingdom is built upon man who is inherently selfish. The leaders are those who use others to get power and keep power. After a time, those who are used and abused rise up and rebel only to do the same. But there is another king and another kingdom.

**B. God's kingdom is forever.**

How did Jesus build his kingdom? He lived for others. He died for others. He was the only one worthy to open the scroll because he, alone was the lamb who not only was willing to be sacrificed on our behalf, but he was. He was our representative who went to the cross and killed our greatest enemy (sin and death) by dying in our place, paying our debt, satisfying our redemption, and taking our punishment. Why would he do that? Because this king, our king loves you and delights in sharing and displaying his glory by being merciful to every sinner, every rebel who repents, turns to him and says, "You are my king." We respect him because he is God. We submit to him because he is all-powerful. We love him, worship him, adore him and follow him because he gave up his life for us all.