

Title: The Victorious Servant King  
Text: 1 Samuel 17.50-58  
Theme: the victorious servant  
Series: 1 Samuel  
Prop Stmtnt: The servant who saved others remains a servant.

A gal in our church did a three-week tour of Israel when she was in college and one of the sites, she visited was the valley of Elah where the battle between David and Goliath took place. She thought she was being clever by stealthily picking up 5 stones from the little creek bed and putting them in her pocket. However, once she was back on the tour bus, the guide asked the group if any of them had done exactly that? She and the others had to confess they had. The guide reassured them that the Israeli government regularly brings in a truck load of stones to resupply all those that are “taken” as souvenirs. 3,000 years later, people from all over the world come to that place. David said that all the earth will know that there is a God in Israel and all this assembly will know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. They still do.

I have been asked why I think David chose five stones, when, as it turned out, he only needed one. The old joke is because Goliath had four brothers. There are four other men of large stature who are descendants of the giants who fought for the Philistines over time, but there is no evidence that these 4 men were the brothers of Goliath. So, I don’t really know why he picked up 5, other than while he trusted in God, he was not being presumptive and wanted to be prepared. After all, Goliath was not there alone. He had a shield-bearer with him and the Philistine army behind him. Besides, David never said that he would kill the Philistine with one shot.

1 and 2 Samuel ask the question of who should be king and this chapter answers that question by telling us it has to be one who has a heart like David. God told Samuel that man looks at the outward appearance but God sees the heart. David had the heart of a king that pointed to Christ. Chapter 17 is the stage that God built for the drama of David and Goliath. Yes, David beat Goliath, but the big idea is we get to see the heart of a king. We get to see what God values. When Christ comes to the earth as the Son of David, we then realize that David had a heart that was in many ways like Christ. This account makes these truths so clear. We need a king. We need a Savior. We need a champion, that is one who will fight on our behalf. We need a king who is concerned with the fame of God, who personally depends on God and knows from experience that God can be depended on. We need a king who is faithful under pressure and has an unwavering confidence in God that drives a holy boldness that seems other worldly. And we need a king who is not ruled by his own power, and does not become a monster when he has a taste of victory or success. We need a king who is not like the kings of this world. We need a king whose glorious reign is displayed through the gladness and joy of his people who so thoroughly trust him because they know convictionally and experientially that he will die for his own. In fact, he already has. This King is a servant willing to suffer that he might save his own.

Read Text:

There are 3 points in this message that come right from the text. Each point shows the impact of David's victory in his day and how that helps us see the impact of Christ's victory in ours.

1. **God saves through the faithful obedience of our Champion.** (50-51)

These verses are the conclusion of this historic event and as such can get overlooked, whereas, they set the stage for so much of what happens next. David prevails but not in the way that we would have thought. He prevailed (v.50) with a sling and a stone and struck the Philistine and killed him. David did the impossible. He was the champion (the one who stood between) and by faith in God accomplished an astounding victory. Here again, we see a theme in the OT that comes to an ultimate fruition in the NT. God saves through the faithful obedience of our Champion. David acted in faith.

A. **David's faith-driven obedience is glorious, compelling but limited.**

David warned Goliath about what was going to happen, of course Goliath didn't believe him. I'm not sure anyone besides David did. He said, (v.46) *"The LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head."* David said that, as we know, and as the author points out again, without having a sword. Obviously, David planned to use Goliath's sword to cut off his head. The Philistine had the size, the physique, the armor and the weapons. David had the Lord. If God is for us, who can be against us. He believed it. This is one of the reasons why the story never gets old. It is so compelling. Some of my research focused on the sheer volume of artwork (paintings and sculptures) that have been done capturing the scene of David with the head of Goliath. The heavyweights like Rembrandt, Michaelangelo, Caravaggio, DaVinci have each contributed works that attempt to immortalize what is already immortal.

Here is why it is so important that you learn to read and apply your Bible carefully.

David's faith-driven obedience is glorious and compelling but it does not mean that every adversary or challenge that I face that I will win if I only have enough faith, like David. David's glorious, compelling but limited and imperfect faith points to a greater David, a greater champion, a greater king and a greater kingdom. That is the story of the Bible and the story of life. David acted on faith in God and Goliath was defeated. Peter and Paul acted on faith in God and were executed as traitors to the Roman Empire. Acting on your faith in God may result in an immediate victory or immediate "defeat" but it will always result in eternal fruit. Christ trusted the Father all the way to the cross. He was not delivered from death, he was delivered through death. But, just as his death was our death, so too his resurrection is our resurrection. We may or may not follow him in death, but we will certainly follow him in resurrection and life forever.

B. **Christ's faith-driven obedience is glorious, compelling and forever.**

We are going to see many portraits of Christ in the life of David. This one is very clear. David steps into the battle that no one else will. He defeats a foe that no one else can beat and secures a victory that is shared in by his people. What we see on a limited scale in David is

displayed completely by Christ. But, like the victory that David accomplished, the victory of Christ's death over sin and therefore the victory of his resurrection over death, has to be believed in order to enjoy its benefits. This was obviously true in 1 Samuel 17. The Philistines saw that their champion was dead and they ran for their lives, while the men of Israel and Judah saw that their enemy was defeated and they rose with a shout and chased the Philistines.

The Philistines had faith in their champion who had faith in his strength and his weapons and now, the very thing that he trusted in is what symbolizes his defeat. His own sword is used to cut off his head! It's so true, isn't it?! What you trust in will give you life or take your life. That is what happened to Daniel's enemies who tricked the king into condemning Daniel to be thrown into the lion's den, only for them to be thrown into it. It is what happened to Haman who built towering gallows on which to hang Mordecai, only to get hanged on it himself.

What is the weapon that Satan seeks to wield? Is it not death? Does he not try to use the fear of death to stoke fear or the hopelessness of it to incite wicked living? But, what did Christ do? Christ used the weapon of death to destroy death. Hebrews 2.14-15 says, *"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood (with Christ), he himself (Christ) likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."* By the death of Christ, he killed death which is the penalty of sin. As John Owen famously wrote, the death of death is in the death of Christ. He took Satan's sword and cut his head off. Our enemy is a defeated foe. Therefore, ...

### **C. Faith-driven obedience totally disrupts the enemy.**

No weapon that is formed against you will prosper because there is no sword that can match the sword of the Spirit. There is no power that can match the power of God's Word. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego before Nebuchadnezzar blew his mind. They calmly explained that he was not ultimately in charge and he freaked out and then realized that they were right. Peter and John were respectful but fearless before the Sanhedrin. Luther before the Diet of Worms, rightfully feared for his life, but also rightfully knew that the truth of the gospel was of higher value than his life, so he staked his claim to it. In John 19, we read that Pilate threatened Christ out of fear and said, *"Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?"* To which Christ said, as we can say to all of the enemies of the gospel, *"You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given to you from above."* Pilate, you and everyone else are on a leash. You are not in charge. The kingdoms of this world are not the final say. Jesus told Pilate that *"my kingdom is not from the world."* This is such a powerful motivation for our faithfulness, particularly when we are under fire for our faith. The author of Hebrews picks up on this theme as he encourages those believers becoming weary with the cost of discipleship to press on. He says, *"Let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."* (Hebrews 12:28-29)

When you turn the other cheek, pray for your enemies, stand prepared to forgive those who wrong you, bless those who despise you, make cookies for those who hate you, you completely disrupt them. You are not playing according to their rules. Why not? The rules of this world are flawed because the rulers and kingdoms of this world are flawed. They don't work and they won't last. And one day, they won't be able to run but will have to kneel. A shepherd boy just held up the head of their hero. To a pagan army, that seems like a strange and powerful magic at work and they run for their lives. We know that it is God. But, hold the phone! Didn't Goliath make a promise that if he was defeated that the Philistines would become the slaves of Israel? Oh yea, but it is just another reminder that your enemy is a liar. He makes threats he cannot keep and promises he will not keep. However, ...

## 2. God shares the victory of the Champion with his people. (52-54)

David paved the way for Christ both as an ancestor and as a preview. The victory of David, the champion of Israel benefited all of God's people. David secured the victory and the people shared in the spoils of war by plundering the enemy. 1,000 years later when Christ ascended into heaven from just outside of Jerusalem, he returned to glory victorious having accomplished his mission. Ephesians 4 says that due to his victory he plundered the enemy and shared the spoils of war with his people. Ephesians 4.11 says that the spiritual leadership of a local church is part of the spoils of war that Christ gives to his people to enrich them, benefit them, equip them, help them mature, be unified, be grounded, be discerning, be loving and working well together. That is pretty overwhelming, but so good at the same time. To the shepherds and teachers (elders and leaders) our ministry is the giving of ourselves for the ultimate good of others. And for the church, we should value and appreciate the good gifts that God gives. Good leadership is a spoil of war.

The death of Goliath was of no benefit to Israel unless they believed what they saw and acted on it. And did they ever! When David cut off Goliath's head, he made it clear that the Philistine was not going to recover from this migraine. This battle was over. The stunning victory was like a bolt of lightning that lit up the Israeli army and with a shout they ran after their enemy. They chased them out of their land and all the way back to the cities they had come from. It was a rout. Samson had some success against the Philistines, but nothing like this. Saul had a technical victory against them in chapter 13, but failed to follow-up and follow through. This was a spectacular rout of the enemy. And after the army of Israel chased them back inside their city walls, they returned to the site of the Philistine camp and carried off anything and everything of value.

There is a very interesting contrast between the actions of the army (v.53) and that of David (v.54). The army plundered the Philistines. David didn't seem interested in that, though he could have by rights received the largest share of bounty. Instead, he took the armor of Goliath and put it in his tent and then curiously, eventually took the head of Goliath to Jerusalem. Does that mean years later when he conquered Jerusalem? It could mean that, but I think there is another possibility. Let's think about that for a second. It's more than a bit grotesque, right?

What do you do with a severed head after a couple of hours, a couple of days, a couple of weeks? You get the idea. It's not like David had a cooler with some dry ice. This is one thing where his brothers may have been right. "Momma is not gonna let you in the house with that thing. She won't let you inside with your shoes on, so don't even think about it." But, why Jerusalem? You may not realize it, but we will later in 2 Samuel 5 that Jerusalem at that time was occupied by the Jebusites. Jerusalem was a fortress city that Israel had thus far failed to conquer and control and it sat right in the middle of Israel as a mocking reminder of her inability to rule her own land. I think that David may have taken the head of Goliath to Jerusalem as a message and set it down at one of the gates. Here is what happens to the enemies of God. You're next. David understood things that others didn't. He knew somehow that this single battle would reverberate around the world and he also knew somehow that Jerusalem had to be taken. And it would be.

### 3. God uses faithful servants to change the world. (55-58)

Saul and Abner (army commander) did not even know where David came from or who his dad was. He is so young that Saul will need to get the dad's permission to let his son serve with him. Saul obviously needs soldiers like this. I'm not sure Saul was thinking of this when he asked, but he had promised that the guy who defeated Goliath would have his father's house declared free from taxes. But, the tone of the entire scene, is set for us by the final line of the chapter. David is brought to stand before Saul and he is standing there with the head of Goliath in his hand. When Saul asked him whose son he was, he answered, "*I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.*" There it is again...

#### A. **God's plan is generally advanced through ordinary faithfulness.**

David did his job. He took care of the sheep. Moses' mom and dad did what moms and dads do. Protect your kids and God intervened and rescued Moses. Later on, Moses was faithfully watching sheep, minding his own business when God called him to step into a bigger role. David was doing the same. Daniel and his 3 friends were faithfully following God in the role the Lord had placed them. Same thing is true of Nehemiah and really, the prophets. Beloved, when we get up day after day, make our beds, put on our boots and do our jobs unto the Lord, the Lord works through our ordinary faithfulness to do extraordinary things. God uses faithful servants to change the world. Here is the grand strategy to take over the world for the glory of God.

(picture 1) The kingdom of this world works according to the values and rules of this world and it fights with the weapons of this world. It tries to build big walls in order to defend itself. We don't. (picture 2) We are the people of God who represent another kingdom inside the kingdom of man. Every faithful local church is an embassy of the kingdom of God and is a foretaste of our eternal home. We are in the kingdom of this world, but we are not of it. We have an ultimate king that we answer to and follow. We do not advance the kingdom of God by threats or worldly weapons. We advance the mission through ordinary faithfulness and sharing the good news of Christ that results in other people giving up their worldly weapons and happily bending

the knee of their hearts in surrender to the real king. By joyfully becoming his servant, they too become free and learn to live with a completely different set of rules. Our kings serve. Our leaders love. Our general sacrifice. Our commanders lead from the front. We do not fight for esteem, the glory belongs to our King, who shares it with all of us. We do not compete for attention since our mission is faithfulness to our calling. We are servants. (picture 3) The kingdom of God will overrun the kingdom of man. It is guaranteed. Even now, we may be attacked, even killed, but we cannot be hurt or defeated. His kingdom is forever.

### **B. Ordinary faithfulness highlights the power of God.**

I will remind you again that for 90% of the life of Christ, he lived in obscurity and poverty, where only a handful of people in an impoverished village ruled by a foreign power even knew his name. If the Son of David and the Son of God could be content with ordinary faithfulness then so can I. Paul picked up on this theme and said, *"it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy."* (1 Corinthians 4.2)

### **C. Faithful servants do not forget that they are faithful servants.**

One of the worst things that can happen to some people is to experience success. It appears to have ruined them. In reality, it only revealed what was there. But, a faithful servant who, like David experienced an incredible victory, at the end of the day is still, your servant. What a relief. When you adopt that posture, it relieves you of the strangling weight of making yourself known and heard.

Graduates, want to change the world? Be a servant and change a life. Find your identity in Christ. Live out the implications of gospel convictions with humble courage. Dads, moms, want to change the world? Be a servant and change a life. Love and serve your spouse. Love and serve your kids. Love and serve your church. I have done several hundred funerals. I cannot remember any eulogy that mentioned Elon Musk, Warren Buffet, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, Tim Cook or Steve Jobs. But I do remember stories of faithful dads and moms who loved each other, poured their lives into their kids, pointed them to Christ and loved their church; and now there are generations who praise God for them. They are the heirs of faithful, victorious servants.