

Undeclared by Giants

I Samuel 17:4-11, 32-40, 45-51 (EHV)

⁴ A challenger who represented the Philistines came out from the camp of the Philistines. He was named Goliath of Gath. He was nine feet, six inches tall. ⁵ He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he wore scaled body armor, which was made of more than one hundred pounds of bronze. ⁶ He had bronze greaves on his shins and a bronze spear slung between his shoulders. ⁷ The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spearhead was made of fifteen pounds of iron. His shield bearer went out ahead of him. ⁸ He would stand up and shout to the armies of Israel, "Why have you come out to line up in battle formation? I am a Philistine, and you are servants of Saul, aren't you? Choose a man to represent you, and let him come down to me." ⁹ If he is able to fight with me and kill me, we will be your servants. But if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our servants, and you will serve us." ¹⁰ The Philistine would say, "I defy the ranks of Israel today! Give me a man, and we will fight each other!" ¹¹ When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they lost their courage and were terrified. ³² David said to Saul, "Do not let anyone lose heart because of this Philistine! Your servant will go and fight him." ³³ But Saul said to David, "You cannot go against this Philistine to fight with him, because you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior since he was a youth." ³⁴ David said to Saul, "Your servant has been taking care of his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, ³⁵ I went after it and struck it and rescued the lamb out of its mouth. When the lion reared up against me, I grabbed it by its mane, struck it, and killed it. ³⁶ Your servant struck both the lion and the bear. This uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has defied the ranks of the living God." ³⁷ David added, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go then! May the LORD be with you." ³⁸ So Saul dressed David in his own gear. He placed a bronze helmet on his head and dressed him in scaled body armor. ³⁹ David strapped his sword over his gear. David tried to walk around in them, since he had never trained with this kind of equipment before. David said to Saul, "I cannot go in these, because I have never trained with them." So David took them off. ⁴⁰ Then David took his staff in his hand and picked five smooth stones out of the stream bed and put them into the pouch of his shepherd's bag. He took his sling in his hand and approached the Philistine. ⁴⁵ Then David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD of Armies, the God of the ranks of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ Today the LORD will hand you over to me. I will strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the earth. Then all the earth will know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷ and all those gathered here will know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear, for the battle belongs to the LORD, and he will deliver you into our hand." ⁴⁸ Then, when the Philistine started advancing to attack David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. ⁴⁹ David put his hand into his bag, took a stone from it, shot it from his sling, and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown to the ground. ⁵⁰ So David defeated the Philistine with a sling and a stone. He struck the Philistine and killed him, even though David did not have a sword in his hand. ⁵¹ So David ran, stood over the Philistine, took hold of his sword, drew it out of its sheath, killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

Goliath was an impressive physical specimen. He clocked in at over 9 feet tall, about twice as tall as your average Israelite soldier. And he wasn't some lanky, long-legged NBA player; he had some serious muscle. He wore over 100 lbs. of armor. His spearhead alone was 15 lbs. of iron, attached to a wooden rod that he could throw with deadly force. He had been a warrior since his youth, having fought and won who knows how many battles.

As the Israelites lined up to fight the Philistines, Goliath would come out to the frontlines and taunt them. "Fight me! Here's the deal. If one of you Israelites defeat me, then all us Philistines will be your servants. But if I defeat your challenger, then all you Israelites will be our servants. So, c'mon! Send someone out to fight me and get this over with! Why bother forming your battle lines if you are just going to stand out here without fighting?" Goliath made this challenge every morning and every evening for 40 straight days.

The Israelites' reaction to Goliath's taunting was what we would expect: "When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they lost their courage and were terrified." (verse 11) In fact, all the Israelites fled the battle lines whenever they saw Goliath. Compounded with the idea that if they lost, the whole Israelite nation would become slaves to the Philistines, no one would fight him...except one guy.

A young man named David heard the taunting of Goliath and wondered out loud when someone would put him in his place for defying not just their army, but for defying God himself, the one the Israelites represented. So, he stepped forward to King Saul and said, "Do not let anyone lose heart because of this Philistine! Your servant will go and fight him." (verse 32)

Immediately, everyone told him he couldn't fight. "You're just a boy." "You're inexperienced." "You're not old enough." "You're not strong enough." "You're prideful." "You're only seeking trouble, trying to get glory through battle." "You will lose." When David did come out against Goliath, the giant taunted David's size and formidableness saying, "Am I a dog, that you come against me with sticks," and he cursed David by his gods. (verse 43) No one gave David a chance to win. There were too many reasons that he would be instantly defeated. Don't bother, David; you can't win. Goliath is and will remain undefeated.

David, King Saul, and all the rest of the Israelites faced a literal giant. What giants do you face? Maybe your giant is a person, someone who is bigger than you, stronger than you, someone who taunts you, verbally abuses you, puts you down, shows their

disdain for you. You hate every moment of them hurting you, but how can you possibly go up against them? You know that they're going to win, that you can't change them. So, you keep my mouth shut and take it, flee when you can. You can't win. You're defeated.

Maybe your giant is an impersonal force, something you see in yourself. Maybe it is a giant of depression or anxiety, that you're in such a deep, dark hole that there is no getting out of this, no matter what you do. Maybe it's a temptation that never leaves you and always wins, a sin that you are never strong enough to resist and are conceding battle after battle, that the struggle used to be intense but now it's turned into an apathetic obligatory mumble of "Oh no. Stop. Don't do it" while letting it rule your life. Maybe it's a temper that never seems to be kept in check or a negative, judgmental attitude that everything is bad and everyone's out to get me.

When you think about the giants you face, are they kind of like a fish story, that every time you talk about one, it keeps getting bigger and bigger? Do you convince yourself that you need more advantages and prep and special situations before you can fight your giants? Are you trying to suit up with armor that doesn't fit you so that you have some kind of an advantage, like what King Saul did by putting his armor on David trying to give him an edge against Goliath? Yet, it's never enough. You still feel already defeated, that there really wasn't a way that you could ever win.

Everyone and everything was saying to David that there is no way he could win, that he would be defeated. And what does David do? He thinks back to the ways that the Lord had rescued him when he faced off against a lion and another time against a bear while defending his father's flock of sheep. You hear his confidence for this seemingly unwinnable battle: David added, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." (verse 37) Saul's armor wasn't going to help him win; only the Lord would. So, David took that armor off and instead took what he usually had with him: a staff, a sling, and 5 smooth stones in the pouch of his shepherd's bag. He pretty much came just as he was. The difference, though, what that he came trusting that the battle belonged to the Lord, that the Lord would deliver David again, that he would keep David undefeated. And that's exactly what happened. Against all odds, little, weak, young, inexperienced David defeated the giant Goliath.

I don't know what your giants are, but I wrote down some of my own – things that were bigger than me and that I couldn't defeat. Remembering that my battles belong to the Lord, that he's not just on my side, cheering me on, but that he is fighting these battles, very quickly I saw that all these enemies will be defeated by God. I don't have to have special training or special equipment or unique opportunities to win. Because God is with me, I know the outcome of my battle with my giants. I will stand undefeated.

I know that this is my outcome and your outcome because our Lord stands undefeated. He is the one fighting these battles with us and for us. We just show up, and he will lead us to victory. For the person who verbally abuses you, recognize that you're still here, that they have not defeated you. The things they said bounce around in your mind, cutting you down over and over again, but God strengthens you and builds you up. He tells you over and over again who you really are: his beloved child, the one he lived for, the one he died for, the one he delivered. And he will ultimately deliver you from this person. Your giant can inflict all the damage that they can muster, but none of it changes what God says of you, what God says you really are, which is forgiven, loved, saved. Your giants will receive justice from God, be judged by him. He will defeat this enemy for us. So, we rest knowing that these battles with our giants belong to the Lord, and he will keep you and me undefeated.

For the temptation and the sin that you're never able to say "no" to, I wrote mine down knowing that I have seemingly insurmountable problems with them. Then I remembered that these battles against my sins, my temptations, are not my battles alone with my strength. No, these battles against my sins also belong to the Lord. Jesus took them head on. He suffered and paid for my sins. He broke me free from sins' chains. Jesus won the battle. He stands undefeated. I'm not destined to be defeated, but, in Christ and what he has done, I stand with him undefeated by these sins and will remain as such because the Lord remains the victor, just as he stood tall and victorious after the devil's temptations in the desert.

I want you to take another look at your giants today. They're big and scary, but they do not defeat you. They don't win. No, our God wins. Our Lord is undefeated. The battle belongs to him. Remember how he has delivered you already, just as he did for David, thinking about all the things that he has already gotten you through. He will rescue us again and again because he's already won.

So, as you look at your giants and your knees knock together and you want to run, show up like David. Show up just as you but trusting that the battle belongs to the Lord. Show up knowing that our Lord fights alongside us and for us. He stands undefeated by giants, and, because of this, so do we. Amen.