

## I SAMUEL

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Samuel chapter 17 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we have seen so far in our study of I Samuel, God has removed king Saul from the throne because of his disobedience and yet, it will be many years before the next king sits on that throne. You see, the prophet Samuel anointed David king of Israel and yet it was not time for him to ascend to the throne. It was only Samuel and David who were aware of this and yet, as we will see, by the actions of David, the people will begin to see David as their leader!

And as we concluded last time we saw the armies of the Philistines in a standoff with the armies of Israel in the valley of Elah. These armies were hiding out in opposing mountains with a valley in the middle and each day for forty days the secret weapon of the Philistines would come out to taunt the children of Israel and he struck fear in their hearts. This secret weapon named Goliath stood some 9 feet 6 inches tall weighing over 500 pounds most likely. His coat of armor weighed between 150 to 200 pounds and his spear weighed 20-25 pounds. A very impressive figure that the Philistines paraded around and you can just imagine what the children of Israel were thinking as this giant stepped forward!

And we really don't have to guess about what they were thinking because we are told in I Samuel 17:11, **“When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.”** Saul was not a man of faith and even though he was the leader, the king in Israel, he was causing this fear to be caught by his soldiers and they too were afraid.

This evening we are going to see what a man of faith looks like and I will give you a hint, a man of faith has legs to walk, and we will see that in our study tonight. With that said, let's begin reading in I Samuel chapter 17, starting in verse 12 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word as this taunting by Goliath continues to go on.

### **I SAMUEL 17**

#### **VERSES 12-15**

1. Now we are going to see this man of faith come on the scene by the name of David, the next king in Israel. He is the youngest son of Jesse and he is the great grandson of Ruth and Boaz.
2. Back in I Samuel chapter 16 we see that when a distressing spirit came upon Saul that he called for David to play some music to calm the savage beast in Saul you might say. But keep in mind that this was not something that kept him away from tending his father's sheep. He went to Saul only when he was called upon, when Saul was affected by this distressing spirit. And at this time he is tending sheep in Bethlehem while his three older brothers are with Saul in this standoff with the Philistines.

VERSE 16

1. Can you imagine this giant coming out into this valley for forty days, mocking and challenging the children of Israel to send out a man to fight against him? And no one came out from Israel, they were in fear, they are scared to death, and you really can't blame them, could you? You bet, because they did not seek the Lord, they did not bring it to the Lord and they let the situation they were in cause them to be paralyzed in fear. When you are paralyzed in fear you won't walk as we see here with king Saul and his army!

VERSES 17-18

1. Why did Jesse send food to the captain that was over his sons? Do I really need to answer that? He sent this food by the hands of David to make sure they were treated fairly in battle, that they might not be put in dangerous situations, he wanted his boys to have a good relationship with their captain and food is a good way to do that especially when you are on the front lines as they were since they were of the tribe of Judah!

VERSES 19-21

1. Now keep in mind that they were not in hand-to-hand combat at this time. Every day, for forty days both the Philistines would gather and the children of Israel would gather at their respective hillsides and they would scream and shout at each other across the valley! “Hey, your mother wears army boots!” or whatever they came up with. It was trash talking before it was popular in sports, this yelling back and forth. There would be a lot of noise but not much action. And then the Philistines would parade their giant, Goliath who would shout at the children of Israel and they would cower away, back into the hillside or mountain until the next day!

2. Please notice the heart of David here. He did not just leave his sheep unattended. He took the time and made sure that the sheep that were entrusted to him were well cared for while he was away. What a lesson for pastors that when they are gone from the pulpit they leave their sheep, the ones that God has entrusted to them, with someone who will care for them.

VERSES 22-24

1. So here comes David, with the supplies for the captain of his three oldest brothers and as he arrives on the scene he gives these supplies to the supply keeper and as he greeted and began to talk with his brothers, here comes this giant Goliath, taunting the children of Israel. And as the armies of Israel see this they fled from him, they were terrified of this giant! Imagine, there was not a man in Saul's army, including Saul that was not afraid; they refused to fight against Goliath. For forty days this pathetic scene went on and now David is taking this in, he is seeing what is going on and how will he respond? Let's read on and see.

VERSES 25-27

1. Notice the difference between what the men of Israel are focused upon and what David is focused upon. They tell David, basically, that Saul is in such a desperate situation that he is bribing anyone to step forward and kill this Philistine and if they do they will be wealthy, they will marry the king's daughter, and their family would not have to pay taxes. It sounds great but there is a big problem, there is a giant that is standing in their way of obtaining this.

On the other hand there is David and he is irritated by what their focus is, the material things of this world. They said, “**This man,**” and David said, “**This uncircumcised Philistine.**” They said, “**Surely he has come up to defy Israel.**” and David said, “**That he should defy the armies of the living God.**” They said, “**The man who kills him,**” and David said, “**The man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel.**” They saw things through the perspective of a man while David saw this from the Lord’s perspective. That is why he was able to walk in faith, because the battle belonged to the Lord and David knew that the Lord would fight for him while the children of Israel were looking at this situation through their own might, their own strength and they refused to walk, they were in fear even though they wanted the rewards for this victory, they just did not want to be involved in the battle!

2. Too many Christians today are serving the Lord for monetary gain or for this and for that, earthly treasures and that is the wrong heart attitude. We need to serve the Lord out of love and as we do we are blessed above and beyond what we could ask or think. And as we serve the Lord out of love it is or should be a privilege to serve Him. You see, God owes us nothing, He is a debtor to no one, but He freely gives to us out of love, and may that love be the motivating factor in our service to Him.

In I Peter 1:1-5, and this is from The King James Version of the Bible, we are told, **“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”** May you not lose sight of that as you serve the Lord!

#### VERSES 28-30

1. As David's oldest brother, Eliab heard what David was saying he was mad, he was furious at David, but why? Maybe he saw his younger brother as insignificant and what in the world was he doing here when he was to be watching the sheep? Maybe he felt that he knew the motivation of David's heart here, that he just wanted to see a battle, a fight break out. That all may be true, but the real reason, I believe is that David was right. You see, Eliab and the other soldiers were afraid, they were dismayed over the situation they were in and here comes David and is basically telling them, “What in the world are you doing, go and destroy that giant!” They did not want someone, especially this young kid telling them to be courageous, even though they should have been, and thus, he was mad and so were the other men!

2. Now, in spite of all those ugly words that were spoken against David, he ignored them and did get to the heart of the matter, **“Is there not a cause?”** You see, David put God before his own feelings, his own personal safety, before everything. David had a love, a passion for God and he was a man of faith, but where did he get this faith? I like what Meyer had to say as he wrote, “There is no short cut to the life of faith, which is the all-vital condition of a holy and victorious life. We must have periods of lonely meditation and fellowship with God . . . Thus alone can the sense of God’s presence become the fixed possession of the soul, enabling it to say repeatedly, with the psalmist, ‘Thou art near, O God.’” Faith is like a muscle, it must be exercised or it will atrophy! David spent time with God and as God called for him to walk, David took those steps of faith and each time he did he was growing, learning to trust more and more in the Lord and that is what we must do if we want to see our faith grow, we must exercise it, we must walk!



3. And think about all that David had to endure from his family and those around him before he even did battle with the giant. Spurgeon put it like this, “Immediately before the encounter with the Philistine he fought a battle which cost him far more thought, prudence, and patience. The word-battle in which he had to engage with his brothers and with king Saul, was a more trying ordeal to him than going forth in the strength of the Lord to smite the uncircumcised boaster. Many a man meets with more trouble from his friends than from his enemies; and when he has learned to overcome the depressing influence of prudent friends, he makes short work of the opposition of avowed adversaries.” There will always be those that will try to discourage us in the work, thinking they are helping us, but folks, if the Lord is calling, don’t be swayed by their words, just walk in faith and see the salvation that the Lord will bring to your life and the situation you are in!

#### VERSES 31-32

1. What words of David were reported to king Saul? David said, “**This uncircumcised Philistine.**” And, “**That he should defy the armies of the living God.**” Also, “**The man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel.**” And, “**Is there not a cause?**” In hearing what this brave warrior was saying, Saul wanted to meet him and to his surprise, here comes this young, ruddy man, not a soldier, not a warrior. But notice David was not boasting in himself, what he could do, but he was just stating the facts, the focus was on the Lord and how this enemy was defying, mocking the living God! For forty days Saul waited for someone to step forward and now here he is, David!

2. This was kind of a cruel joke to Saul, kind of like the saying, “I have good news and bad news for you. The good news is that there is finally someone to fight Goliath. The bad news is that it is this little shepherd boy David!” And maybe David saw the face of Saul and the other men and thus, he tells them, “**Let no man’s heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.**” In other words, “Relax guys, I will take care this problem. I have everything under control.” And David was not being overconfident; he was just trusting the Lord and walking by faith as opposed to king Saul and these other men who were not!

#### VERSES 33-37

1. As you read this you can see that Saul is looking at this situation through his natural eyes and thus, David is a youth, there is no way he could defeat Goliath. In fact, Goliath has been a warrior longer than David has been alive and thus, there is no way he can overcome this Philistine warrior. He looked at the outward situation instead of seeing the spiritual dimensions of this battle.

2. David spoke up and tells king Saul that he has protected the sheep that his father has entrusted to him from lions and bears and if they are from Detroit or Chicago this year, well, the Lions and the Bears are not too tough, but you get the picture here. God was preparing David all his life for this battle. I like the way Spurgeon sees this. He wrote, “When he kept his sheep and the lion came, David did not raise the question whether he could kill the lion: he killed him, and then the question was settled. When the bear came, and was about to rob him of one of his lambs, he did not say to himself, ‘Have I a call to kill that bear?’ Not he; but he killed him, and then he knew he was called to do it.”

He goes on to say, “When David was young in years he was old in experience, because he had watched the hand of the Lord in its dealings with him. He had not been an idler among the hills, but a worshipper, a worker, a student, a practical, living man of God . . . thus he gained his experience by the active discharge of his duty as a shepherd. He did what he was called upon to do with holy daring, and in so doing he learned the faithfulness of God. Many men have lions and bears, but no experience.”

You see, for king Saul and the children of Israel, as they looked at this situation through the eyes of man, they saw that this giant was too big for them to *MESS* with. On the other hand there is David and as he looked at the situation through eyes of faith he felt that this giant was too big to *MISS*! What about you, how do you look at situations? You see, God is still at work in our lives and He is preparing us every day of our lives for the battles that are coming, preparing for what lies ahead of us so we too may stand like David. Again Spurgeon tells us, "I charge you, therefore, my beloved brethren and sisters, who know the Lord, be up and in earnest to slay your lions and your bears, that you may learn how to kill your Philistines: that is to say; — serve God with all your heart, and patiently bear the cross for his name's sake, so that when the time shall come for you to stand as a lone man for Christ, you may do it gloriously, and may bring honor to your divine Leader."

3. One more point here before we move on. David gives to us an important lesson that we can apply to our own lives. David is looking to the past for strength in the present. He is looking at God's faithfulness in delivering David from both the lion and the bear, as a reminder that God will continue to protect him in the present. We are not to live in the past, but we sure can draw strength by it. David looked at the faithfulness of God in the past to help him in the present battle he was about to enter.

VERSES 38-40

1. Saul does not want to lose this battle and thus, he is working in the natural. He gives to David his best armor, his helmet, his sword thinking that will help David out. And as David puts it on it obviously doesn't fit, Saul was much taller and probably bigger than David! David could hardly walk in this armor and thus, he could in no way fight with it on.

2. What is God trying to show us here? First of all you are not going to win these battles in your own strength, with your own armor, but with the armor of God applied to your life! Think about what Saul gave to David, his bronze helmet but that did not compare to what David had at his disposal, the helmet of Salvation! Saul gave to David his coat of mail but David had the breastplate of righteousness at his disposal! Saul gave to David his sword but David had had his disposal the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God! Now keep in mind that this was available to Saul if he would have just come to the Lord, but he didn't and thus, he had to rely on these physical weapons, which were not helping him.

How about you, do you apply the armor of God to your life as Paul calls us to do in Ephesians chapter 6? Paul tells us, **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”** Ephesians 6:10-13. Sadly, many can't walk in them because they are not use to using them as Trapp tells us, “Press some people to their exercise of prayer, or any other piece of the armour of God, and they must say, if they say truly, as here, I cannot do withal, for I have not been accustomed to it.” May you take up the whole armor of God to fight against those giants that the enemy brings across your path. Stand strong!

Secondly, I think that the Lord is trying to tell us not to be somebody we are not. As God calls you into a ministry, as God calls you to do something for Him, don't try to imitate another, be yourself. I know that can be scary but what works for me may not work for you. Years ago, back in Chicago I had a discussion with a brother in the Lord who thought it was not trusting God to have notes all written out, that you just need to study and then rely on the Holy Spirit. And I did feel bad because my notes I have written out. Not that the Lord doesn't expound on them when I am teaching, but what you see on the web page are my notes that I use when I am teaching. And the Lord just showed me, "Joe you need notes!" And I can't argue that point, for if I did who knows where I would be as I taught! You see, God has made us all unique, we are different with various gifts and talents, characteristics and-so-on. If God has called you to do something, don't try to be somebody else or, as Sammy Davis Jr. sang, "I've got to be me, I've got to be me. What else can I be but what I am." God will work through us just the way we are because everything else won't fit; it will be awkward and clumsy for us to wear!

3. So David takes off the king's armor and he grabs the tools of his trade, shepherd tools. The sling was used to scare the sheep back to the flock as some would wonder off from the rest of the flock to areas that might be dangerous. Thus, he would sling a stone behind them to drive them back to the rest of the flock, to safety. But it was also used as a weapon as they could sling these rocks very accurately as we are going to see. He also had a staff with him, but not much of a match against a sword!

4. We are now told that David goes to the brook to pick up five smooth stones. Now when we were in Israel I got to teach in this valley where this battle took place. And you can see the mountains on either side and then, in the valley is where this brook was. Don't miss the point. David had to go down into the valley, where the enemy was close by to pick up these stones. That meant that David was prepared for this battle, it was not just talk but he was willing to take those steps of faith as his faith had feet to walk and he did!

5. One other point here and that is why did David pick up five smooth stones, did he think he might miss and wanted to have an ample supply of stones to launch at Goliath? Absolutely not! How do I know that and what is the reason then? I think that II Samuel 21:22 gives us some insight to this as we are told, **“These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.”** Now as you read this story in II Samuel it seems that these four were related to Goliath, some were his sons. In fact, the Hebrew says that these four were born to the Raphah; that is, belonged to the race of the Rephaim, who seem to have settled in Gath in large numbers. Thus, David picked up five smooth stones because the first stone was going to kill Goliath and the other four were for the relatives of Goliath if they came after David! Again, David was a man of faith and we will see that faith as we continue on in this story.



VERSES 41-44

1. So as David is out in this valley, here comes the giant, Goliath and he says, “Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Israelite. Be he alive, or be he dead, I’ll have his bones to grind my bread.” Well, not exactly but very close! This giant can’t believe his eyes. That this is the best they could do; send out this little kid to fight their battles! Goliath was outraged, this insulted him and he was going to teach this boy a lesson by killing him and feeding him to the birds! And this giant tells David, “**Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?**” Now in the Hebrew it is even stronger than that. This word that is used here for “**dog**” is the Hebrew word, KELEB and it is used in passages like Deuteronomy 23:18 for male homosexual prostitutes! You can just see the smoke coming out of Goliath’s ears he is so mad and he is basically saying to David, “Bring it on little boy!” And you know what, David will bring it on as we will see!

VERSES 45-47

1. Now can you imagine how the children of Israel, these soldiers felt after Goliath blasted those words at David? I am sure they were fearful, even more than before. “Great, now he made the giant mad! Were dead!” And here comes David, not letting the words of the giant deter him from the course that God has set for him. He tells the giant that he may have all those physical weapons of war but he has something better, the **LORD!** What faith on David’s part. David knew the battle was not going to be won by his strength, his might, his ingenuity, but in the Lord. Remember what the Lord said in Zechariah 4:6, “**Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts.**”

Now do you think that by David saying, **“I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied”** that Goliath was afraid? Of course not! He was not a man that was easily afraid and who is the Lord of hosts? David had no weapons and Goliath towered over him and thus, these words were nothing more than an empty threat, at least in the mind of Goliath! But he should have been terrified because David was not coming in his own strength but as a representative of the LORD of hosts, he was on a mission from God you might say and he was not going to fail! You see, it was in the Lord’s hands and all David had to do was walk by faith and he did!

2. We fail many times because we try to accomplish in the flesh that which can only be accomplished in the Spirit or that the Spirit of God is empowering us to finish the work. We need to look to Him to be our strength. In I John 5:4-5 John tells us, **“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”** What does the word **“faith”** mean here? Spurgeon said this of this word **“faith”**: “Look at any Greek Lexicon you like, and you will find that the word [faith or believe] does not merely mean to believe, but to trust, to confide in, to commit to, entrust with, and so forth. The very marrow of the meaning of faith is confidence in, believing upon.” You see, our victory is found in Christ, not ourselves. If you are lacking victory in your life, I would encourage you to abide in Him, draw close to Him and stand on the promises of God that He has given to us in His word, and then walk by faith!

VERSES 48-49

1. Can you imagine this giant running after you? I think my first thought would be, “Run for your lives!” But not David, he runs to the giant even though the giant is running after him! How could he do this? Because he knew that, “**This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand.**” I Samuel 17:46. But David did not just kick back and wait for God to strike Goliath dead. David knew that he had a role to play in this victory, he needed to walk by faith and he did and God brought about this victory. What a shot, one rock in the head and the giant, the secret weapon of the Philistines falls to the ground and what a thunder that must have made. Remember back in I Samuel chapter 5 as the Philistine god, Dagon fell flat on his face before the Ark of the Covenant. That is what we see here with this Philistine giant named Goliath, fallen on his face before the LORD of hosts!

And again, the children of Israel, king Saul and his soldier’s thought that Goliath was too big to fight. David looked at it differently. This giant was too big to miss and he didn’t! And don’t think that a sling could not bring this giant down. This sling was a powerful weapon. Clarke tells us, “In the use of the sling it requires much *practice* to hit the mark; but when once this dexterity is acquired, the sling is nearly as fatal as the musket or bow.”

2. There are some Christians out there who truly believe that we are just to sit back and let the Lord work, but that is not the case. The Lord works with us most of the time to accomplish His work. He doesn't have to but He does and many Christians miss out because they are doing nothing and just waiting for lightening to come down from heaven. Spurgeon rightly put it like this and he doesn't hold back. He wrote, "The lazy-bones of our orthodox churches cry, 'God will do his own work'; and then they look out the softest pillow they can find, and put it under their heads, and say, 'The eternal purposes will be carried out: God will be glorified.' That is all very fine talk, but it can be used with the most mischievous design. You can make opium out of it, which will lull you into a deep and dreadful slumber, and prevent your being of any kind of use at all." May we take those steps of faith as the Lord is leading us!

VERSES 50-54

1. David wants to make sure that Goliath is dead and thus, he grabs the sword of Goliath and cuts off his head! Is there a spiritual lesson there for us? No, don't cut off the heads of your enemies! The point here I believe that the Holy Spirit is making is that you don't play with sin, you make sure it is dead; you crucify it! Paul tells us in Romans 13:11-14, **“And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”** And in Galatians 5:24 Paul tells us, **“And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”** You see, like the giant in David's life, we too must put to death the flesh and the sword of the Spirit is a powerful weapon that we have to defeat the enemy, the Word of God. May we use it with the empowering of God's Spirit and see the giants that will fall in our lives!

2. As the children of Israel see what happened, they rise up and come after the Philistines. As the Philistines see what has happened to their secret weapon, they run for their lives and the children of Israel push them back to Ekron, their hometown! Of this great victory, Spurgeon had these words to say, "I wish that young men here would aspire to brave lives for the God of Israel. I would that for truth, and goodness, and the eternal glory, they would be ready to rise to the measure of their destined hour. Why should we all be mean men? Is there not room for a few downright devoted beings, who will lift their hand unto the Lord, and never go back? If self-sacrifice is wanted, let us make it. If some one is needed for a heathen land, or to bear testimony for truth in this almost apostate nation, let us cry, 'Here am I! Send me!' God's David will not hang back through cowardly fear or dread of consequences, but will take up his place as God shall help him, and say, like Martin Luther, 'I can do no other: so help me, O my God.'" May we have that kind of heart that is willing to go forward and do battle in the power of God!

VERSES 55-58

1. Does this mean that Saul did not recognize David? How can that be when he played for Saul when a distressing spirit came upon the king? Some think that David played this music behind the curtain or behind the scene you might say, but I don't think so. I believe that Saul knew David but remember, the one who killed the giant their family would not have to pay taxes and I think that is the point here, that Saul did not know the father of David, Jesse! And David, in all humility, answers the king and says, "**I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.**"

2. What a picture of a man of faith and the victories David had and we can have as we look to the Lord! As I close this evening let me leave you with these words from Michael Griffiths. He wrote:

Both Jonathan (chap. 14) and David initiated action on a small front just where they were, but what they did led to great victories. There is a need for us alike to take the field locally. We cannot hope to take on the whole of the enemy force, but we do not have to do so. There is a work for Jesus ready at your "front." We are called to be bold and to take the initiative where we are. God will take care of the rest when, as a result of our action, the battle spreads along the whole front.

- Michael Griffiths, Take My Life, p. 128

And where did they meet for this battle? It was in Ephes Dammim or the boarder of blood! Folk's, the giants will never fall in our life unless we bring them to the boarder of blood, to the cross! It is the blood of Christ that cleanses us from all our sins, may we not forget that. And let me leave you this evening with these words from Paul as he admonishes us not to give up but keep moving forward. He wrote, "**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**" May we never forget that!