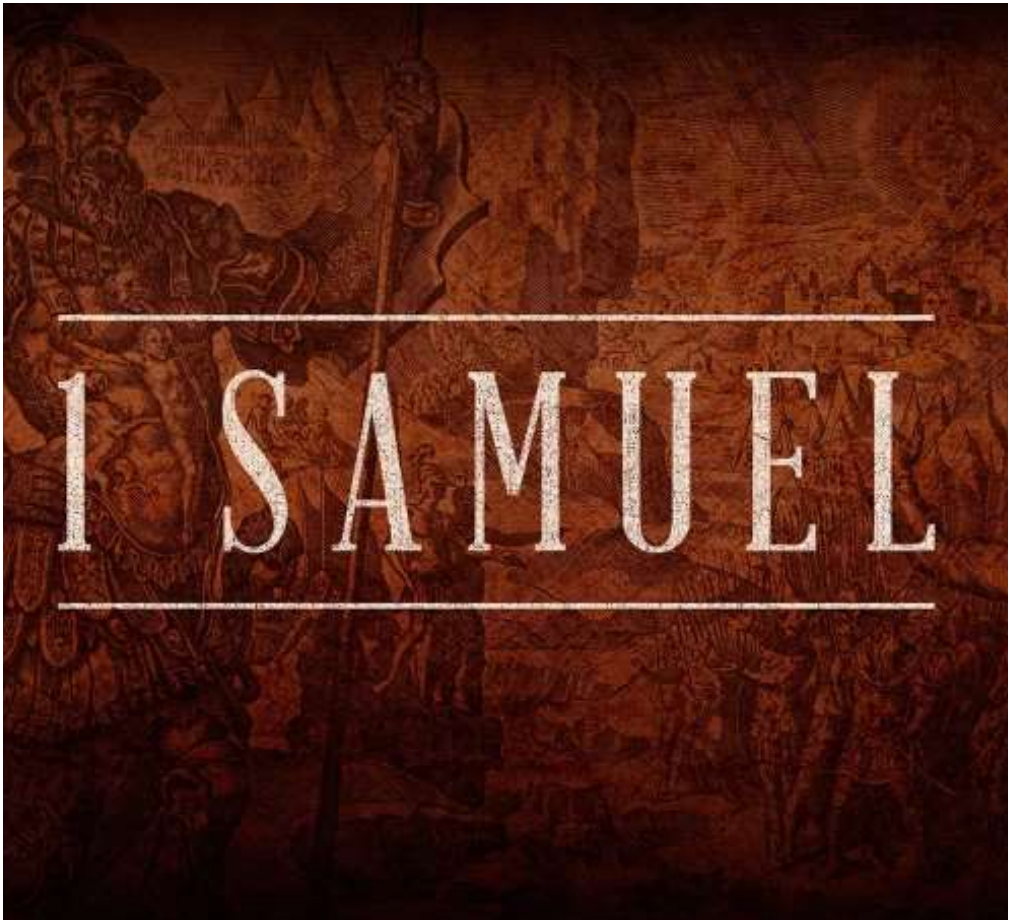


Let's Worship God

17th-21st August 2020

1 Samuel



1 SAMUEL

Monday - 1 Samuel 17 - Faith and Giants

We come to a well known and well loved heroic tale of small conquering big, the unimpressive beating the impressive, belief overcoming brawn, and faith triumphing over fearsome foes - giants can be overcome by faith! That's the standard lesson: fix our eyes on God, believe his promises and purposes, and through courageous faith we can kill our giants. One author has this inspirational statement: 'I don't know what your intimidating giant is today. It may relate to your job, your workmate, your school. Maybe it is a person, a lawsuit, unemployment, a disaster...maybe even your own partner in life. Perhaps it is some fear that is lurking around the corner, sucking your energy and draining your faith. God is saying to you right now, "All I ask of you is 5 smooth stones and a sling of faith. I'll take it from there. You don't have to wear somebody else's armour. You just trust me. I'll strip you down to nothing but faith, and then I'll accomplish a victory where I'll get the glory. But as for you...you trust me.'" We read this passage and say, "I'm David, my problems (sin, trial, difficulty, people) are Goliath and, if I just trust like David, I'll get the victory." Kill our giants through faith.

Except, you're not David, God's chosen and anointed king over his people. Your problems are not Goliath, a real person threatening to literally enslave the people of God, while offering winner-takes-it-all single combat. And David wins the battle not by simply trusting God. He doesn't kneel in prayer that Goliath will tumble, but smashes his skull with a 100 mph tennis-ball-sized rock, before decapitating him with his own weapon. You're not David and you haven't killed any giants recently.

Questions

1. Who do you think this passage is really about?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God to give you fresh eyes as we consider this passage this week.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Then David said to the Philistine, "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." 1 Samuel 17:45

Praise: Psalm 33:9-13 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Tuesday - 1 Samuel 17:1-11 - A Giant Combatant

We suggested yesterday that perhaps the usual understanding of this well known story falls short of what God is saying in it: we're not David and our problems are not Goliath. Let's walk our way through the chapter and see what God is saying.

As we read the description of Goliath in verses 4-7, no wonder the Israelites were "greatly dismayed and afraid" (verse 8). Dressed in helmet, chain mail coat, and greaves (leg protectors), he is a gleaming mass of moving metal, with only his face uncovered. He would have clunked like a digger on caterpillar tracks. His armour weighs 8.5 stone - like fighting with 4 three-year olds on your back. He bristles like a porcupine, armed with a sword and spear, the spear head weighing 7 kgs, the same as a small bag of spuds. Israel, in comparison, has only basic armour and swords (13:19-22). And, of course, his height is 9 feet 9 inches. If you have a tape measure handy, mark it out against your outside walls - huge! Of course, it stretches credibility for many. Children's Bibles haven't done us any favours here, portraying him like something from a fairy tale shouting, "Fee fi foe fum". The tallest man in modern history was 8'11; 9'9 isn't much of a stretch of credibility, especially when you allow for genetic mutations and pituitary gland problems. He is a career warrior (verse 33). Israel faces a giant combatant.

There's a double significance here. First, Saul has been chosen as their King, like the nations, because he was tall and a warrior. But he has been trumped and is cowering in fear. Secondly, in Numbers 13-14 being dismayed and greatly afraid of giant warriors kept the Israelites out of the Promised Land. The 40 days of testing (verse 16) echoes the 40 days spent spying out the land (Numbers 13:25). God is testing his people - who will they look to for victory?

The key is in verse 4: Goliath is their "champion". He is the representative fighter who takes part in mano a mano, winner-takes-it-all single combat (verses 8-9), as was common at the time. Here's the champion of God's enemies, wanting to kill, enslave, and destroy. He's intimidating and threatening the safety and existence of God's people. Sound familiar?

Questions

1. Who is Goliath a real-life embodiment of?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for courage in facing this foe day by day.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Then David said to the Philistine, "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." 1 Samuel 17:45

Praise: Psalm 74:9-11 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Wednesday - 1 Samuel 17:12-37 - A Giant Conviction

The stakes are enormous here - verse 10. The enemy is vaunting himself and hurling reproach and contempt at God and his people. God looks powerless, and his people look like they are in serious danger. It is a shame and a scandal. David sees it for what it is: a reproach on Israel (verse 26) and defiance of the armies of the living God (verse 36). We jump ahead to verses 45-47 to get a feel for what is at stake here: "Then David said to the Philistine, "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. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."

The reproach on the army of God is a reproach on God. His name, glory, and honour are at stake here. His people are threatened, and it makes him look weak. Is God able to keep his promises to protect and deliver them? This is the cause and conviction David fights for. This battle is in the LORD's name, for the LORD's cause, for the fame of God among the nations, and the glory of God among his people. Cosmic issues are at stake: can God deliver his people from enslavement and from the power of a giant and frightening foe? Sound familiar?

Questions

1. Where else do we see these issues at stake in the Bible's story?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for a heart for the glory of God among his people and the nations.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Then David said to the Philistine, "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." 1 Samuel 17:45

Praise: Psalm 57:1-4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Thursday - 1 Samuel 17:28-47 - A Giant-Conqueror

Cometh the hour, cometh the man. Who will step forward to deliver God's people and vindicate his glory? Who will be the giant-conqueror - tall regal Saul, handsome Eliab, Jesse's eldest, or some well armed, skilful, experienced combatant? Read verse 32 again.

David - the cheese-bearing shepherd boy, inexperienced and armour-less; ruddy and handsome, yet bearer of sticks and stones. Goliath is insulted (verse 43). There is no prestige in beating a child. Israel's chosen giant-conqueror does not appear to compare with his foe, and his weapons do not seem like they will avail much. But remember 16:7 - it's not appearances that count. This is exactly what we should expect - remember Hannah's song in chapter 2: "not by might shall a man prevail... the bows of the mighty are broken and the feeble binding on strength... he will give strength to his King and exalt the power of his anointed."

The giant-conqueror is not what we'd expect, humanly speaking. His weapons and armour are not the same as the world's, and his method is not what you'd expect. His heart is bursting with zeal for God's glory. Here is David, the giant conqueror, God's chosen messiah-king.

God is again showing us his way of working: human expectations are reversed. We are so quick to judge things the way Eliab (verse 28), Saul (verse 33), and Goliath (verse 43) did - by outward appearance. Whether it's the value of people, the quality of preachers, or the success of a church, we invariably view them from Man's perspective. But we don't see what God sees, nor value what he values. If we were less caught up in judging things by outward appearance we would spend less time being discouraged.

Questions

1. Who or what have you been judging by Eliab, Saul and Goliath's standard?

Prayer Points

1. Ask for forgiveness for viewing things through the eyes of Eliab, Saul and Goliath.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Then David said to the Philistine, "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." 1 Samuel 17:45

Praise: Psalm 113A:all - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Friday - 1 Samuel 17:28-51 - The Messiah-King, Giant-Conqueror

Here is David, the giant-conqueror, God's chosen messiah-king, his heart is bursting with zeal for God's glory. And like we noted at the start of the week - we're not David in this story. The whole point of this event in David's life is not to show us how to defeat our giants, but to show us that God defeats them for us through an unexpected and unlikely giant-conqueror. Ultimately, it is Jesus who is the giant-conqueror, the faith-filled champion who steps into battle for us. We're not David in this story, Jesus is David.

Think through the parallels. The enemies of God and his people line up to conquer and enslave - it is the ages old conflict between the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness. The two sides foretold in Genesis 3:15 are here encamped on opposite hills. A giant foe, Satan, defies the living God, wanting to destroy his people and tarnish his honour. An unlikely giant-conqueror, who would not be chosen by the world, steps out. Despised by his brothers he comes to fight with unlikely weapons, not the weapons of the world. His weapons are a spirit of obedience and service. He comes with a giant conviction - that the honour of God is all that counts and the reproach of sin must be removed from his people, so that all the earth may know the God of Israel. He uses the enemy's own sword to destroy him - the Cross was Satan's own attack and weapon, but Jesus decapitated Satan, Sin, and Death by it.

The lesson of David and Goliath is not that you can have victory if you believe enough, but that you already have victory through another. God's champion delivers God's people. We all must learn this lesson. We don't achieve our own victory; victory over giants is not our own doing. The messiah-king does it for us. Like David says: "the battle is the LORD'S" (verse 47).

Questions

1. Why is better to see this first and foremost as a picture of Jesus battling Satan, than us in our battles?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that the victory is already won.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Then David said to the Philistine, "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." 1 Samuel 17:45

Praise: Psalm 20:1, 4-6 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Saturday - 1 Samuel 17:41-58 - A Giant Crushing

David's victory as champion of his people leads to a rout - the Philistines are crushed (verse 51-53). We see now the beauty of realising that we are not David in the valley, but the ranks on the hillside watching Jesus as 'David' fighting in the valley. When he defeats the champion the enemy forces scatter, and our job is simply to pursue and mop up a defeated foe. We see an unlikely saviour enter battle, emerge victorious from the tomb, Satan, Sin, and Death broken, and our job is simply to press home the victory.

Think of the 'giants' in your life - the fears or sorrows from the past and the sins that make you stumble. See them like Goliath's decapitated head! Is your giant death - the fear of your own or the pain of a loved one's? Death has been felled; we have a resurrection hope. Sin is likewise felled - its power is broken, and we are not slaves. The hurts of pains and abuses long in the past - also felled. They can be left in his good and sovereign hands. We don't need to face our giants - Jesus has. "The battle is the LORD's" (verse 47).

What a watchword this is for the church. The battle is the LORD's - the battle to win hearts and souls. The decisive victory is already won. He will build his church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail. We just need to press home the victory and crush the foe. Like Paul said to the Philippians, "work out your salvation...for it is God who works in you" (Philippians 2:12-13). You can resist temptation, you can be courageous in the face of sickness and death, you can move on from the past - those giants are dead. The Battle is the LORD's, and the victory is won.

Questions

1. What giants do you face?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that the giants are defeated already.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Then David said to the Philistine, "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." 1 Samuel 17:45

Praise: Psalm 40 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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