

When You Are Outgunned – 1 Samuel 17

I remember the first time I heard about precision guided bombs or “smart bombs” for warfare. It was the Gulf War in the early ‘90’s. I remember some of us were glued to the TV watching CNN which was pretty much the only all-news station back then. I watched as the war was filmed for TV and news stations like never before. We could actually watch bombs being dropped from the point of view of the airplane pilots or crew. Sometimes the bombs even had cameras on them and you could watch it all the way to the target. I have vivid memories of watching and hearing a pilot talking to his headquarters as he approached the building he was going to bomb. He spoke over his radio that he had the building in sight and requested permission to fire. The permission was granted as we watched a grainy image of the building come into view and get clearer and clearer. And then the pilot asked where in the building did they want the bomb dropped. They told him to just drop it right in the middle. The pilot said something about it looking like there were bathrooms in the middle of the building. And on the screen you could actually see what looked like two doors side by side. And then, and I don’t know if the pilot was joking or not, but he asked, “*Do you want it in the men’s room...or the ladies room?*” And then you can actually see the bomb hitting right in the middle of the building as it is completely destroyed.

I’m quite sure the technology has improved greatly in the past twenty or thirty years but I’m still impressed how accurate those bombs were and how they could pinpoint the target and completely destroy what they wanted to destroy but limit collateral damage. The enemy didn’t stand a chance. Don’t you wish you had that kind of weapon to fight against your enemy, the devil? Don’t you wish you had something that would allow you to destroy the enemy when he brings temptation? Don’t you wish you could pinpoint a bomb that would destroy the difficulties brought on by Satan; an iron dome of protection that would extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one?

I love love love the story of David and Goliath. It is probably my favorite story in all scripture. I’ve read it a million times since I was a little boy. But the problem is that in all these years of reading it, I can never find the secret that will allow me to always win the battle like David did. I can’t find that “smart bomb” or in David’s case, that smart rock that will allow me to always have victory over the enemy like I want. David had faith. Well, I have faith. It may not be as strong as David’s but I have faith. David had some rocks. Shoot, I live in Chico, Texas. Finding a rock is easier than finding a building. David came from humble beginnings. Sounds like me. Still me. David had courage. Well, at my most courageous, I still get trampled by the enemy time after time. What is it that David had that I can use to defeat my giants when they come? What can I do to blow up temptation and to annihilate problems when Satan attacks? Well, let’s look at it a little closer in **1 Samuel chapter 17**.

I don’t have to tell you the story of David and Goliath. Even unbelievers and people who have never read the Bible know the story. People often talk about being in a “David and Goliath” type situation where the underdog wins. And we all root for the underdog, right? Why is that? Being labeled an underdog gives the impression that you try harder, have more heart, more courage and more gumption. And that may or may not be true but that is how we look at underdogs. What it boils down to is that everybody likes an underdog because everybody sees themselves as an underdog. Well, David is definitely the underdog in this story so let’s read part of it. We don’t have to read the whole chapter but I want to hit the highlights. Let’s start with **chapter 17, verses 4-11** and then we will go to **verses 32-51**. **1 Samuel 17:4-11** says, “*A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span. 5 He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; 6 on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. 7 His spear shaft was like a weaver’s rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him. 8 Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, “Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to*

me. 9 If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.” 10 Then the Philistine said, “This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.” 11 On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified. Now let’s go to **verses 32-51**. David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.” 33 Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth.”

34 But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 37 The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Saul said to David, “Go, and the Lord be with you.”

38 Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. 39 David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.

“I cannot go in these,” he said to Saul, “because I am not used to them.” So he took them off. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd’s bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

41 Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. 42 He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. 43 He said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 “Come here,” he said, “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!”

45 David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”

48 As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. 49 Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.

50 So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

51 David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine’s sword and drew it from the sheath. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.

Wow! I love that story! It still fascinates me just like it did when I was a little kid. I remember years ago studying this passage and then I had to call my mom. “Mama! Did you know that Goliath was 9’6” tall??? His armor weighed 150 pounds! The head of his spear alone weighed like 16 pounds! That’s incredible!”

But as I re-read this story again lately, I had to read it a little differently. I was looking for exactly what I could do, what I could use, what we can replicate in this story as we continue our sermon series on spiritual battle. What can we do when we are outgunned? And what we need to realize is that our enemy, Satan, attacks us in two ways. He may attack us by tempting us to sin or he may attack us by causing bad things to happen.

Let's start with what to do when he attacks us with temptation. This is not how David was being attacked but we get our defensive battle plan for this from the New Testament. We won't spend a long time on this but since we are discussing how Satan attacks, we need to know this. And **1 Corinthians 10:13** is the first step. It says, *"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."* So, we know that with this type of attack, we can always overcome it. We can always defeat it.

The second step is what we saw Jesus do when He was tempted and it is explained back in **Ephesians 6** where it tells us to stand against Satan by putting on our full armor including the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. The word used for "sword" there is a short sword or dagger, meaning we are to take, not the whole Bible, not the Big Sword, but just a small section; a verse or two; a small passage and use it like Jesus did when Satan tempted Him in the wilderness. We've talked about that before, even recently on Sunday night. You can expect Satan to attack you at your weak spot so find a verse or two that pertains to that and have it ready and you can always have a way out of that temptation.

But, like I said, this was not how David was being attacked by Goliath that day. Goliath was not tempting David to go out behind the building and smoke a joint or to lust or gossip. Goliath was going to attack David to kill him. 1 Peter 5:8 says Satan is prowling around like a roaring lion looking to see whom he may devour. He wants to kill you dead but if he can't kill you, he will cause all kinds of bad things to happen to you. So, how do we survive those kinds of attacks? That was what I was reading the David and Goliath story trying to find.

Now, here's how some people might read this story. Some prosperity preachers might preach that if you just have faith like David did, you can always overcome the attacks of Satan. If you just keep looking up as David did, you can always defeat your giant, no matter how big. God will never give you more than you can handle. Then just make your check out to Todd with two d's.

But the problem with all of that is that it's just not true, is it? Sometimes you get more than you can handle. Sometimes you are going to get cancer. Sometimes your wife will leave you. Sometimes you will get fired from your job. Sometimes those giants come into your life and tear you up and you don't have a slingshot big enough to keep it from happening. Then what are you going to do?

I want you to see something from the story of David and Goliath. I want you to see that there are two ways to look at your giant problem. You can look at it with physical eyes or you can look at it with spiritual eyes. Every single person on that battlefield that day was seeing the problem with physical eyes. Every warrior in Israel was looking at Goliath's size, his armor, his weapons and his strength and saying, *"Nope. Can't do it. Can't beat him."*

Then David came along and he saw the giant problem with spiritual eyes and said, *"Well, he's so big, I can't miss."* David knew what Paul wrote about in **Ephesians 6**. Our battle is not against flesh and blood so we can't look at it with physical eyes. Our battle against cancer is not against flesh and blood. Our financial battle, our family battle, our battle with the crazy neighbors is a spiritual battle that God has allowed to come into our lives for some reason.

Some of the most powerful and encouraging scripture in all the Bible is written in this passage. Look again and see how David saw when he looked with spiritual eyes in **verses 45-47**. *David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the*

armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

Now, stop right there. What happens next is not the part of the story that we can claim. You know full well that just saying to your cancer or your job loss or your financial problem, *"I come against you in the name of the Lord..."* is not always going to solve the problem. Yes, it did for David this time and it MIGHT for you but it won't always. I'm just going to be blunt. You can name it and claim it and blab it and grab it all you want and invoke the name of Almighty God against your cancer and sometimes God will heal you and sometimes...you will just die. But we are all going to die sometime.

That is not the moral of this story. The moral of this story and the weapon that we can use and the power that we have to overcome the giant problem is **obedience**. That's what David had. David was seeing with spiritual eyes and knew all he had to do was be obedient and God's will was going to be done. Hit a giant with a rock? Sounds crazy to me physically. But I'm not looking at the physical. This life is a wisp of smoke anyway. I'm looking with spiritual eyes and I want the spiritual outcome. And do you know what the spiritual outcome ALWAYS is? Joy and peace. Joy comes with obedience. Peace comes with obedience. That's the guarantee and there is no other. When David stood behind God like Ephesians 6 tells us to do, he had peace and joy. Semper Stantes!

Now, please don't take from this that I'm saying we shouldn't pray for healing or pray for deliverance from whatever is the problem. You know better than that. And we all know that God is still in the healing business and we give Him all the glory for it. But at some point, we are all going to die. Our job is not to get out of that. Our job is to be obedient to whatever God wants for us.

You know, I love me some David. He's my guy. And I love this story! But do you know what a better story is? I'm serious when I say that I know of several better stories from people sitting right here today. A better story is the guy who told me just this week, *"Yea, I've known Cody all my life. Neither of us were good kids growing up. But God has really changed him! I've never seen such peace as he had at his mother's funeral."* That's a great story!

Or how about the story of Belinda who broke both her legs at the same time and to this day she cannot keep from saying, *"Glory to God!"*? How about Lois who had both lungs ripped out when her son died, suffered through her cancer and Morris' cancer and still loves to worship and serve and tell others what good things God has done for her? I could go on and on but that is how you respond when you are outgunned. And we will all be outgunned at some point.

Verse 47 one more time. *All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's"* ...and all we have to do is be obedient. The battle is the Lord's. And all we have to do is be obedient.

Now, maybe that obedience means to take up a weapon and run quickly toward the enemy like David did. Or...maybe it means to **be still and know He is God** as it says in **Psalm 46:10**. Maybe it means one thing for you and another thing for somebody else. Just like we can't apply David's outcome to ours, we also can't apply what obedience looks like for us and to others. You be obedient to what God wants you to do. Then He gets the glory and you get the peace and joy even in the midst of the battle. Sounds like a pretty good deal to me.

Whatever giant you are facing today, let's go to God in prayer right now and just make sure that we all know what our orders are. Just go to God right now and first make sure there is no unconfessed sin in your life that would hinder you from hearing His small, still voice. Then be open to whatever He tells you to do.

Are you able to hear His voice? If not, maybe you don't have a relationship with Him in the first place. Maybe you have never accepted Him to be both Savior and Lord of every aspect of your life. Do that right now. Ask Him to forgive all your sins and then repent or turn away from those sins. Accept His forgiveness and allow Him to come into your life and change you from the inside out. Do it right now as the music plays.