

Five Smooth Stones: God Gets the Glory

1 Samuel 17:12-30

Last week we unpacked a little bit about Goliath and our enemy, the devil, who the Bible says is actively seeking people to devour. He is a liar and the father of lies. We saw he uses a tactic called gaslighting to confuse and instill doubt in people. The story of David and Goliath, however, is ultimately a story of God's power to deliver His people from the power of the enemy. So, today we will spend some time learning more about this young, chosen vessel of deliverance, David, who would act as God's deliverer.

David is an ordinary person, but he is after God's own heart.

1 Samuel 17:12-30

We are introduced to three aspects of David at this point in his life: he is despised, he is God-focused, but he is also ambitious.

David is Despised

In 1 Samuel 16, God directs Samuel to go the house of Jesse of Bethlehem to choose the new king of Israel, Jesse parades all his sons before Jesse, but God rejects all of them. Samuel is perplexed and asks Jesse if all his sons are here. Jesse replies, *"There is still the youngest (Heb. - 'runt.'). But he's out in the fields watching the sheep and goats."* As if to say, "Oh David, don't worry about him, he's just out tending to the family's livestock in the fields. He's not the one for whom you're looking. He's the runt."

Because David was the youngest, all his brothers, especially the oldest, Eliab, were taller, bigger, stronger, and more "king-like," at least by external human standards.

God rejects all of Jesse's sons because he knows what is in their hearts. 1 Samuel 16:7

David was chosen because God knew what was in David's heart.

David possessed an unsurpassed love for God, an unwavering faith and trust in God. He desired to please God—to do God's will.

Throughout scripture, God chooses to use people who are the youngest, weakest, poorest, least educated, marginalized, bullied, and forgotten. God is in the business of elevating the world's outcasts. (Gospel of Luke)

God intends to use you more than you can imagine. God delights in using the weak and unexpected things of the world to humble the powerful. And at the end of the day it's all for His glory, not yours, not mine. Your identity is in Him!

David is God-Focused

1 Samuel 17:26 - *"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"* This statement shows that David's focus was never on the Israelite army, nor on Goliath, but on God.

Remember, what Goliath said in v. 10? He defied "the armies of Israel." David interpreted this as nothing less than defying "the armies of *the living God*" (17:26). This explains David's courage. David saw Goliath's vulnerability; Goliath did not believe in the living God. Zechariah 4:6

David is Ambitious

Even though David was God-focused, and God has ordained him the next king of Israel, and God will use him for His glory, David is also ambitious.

Eliab's words in 1 Samuel 17:28

The verse says Eliab *burned* in anger towards his brother. Why? Because Eliab didn't trust David's motive. Those closest to us know us.

When David arrives on the battlefield, he inquires what the king will give the man who defeats Goliath *four times*. David clearly has a strong faith, but his interest in the reward is underscored—which offers a glimpse into David's heart.

Therefore Eliab, in v. 28, complain about him coming only “to watch the battle.” You are here only to take advantage of the situation for your own good. This is all about you.” Does Eliab have a point? Look at what David did. He abandoned the supplies (not giving them to his brothers) and ran to the battle lines, where he continually asked about the reward for slaying Goliath. What is more, many of the words found in Eliab’s critique here show up in 2 Samuel 11–12, where the worst of David’s character, his ambition, is displayed with his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah.

God is using Eliab to sound a warning to David: *attend to matters of your heart*. Eliab accuses David of neglecting ‘those few sheep’ which later in David’s life will haunt him when he neglects his role as a ‘shepherd’ of God’s people. There is ‘one little ewe lamb’ that the prophet Nathan mentioned in 2 Samuel 12 that becomes an occasion of great stumbling and national disaster. That one little ewe lamb was Bathsheba.

We all do well to heed Eliab’s warning: *attend to matters of your heart. Know yourself and know what motivates you*. Not knowing may only make you more susceptible to temptation. David’s ambition in this story may not be outright sin, yet it shows that David isn’t the simple, pristine, pietistic character we might have thought. It can be an encouragement, however, to know that God works through flawed, complex people, like us. Our best moments for God are tainted with selfish motives. None of us have “arrived,” and none of us are completely sinless.

Application

David was a “*man after God’s own heart*.” What will shift in our own lives if we decide to maintain a focus on God above all other things. It doesn’t mean *saying* we have our sights set on pleasing and honoring God, or only doing so if it aligns with our will and ways. We must make the decision, as David did, to be so focused on God’s Kingdom, we immediately recognize someone or something coming against it.

There will always be “Goliaths” in our lives seeking to incite fear and doubt in the minds and hearts, but what happens if we believe, like David did, flawed as he was, that Almighty God is bigger and more powerful than any “giant” who comes.

What, or who, are the “giants” in your life? Could those giants be your motivations?^[SEP] What are the things or situations that make you feel completely inadequate, insufficient, and unable?

Remember, part of what empowered David was his understanding of who he was before God. He understood he was part of God’s people; he was a beloved son. People, remain attached to the vine, to the truth, as John 15:5 tells us.

Press into Jesus this week and stay focused on God. Remember who you are because of Him. And remember what God says about you always trumps any lie the enemy or anyone else speaks over you.

And at the end of the day, when all is said and done, it’s all for His glory.