

**THERE'S A
GOLIATH
IN YOUR FUTURE**

AND OTHER SERMONS

STEVE L. CANNON

Contents

Preface	7
The Puzzling Children	11
There's a Goliath in Your Future.....	15
Beyond Repair.....	23
Your Next Step.....	33
Don't Let the 2% Milk You	45
The Miracle Is in the Advance.....	53
Seven Good Things about Hell.....	63
Stop Planning Your Funeral	75
Habits, Hobbies, and Habitation	85
Don't Let Your Thorn in the Flesh Become a Thorn in Your Spirit	95
The Undertaker or the Rainmaker	105
Final Thoughts: Giving Children an Advantage.....	119



There's a Goliath in Your Future

*Your story could be the key that unlocks
someone else's prison.
Don't be afraid to share it.
—Author Unknown*

When a child is born, why does the child have a natural desire for milk? Why not Diet Coke, Mountain Dew, or Dr Pepper? The answer is simple: children have a natural desire for milk because they can't survive without it. It's the only nutrition they can take in and digest. That teaches me that even in the earliest stages of our lives God has a plan for our growth and life.

The word *milk* is used some forty-eight times in the Bible, the last mention being in I Peter 2:2: "As newborn

babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Just as we were born with a natural desire for milk, we all are destined to grow until that moment in life when God determines we are ready for the test that will form our testimony. The test will come in the form of a Goliath.

The period of the Judges had begun to fade when Samuel came on the scene. The stage for the Goliath test took many years to prepare, years in which Israel was continuously beset by the Philistines. Early on, this enemy had even captured the Ark of the Covenant when the high priest's wicked sons had foolishly carried it into the thick of the battle. With the Ark in their possession, so much trouble came upon the Philistines that they finally sent it back to Judah. Israel repented and routed the Philistines at Mizpeh, but the Philistines kept coming back. And they continued to harass Israel to the point of removing all the blacksmiths from their midst so Israel would have to crawl to a Philistine smith to get their agricultural tools sharpened.

Desperate to get their enemy off their back, Israel went to Samuel and demanded a king. Even when the prophet warned against this folly, they insisted to the point that God gave them the desire of their heart. The new King Saul started out strong. He defeated the Ammonites and won several victories over the Philistines. It never lasted long, though; Philistia always rallied to fight another day. Many years passed, but it wasn't yet time for Goliath to walk onto center stage.

Because of Philistia's ban on Israel's smith trade, God's people had no weapons. Unable to defend themselves, the people were terrified and hid in caves, thickets, high places, and pits. Some even deserted. Saul was at his wits' end. Samuel had said he would come in seven days to offer the sacrifice prior to a decisive battle, but on the seventh day Saul's patience gave out and he offered the sacrifice himself. No sooner had the burnt offering been consumed than Samuel

arrived, reproved Saul for his sin, and predicted the fall of his royal lineage.

After many more years and many more battles, Saul faced the definitive test when God told him to defeat the Amalekites and destroy all of the people and even their animals because of their treachery against Israel when the people of God came out of Egypt. Saul failed the test and spared the finest of the cattle and the wicked King Agag. It was the beginning of the end of Saul's reign.

Saul made two major mistakes during his reign: he tried to usurp the place of the man of God in offering the sacrifice, and he disobeyed God in the matter of the Amalekites. If he had kept his heart right and made better decisions, his lineage could have reigned in Israel indefinitely. Instead, he lost his throne, and ultimately he lost his sons, his standing with God, his integrity, and his life.

*I am not a product of my circumstances.
I am a product of my decisions. –Stephen Covey*

In the midst of this situation, God knew there was a nine-foot-tall Goliath waiting in the wings. The Philistines were sure Goliath would be Israel's nemesis. No one would dare attack their champion. They predicted that even Saul would be afraid, along with all of the warriors of Israel. It was around that time that God sent the prophet Samuel to anoint a future king. Samuel arrived at the house of Jesse, where the proud father presented his sons, from the eldest on down, before the prophet Samuel. Seven sons were inspected, and they all looked promising, but as each one was presented, God told Samuel that he wasn't the one. The prophet couldn't understand it. In his eyes, Jesse's sons were exceptional.

God saw his quandary and said, "Do not look on the outward appearance of these young men or how tall they are in

stature. I can see beyond what you can see; I can look inside their hearts.”

When seven sons had been rejected, the puzzled prophet turned to their father and asked, “Are you sure these are all of your sons?”

Jesse said, “Well, there’s one more, but he’s the youngest. He’s out somewhere on the countryside looking after the sheep.”

“Send someone to fetch him, because we won’t sit down to eat until he arrives.”

Finally, David came in, wondering what was going on with all of his brothers assembled and the famed prophet in attendance. The prophet looked him up and down and saw the lad was well favored, ruddy, and smelling of the freshness of the fields. The Lord told the prophet, “This is the son I want. Anoint him!”

God did not select from the outside; he selected from the inside! The eighth son made all the difference. Jesse had tried to persuade Samuel to pick one of the seven, but at the Lord’s prompting the prophet would not stop until he saw the last son. David was Jesse’s last son with the least amount of hope for an inheritance. Likewise, I was the eighth child in the family of Doyle and Christine Cannon. The lesson here is, don’t let your lowly position in the family affect your future.

So Samuel anointed David to be king. The oil ran down from his head to his feet. No doubt the young lad was wondering, *Why me? Why not one of my brothers?* Jesse’s older sons looked on, perhaps with amazement or amusement or even derision that the prophet would single out their kid brother, considered the least in the household and hardly worth mentioning.

What happened next?

God sent an evil spirit that locked King Saul into a pit of demonic oppression and manic rages. One of the king’s trusted servants suggested finding a man who could play

soothing music on a harp that would calm the king's moods. Saul said, "Go ahead." Another servant offered, "I've seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who's a skilled musician, but also smart and courageous." Saul said, "Bring him to me." Saul was pleased with his new resident musician. When the black moods descended on him, David's music soothed him and the evil spirit lifted.

However, at some point Saul learned of David's anointing and a spirit of jealousy joined the other spirits that plagued him. At times he attempted to kill David and even threw a spear at his eldest son and heir apparent, Jonathan.

Then Philistia gathered for an epic battle, this time with a new, undefeated champion, the powerful Goliath.

This nine-foot-tall titan swaggered into the valley, roaring insults against the God of Israel and His armies. Victory for Israel seemed impossible. King Saul, who was head and shoulders above any soldier in his army and thus the only Israelite anywhere near the giant's height, was too cowardly to face the giant. Israel was outnumbered, weaponless, and intimidated by the Philistine champion. But God likes these kinds of situations when the odds are stacked against His people. He will not need a sweat band or someone to fan Him to relieve the pressure. He knows we are going to have a struggle, but He knows that His grace will be sufficient. God is working; we just have to trust Him. In Israel's case, God had begun preparing the shepherd boy, Israel's champion of the hour, years earlier, even though no one knew it or saw it coming.

David not only faced the giant but ran to him armed with only a sling and five smooth stones, shouting, "You've come to me with a sword, a spear, and a shield, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defied!" He loaded the sling, whirled it, and let the stone fly. It struck the giant like a bullet in the forehead. The giant's eyes rolled back and he toppled to the earth with a mighty thud. Standing over the fallen giant, David hefted the

giant's heavy sword and cut off the giant's head. Israel, seeing David's success, rallied and won a great victory that day.

God does not always select a person according to man's favor.

1. Moses ran from justice, but God still used him.
2. Jonah sailed away from God's mission, but God still used him.
3. Rahab ran a brothel, but God still used her.
4. Samson ran to the wrong woman, but God still used him.
5. Jacob ran in circles, deceiving and being deceived, but God still used him.
6. Elijah ran into the mountains, but God still used him.
7. Sarah ran out of hope, but God still used her.
8. Lot ran with the wrong crowd, but God still used him.

*We don't have the luxury of choosing the tool
God will use
to make us what we ought to be.
—Brian Kinsey*

When God foresaw the Goliath in Israel's future, he just needed a man who was not afraid, a man who would stand and defend God's name. First Corinthians 10:13 says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

If you have read the "back of the Book," you will find that the church is going to win! God is getting people ready for the battles that lie ahead.

David was a man after God's own heart. There were sixty-six chapters written about David, second only to the number of chapters about Jesus. The New Testament men-

tions David's name some fifty-nine times; the name Jesus is mentioned some 942 times.

David founded Jerusalem, the capital of the world. God not only found a man, He found a leader. That leader arose through obscurity and shined for God. His musical talents, skill with a sling, amazing commitment to God, and love for God caused him to be placed above his brethren. David sang songs to drive evil spirits away. He slung the rock that sank into Goliath's head.

God sees a Goliath in your future, but he's got a Goliath-slayer in mind. If he can't use you, he will find somebody else. David's willingness to follow after God gave him the authority to lead. My friend Doug Ellingsworth once said, "You cannot hold both influence and power. You must cling to one and let the other go. Influence outlives power." David's influence trumped the power mentality of his brothers. Remission from sin always comes after submission to God.

What will the Goliath in your life be? Trouble at work, financial difficulty, relational problems, disability, serious illness, a car accident, or even imminent death? But God has already made a way of escape for you. Just follow Him and He will supply the David for your Goliath. Submit yourself unto God and He will make you the soldier for the battle.

*The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in
front of him,
but because he loves what is behind him.
—G. K. Chesterton*