

**David: Issues of the Heart**  
**Part 2**  
**“A Courageous Heart”**  
**REC: September 20, 2015**  
**1 Samuel 17**  
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Well Good Morning! Good to see all of you. And if you have got your Bible I am going to ask you to turn to the Book of 1 Samuel and Chapter 17 - 1 Samuel and Chapter 17.

And while you are turning there, let me remind you, or inform you if you were not here last week, that we began then to look at events in the life of David. David, the first – not the first, but the second king of Israel, but the most significant king of Israel, began as a shepherd boy.

And I am calling it “Issues of the Heart” because the Old Testament says quite a lot about David’s heart. When he wrote many of his psalms, he speaks a lot about his heart.

And so “Issues of the Heart” and we talked last week about a complex heart, and I want to talk this week about what we are going to call a courageous heart in the well-known story of David and Goliath.

So I am going to read to you from Chapter 17 of 1 Samuel and Verse 1. It is quite a lengthy reading. I have trimmed it down as much as I can but listen carefully; build a picture in your mind as to what is going on. And then we will be going back to some of these events.

1 Samuel 17:1:

“Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Socoh in Judah.”

Down to Verse 3:

“The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the Valley of Elah between them.

“A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall.

“He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back.

“His spear shaft was like a weaver’s rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him.

“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.

“‘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.’

“Then the Philistine said, ‘This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.’

“On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.”

Then in the following few verses, David who was still a teenaged boy looking after sheep, was sent by his father with bread and cheese and barley for his brothers.

And when he got there, he asked what was going on. They explained the situation and he said, “Why is no one going to fight him?”

They said, “Because Goliath is huge and there is just no one who will take him on.”

So down in Verse 32,

“David said to Saul, ‘Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.’”

In other words, “I will go and fight him.”

“Saul replied, ‘You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.’

“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, 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.

“‘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.

“‘The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.’

“Saul said to David, ‘Go and the LORD be with you.’”

Down to Verse 41:

“Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David.

“He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him.

“He said to David, ‘Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?’ And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

“‘Come here,’ he said, ‘I’ll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!’

“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.

“‘This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.

“‘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.’

“As the Philistine moved close to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.

“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.

“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.”

Well that’s one of the longest readings I have ever given I think here. But it’s the only part of my message that is inspired so that’s the bit we need to know and to understand.

Not many folks on the street know Bible stories anymore but I would guess that if there is one that is more widely known than any other, it would be the story of David and Goliath.

Martin Gladwell, who is the author of some fascinating books; some of you will have read, as I have, “Blink”, “What the Dog Saw”, “The Tipping Point”, “Outliers”; his most recent book is called “David and Goliath”.

It has little to do with the actual Bible story but it is about why under-dogs sometimes win. He talks about the hidden rules that determine the interaction of the weak with the strong and the powerful with the dispossessed.

And we know this image of David, young, weak, dispossessed, killing the giant Goliath – strong, expected to win.

A little bit like if you are watching the rugby world cup that just started yesterday, Japan beating South Africa. Japan has won one game since 1971 in international rugby world cup games. South Africa, the most likely to win the tournament, and Japan (David) destroyed South Africa (Goliath). It was a thrilling match.

But that's the principle, you see.

However the principle may be epitomized by this story, but the place of this story in Scripture is not just to give us a moral to live by; this story is of enormous spiritual significance.

Which is why I am looking at it this morning – we are not just looking at a piece of Israel's history, fascinating though that might be. But we have, in these verses, lessons that you and I need to learn, need to live by, need to appreciate if we are going to experience what God intends for us.

Now this chapter, 1 Samuel Chapter 17, gives two parallel stories that are brought into focus. One is of the demise of King Saul (he was the first king of Israel) and the other is the rise of King David, who would be the new king of Israel.

Both these men had been chosen by God for leadership. Both these men had been anointed by the Holy Spirit. Both these men experienced intimacy with God and both of them demonstrated the power of God when they stepped out in obedience to Him.

But there the comparisons stop and the contrasts begin because everything else in their lives is in striking opposition. We see the sun rising on David, and this chapter highlights that. We see the sun setting on Saul, and this chapter also highlights that.

We see steady growth in one; we see steady decline in the other into disobedience and darkness.

Saul had started well and he could well have been all that David became. He had every advantage going for him. Physically, he is introduced in 1 Samuel Chapter 9 as being an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites, a head taller than any of the others.

So if you met Saul before he was ever on track to become king, you thought, man that's an impressive young man. Physically, he was.

That's in Chapter 9. Chapter 10 tells us how God changed Saul's heart. It tells us how the Spirit of God came on him in power. So Saul was a man of deep spiritual experience with God.

Next, Chapter 11 tells us how he became victorious in battle, how the people recognized him as God-anointed, how they rallied around him as king, how he drew valiant men to himself, whose hearts God had touched.

His story has a great God-centered beginning.

But the story of Saul is a tragic one. It is not a story of success but a story of failure. It is not a story of victory but a story of defeat.

Samuel had already told Saul that his kingdom would not endure before we get into Chapter 17. So Saul, at this stage, knew he was living on borrowed time.

Saul didn't know that Samuel had been sent by God to Bethlehem to find his successor. And his successor was the eighth son in Jesse's family, the one that they had not even brought to be interviewed by Samuel because they so completely disregarded him as a possible potential as king. But he was the man God chose, and we talked about that last week.

And I think we best understand Saul's demise over a promise that God made to Saul when he became king. Because in 1 Samuel 9:14[16], when Saul was anointed king, or about to be anointed king, God had said to Samuel,

“I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel...”

(Listen to this)

“...he will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me.”

That is the unambiguous job description given to Saul by God: “He will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines.”

“That's what his reign is going to accomplish.”

He had plenty of opportunity for that because it tells us in Chapter 13:1 that Saul was on the throne for 40 years.

And in Chapter 14:52 it says,

“All the days of Saul there was bitter war with the Philistines.”

So for forty years on the throne, constant war with the Philistines, and he never, never experienced what God had told him would be the purpose of his reign – to deliver Israel from the Philistines.

There are three occasions in his reign when we have details about battles that Saul had with the Philistines.

This is one of them here in Chapter 17. It begins in Verse 1.

“Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Socoh in Judah.”

Now I start out asking the question who are these Philistines because they figure very highly in this part of the Old Testament Scriptures.

When Israel conquered Canaan under Joshua, they had to deal with seven inhabiting nations who were already there. The Philistines were not one of them.

The Philistines, at that stage, were living on the northeast coast of Egypt, because when the Israelites left Egypt Moses was told that when Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country (though that was shorter) but God said if they faced war they might change their minds and return to Egypt.

So God led the people around by the desert road towards the Red Sea. That's in Exodus Chapter 13.

So the Philistines were on the Egypt side of the Red Sea at that stage.

They had crossed the Mediterranean probably from Crete – there is some debate about the origin of the Philistines – they had settled on the northeast coast of Egypt near the Fertile Crescent.

But now forty years after Joshua has occupied the land, the Book of Judges opens up and the Philistines have become the prime enemy of Israel.

They had taken advantage of the instability created by the occupation of Canaan by the Israelites and tried to move up in their slip stream during that period of instability and occupy the land for themselves. That was their intention.

And therefore, as enemies of Israel, they were enemies of God's purpose for that nation to be settled there in that land. And so every time they appear in the Book of Judges and 1 Samuel, they are always, constantly fighting. It seems to be inbred within them.

(I think they are the ancestors of the Irish who love little more than a good fight it seems.)

We are given a record of three battles in which Saul engaged the Philistines.

One was in a place called Geba in Chapter 13 and 14; one is in the Valley of Elah here in Chapter 17; one is in Mount Gilboah in Chapter 28 to Chapter 31.

In each battle there was one constant characteristic of Saul, and the characteristic was fear.

In Geba (Chapter 13:5):

“The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven.

“When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns.

“Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of ...Gilead.”

In other words, they ran away.

“And Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear.”

So here’s Saul and his troops quaking with fear as the Philistines threaten them.

I’ll come back to that.

In the Valley of Elah, Verse 11 of Chapter 17,

“On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.”

In Verse 24:

“When the Israelites saw the man, they all ran from him in great fear.”

This is the fear and terror that Goliath instilled into them.

In Chapter 28:5 at Mount Gilboa,

“When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart.”

So the characteristic of Saul, every time they are in battle with the Philistines, is fear and terror.

Now what is fear?

I suggest to you fear is an emotion that we experience when we are faced with something threatening us that is bigger and more powerful than we are and our resources. And when something threatens us and it is bigger than us and bigger than our resources, the inevitable result is fear.

I think one of the times I was probably most afraid in my whole life was many years ago now – my first visit to India about 35 years ago now. And I was in the Nilgiri Hills of South India speaking at a conference there.

And the conference grounds were located in what they claimed to be the largest game reserve in the world. What that meant was not that there were big fences around it and you had to pay to go in; it meant that the wildlife was free over a large area to live and exist and were protected and so on.

And when I got there they told me stories about elephants in particular and the danger of elephants, that people had been killed by elephants.

One day I was taking a walk up the side of a river that ran by the property, just walking along, chewing over something I was going to be speaking on. Actually I often walk and just preach to myself.

And there were trees on one side, forest on one side, and I was following this path by the side of the river, when I came around a corner. As I came around the corner, there I found myself face to face with a huge female elephant, probably as far away as that wall from me.

And when I saw it, my heart seemed to stop. The elephant looked up, its ears went out, its trunk went up. I knew that was a danger sign.

My feet seemed to just freeze to the floor and without any pre-meditation, I just instinctively left the path, jumped into the river and swam across to the other side.

But remember there were crocodiles in the river. But I got across to the other side, got up, looked back, and this elephant got such a shock with me jumping into the river, it had turned its big body around and was running (I saw the end of it), running down the path, had broken a few branches off on its way, which became my evidence of what had happened.

So I went back to the base. I told them what had happened and they gave me a nickname, a Hindi nickname which meant “the one of whom elephants are afraid.”

That one Sunday I was speaking at a church not far away and they me that name. They said, “This is the one of whom elephants are afraid” and there were kids there with eyes the size of saucers, you know.

But I don't know about the elephant – I was terrified! Why was I terrified? Because it's bigger than me, it's stronger than me. I knew I couldn't get that elephant by the trunk and sort of get it over my shoulder and give it a karate chop and tie its trunk in a knot and kick it into the river.

I knew if that elephant got me, it would pick me up in its trunk, throw me in the air, catch me on its tusks, pull me off, throw me up again, catch me on the tusks, pull me off, throw me up again, put me on the ground, turn around and sit on me. And I knew I wouldn't be very safe after that.

So I was terrified, naturally.

On the other hand, I met another wild animal on another occasion – this actually was in New Zealand – I was in a home. We had come back at the end of a meeting I was speaking at; I was staying in this home. And the husband, wife and myself; we were talking, having a cup of tea or something, when suddenly the lady of the house shrieked and she jumped up onto the seat she was sitting on.



We followed the direction of her eyes, and peeping out from behind the piano was a mouse. Her husband and I had so much fun the next hour or so trying to catch that mouse. We moved every piece of furniture we could and eventually we got the mouse and we put it outside.

Why wasn't I scared of the mouse? It's a wild animal. I mean mice can kill you – that lady could have fallen off the chair and broken her neck.

I wasn't scared of the mouse; I was scared of the elephant because the elephant was bigger than me, bigger than my resources. I wasn't scared of the mouse because, "Mouse, come as close as you want, go on, a little bit closer – that's it – got you!"

Why was Saul afraid? Because, as far as he was concerned, when he met the army in Geba, he had only 3000 men and they had 3000 chariots and 6000 charioteers and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore, it says.

He counted his men, 3000, and he counted theirs – 1, 2, 3 – 3000 chariots – twice as many charioteers plus thousands of soldiers.

He did the math and he said, "We can't do this." And he was overcome with fear.

The fact God had made a promise to Saul was totally irrelevant to his thinking. God had said, "You will deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines. Understand that Saul? That is your job description. That is what is going to happen. And I, God, will do it through you."

Because he was told that. He was told later, "Do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you." You are not a lone ranger out there, Saul, doing this; you are doing this together with Me."

We sang songs about that this morning. We sang songs about

*Every high thing must come down  
You wear the victor's crown  
You will overcome*

You know, we sang two of them actually that were like that – right on target with what I wanted to say.

And I can imagine Saul going out, humming a song like that. But you don't know what you believe by what you sing; you know what you believe by what happens when you face the crisis.

And Saul panicked, turned away, and if it was the numerical strength of the Philistines that frightened him in Chapter 13, it was the bigness of one man in Chapter 17 because when he faced Goliath in the Valley of Elah, he was a giant.

The NIV puts down he was nine feet tall. There is some ambiguity about that. The Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, puts him at six foot five, but either way he was a big man.

And as Goliath stood out of his camp, he put this novel idea – instead of all you Israelites fighting all of us, and every night we stop fighting, we go back, we bury our dead, we patch our wounded, we have some dinner, we go to sleep. We get up the next morning, we come into the valley and we fight all day, and at the end of the day, we stop, we go back home, bury the dead, patch our wounded – instead of doing that every day let's have one person from your side, one person from our side.

And if the person on your side wins, we will serve you. If the person on our side wins you will serve us.

Novel way to fight a war, isn't it? Just put two people in a boxing ring and let them sort it out and accept the verdict.

Well, for some reason Saul accepted the challenge. And then Goliath said, "I am fighting for the Philistines – who is fighting for you?"

There's one obvious person: Saul. He was head and shoulders above everybody else – that's one reason; at least he could look him in the navel. He was the tallest man they had.

And secondly, he was the obvious person because God made a promise to him: "You will deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines."

Saul, here it is on a plate. God has promised it. Just do it.

But on hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

Terror filled his soul. For forty days, every day, Goliath would step out of the Philistine camp and say, "Where is your man?"

Every day the same feeble response came back: "Just-just-just wait a minute – just-just trying to sort it out – h-hang on."

Meanwhile Saul was busy behind the scenes. He offered reward to anybody who would go and fight him. He started by offering great wealth to the man who kills him.

Well that may have been attractive until you realize "what happens if I lose." You could have an expensive funeral but that's about all.

So then he offered his daughter in marriage. We don't know what kind of prospect that was. But at least you would have been brought into the royal family and you would have a lot of connections and a lot of privileges.

But nobody took it up.

And then he not only offered great wealth and his daughter in marriage, but he said he would exempt his father's family from taxes in Israel for the rest of their days. I am sure a lot of families pricked up their ears. "Wow! The whole family would be tax free for the rest of their days?"

They probably got hold of some dweeb in the family and said, "Why don't you go? Go on; you go and do it. If you get killed, at least we will be free of taxes."

But there were no takers and it was at this point that David came on the scene, sent by his father, still a shepherd boy with his bread and cheese and barley for his brothers.

And he heard the silence of the armies and he talked to one of the soldiers. And then he went and talked to his brother Eliab and said, "What is going on?"

"Well, we have got a problem."

"Yeah, I just heard that from the soldier. Why is it a problem?"

"Because it is Goliath."

"Yeah, I know; I heard that, but why is it a problem?"

"Because he is big."

"I know that, but why is it a problem? Isn't God on your side?"

"David, don't be so spiritual. You have got to be practical about these things."

And they kicked him out. And he went to Saul.

Saul knew David – not much about him, but David used to play his harp for Saul when Saul was depressed. But he obviously didn't know much about him because at the end of this he says, "Who is this? Tell me about him."

But he used to play for Saul, work for Saul, so he had some kind of access. And so he went to Saul's tent and said, "Why is there no fighting?"

"Well, we have a problem."

"Yeah, I just heard about that from the soldiers and my brother."

"Yeah, but Goliath is big and he is strong."

"I know – I know all that. Isn't God on our side?"

"You know, David, it's lovely to see the enthusiasm of youth but you will get over it."

David said this: “If nobody else will go, I will go.”

And in Verse 33,

“Saul replied, ‘You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.’

“David said to Saul...”

And this is very important – listen carefully:

“Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 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.

“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.’

“The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”

What is David saying there? He is saying this: “Saul, I have already proved God with no audience, nobody watching, alone on the hillside with my sheep. When a lion came, I killed it.”

He says in fact he struck it with his own hands, seized it by the hair, struck it and killed it.

“When a bear came and took another sheep, I killed that one too.”

I am sure David’s father Jesse said to him many times, “David, if ever a bear comes, or ever a lion comes when you are out with the sheep, don’t do anything silly; just bring the sheep home.”

But David knew that if a lion gets a sheep today, it will be back for another one tomorrow. It’s like a fox. We used to have chickens when I was a kid and if a fox got a chicken last night, he will be back the next night.

And David; his spirit was this: “if I am going to be a shepherd, I’m going to be a good shepherd. And if I am going to be a good shepherd, no lion will get my sheep and no bear will get my sheep. And the God who delivered me from the lion and the bear will deliver me from this Philistine.”

Do you know why we are powerless in big things? It’s because we never trust God in the little things. We do not leap frog into spiritual maturity. We do not suddenly get into a public domain and suddenly we have faith. No. We prove God when there is nobody looking, when there is nobody watching, there is no record to be taken of it, if you just trust in God.

You know there are many of us who find it very easy to live a kind of fraudulent life where one thing is out on front, but we don't have the hinterland, the background of dealing with God.

Sometimes we fail but we come back in deep repentance and cleansing and God will give you opportunity to prove Him again in that area, in those areas.

If we were to look more at Saul's story, which we don't have time to, we will see that Saul disobeyed in the little things. He cut corners in the little things and when faced with a big crisis, was totally at his wit's end, totally powerless.

I am not suggesting a lion is a lesser thing than a giant actually, or a bear is a lesser thing than a giant, but it is of less importance, of lesser significance; it's just sheep after all.

But it's what goes on in the secret area, what goes on in your work life, behind doors, that either weakens you in your big picture life, or equips you in your big picture life.

And Saul tried to dress David in his own armor, which of course was too big. He didn't need it. He collected 5 stones and in Verse 40, if I read this bit again, Verse 40,

“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.

“Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David.

“He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him.

“He said to David, ‘Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?’ And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.”

“What is this? What is this? Your best soldiers won't face me and you are just a kid, just a teenager; you are a shepherd boy. What have you got in your hand? You have got a sling, that's all.”

“‘Come here,’ he said (Verse 44) ‘and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field.’

“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.

“‘This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.’

“ ‘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.’ ”

“Goliath, do you understand that? It’s not about swords and spears; it’s about God, and He will give you into our hands.”

And David took his stone and slung his sling. Now of course he was a brilliant sling shooter. Elsewhere it tells he could hit a hair – was it 30 yards or something?

It wasn’t that you just throw your stone anywhere and God will guide it so it will hit him in the forehead – no, no, he was a good slingshot. And he took it, hit him in the forehead. Nothing like that had ever entered Goliath’s head before! And he fell to the ground.

At last the Philistine was defeated. At last the nation now was victorious.

And I finish with this. You see you may live as a Saul; I may live as a Saul, or live as a David.

As a Saul, called by God, a history of experiencing God - the Spirit of God has been on you. You have testimony of His presence, His goodness, His working, but you are living by your own wits and by your own resources.

Yes, we still speak the language of godliness. You know when David went, Saul said to him in Verse 37,

“Go, and the LORD be with you.”

What empty trash! If Saul believed that, “Go and the LORD be with you”; if he believed that he would have gone himself.

You know we can self-deceive with spiritual jargon because we learn to say all the right things. You know, this was just jargon that he learned. You can learn jargon in Sunday school, and carry it all your life and it is totally devoid of reality.

You can learn language you use in conversation; it has no relationship to your life in private.

And Saul had become this empty shell devoid of godliness, but retaining all the trappings of his relationship with God, all the language of it, but no substance anymore.

And you and I can be a Saul very easily. It is like a centrifugal force pulling us away all the time from the centrality of Christ. And the biggest enemy of Christ is Christianity when we adopt Christianity as a substitute for Christ Himself, when we depersonalize our Christian lives.

We talk about our faith life – don’t talk about your faith life. Your Christ life – that’s just a vague empty phrase. It’s personal. It’s the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who we are to experience and be united with.

But if we can be a Saul on the one hand, we can be a David on the other. And for David it meant to take risks, in stepping out in confidence that God has given him what to do and God is bigger than every obstacle and bigger than every barrier. And step out with the courage that God will give him into our hands.

He doesn't reason with Goliath. "Well, Goliath, you know I'm pretty good with this sling, you know. I have killed about 25 animals in the last three months with this thing. Don't you belittle my sling, Goliath."

He doesn't say that. He says, "I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts and this day He will give you into our hands."

That's where his confidence lay.

And David, stepping out in that obedience and trust, became the one who gained victory.

And finally, two things happened to David – natural things that will happen in these situations.

First of all, people joined him because in Verse 51,

"David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.

"And when the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.

"Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath and to the gates of Ekron.

"Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron."

Isn't that interesting? Suddenly the men of Israel and Judah, a whole crowd of them; they surged forward and chased the defeating Philistines.

For forty days they had been intimidated by them and afraid. But probably in their fear – and we all have fears – we don't want to be the first, we don't want to step out on a limb, but when somebody did – when David had the courage to do so – other people joined him.

And when you live in dependence on God and begin to see the victories and strength and presence of God in your life, people will join you. They will, because they are hungry for it.

That's why some of the best things are caught, not taught. You can teach them but unless I can see it and get caught in with it.

So that's the first thing that happened to David. And that's another aspect of the story; it's another spiritual principle actually. Don't criticize the people who, you know, you think are not doing the job – do the job. And there are amongst them who will join you.

But the second thing, again inevitable: someone hated him for it. Saul hated him.

What happens to a man who should trust God but doesn't, when someone else comes along who does obey God, who does trust God, and especially if they are younger?

You think Saul was delighted? Think Saul called him in, "David, fantastic! You have saved the nation. Thank you so much!"

You don't know human nature if you think that. Saul was not delighted at all.

In Chapter 18:8:

"Saul was very angry."

Well, they were singing a song, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands." That didn't help.

But he became angry.

Not only that, in Verse 9,

"From that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David."

Notice that.

Down in Verse 15 of Chapter 18 it says there:

"When Saul saw how successful David was, he was afraid of him."

So his anger was turned to jealousy, now it turns to fear. In Verse 29:

"When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David, Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days."

Chapter 19:1:

"Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David."

And David would be in trouble living as a fugitive for something like 12 or 13 years after this.

And Saul hated him. And you know, when we live in the flesh - Christian, but we live by human resources; we live in the flesh; we live simply by our own abilities instead of in the Spirit, we will find ourselves having a thorough dislike of people living by the Spirit.



And we may not be smart enough to understand why because the Spirit of God exposes the emptiness of our flesh.

And David would be for years in trouble, on the run. And we will be looking at some of those trouble years in time to come, because he was willing to trust God and let God be God, but Saul wouldn't.

So I ask you as I close, which is a more likely picture of you? Saul or David?

We know the language, even try to live the life, but we don't know God for Himself, experientially, day by day, living and basking in His love. We love Him because He loves us. Enjoying His presence, relating every situation to Him – "Lord, this situation You have given me, I thank You I can trust You and I look to You."

And whether it's in your family, in your business, in your church life, it doesn't matter. This is not a category that only fits one part of our lives. We let God be God.

We are going to pray together.

I'd like you to pray with me. If you find you have been living a life characterized only by frustration deep down and failure, it's not just a simple overnight thing to put it all right, but it must begin with confession of our own independence of God.

Lord, I acknowledge before You this morning that it is so easy to get lost within spiritual things, within godly language, within Christian responsibilities and work. We get lost from the life and energy and the source of the Christian life itself – Christ living in us by the Holy Spirit.

We relate far better to the circumstances around us than we do to Your presence within us. We are more intimidated by our circumstances than we are freed by Your presence.

We don't want to be naïve about the complications of life but we pray, Lord Jesus that this principle of looking to You in every situation and trusting You with every situation and obeying You on the basis of that trust, will increasingly characterize our lives and our experience of God.

We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.