

Slaying Giants

Introduction

There are parts of the biblical story that every time I reread or hear someone else talk about them, or even just think about them, another lesson seems to evolve. This is a wonderful part of my “job” specifically, and the Bible generally. We never “get finished” learning- and therefore growing, in our faith and service to the Lord.

Recently, and largely due to the recent restrictions, I’ve had more time and opportunity to hear some of my colleagues preach and teach the Word. On one of these occasions, I got to hear Russ Bowman. Though we’ve known each other since high school, we’ve not had the opportunity to spend much time together despite working only a couple of hours from each other for about ten years. Our fathers were friends, and had great love and respect for one another, and he is a man for whom I have great respect as well. All of this to say that I heard Russ give a great lesson on David and Goliath online recently, and he “rekindled” my fascination with this part of biblical history and its application value for us today. So, here’s a “tip of the hat” to Russ for some additional insight and inspiration.

Pertinent Points of the Incredibly True Story, 1Samuel 17:

- At this point of Israelite history, the Philistines were archenemies, vv.1-3; cf.4:1 – 7:14;
- In lieu of the opposing armies fighting, Goliath proposes that each send out a *champion*, and that they should fight in a “winner takes all” contest, vv.8-10;
- This proposal was easy to make for Goliath, given his tremendous size and strength advantage, vv.4-7; cp. 9:2; 10:23;
- Saul and *all Israel* were “*dismayed and greatly afraid*,” v.12, especially given the potential consequences for them, their families, and the nation, v.9;
- Three of David’s older brothers, *Eliab*, *Abinadab*, and *Shammah*, were with Saul and the army, while David, the youngest of Jesse’s eight sons, went back and forth from tending his father’s sheep to taking provisions to his brothers at the potential battle scene, vv.12-19;
- When David arrives on the scene, he rushes up to the *battle line* to *greet his brothers*, but surely also wanting to see the fight as any young boy might want to do, vv.20-22;
- As he was speaking to them, Goliath came forth to reissue his *twice daily* (for *forty days*!) v.15) *challenge* to the Israelite army, v.23;
- *All the men of Israel* were *greatly afraid* and *fled* when they saw Goliath, v.24;
- But, they also told David of the *rewards* offered to any man who killed Goliath, v.25;
- When David asked for clarification/confirmation regarding the reward, *Eliab* heard him and took issue- probably motivated by a combination of shame and sibling rivalry, vv.26-30; cp. 16:6-13;
- However, David’s questions/words (surely v.16b) were told to Saul, who sent for him, v.31;
- Saul’s initial rejection of David’s brave offer is met with evidence of past victories (*lion* and *bear*), and his *faith in the Lord affirmed*, Saul withdraws his objection, entreats God’s blessing upon him, and allows David to proceed, vv.32-37;
- After rejecting Saul’s offered *armor*, David loaded his *bag* with *five smooth stones*, took his *sling*, and went forth to do battle, vv.38-40; (on *five stones*, cf. 2Sam.21:22ff and 1Chron.20:4-8);
- Goliath is *insulted* by the appearance of David (and his youth, no doubt), but *cursed him by his gods* and vowed to kill him anyway, vv.41-44;
- But David was undaunted, and made clear his *intentions* and his *strength*, vv.45-47;
- At this, Goliath rushed forward- surely expecting David to flee, but instead he also *ran quickly* forward to do battle, v.48;

- David reached into his bag and loaded a stone into his sling, flinging it with such force and accuracy that it *sunk into Goliath's forehead* causing him to fall face-forward dead, vv.49-50;
- Then David removed the giant's head with his own sword, v.51a;
- But the Philistines quickly reneged on the original "deal" (v.9) and *fled*, v.51b;
- All that then remained was the pursuing slaughter of the Philistine army all the way back to their homes in *Gath* and *Ekron*, vv.52-53.

What an incredible story, but this was just "story time" - it's a *true* story with a few very germane points for us, Rom.15:4. This is not a "fairy tale," and the OT is not some collection of Jewish myths, fables, or allegories. While the OT is not a *complete history* of mankind, or even of the Jews, it is an **accurate account** of essential narratives that relay the story of the *fall* and *redemption* of man through Jesus Christ. So be careful to both understand (yourself) and convey (to your children and others) the "realness" of these narrative accounts so as to distinguish them from fantasy or even mere allegory!

Applications

1. We all have our *giants* that need killing, v.4. They may be:

- Financial-** Many are struggling now with lost income, perhaps even lost jobs or businesses, and with them lost benefits and savings, but with continuing bills and obligations. 1) Pray for them; 2) Help them if possible; and 3) If you're one of them, *accept* help from your brethren- it's what they're *supposed* to do in such circumstances, cf. 1Cor.16:1; 2Cor.8:12-15. But remember also Luke 12:15; Matt.6:33; and 1Tim.6:6-8.
- Familial-** This "time at home together" has been a *blessing* to some, and a *curse* to others regarding *family problems*. I don't know that it created them in either case, but it sure can highlight them! Some *families* have not only been *brought back together*, but *brought back* to the *foundation of their faith in and reliance on God*. Others have had their *internal family flaws* laid bare to them, with all the warts and blemishes included. Hardships and tribulations have a way of doing these things- they either bring us together, or drive us apart... physically and spiritually, Matt.10:32-37; Luke 1:17; Eph.5:25,22; Titus 2:4.
- Personal-** Some of our "personal problems" are much more "personal" than we'd like to admit. It's always easier to blame someone else than to look carefully into that *perfect mirror of the perfect law of liberty* and do what it takes to correct the reflection you see, Jas.1:22-25. So, if you have a *personal* problem, admit it first to yourself, then to God and anyone else necessary, then fix it and do it right and start now, Jas.4:17; Rom.6:23.

2. Every battle with your *giant(s)* either is or can become a *spiritual* one, v.26b.

Think about even just those *giants* mentioned in the previous point of *financial*, *familial*, and *personal*. Every one of those *giants*, left *unslain*, rapidly becomes a very dangerous *spiritual* problem, Rom.6:2-14. Pick up as many *stones* as you think you'll need, take careful aim, and starting *slinging*! You don't have to be "well off" financially to go to heaven, but if you don't have the right attitude and activity with what you have, it can cost you eternally. You don't have to have a family to go to heaven, but they can take you with them to hell if that's where they're headed. And make no mistake about it, unresolved *personal problems* are "my" fault, 1Cor.10:12-13.

3. Every battle can be won (spiritually) if we have the perspective, faith and courage of David, cp. vv.12,16 and vv.26,37,45-47. This:

- Doesn't mean you won't lose your fortune, family, or your health- Job lost them all.
- Does mean that even these losses don't require the loss of your faith, joy, or your soul, cf. Lk.16:20-22.