

**Text: 1 Samuel 17**

**Theme: David, A Man after God's Own Heart: Goliath Defies Saul and Israel**

**Sermon delivered by Dele Agbelusi during Holy Communion Service on 9/07/2017 at 10.30am**

### **Goliath Defies Saul and Israel**

We have a vivid description of Goliath in the opening verses of chapter 17. He was about 9 feet tall, and as a big man carried a heavy armor and weapons. So sure of himself, he issued a bold challenge to the army of Israel. (verses 8-10). Am I not Philistine enough for you? And you're all committed to Saul, aren't you? So, pick your best fighter and pit him against me. If he gets the upper hand and kills me, the Philistines will all become your slaves. But if I get the upper hand and kill him, you'll all become our slaves and serve us. I challenge the troops of Israel this day. Give me a man. Let us fight it out together!"

**(Verse 11) When Saul and his troops heard the Philistine's challenge, they were terrified and lost all hope.** This was Goliath's *exact intention* in issuing the challenge. The reason why he came out with full battle equipment and paraded in front of the Israelite army was because he *wanted* to intimidate them and on that score, he defeated the Israelites on fear alone.

Saul had special reason to be afraid when he heard the threats and boast of Goliath. While Goliath was the giant among the Philistines, Saul was head and shoulder taller than other Israelite men (1 Samuel 9:2). Saul was the logical choice to square off against Goliath, and we can expect he knew others expected him to fight Goliath.

At one time, Saul was known as a fierce and successful military leader (1 Samuel 14:52). But that was before the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul (1 Samuel 16:14). As the Spirit left Saul so did his courage.

### **David comes to the camp of Israel.**

**(12-15)** David, the youngest of eight brothers, splits his time between the palace and the pasture. David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep: It seems David was only called to the palace as needed, when Saul was afflicted by the distressing spirit.

### **(16-21) David brings gifts from home and comes into Israel's camp.**

And the Philistine drew near and presented himself forty days: Day after day, Goliath taunted and mocked the armies of Israel, exposing them all (and especially Saul) as cowards.

**Dreadfully afraid:** *All* of the Israelite army was dreadfully afraid. There was not one man among them who would take on Goliath. Every one of them fled from him when Goliath came out. It is interesting that now it is 'seeing' Goliath which instils fear into the troops, whereas back in v11 it was 'hearing' Goliath.

This is how man sees the enemy and it crushes him. But is that the perception that really matters? God said to Samuel back in chapter 16:7, 'The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.' The soldiers on that day, including David's brothers, looked at David's appearance and were not impressed. They look at Goliath's appearance and were singularly impressed to the point of almost throwing up their hands in surrender. But God doesn't do that and neither does his servant-David, and what is more, neither should we- but we do. **The church looks at the might of the world, listens to the mockery of the media and the apparent triumph of secularism and cowers.** She panics and tries to play the world at its own game by trying to look impressive, using the world's techniques-and invariably fails. Do we honestly think that the God of the universe who could take a star like our sun with its enormous power, and snuff it

out like a man snuffs out a candle is going to be daunted by this so called giant? Hardly. And David didn't think so either. In fact, he was affronted by the arrogance of this Philistine and couldn't understand why the soldiers were more concerned about their own safety than God's glory-v26, '*David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"*'

**Saul and the fighting soldiers saw formidable Goliath as a weapon of tyranny, death and oppression, someone to be feared. David saw Goliath as an enemy of God, someone to be crushed- defeated.** David saw beyond the obstacles and saw a God who is over and above all. Is that what you see when you are surrounded by human, social, psychological spiritual and financial obstacles? Now we are beginning to see what it means to be anointed with the Spirit of the Lord in great power. It is not that there is some physical transformation like the Incredible Hulk or some physical manifestation like falling down, but there is a spiritual reformation, a stirring inwardly of a love and passion for God such that one would rather die than see his name besmirched in any way.

**(25-27) David hears of Saul's reward to the man who beats Goliath, but he is more concerned for God's honor.** Other soldiers focused on the *danger* of the battle or the *material rewards* to be won. It seems that David alone focused on the reputation of Israel and the honor of the living God.

The situation had become so desperate that Saul needed to offer a three-part bribe including a cash award, a princess, and a tax exemption – to induce someone, *anyone* to fight and win against Goliath.

Notice David's description of the situation: When the men of Israel said, "**This man,**" David said, "**This uncircumcised Philistine.**" When the men of Israel said, "**Surely he has come up to defy Israel,**" David said, "**That he should defy the armies of the living God.**" When the men of Israel said, "**The man who kills him,**" David said, "**The man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel.**" David saw things from the Lord's perspective, but the men of Israel saw things only from man's perspective.

If you want to fell some Goliath in your life you must begin by calling it what God calls it. You will not conquer it if you do not see things from God's perspective. For any problem you want to name, the world has a euphemistic label that makes it sound good. The world makes sin sound like it is not so bad and that everybody does it and it won't hurt you. But God hates sin and says that it will destroy you. You start fighting it by calling it what God calls it.

Take the problem of anger. The world calls it "having a short fuse" and even tells us that it is emotionally healthy to vent our hostilities. God's Word says that being wrongfully angry toward another person is to murder them and that we can and must control it. Or, take adultery. The world calls it "having a fling" or an "affair" and makes it sound adventurous and exciting. The Bible calls it sin and shows that it will ruin lives and have devastating effects on families. It is the way of death (Prov. 7:26-27). Bribery takes another name and is called sleaze. What a nice name! But it does not make it glamorous before God.

**(28-30) David is misunderstood and falsely accused by his brother.**

We might have thought that David's visit would please Eliab, especially considering all the things he brought from home. But David's words angered Eliab and there were many reasons why.

First, Eliab was angry because he felt David was an insignificant, worthless person who had no right to speak up, especially with such bold words.

Second, he was angry because he *felt* he knew David's motivation but he didn't *really* know David's heart. "He took upon himself that which belongs only to God.

Finally, he was angry because *David was right!* When you are *dismayed and greatly afraid* or *dreadfully afraid*, the last thing in the world you want is someone telling you to be courageous.

**What have I done now? Is there not a cause?** David stuck to his position. There is no doubt that what his brother Eliab said *hurt* him, but he would not let it *hinder* him. David was more concerned with God's cause than with his own feelings. When David was misunderstood and publicly rebuked by his own brother, probably amid the laughs of the other soldiers, he could have quit. But he showed the strength of the armor of God in his life and replied rightly. He cared only for the glory and success of the Lord's **cause**. *Goliath was a dead man right then. This is where the battle was won.* If Eliab's hurtful words can get David in the flesh and out of step with the Spirit of the Lord, then David's strength is gone. But that was not to be. David focused on God and what He can do.

### **David prepares to fight Goliath.**

#### **(31-32) David's confident words become known to Saul.**

Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported *them* to Saul; Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine: Saul waited a long time – at least 40 days – to hear someone say these words. But to hear them now, from the mouth of this boy, almost seemed like a cruel joke. "The good news is that someone finally wants to fight Goliath. The bad news is that he is a little shepherd boy."

These are bold words. This is the first time David specifically volunteered to battle Goliath. It is one thing to say, "*Someone* should do something about the enemy." It is entirely another thing to say, "*I* will do something about the enemy."

#### **2. (33-37) David's training as a shepherd prepared him.**

Saul thought David was disqualified because of his age, size, and inexperience. Again, this shows that Saul only looked at the outward, not the spiritual dimensions of this battle.

**Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them:** David increases in boldness as the story progresses. First he said someone *should* fight Goliath for a righteous cause (1 Samuel 17:26, 29). Then he said he *would* fight Goliath (1 Samuel 17:32). Now he says he will *kill* Goliath.

David had no idea he was being trained to fight a giant. Now, David can look back and know that the same God who **delivered** him from a lion and a bear before will also **deliver** him now. David knew that God's help in times past is an indicator of His help in the future.

#### **(38-40) David prepares to fight Goliath.**

##### **David defeats Goliath.**

Picture the humor here--David gets all this armor on, and he can't move! He is like a little kid dressed up in a snowsuit put on over 14 layers of clothes. He's as stiff as a zombie! And so he takes it off. David had to renounce Saul's armor – an indication of what the world has to offer. Often, we want a safe "middle ground" where we try to wear both kinds of armor. God wants us to trust in Him and Him alone. There is nothing wrong with methods, as long as your trust is truly in the living God and not in your slick method, and as long as the method does not detract from the Lord's glory and power. The way to fell that giant sin in your life is not by some latest method, but by genuine trust in the living God. **Faith always honors God, not methods, and God always honors faith, not methods (Ps. 33:13-22).**

**(41-44) Goliath curses David and his God.**

When the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him: The idea behind *looked about* is almost that Goliath had to look around to *find* David. David was so small compared to this man that Goliath had a hard time even seeing him. But when he did see him he disdained him. There was nothing – *nothing* – in David that struck fear or respect in Goliath’s heart. Goliath felt insulted that they sent David (Am I a dog that you come to me with sticks?).

**And the Philistine cursed David by his gods:** If it hadn’t been established before, it is certainly settled now. This *is not a fair fight*. It isn’t Goliath and his armor bearer against David. It is Goliath and his armor bearer against David and the Lord God of Israel. The battle is over. Anyone with any spiritual understanding could finish the story from here.

**(45-47) David, full of faith, replies to Goliath.**

**You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied:** David makes a contrast between himself and Goliath without giving credit to Goliath himself. “Those are some pretty fancy weapons you’ve got there, mister. But I’ve got something far better than your weapons.”

“I come as a representative of the Lord of hosts, the God who has heavenly armies at His command. I am a sent man, a man on a mission from God.”

**This day, the Lord will deliver you into my hand:** David is bolder and bolder. It is one thing to tell *Saul* he will kill Goliath (1 Samuel 17:36). It is an entirely different thing to tell *Goliath* he will kill Goliath, and to say the Lord would do it **today**.

David was careful to say, “**the Lord will deliver you into my hand.**” David was bold, but bold in God not in himself. He knew the battle belonged to the Lord.

This whole incident made David famous. But that was not why he did it. He did it for the fame and the glory of the Lord, not his own name. He wanted **all the earth to know that there is a God in Israel.**

What a scene! Goliath, enraged at David’s boldness, **drew near** to quickly kill David. David didn’t run away. He didn’t hide. He didn’t panic. He didn’t drop to his knees and pray. Instead, **David hastened and ran . . . to meet the Philistine.**

Many Christians struggle at this very point. Is God supposed to do it or am I supposed to do it? The answer is, “Yes!” God does it and we do it. Trust God, rely on Him, *and then get to work and work as hard as you can – run right at the enemy.* That is how the work of God is done. **The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face: It was a God guided missile just as the music played on David’s harp brought relief to Saul.**

**(50-54) David beheads Goliath and Israel romps over the Philistines.**

**David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it:** First, David *made certain the enemy was dead.* You cannot mess around with sin or your spiritual enemies; you must kill them *dead*. Second, David used Goliath’s *own sword* to cut off his head.

But there is one further detail I want to draw to your attention which may be significant in pointing to David’s greater son, Jesus, as he came to defeat God’s enemies, and our enemies, the enemies of sin, death and the devil. Sin was punished on the cross as Jesus the great sin bearing substitute died in the place of sinners. It was by dying our death that Jesus broke death’s icy grip, so while death may be the last enemy it will not have the last word. By Jesus death, we have the death of death. David was right after all when he spoke his Gospel to Saul, saying ‘Do not lose heart’. If you are a Christian here today- you don’t have to lose heart because Jesus is God’s champion and yours and mine too.

**David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent:** Since it was many years later that Jerusalem was conquered (2 Samuel 5:6-10), this likely means David *eventually* brought Goliath's head to Jerusalem. But David will use the sword of Goliath later (1 Samuel 21:9). David had some enduring reminders of God's great work.