

Introduction

Have you ever noticed how it is a *consistent pattern* in the Bible that God likes to make things hard on Himself?

- When He wanted to create a people to bring salvation to the world, He chose an old, childless couple over 90 years old (Abraham and Sarah).
- When He wanted to rescue His people from the Egyptian army – He marched them straight to the shores of the Red Sea.
- When He wanted to conquer the mighty city of Jericho – He had His people merely march around the city.
- When He wanted to start a movement that would turn the world upside down -- He chose twelve unknowns:
 - Four were fishermen.
 - One was a hated tax collector.
 - Six we know practically nothing about.
 - All were laymen.
 - None were preachers by trade.
 - None were experts in the scriptures.

It is a *consistent pattern* in the scripture that God chooses *weak vessels*.

- People, who under their own strength and ability *cannot accomplish the task* God has for them.
- Instead, they must rely in faith upon His promise.
 - They must trust in the power of a *living God* to show Himself mighty.
 - They must give God alone the credit for the victory.
- Such is a *heart of faith*.
 - Trusting God to do what only God can do.
 - Stepping out in obedience.
 - Giving God the praise and glory for the victory.

Illustration

As Israel faced incredible odds against the giants in the Promised Land, **Caleb** stated,

- "Do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. *Their protection has been removed from them, but the Lord is with us, do not fear them*" (Numbers 14:7-9).

As an 85 year-old man, choosing his piece of property in the Promised Land, Caleb said to Joshua,

- "Do you remember that hill country where we saw the giants? That's the piece of property I want!"
- "*Perhaps the Lord will be with me* and I will drive them out as the Lord has spoken" (Joshua 14:12).

This is *not optimism* – there were no grounds for optimism here.

- This was *faith*, pure and simple.
- Faith does not look at the circumstances – *faith looks to God*.

- Faith trusts God to work and do His will.
- Faith will bring God the glory for the victory.

Transition

Today's passage is about another battle with incredible odds.

- Once more, God made things deliberately hard for Himself.
- He wanted to show that a *living God* makes the difference.
- He simply needed someone who would *trust in Him*.
- God wanted to show Himself mighty through a *weak vessel*.
 - A vessel with a heart of faith in a living God.
 - A young boy named David.

Background

Saul had been rejected as king (16:1).

The prophet Samuel had gone to Jesse's house in Bethlehem to anoint the next king.

- Samuel wanted to anoint David's older brother Eliab, who was tall and handsome – but God stopped Samuel.
 - "*Do not look at his appearance or the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart*" (16:7).
- Instead, David was chosen and anointed (16:12).
- David was empowered by God's Spirit (16:13).
- God's Spirit departed from king Saul (16:14) – doomed to live his life and pursue the rest of his kingship under his own wisdom and strength, not under God's power.

1 Samuel 17:1-11

Goliath must have made quite an impression.

- Three meters tall (9'6"), 60 kgs (126 lbs) of armour.
- A spearhead that weighed 7 kgs (15-16 lbs).
- He was huge, ugly, scary, and strong.
- He must have seemed invincible.

While Goliath was out strutting proudly and making all of his racket – *Where were Saul and his men?*

- "*When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, They were dismayed and greatly afraid*" (v. 11).

There is something significant about this section that we have just read – something is missing.

- Nowhere in this story up to this point is God even mentioned.
 - *It is a totally God-less perspective.*

A God-less perspective leads to fear and whining.

- It is the result of looking at life's difficulties without God in the picture.
- Such a perspective will lead to the same reaction as King Saul and all of Israel – "*they were dismayed and greatly afraid*" (v. 11).

But the writer has already helped you understand where your focus should be.

- He gave you this *long physical description* of how big, mean, and ugly Goliath was.
- But these words should be running through your mind as you read that description:
 - "Do not look at his appearance or the height of his stature, for I have rejected him" (16:7).
 - God has rejected Goliath.
 - He doesn't have a chance.

Appication

All kinds of difficulties in this world tend to threaten our faith if we focus upon the wrong things.

- Financial needs, emotional needs, physical needs
- Deeply ingrained habits
- Issues with your background
- Things that are far too big to handle under your own strength and wisdom.

But how you respond to those difficulties determines where your perspective truly is.

- Saul and his men were looking at the obstacle *without God in the picture*.
- They were "dismayed and greatly afraid" as the result.
- A God-less perspective leads to fear and whining.

David showed up with food for his older brothers serving in the army.

- He heard Saul ranting and raving.

17:23-27, 31-40

For the first time in this entire story God is mentioned (in verse 26).

- "Who is this *uncircumcised Philistine* that he should taunt the armies of the *living God*?" (v. 26).
 - Doesn't having a *living God* make a difference in all of this?
 - This chump has mocked the armies of the *living God*, and doesn't that matter to you?
 - "Will somebody do something about this?!?"

To David, the *only physical characteristic* about Goliath that meant anything was –
UNCIRCUMCISED!

- The sign of a covenant relationship with the true and living God.
- Goliath was not among God's people.
- Goliath doesn't have a chance.
- ***A godly perspective leads to courage and confidence.***

David expressed much the same thing to Saul.

- This guy is *uncircumcised* (v. 36).
- He has *taunted* God's chosen people.

- We have a *living God* (and he doesn't) (v. 36).
- "*The Lord Who delivered me* from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, *He will deliver me* from the paw of this Philistine" (v. 37).

David doesn't say that *he* killed the lion and the bear.

- He doesn't attribute his past victories to his own luck, skill, and courage.
- He clearly states – *the Lord did it!!*
 - God spared me in the past – He will save me in the future.
- "Don't say I don't have any experience in battle – striking down enemies is my job!"
 - It's just been the four-legged kind up till now.
 - The same God who protected me while guarding my sheep will protect me while confronting this Philistine.

This is not cockiness or adolescent idealism.

- This is a Spirit-filled servant with faith in a living God.
- David had so much faith that he refused to change weapons.

Application

Isn't it a shame when someone hears our personal whining and complaining and can't even tell that we have a *living God*?

- People hear us tell all the bad news, but now a word of confidence and courage for *what God can do* in such circumstances.
- A godly perspective leads to courage and confidence.

17:41-50

Goliath "*curse David by his (dead Philistine) gods*" (v. 43).

- Now it gets theological and personal!
- God had promised Abraham and his people, "Those who bless you I will bless, and *those who curse you I will curse*" (Genesis 12:3).
- Goliath was just sealing his own fate.

David couldn't care less about himself, but

- "I come to you *in the name of the Lord of hosts*, the God of the armies of Israel, *whom you have taunted*" (v. 45).
 - You have blasphemed the God of Israel.
 - Somebody needs to shut you up!

Aside

Does anyone know what God's law says is to happen to the person who blasphemes God?

- They are to be "stoned" (Leviticus 24:16).

David said, "This day *the Lord* will deliver you up into my hands" (v. 46).

- He will do this, "*so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel*" (v. 46).
 - Everybody needs to know about Him.

- I'm not the important one – *He is!!*
- *He alone deserves the glory.*
- *This battle is His.*
 - This is a theological battle.
 - This is to demonstrate *Who the true and living God is.*

The biblical writer spent more page space on David's speech (63 words in Hebrew) than he did on the actual battle itself (36 words in Hebrew).

- It is almost as if the explanation of what all of this means is more important than the actual event.

As God brings the victory – He alone deserves the credit.

Our world desperately needs to know the God we serve.

- Our God wants us to give people a *verbal witness* to Who He is.
- "*That all the earth may know*" that God lives here.
- *He alone deserves the glory!*

Application

My friends, what is your perspective on life?

- Do you look at *circumstances* and how difficult they may be?
 - Do you let the circumstances bring you to the point of fear and dismay?
- Can people tell by the way you talk that you indeed serve *the true and living God?*
 - A true and living God can set you free.
 - He can bring victory in your trial.
- When God give you the victory – *who receives the credit?*

Benediction

"Now unto Him who is *able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we could ever ask or think* – according to the power that works within us.

- "*To Him be the glory* in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever" (Amen). (Ephesians 3:20-21).

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