

Brentview Baptist Church



'Louder Than Words'

Stories of Impact

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October 2, 2011

We began this fall by asking you to consider becoming involved in making this a 'Year of Impact' for this church and for each of us as Christ followers. To ask the question 'what does God want me to be involved in which is Bigger than myself?' which can have an impact of those around me and possibly make an impact in our world. I need to tell you I have been amazed with some of the things some of you have been talking to me about. For example one person is feeling a call to help the 'working poor' find furnishings for where they live. Someone else told me that as he has been praying each morning (Jesus what do you want me to be involved in today to make a difference in your world?) he has already had a person ask if he could go for lunch with him to talk about spiritual things. Another person has talked about starting a blog for those who have sports injuries and adding some Christian content into it. Another person helped a stranger find faith in Jesus last week. I have also noticed that as some of you have been stepping out into these new and exciting adventures (and begin living your faith out loud) that for some things have risen, which have stood like giants in your way.

Sometimes you hit that place where unless a miracle happens the adventure will die. I sat with a great lady last week who now is in the middle of an amazing journey. As we talked about a giant road block she had run into, all I could say was 'I wish I had some great advice to give you, but all I can do is pray that God finds a way through and that this giant in your path falls down in front of you'. When I say that, I am sure many in this room feel that same thing is true on a personal level. For there is a situation, a struggle, a sin and a place where you are stuck and unless that very real giant that is in front of you falls down you can never go forward. So as many of you with God's help, attempt things bigger than yourselves and others here are struggling with things that are blocking their way forward let me take you to the scriptures, to a place where we can find hope that giant's fall. Hopes that will help us wrestle with these real giants in our lives.

This morning I want to take you back in history to the day David faced the giant. Grab your bibles and turn to (1 Samuel 17). The place is the valley of Elah, which is about 15 miles outside of Jerusalem (The Philistine Army was knocking on Jerusalem's door). The valley is over a mile across and had a ravine/creek bed that ran down the middle. On one side is a 1/2 mile flat plain, then there is a 20 foot ravine and on the other side is another 1/2 mile flat plain. On one side the Israeli army was bivouacked and on the other side the Philistine army was camped. Every morning and every evening for 40 days a giant named Goliath came to the ravine and yelled across it at the Israelite soldiers. (1 Samuel 17:4-7) Tells us that his height was 9'9", with a raised arm his spear would have been over 12' in the air. His coat was made of canvas interwoven with bronze chain link weighing 175-200 lbs. His javelin was tied behind his back; the spear had about 20/25 lbs. His shield was 7' tall and carried by the most submissive man in his country. His challenge was a common one for that day; it was a representative battle in which winner takes all. (1 Samuel 17:8-11). As we said as we began this morning, Giants often stalk our land as well.

That giant could come in the form of a worry that keeps hammering away at our faith, a pressure or a person who seems to keep showing up and yelling at us in our own personal valley of Elah. Or it could be that thing that stands in the way of our reaching that which we believe is God's best for us. Keep your personal giant in mind as we continue.

David enters the story as he is bringing food to his brothers at the battle front (1 Samuel 17:13-15; 17). As he arrived with the food (1 Samuel 17:20-24) the Israel's soldiers are coming out of their tents armed for battle, when a war chant begins from across the valley. The sound rises to a blood curdling roar and then as Goliath shows up everything goes silent. Goliath yells his challenge (1 Samuel 17:24) "And they all ran from him in great fear." I wonder if David is caught up in the flight of fear. But then he stops on the Hillside, it is there that he feels the tug of God to get involved.

Now as you read the story it only makes sense to ask 'Whose job was it to take on the giant?' It was King Saul's (1 Samuel 10:1, 6). I say that because it says Saul was head and shoulders taller than anyone in all of Israel (he was the 2nd biggest guy in the valley), but also as King he was the one who was supposed to lead his people under God to victory. He was the King; he was God's hand-picked leader. (1 Samuel 17:11) Notice where Saul is 'in his tent terrified', why was he afraid to take on the giant? (1 Samuel 16:14) says it was because Saul's walk with God had become so cold, so distant that when the Giant entered the picture Saul was in a place where he could no longer access the power, the presence or the inner leading of God. You know this, while one can 'get away with' some distance from God during the 'easy' times of life, eventually giants will show up. And it doesn't take long when the giants arrive for us to realize whether we are close to God or if our relationship has grown distant from God.

In Saul's case he instantly knew that he was unable to gain a victory over this giant in his life because he had moved far away from God. Don't miss this, when we get distance between ourselves and God due to neglect, sin or disobedience, the result is always the same. We will become afraid of our giants. Here is where we need to start this morning, for if a giant seems to be stopping our forward movement in our life or what we feel is God's direction in our life. Then we need to stop and check our spiritual pulse to see if we have let something drive a wedge between us and God and his power to move against that giant. We need to make sure we do what is necessary to invite God back into our situation.

I say that because if you look at David you will see a different response. For since David chose to stay close to his God, we find a confidence which is the exact opposite of the fear Saul felt without God. For in (1 Samuel 17:32; 36; 45, 46, 47) there is a confidence that he knew as he stood in and under the power of God that the giant would fall. Now where did that confidence come from? I believe it began when Samuel anointed David to be king. (1 Samuel 16:13) 'On that day the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.' That as the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, a new power entered David's life which he hadn't experienced before. With that new power, came a new confidence that he was God's anointed, that with God nothing was impossible. That he would be more than a conqueror through Him who loves us. God would be with him always (Romans 8; Psalm 89:20-24).

Turn to (Acts 1:4, 8) 'But you will receive power' same word concept used in (1 Samuel 16:13) when it says "the Lord came upon David in power, when the Holy Spirit comes UPON you'. There is that picture that as the Holy Spirit came upon David; God's Holy Spirit will come upon us. God desires to place the Holy Spirit upon us so that we may live not as 'Saul' but as 'David'. That when our giants stock us we will not end up afraid in our tents. Instead, with confidence chase them down into the valley and put them to death.

As we begin can I also have you notice that if you tolerate a giant for too long he will take over your life? Look at (1 Samuel 17:8) it uses the words "come down to me." In other words Goliath was standing in the ravine in the middle of the valley and shouting up at the Israelites on the other side. Now look at (1 Samuel 17:25) literally in the Hebrew Language, it says he has "come out (UP)". After 40 days of hollering, where was Goliath standing now? He was no longer standing in the ravine making his threats for he had moved up out of the ravine and is now standing on Israel's bank. Have you experienced that? I have. Once we allow giants to enter our life unchecked, if we don't stand against them they will increasingly move into your camp. They will increasingly control our every waking thought and steal our sleep at night. They will take your focus off of God. That is why you can't tolerate a giant, you have to kill it. Ask yourself the question 'In my response to fears, hard situations or difficult people, do I face them head on, or by my lack of action do I give them the ability to climb the bank to infiltrate my space, steal my joy and control my life?

Far too often I see people who let a comment by a parent, the effects of a loss, the scars from a tragedy be treated like a friend instead of a giant enemy which left in their lives will hamstring them for years. We will see in a moment, David faced his giant immediately so he could control his own destiny. We need to do the same.

I. How do we face something that is bigger than us?

As David was getting ready to take on the giant there were 4 things which he did which I need to remind myself of as I face giants that stock me.

1. He remembered what he ought to forget and didn't forget what he ought to remember. Question: How long have your giants been stalking you? Goliath's family had been stalking Israel for generations. While Joshua had driven them out of the Promised Land 300 years before, they were still hassling Israel. Saul could have said "not again, my dad and grand father fought them". Maybe you have groaned similar words "I'm becoming a workaholic just like my dad, or divorce cuts through our family tree like a chainsaw or mom couldn't keep a friend either, will it ever stop?" Or maybe you have a tremendous talent to chronicle in amazing detail all the failures and defeats of your life. Yet we forget so quickly the victories which God has brought into our lives and the lives of those around us.

In (1 Samuel 17:33-35) Saul points out David's tiny size and lack of victories as a warrior, David's response was that he filed that under important information to forget. Then he called upon his memory of important memories to be remembered. He took the time to recall when he grabbed the bear and lion by their chinnies and killed them, and by doing that recalled how God could bring victory even at such a frightening time. He purposely didn't focus on his weakness, but instead focused on the power he had seen as God had helped him overcome a problem in his life. When you become afraid, do you focus on the victories you have seen God accomplish or on your failures and weaknesses? Feed the fire of your faith with memories and testimonies that will help your faith burn strong within you.

2. Make sure that the only giant in your life in your GOD not a Goliath

There were only 2 ways David could look at the situation he was facing. He could look at it through Goliath's eyes or God's eyes. Through Goliath's eyes (1 Samuel 17:43) all Goliath thought was that an unfair fight was about to happen with a little boy with a shepherd's staff. Or you could look at it through the eyes of God (1 Samuel 17:45) it was an unfair fight, for Goliath was about to take on the God of the universe, whose power created our world with the movement of His finger. In Goliath's eyes David was too little to hurt him. In David's eyes Goliath was too big to miss. It is all a matter of perspective.

It is so easy to only hear the voice of our Goliaths, instead of hear the voice of God in our situation. Did you notice that David showed up discussing God? The soldiers, David's brothers and Saul never mentioned God once, yet almost every time David spoke he mentioned God. For he saw a subplot happening just below the surface, it was not David vs. Goliath, it was God against Goliath. While he still saw Goliath in front of him, he saw more of God. I believe for our generation this has become more difficult because a shift has happened in our view of us and of our view of God. I heard a Jewish scholar say the other night that if you look at the Old Testament you will see that they believed in a huge God and a little us. Yet a shift has happened, in that today we believe in a huge (I) and a small God. We are the center of this universe that is why we need an iPod, iPad and our iPhones. The problem is that when Giants stalk us, it doesn't take long until (we/I) can't handle the battle and we need a huge God again. The Old Testament 'David's story' is great news, we still have a big GOD. Like David we need to make sure that the only giant in your life in your GOD not a Goliath or ourselves. How do you do that?

3. In silence choose the right Ammunition

Keeping in mind (1 Samuel 17:45) which explains the weapons in which Goliath brought into battle was a huge sword, a spear with a 25 lb head, a Javelin kept in a scabbard on his back and a shield barrier standing in front of him with a 7 foot shield. Now flip back to (1 Samuel 17:40). Often people want to talk about why he picked up 5 stones when he only used one and I think by doing that they missed the point of why this verse was put there. Remember from the moment David stood on that hillside and heard Goliath bellowing about how his life has been phonetic with action.

David was talking to soldiers, being put down by his brother, dragged into Saul's tent, and tried putting on the king's armor. He hasn't had a moment to himself, a moment to in silence draw strength from God. My belief is that right here beside the brook he took extra

time, picking up more stones than he would need. For it was at this brook (in prayer) he asked for God's blessings and stood in his faith before God, dedicating himself and the battle to the glory of God. The result of those quiet moments by the brook was that minutes later, standing only feet in front of this giant, David could roar in confidence what he had been given in the quietness by the brook. (1 Samuel 17:45, 46) This is so crucial, yet so easy to forget in the shadow of our giants, it is in the silence when we grasp the fact that God is God and that those giants that come against us are only midgets compared to Him. So don't forget that it will be in those times of silence when we are the victors over our giants. So when the fears arise, find a place of quiet to focus back on who is our real tower of strength.

4. In most cases you must face your Giants all alone

I need to state this so you are prepared. When David walked down into the valley no army stepped in behind him, he walked all by himself. As you face the giants that stock your soul, be they a temptation, a fear, a loss or as you are wrestling about how to handle that hard situation or person. While at times we can call a friend for help. Often, a key part of the battle will need to be fought alone, just you and God. If you can, call on a friend to walk with you, but know that like David, when you are alone, you are never alone, for God walks with you. That leads us to the most important part of this sermon.

II. REMEMBER whose battle it is

With 1000's of Philistines on one side, 1000's of Israelis on the other side, David walks down into the ravine, the creek bed and drops to his knees. You can cut the tension with a knife. Someone asks "What is he doing?" Another man says "I think he is looking for pebbles" David picks up 5 small stones (Why 5? I think it was because he wasn't sure he could take Goliath down with one rock, you see he had never killed a giant before, only a bear and a lion) {Confidence wrapped in humility}. Then Goliath picks up his 7ft. shield (weighing in at 25lb., and his spear and yells "Am I a dog that you send a little kid with a stick to kill me?" David fingers a smooth stone, looks up and says "prepare to die." How could he be so sure of what would happen? (1 Samuel 17:47) "The Battle is the Lord's" David had no chance in the world to beat Goliath in a battle of his own strength, but the fight wasn't just his, it was God's. His strength wasn't in this ability it was God's strength that he was leaning on. Remember the only giant that David saw on the field that day was God. The other Guy was just a dwarf compared to his God.

As you face the battle which could stop your ministry, hurt your home, an addiction which could ruin your life, a temptation which could bind you, a loss you think will swallow up your joy forever or that fear or phobia which wants to strangle your life and steal your sleep, whose battle is it? Is it yours alone? Or does your heavenly father have an interest in the outcome.

David said, 'God this is your battle, not mine'. And he took his hands off the situation and placed it squarely in the hands of God. How many battles are you facing, how much worry are you carrying which isn't yours in the first place? David said, 'it may be my eye, hand or sling you will use, but God, this is your battle. And the sling went around and around and a giant who was so certain of his victory threw back his head in laughter just enough to shift his helmet and expose his forehead. And 100,000 soldiers who had bet against David because he had no

chance, watched as this kid dropped the giant with a pebble. As the ground shook and the giant breathed his last, everyone caught what David had known all along. No giant can stand before the power of the God of the universe. No Giant can stand before the children of God when they stand in faith and let Him do the battle on their behalf. Isn't it time you let go and let God into that situation you have been facing? You can give it to him because "The Battle is the Lord's"

Know that when your giant falls it will make it easier for others to move out in courage (1 Samuel 17:52). Once David stood in faith and a miracle happened, faith grew in the army of Israel. Know that as you step out in faith, others will follow. Your faith will help their faith grow. Make sure your Trophy room is well stocked

I'll bet you have never seen this (1 Samuel 17:51; 54) David took the sword and placed it in his tent. For whatever he faced in the future he wanted a 'visual memory' of what the Lord can do when he stepped out in faith. You and I need to visually and spiritually keep in the trophy rooms of our mind lists and stories of what God has done in our lives so when future giants stock our lives, we can remember what God can do. Use them to strengthen our faith.

The battle is the Lord's, a number of years ago when I was looking at this passage I put tape on the back wall to show how big Goliath was, and then in order to show the contrast I stood below it. After explaining what Goliath said, I yelled David's response "The battle is the Lord's". It was as if the words blew right through me, I lost my breath and almost went down. It was as if the Lord was saying "preacher this is for you as well." About 25-30 other people said they experienced the same thing that morning. The point is God wants to personally remind us all that 'The Battle Is the Lords' and as we trust him Giants will fall in our lives.

III. The Result... And as we live this way

We live a life that speaks louder than words could. In (Acts 13:22) over 1000 years later despite God having some colossal ups and downs in his life that 'David was a man after God's own heart' other's around him noticed his faith and his walk with God. I want my life, my victories over struggles and fears in life to be like that.

We live a life that allows God to speak louder than words. David's actions impacted those around him and showed how powerful and present God could be. As I speak this morning I know that these words are being filtered through so many situations, struggles and for some desperate cries for God to come and slay the giant that stands in front of you. I know that God is powerful enough to make the giant fall. I know that we need to stop at the brook and quietly lay our situation in front of him.

I know that I am supposed to remind you this morning of God's power and care in your life. I know I am called to pray over you his blessing. I know I am called to ask you to once again, place your situation in his hands. And finally, I know I am to remind you that the battle is the Lord's.

