

1 Samuel 17

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Preacher: Hamish Taylor

[0:00] 1st Samuel 17. And we'll go through the event slowly, but it'll be critical at the same time.

We won't dwell for long on anything, so it'll be quite a short sermon. But if we're looking for a text, perhaps the words of Saul to David at the end of verse 37.

And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with you. Through unscripted, and that is really how scripted often speaks to us, we come across small sections like this one that we know so well, that we've known since childhood.

And perhaps we know them so well that we don't think in them too often or too deeply. We just make you remember the event that we were told about this event or that we read it.

But in any case, we know it. And it's an easy, this is an easy event to read, an easy part of the world to read.

[1:30] And we might think also that in reading history, that it is the history of a bygone age, thousands of years ago.

But we can be brought up short when we find in all these accounts something for today. And that happens throughout, in all of scripture.

Because scripture is a living word. It's not a dead word that comes to us from history. It's a living word that speaks to us as truly and as faithfully and as surely today as it did when the events in this history took place.

And tonight, I would like to bring our thoughts around to thinking about this section of scripture on history, which we read.

And I hope that we find truths that also extend beyond time and are available for our encouragement, for reading and for our encouragement and for our blessing here and today.

[2:47] And as we do so, perhaps we could keep in mind these words of Saul to David.

Go and the Lord be with thee. The conflict between the Israelites and the Philistines might have been looked upon as just another one of these wars, which it was.

But within that war came this quite brief event. Possibly if we think of it in terms of time, perhaps a day or two.

No, it doesn't. Because it did not the giant tempt them for 40 days. That gives us a time scale through which this event happened.

This confrontation between the Philistines and the Israelites and the confrontation between David and Goliath, which took perhaps minutes.

[3:55] And it did not only influence the course of that war, but throughout the ages, throughout the ages since then, it has always been looked back on as having been the confrontation, a confrontation which still continues between good and evil.

The continuing confrontation between good and evil. And that is how one of the ways in which this speaks to us in our time.

And the more we think about this, the more we read about it, and the more we observe the event as it's reported to us in this Old Testament, the more we might see that this is not only a confrontation between these two, David the wee fellow and Goliath the giant, a long time ago, but so very similar to the conflicts which have gone on since then and continue to go on this very day.

The continuing conflict between good and evil on the battlefield of the human heart. And I remember hearing once that the conflict between good and evil was between two entities and somebody looking on.

The two entities were good and evil, and the battlefield was the human heart. And the passion looking on was also that human heart.

[5:48] And that all it took to win the conflict was for that human heart to choose which side it was to support.

And here we are, good and evil again, in confrontation on a physical battlefield, and someone, the most unlucky person, choosing which side you would support.

Well, let's see. Let's first of all compare the two people.

David, the youngster, not old enough or big enough to do anything else except look after his father's sheep and perhaps bring sandwiches to the brothers.

And there's so little said about him, there's really so little to say about him. And still, do we not identify with him? And can we not already, even knowing we're reading so little about him, we can already feel for him?

[7:09] We can associate ourselves with him. And then there's this Philistine champion. And there's so much written about him that we could draw a picture of him.

In fact, there's a program on television right now, on Sky, called King David. And I happened to push a button and it came up the other night. And this event was being portrayed.

And Goliath appeared, just as we'll read of him, in his account. And a huge man, he was, a huge man towering over nine feet tall.

He wore a brass helmet on his head and he wore a cuirass weighing in a measure, well, before metric, over a hundred weight.

A brass shin guards, arm guards, and a breastplate. And he carried a spear with a shaft, as is told there, as thick as a weaver's loomspindle with an iron tip that alone weighed a stone, fourteen pounds, six and a half kilos.

[8:34] That was the tip of the spear. And it was always like a big oar. The size of a big, big oar.

With an iron tip that weighed six and a half kilos. And here was a giant of a man. Perhaps three times David's size in all proportions.

But apart from his size, his presence made itself felt wherever he went because he carried an aura, an influence that made itself felt wherever he was.

An influence which surely we can also feel. A presence of which we can be aware when we imagine it. The presence and the aura of total evil.

The presence of a dark influence so much bigger than our shells and threatening us and towering over us. The conflict that he said between good and evil.

[9:51] At verse 24, we didn't read that but all the men of this year when they saw him they ran away for they were afraid.

But no matter where they ran, how far they ran, Goliath showed up every morning and every evening to challenge them. And he did this for 40 days and 40 evenings.

Now, I wonder whether this is not the same with us. If we are aware of the fact if not the presence of evil or temptation call it what you will stalking us we may yield to it or we may run away from it.

But whether we run away from it or not it is still there it is still biting at our heels and challenging us every day from morning to evening just like Goliath.

David was the youngster of the family. He was the shepherd and he was the one who spent his time alone with the sheep and with the wild animals and with God.

[11:22] He learned that trust in God could overcome any obstacle and any opponent. Remember his witness to Saul the Lord who saved me from the lion and from the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.

complete and doubting faith. The word and the expression of doubt-free faith and confidence in God as his protector.

God who has taken me thus far will be with me. And at least for those of us who have come a long way along the journey can we not also adopt these words as a warning.

These words are faith and doubted faith and doubt-free faith just as I said. The God who has taken me thus far will he not continue to be with me.

And we know that God fails not and that he is with us our step of the way. That is evil rather good and evil and we see the faith of David and then we come to the commendation of Saul and we read that verse 37.

[13:04] David said just what we said he who delivered me from the lion and the bear will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And we read and Paul said unto David go and the Lord be with thee.

Now in my mind I hear Saul saying that and I hear a commendation that perhaps reflects more desperate hope than confident faith.

Go and the Lord be with you. All necessity was shaking his head when I was saying it. Reflecting more desperate hope than confident faith.

But which hopefully after we have studied this event a little bit more reflecting in us more of the faith of David than the hope of Saul.

Go said Saul and the Lord be with thee. And then at the next verse and Saul armed David with his own armor and gave him a helmet of brass and a coat of mail.

[14 : 29] And then when we look at that and we think we see Saul dressing David in this armor. And then when we remember what the giant wore, Saul is actually clothing David with armor similar to that of Goliath.

He gave him a shield and he gave him a sword and he gave him chain name. In armor similar to that of Goliath.

And perhaps we might say that Saul clothed good in the armor of evil. Certainly Saul, like Goliath, and like most of most of humanity placed more faith in the cumbersome armor of humanity than in the infallible protection of God.

Saul sought to confront evil on evil's terms. But David's faith argued against that.

David did tie the armor on, but he just didn't feel comfortable with it. It didn't fit him.

[16 : 05] This armor was not him. And that is a reminder to us of two things. Three things.

One, we have already tripped over confronting evil on evil's terms on or in similar ways.

But secondly, our own armor will not protect us. Our humanity, far from being our strength, is our greatest weakness.

And we cannot and we must not rely on the armor. This is the third point. We cannot and we must not rely on the armor of another human being, like Saul was giving it to David.

Because the armor of another will not protect us. Our only protection is that being constantly offered to us individually by God.

[17 : 20] God giving us armor that fits us and that works only for us in his name and with his blessing.

And then at verse 40, we're really skipping over this quite fast but it gives us perhaps points to think about on our own and that is what the sermon is all about.

And then we move on to verse 40. David took his stuff in his hand and out of the brook he chose five smooth stones.

out of the brook he chose five small stones. Now, I often wonder why did he choose five?

Why did he take five? Because we now know he only needed one. was this a very human and very understandable human safeguard?

[18 : 34] And if it was, you can almost picture God smiling down David, smiling down his forgiveness hands. And perhaps after the task was over and David drumming about in his bag and finding the other four stones, the other four unused and the necessary stones, whether God gently reminded him and asked him, did you really think that you would need five?

that. It's just a point to be thinking about and wondering about and seeing we are all human and David was human and our faith is not perfect and faithful, full of faith though David was, his faith was not perfect.

It is God's understanding of forgiveness. Did you really think that you need more than one? It's a very fine dividing line between living wholly and passively on faith and acting on faith and I don't know with you but I don't think God would condemn anyone for accidentally spraying a little bit over that line if that's what David did.

42 And when the first time he looked about and saw David he disdained him. He disdained him. When evil saw good he disdained him for he was but a youth and of a fair complexion.

The characteristic attitude of evil to good. The characteristic attitude of humanity to faith. Disdain and ridicule particularly in the relationship between human sinfulness and him who is the personification of all that is rude.

[20 : 51] And perhaps in our time we should be able to identify that more than at any other time. Isaiah described that.

he is despised and rejected of men. Evil disdained good. David said to Goliath at verse 45 You come to me with a sword and a spear and a shield.

Good being threatened and threatened on every side. threatened and assaulted by everything defensive and offensive that evil could throw at it.

That evil could use against it. But I said David come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts. Good showing its colors.

Good giving its witness. Good declaring its authority. good dependent not on human skill or contrivance or power but on faith in its master and its source.

[22 : 11] God and when the Philistine rose and came to meet David David hastened and ran towards the army to meet the Philistine.

Here we see the evil giant coming to meet David and we see David running to meet him running to confront him. Good not fearing evil in spite of unbelievable fearsome odds.

Good allied to confident faith. A formidable combination and Goliath was sent to find this out.

So David prevailed we read at verse 50 over the Philistine and smoot the Philistine with a stone and slew him.

But there was no sorrow in the hand of David. David had used the simplest of weapons. Good prevailed over evil using the simplest of weapons but in the name and with the blessing of Almighty God.

[23 : 32] And this conflict confrontation is not the history as I said perhaps at the beginning of a bygone age.

The confrontation between David and Goliath was an individual incident in general warfare. And doesn't this monster and this giant and this Goliath rear up to confront us as individuals every day if we are aware of it?

every day on the turbulent battlefield of our own hearts. Paul also felt this and he knew others felt it and he advised them and us.

He advised them and us and he reminds us of the weapons which are most effective in that great conflict. And we see that in his epistle to the Ephesians chapter 6 verses 10 and 11 to start with.

Finally my brethren be strong with the Lord and in the power of his might put on the whole armor of God that he may be able to stand against the wise of the devil.

[24 : 53] And then he says literally on verse 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that he may be able to stand in the evil day and having done all to stand stand therefore having your loins geared about his truth and having on the desperate of righteousness and on your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace above all taking the shield of faith bywith he shall be able to quench all the fire and douch of the wicked and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit and watching thereunto all the perseverance and supplication for all saints go said

Saul more in hope than in faith and the Lord be with you go said Christ to his disciples and God says to us go in faith and lo look if you open your eyes and if you see and if you think I am with you always Amen the God has listened to these few things of gospel heart these are means you guys have let rep one Bye