



northminster presbyterian church

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SCRIPTURE: Mark 4:35-41 1 Samuel 17:1,4-11,19-23,32-49

SERMON: The Goliath Factor (Rev. Susan Haynes)

Beginning last week, we began a series on the life of David and we have titled it, David: King Con? Last Sunday, we saw God leading Samuel to anoint David, the youngest son of Jesse, as the future King of Israel, passing over all of David's older brothers. We were reminded that God does not judge according to outward appearances, but rather by what is in the heart. It might have been helpful for Goliath to have recognized that one cannot be judged just by their outward appearance!

Goliath was a big man. Six cubits and a span, almost 10 feet tall! Even if David was an average sized man, Goliath was still almost twice as big. I get the impression David was not full-grown yet. He was called "just a boy" by Saul.

David quickly assures King Saul that although he is "just a boy" he has come up against "Goliaths" before... "Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God... the Lord who saved me from the paw of the lion and the bear will save me from the hand of this Philistine."

David convinces King Saul he's up to the task. David even refuses to wear King Saul's armor for protection. Instead, David goes to the brook, chooses five smooth stones and with those and his slingshot goes out to deal with Goliath.

Now think about how Goliath must feel. He had been strutting around for 40 days, spewing all kinds of invectives at the Israelites, challenging them to put their best soldier up against him. And they send... *a boy??* He must have been seething inside!

Goliath hurls insult after insult at David. But David's ultimate words: "...the Lord does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand" ring true. David kills Goliath, striking him in the one vulnerable spot in all that armor Goliath is wearing.

What is your Goliath? What is that great big giant of an obstacle in your life that seems unbeatable, insurmountable and impossible? What is that thing, or things, that you think might just be your undoing? What is the Goliath in your life that might just have you thinking about throwing in the towel?

Perhaps you have met Goliath in the past. Maybe Goliath is troubling you right now. Whether we admit it or not, most of us have a Goliath or two in our lives.

And we don't just have our personal Goliaths. Our families have Goliaths that haunt and taunt us. Our church families have Goliaths that haunt and taunt us. Do we dare to name our Goliaths? If we name them, then we recognize them, and are forced to do something about them.

Let's think together about some of the Goliaths that might be looming in our personal lives and in our corporate lives:

- ~ Addiction Alcohol - prescription drugs, sex, our work.
- ~ Fear of failure - somehow we won't measure up to others expectations.
- ~ The end of the money arrives before the end of the month arrives.
- ~ Loneliness - how much longer do I have to go home everyday to an empty house?
- ~ A marriage that is less than what we thought it would be.
- ~ Chronic or life threatening illness that makes us feel like a burden upon our families and friends.
- ~ Worry that paralyzes us.

I want to share with you one of the Goliaths in my life. My constant Goliath is trying to put my head and heart around what God thinks about different things and how God would have me respond to those things.

Do you remember several years ago when we went through the WWJD, What Would Jesus Do, phase? Bracelets, t-shirts, caps. You name it, if it was something that could be printed on, you could find WWJD printed on it.

Oh how I wish it was that simple...to ask one's self, "What Would Jesus Do?" and the answer would automatically be revealed. There are those for whom that works; they know the answer immediately. Give them a situation and they can tell you what Jesus would do in that situation.

I am not one of those people. Perhaps I don't know or understand the Bible as well as those folks. Perhaps I don't understand human nature as well as they do. Perhaps they never have to ask God, "*Are you there?*"

I struggle with understanding where God's mind and heart lies with all kinds of issues. For instance, I struggle to understand what God would have us to do about the US involvement in Iraq.

I know some of you could tell me very quickly what God's mind is about that! What is the right thing to do? Is the US Goliath in this story, looking out for its own interests? Is the US David in this story, facing great evil? For me, it is all very complicated and I desperately want to know what God thinks.

I realize that some, perhaps many of you, believe you know what God thinks about this situation and are ready to share that with me. I am envious of your certainty. *But God has not gotten me there yet.*

Perhaps it makes you uncomfortable to hear one of your pastors admit they don't know the answer to something that casts such a dark cloud on our lives. That she wakes up in the middle of the night and wonders and worries about such things.

I'm sorry if my Goliath makes you uncomfortable. It certainly makes me uncomfortable! It would be so much easier for me if I could know the mind and heart of God regarding every issue that faces me. Until the time comes that I do, I believe the one thing I can take from David's encounter with Goliath is from what David himself said in Psalm 27:1: "*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*"

Today I want to encourage you to *confront* your Goliath. I want to encourage you to deal with this enemy that robs your life of hope and joy. I want you to join with me, and even in the uncertainty and the doubt and the fear, let us declare together, "*The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*" That my friends is the good news from the story of David and Goliath.

During our Church Family News time, I asked you to address to yourself the envelope you received this morning. Now I want to invite you to take out the index card you received and write down your Goliath or Goliaths on it. Then put the card in the envelope and seal it. When the offering plate is passed, please place your envelope with the card in it in the offering plate. I will gather them and keep them, unopened.

Our David: King Con theme runs through July 30. On July 31st, I will put all of these envelopes in the mail and your card with your Goliaths noted on them will be returned to you. My prayer is that by the time you receive your Goliath card in the mail, that you will have experienced, even if your Goliath has not been totally defeated, that God is indeed the stronghold of your life and you need not be afraid.

[The congregation fills out the cards while Charlie plays "It Is Well with My Soul"]

"The Lord is the stronghold of our lives; of whom shall we be afraid?" Not even you Goliath... *not even you!!! Amen.*

Mark 4:35-41

35On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."
36And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. 37A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" 39He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. 40He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

1 Samuel 17:1,4-11,19-23,32-49

1Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim.

4And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. 5He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. 6He had greaves of bronze on his legs and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. 7The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and his shield-bearer went before him. 8He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. 9If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." 10And the Philistine said, "Today I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man, that we may fight together." 11When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

19Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. 20David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, took the provisions, and went as Jesse had commanded him. He came to the encampment as the army was going forth to the battle line, shouting the war cry. 21Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. 22David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage, ran to the ranks, and went and greeted his brothers. 23As he talked with them, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him.

32David said to Saul, "Let no one's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." 33Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth." 34But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock, 35I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it. 36Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God." 37David said, "The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine." So Saul said to David, "Go, and may the Lord be with you!" 38Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a bronze helmet on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail. 39David strapped Saul's sword over the armor, and he tried in vain to walk, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them." So David removed them. 40Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the wadi, and put them in his shepherd's bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine. 41The Philistine came on and drew near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. 42When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was only a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. 43The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the field." 45But David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46This very day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head; and I will give the dead bodies of the Philistine army this very day to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand." 48When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David, David ran

quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.

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