

Made for More: David - Faith vs Fear

1 Samuel 16:3-16, 17:33-49; Proverbs 1:7; 2 Corinthians 12:9

We are in the second week of the series “Made for More” where we are looking at the young people of the Bible and how they realized that age doesn’t limit our calling. Last week, we looked at the life of the prophet/judge Samuel, and how obedience to God makes it easier to hear him, and how making room for Him enables us to see His vision. This week, we’ll be looking at the life of David. A focus on his younger days to review the dynamics of Faith vs. Fear.

Background (Saul Rejected):

So when we last left our intrepid heroes, Samuel listened to God and became a Prophet and Judge. Then the people began to envy how strong the other kingdoms looked and asked for a king. This was pretty insulting, seeing as their current King was the God who delivered them out of Egypt.

Samuel warned of what a kingdom becomes...an organization to enrich the king. King Saul was ok at first, but eventually he chose himself over God because the nation had a culture that wanted to praise a celebrity that they could see rather than a benevolent God that escaped their immediate understanding. So Samuel was tasked to select a different king...one that sought God's heart and trusted in God with his own wellbeing enough to have faith in Him.

Read 1 Samuel 16:3-16. After David is anointed king, David was actually called into Saul's service. Saul's disobedience had opened him up to attack. The farther we go from God's camp, the closer we are to the enemy's camp and open ourselves to attack. Saul didn't want to follow God. God accommodated Saul by removing His spirit from him and an 'evil spirit' moved in to torment Saul. (If you think this cannot happen to you in your disobedience, you are most hysterically wrong.)

Saul's attendees recommended a jam session to remedy his demon problem. In God's mercy, David was a musician. Saul sent for David because of his musicianship and David's playing soothed Saul. In my head cannon, this is because God was with David, and God's presence chases such evil away.

Saul is very happy with David and makes him the royal armor bearer. This positions David for his most famous moment, that gives us the best point of analysis of Faith vs Fear.

Goliath (Perspective):

We all know what happens next in the story. The Philistines pick a fight with Saul. David, being affiliated with the king, is naturally going to be involved. He just so happens to be delivering rations to his brothers in the army. Then David hears something.

Back in the day, wars weren't exactly fought how we know them conventionally. Today, we use the resources we have to achieve goals to an end. In ancient times, the point of war was to dominate other cultures in order to secure your culture.

Also, humans were a bit more difficult to come by. Our numbers weren't great so armies occasionally had a tradition in order to avoid mass casualties. (Mass casualties make you weaker towards other enemy nations that may be watching your current campaign, waiting to

strike.) So they came up with something called Monomachy...Champion Combat. This is where each side selects a champion, or set of champions, and the result of this fight decides the battle.

The Philistines proposed a Champion Combat, but their champion was 9 foot tall and, in order to be able to carry his own equipment, a minimum of 400 lbs. Goliath came out and taunted Saul's army. Eventually David heard him and decided to do what everyone else had been afraid to do.

Read 1 Samuel 17:33-49. It's easy to cheapen this by saying, 'oh wow David is so brave'. But take note of how David acted.

1.) Let's talk about the lion. Did David kill the lion? Yes. But who did David give credit to? God. Why?

Let's do the math. David, male, 12-19 years at the time he tended sheep. If David was an absolute unit, he'd be 180 lbs. No fangs. No claws. No sword. He has a club.

A Persian Lion, male, 6-9ft long, 250-400 lbs. Fangs. Claws. Attitude. David had no business winning this fight. It makes sense to give God credit for that fight.

2.) David openly spoke that he relied on God rather than weapons. He was practically unarmed and again relying on God. Pretty cut and dry.

3.) How many stones did David grab? Five. 2 Samuel shines some light on this. Goliath had 4 brothers. David didn't just have faith that God would deliver him from the giant in front of him. David planned to fall all the other giants in his future. He assumed God's victory.

This shows us his faith. David had no illusion about God's control. Not with lions, not with one giant, not with 5 giants. In all his obstacles, David understood that it was God's right to give and take.

David had an advantage. This advantage makes Faith easy to achieve and is called perspective. We will face troubles, distractions, loud-scary-unpleasant giants in our life. However, if we can just take a fraction of a moment to realize that none of our history is a surprise to God and that we have only to trust/seek Him and to trust in His transformative process, the obstacles mean nothing. God deals with obstacles. We deal with leaning into Christ and following Him. *What is that to thee, follow thou me.* (John 21:22) The obstacles we face serve as nothing more than an opportunity to trust Him. "*Ab omnis, occasionibus.*" From all, opportunity.

Set Apart:

It's tough to think of our obstacles and tragedies as opportunities. One could ask, and I encourage you to ask, why would God need to give you giants to face? Why would God give us tragedies to overcome? Why wouldn't God simply take Goliath out Himself? Wouldn't that make the same point?

To answer this, let's take a look at God's mode of operation (Excluding Jesus). First, choose a human who is usually obedient to God and rejected by people or at least someone that no human would pick for the job. Then, have that human announce God's intention. Finally, deliver a victory through said human. Some examples are David, Moses, Noah, Abraham, Esther, Deborah... None of these were supposed to be on the A-Team.

So why allow us to face giants? Why pick the runts to take them on? Well this selection process has another name. Setting apart. Anointing. Making holy.

God could handle the giants, but we humans are a bit thick. We can give credit to anything of our choosing. For example, when God led His nation out of Egypt, Moses left for how long before Israel immediately panicked and credited their freedom to a 'magic' cow that they made up? Notice how this mistake was not made until Moses was out of sight.

God doesn't set apart champions so you can talk about how great these champions are. God selects champions in such a way that their victories must be credited to Him.

If God splits the red sea, witnesses could call it a natural happening. But when unqualified Moses splits the sea, it becomes apparent that this is the doing of the God which Moses is loyal to.

If God delivers the exiles from Haman's plot, it could be seen as political subterfuge. But if Esther steps out in courage, it becomes apparent that this is the God of Esther working through her.

If God fell Goliath, the Philistines could claim any of their pantheon of gods could have passed judgment on him. But if David, the runt, fell Goliath, it becomes apparent that it's the God of David that fights for him.

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9. It's the use of loyal and unqualified persons that is the evidence of things unseen...using a power that is not ours, and a loyalty that is God's.

A proper perspective bolsters Faith...and Faith is a mighty shield. But there are some things that can kill your Faith.

Mistakes (What Happened):

David had a lot of credit to his name when he was young. As many of us know, this wouldn't last. David would go on to make mistakes.

I don't want to focus on them, as this is a case study on David's faith, how it comes about, and why God gives us opportunities to find faith. But I do want to ask the question. What happened? Did David lose his perspective on Who's in control? Did he lose his faith?

When we think of David's mistakes: polygamy (1 Samuel 25), taking a census. (2 Samuel 24), arranging for his friend to perish so he could justify his coveting and scandal (2 Samuel 11)...these involve getting 'caught up' in what a king was expected to do. These are all 'celebrity' actions of his day.

Kings took many wives to show off even though Deuteronomy had forbidden it. They were ignoring God's vision for what love looks like.

Kings counted their soldiers to show off and assess their own strength. Ignoring that God told David that He Himself would be David's strength, he was focusing on his own nation's greatness rather than God's greatness.

Kings made their own law rather than submit to it, murdering whoever they wished and taking whoever they wished. They were making their own way rather than humbling themselves before a greater way.

Fear of the Lord:

All of David's mistakes didn't involve a lack of *Faith* in God. They involved a lack of *Fear* of God. We often say here, *Faith over Fear*. We actually mean *Faith in God over Fear of the world*.

We can look at young David and easily see why we should have Faith that God will deliver us when we face evil. We seldom think about how this dynamic changes when we choose to become that evil.

If we turn from God, and choose to be our own celebrity at the expense of others, all the power that delivered us from evil in the past is now levied against us. We see God provide and provide and we come to almost expect it. Our expectation becomes a sense of entitlement. Before we know it, we act as if we're God's favorite and He'll never oppose us no matter what we try to pull.

David was probably told about how great he was for so long that he trusted in his own greatness over the One that put him there. David didn't lose Faith in God. David lost his perspective on what God's power works against. Evil.

If we oppose evil, God backs us and that invokes faith. If we produce evil, God opposes us and that should invoke fear...and it is best when this thought provokes fear beforehand.

Read Proverbs 1:7. Faith has its purpose when we face giants in life, but there is still one thing we ought to be afraid of...opposing the source of Good Himself.

Faith in our own greatness is foolishness whereas faith in God is peace. Fear of the world lacks perspective, whereas the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Both faith and fear have their proper place, and the propriety of their placement is determined by their orientation to God.

Conclusion:

If we have Faith that God can deliver us when we are FOR Him, we should have an equal Fear of God when we are AGAINST Him. He tolerates NO Evil. He cannot. To be good is to deny evil. To rescue us from our own evil, that's where Jesus comes in.

We must not Fear the world, but we must Fear what our own evil means in terms of how it separates us from God and locks us in opposition to Him.

We must not have Faith in our own abilities, we must have faith in what God has done in order to deal with the giants we face and what God has done to deal with our own evil. This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Fear how your evil keeps you from good. Have faith that God intends to reconcile us to himself by looking at how Jesus the Son allowed us to treat him without retaliation. Have faith that his forgiveness can deal with our evil where we cannot.

Reflection Questions:

- Why did God allow David to face the giant instead of defeating Goliath Himself?
- What are some 'giants' you have had to face or are facing now?
 - Have you/are you trusting God with faith to defeat the 'giant'?
 - Have you given God credit for the victory or claimed it for yourself?
- In what ways have we lost our fear of God as a society?
 - In what ways have you personally lost your fear of God?
 - What steps can be taken to fear God more than fearing the world?