

**In the Name of the Lord Almighty**

1 Samuel 17:1-58 (Key verse 45)

*You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.*

This is a very famous passage about the fight between Goliath and David. Even non Christians know about this famous story. It is a story that touches anyone because we can quickly relate with it our life journey appears to be about fighting our way through life. There are a number of things we can talk about from this amazing story, however today will focus on the heart of David on how he trusted in the Almighty God. What do we trust in to fight our battles against sinfulness, fears of life uncertainties and so on? I pray that we may learn today, that is not by sword or spear that we shall win our life battles but through trusting in the name of the Almighty God. May the Lord help us renew our trust and faith in our Lord Jesus through this passage? Amen.

Look at verse 1-2, "Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Sokoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Sokoh and Azekah. 2Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines." The Philistines occupied one hill whereas the Israelites another. The Philistines had one of the world's bravest man called Goliath. He was a world champion of note, he was about 2.7m tall, wore a scale armor of bronze that weighed 57kg and had many other military gadgets which Israel could never compete with on a 1:1 basis [3-7]. This great champion of the world terrorized Israel and wanted a challenge.

Look at verse 8-11, "Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. 9If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." 10Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." 11On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified." When Saul and Israel heard his words, they became dismayed and terrified. They became directionless and terrified, Goliath brought great terror upon Israel. For obvious reasons he was giant man with massive military gadgets. Probably his voice roared like that of a lion.

Now look at verse 17-18, "17Now Jesse said to his son David, "Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. 18Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them." David was the last born son from eight sons of Jesse. Three of Jesse's oldest sons had followed Saul to the battle field. David's routine was to tend the sheep, however this time around his father Jesse asked him to go give some food to his brothers and to also just check up on them. In verse 20-21, we read that David left early in the morning and reached the camp as the army was going out to battle positions. Look at verse 22-24, "David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and asked his brothers how they were. 23As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. 24Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him in great fear." The lord had orchestrated to have David at that place, while the men fell into great terror and fear over Goliath, David had a different response, look at verse 26b, "...Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that **he should defy the armies of the living God?**" David was just a young boy with no military training, and humanly speaking he was even at the place he was not supposed to be, near the battle line. All he had to do was to bring some food for his brothers and report back to his father about their well being. That is why even his older brother Eliab burned with anger at David when he heard David talking to the men [28]. He did not have much respect for David to contribute anything significant at the camp, that he said in verse 28, "...you come down only to watch the battle" However, this insignificant little boy said something that pieced the hearts of the men such that it was even reported to Saul. Look at verse 31, "What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him." David was even sent to Saul because of what he said. Now let us look careful at what David said.

"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God." Firstly, David recognised though Goliath was a champion, he was but an uncircumcised Philistine. This means they had no covenant with the Living God, they were a people who lived according to their own desires and human laws. A people who

surrendered their lives to man made gods such as money, fame, reputation, respect, human honour and so on. Whereas Israel was a nation that had an everlasting covenant with the living God and the symbol of their covenant was their circumcision. The living God was their protector and saviour because of the covenant he made with them. This means they had a relationship with the living God and that is why David further questions how Goliath can come against the armies of the living God. How could he defy such an army, David could not understand this because he trusted in the living God. David showed a firm and practical faith in the living God and his words were reported even to Saul.

Let us now look at what David said when he was brought to Saul in verse 32, "David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." Not only did David utter words of trust in the Lord, he was ready to live out his faith. He was ready to demonstrate what he meant. This inexperienced young boy in military affairs was ready to go fight Goliath. Saul even tried to discourage David from proceeding, that he was only a young boy whereas Goliath had been a warrior from his youth [33]. How could this young shepherd boy who had experience of tending sheep have a chance with the military champion of the world? It was because David trusted in the living God, He shared with Saul how the lord rescued him while tending his sheep. Look at verse 36-37, "Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, **because he has defied the armies of the living God.** 37The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." David had a personal encounter with the saving hand of God. David's words of faith were not some motivational speech to convince himself to fight Goliath, he had a lived experience of the saving grace of God. He saw and experience first hand the power of God while fighting a lion and a bear. He overcame the Lion and the bear not through calculations or trusting in himself, but because he trusted in the Lord Almighty. And so he could not sit still and watch this uncircumcised Philistine defy the armies of the living God. In other words, it was not about Israel as a nation that was at stake, but the name of the almighty God because he says they had defied the armies of the living God. So it was not a matter of how great and strong Goliath was, but to David it was a matter of trusting in the Lord, the Living God. In this way Goliath was not a match even though David was a small boy. He knew that though a small insignificant boy in matters of war, the living God of the armies of Israel will deliver him.

So Saul seeing absolute trust David had in the living God, agreed to allow David fight Goliath [37]. They tried dressing David with Saul military attire. However it was heavy for David and he was not used to it, so he took it off [38-39]. Let us look at verse 40 on what David took, "Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine." And Goliath was not pleased to realize that he was given a boy to fight with and uttered a number of curses towards David. Look at verse 43-44, "Am I a dog," he said to David, "that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44"Come here," he called to David, "and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!" Such words were supposed to have crippled David and make him run away for his life, like how Israel had been doing. Such words were supposed to terrify David, also just the way Goliath looked, his determination to kill David should have given David some ticks of fear to run. Everyone would have understood had he ran away like others, because in any case everyone had been running away from Goliath in great fear. However, it was not about the people, it was not even about himself. In fact had David calculated how he could win over Goliath, he would have ran away for his life.

Let us look at the key verse 45, "David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied." It was about a person who was greater than both Goliath, David and the nation of Israel. It was about the name of the Almighty God. The God of the armies of the Israel. It was clear to David that the Philistine was coming against him with sword and spear and javelin. David was not trying to diminish the powerful weapons Goliath was coming against him with. David knew full well what a sword, spear and javelin could do to him. That Goliath could skilfully throw the javelin at David at a far distance, his sword could skilfully cut off his heard. Goliath and his weaponry was so significant that even the most experienced fighter in Israel ran away in fear. How could David face up with Goliath. Let us look again at the key verse, "David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel..." David's weapon was not a sword, spear of javelin, but the name of the Almighty God. David trusted in the Lord Almighty, we can learn further what it means to come in the name of the Lord Almighty. Firstly it means that,

it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves, look at verse 47a, **"All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's...."** David's weapon was the Lord Almighty, the battle is not won through sword or spear but in trusting in name of the Lord Almighty. **Secondly, it is the Lord who will fight the battle.** All that David had to do was to trust in the name of the Lord Almighty. David fully trusted in the Lord to fight this battle for Israel. There was no reason for David to try calculate and rely on his human strength to defeat Goliath. David's strength was his trust in the Almighty God. David could then with absolute faith say in verse 46, "This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel."

Look at verse 48-49, "As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. 49 Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground." Goliath has military gadgets that covered and protected him, however God guided David's stone nicely that it went through into his forehead. And so David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, without sword or spear in his hand [50].

We are confronted with a number of Goliaths in our lives, things that when we look at them, fill us with fear. Like the Israelites we too pray and feel empowered in our private prayer places. However when we go out there into the world we run away and become paralyzed with fear. I remember before I got married, marriage was something that I feared to enter into. I got worried about whether I will be happy and survive marriage life. I have a friend who got a divorce and another friend who used to contemplate divorce. I do not believe in divorce once married, however I wondered if I could cope in marriage to keep my vows till the end because marriage is for life. And so since I am a very calculative person, and worse part did engineering which also teaches us to calculate everything. I tried hard to make sure the person I marry is the right one. Which is in itself an illusion because the person you marry will change and is bound to change, so the right person now will change, which means there is no such a thing as the right person. However in any case, these calculations only resulted in more stress and uncertainty. It was through much prayer and the word of God that I could step into marriage. By the grace of God I could trust in God and His word to carry me through marriage life. The almighty God helped me hold on to his word through Haggai, to instead of focusing on how big and strong Goliath is, I should rather trust God who wants to use me to serve in making his name great and known to others. God wants the world to know that it is not by sword or spear that he saves, but is it by trusting in his almighty name.

I also know that certain courses can terrorise students. During my undergraduate studies, there was a certain course that terrorised us. We heard terrible stories about it, students repeating their studies to 7 years because that course. Some of us may have that course that is just terrorizing you? Family issues or conflicts that have been difficult to resolve. University supervisors can also be a sight of terror, I was not aware that one of my Masters student great had great fear coming to see me for consultations. One day he told me that he could not explain well himself when I asked him questions because he was afraid of me. In this case I was like a Goliath to him. What have you been relying on in fighting our Goliath? Eph 6:12 tells us that, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Some of us have families with generational issues or what some call curses. Some it is strong holds of a chain of un-forgiveness that keeps affecting future generations. Many of our life deepest fears are rooted in sin. Fundamentally a Goliath is anything that infused fear and terror in our life such that God cannot be glorified through our life. In that way it is an enemy of God. What do we rely on to fight our Goliaths?

David showed that by faith and trusting in the almighty God, we can fight our Goliath. The sword or spear are our calculations and human strength on fighting a battle. However, David demonstrated in real life that, God does not save through sword or spear, but through trusting in his Almighty name. Like David we are called to make the world know that there is an almighty God who is living and eager to save us from the power of sin. How will our friends and family know that it is not by sword or spear that we will be saved and overcome the burden and weight of this life? I pray that we may repent and trust in the living God, our Lord and saviour Jesus who is ready to save anyone who but place their trust in him. As the Bible says not by might nor by power, but by the spirit of God [Zechariah 4:6].

In Conclusion, in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 we read, "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." Looking at Jesus he also did not use weapons of this world to overcome the power of sin. Jesus' weapon was His heavenly father, he trusted God and did all that God willed him to do. Instead of killing his enemies, Jesus laid down his life in accordance with God's will. And in this way he saved all peoples on earth.

So in the same way we need to use God's divine weapon which is the word of God and prayer and the gospel in order to win victory over our enemy, the power of sin and death and Satan and all kinds of arguments and pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God. If we use weapons of this world we will lose God's blessing to know him and trust in Him. Because David trusted in the living Almighty God, he could show the world that, it is not by spear or sword that we are saved. But it is through trusting in Jesus, the salvation work he has already completed for us. And the work that Jesus is continuing to do. I pray that we may place our trust in Jesus, the word of God, prayer and experience God's saving work anew. Amen.