

## Flawed Hero: Facing Goliath

Jake Barker | 1 Samuel 17:1-58

---

Well, hey Traders Point. I hope you are having a great weekend so far. So excited that you are here especially if you are new or you're just getting to know us. We are so glad that you would come and hang out with us this morning. I especially want to welcome those of you who are watching online. We are so grateful to have all of you here.

This is week two of our summer series called *Flawed Hero*. We're going to be studying through the life of David. Over the summer our lead pastor, Aaron, is on a sabbatical that our elders have graciously given to him. He gets some well deserved time to rest and love on his family and recoup for the fall—he'll be re-energized for that. So if you could, be praying for him this summer as he is out and being refueled by the Lord. That would be awesome.

For now, we're going to be in our series called *Flawed Hero*. We're studying through the life of David. If you have your Bibles or a Bible app, I would love for you to join me in 1 Samuel, chapter 17. First Samuel 17 is where we are going to be hanging out. You can get a head start and head that way.

Now, before we dive into *Flawed Hero* what I'd like to do for you is give you an update on our *Humble & Hungry* progress. If you were with us in the months of April and May then you were here when Aaron was laying out the next season of ministry here at Traders Point and the vision for that.

This fall we are very excited to add our second location on the north side of Indianapolis at Creekside Middle School. We are very, very excited to do that. We are burdened by the number of people in our city, the hundreds and thousands of people who are lost or disconnected from Jesus. So it is our heart to add a location so that we can reach many people for the Lord and see them grow in their discipleship and grow in their leadership.

It's been so much fun over the last few weeks to get emails and messages from people who have said, "Hey, I live close to there. I've never been able to get involved. Now I can." I saw on Facebook that a small group actually went to the school this week and prayed at the school, which is so encouraging for us.

What we've done over the last few weeks is that we've asked everybody to consider a few steps so that you can be involved when it comes to this big mission of God's. The first one was this. We asked each of you who call this place home, as a family or as an individual to take the next step in your generosity. We asked you to fill out one of these Commitment Cards.

Right now we think that we have about half of the Commitment Cards that are out there, about half of what were turned in the last time we did something like this. And so if you have yet to turn in your Commitment Card, we would love for you to do that this weekend.

Now, you may be asking, “Why does it matter? I’m going to give anyway. Why do I have to fill out this card?” Here’s why. We have said, as your leaders, that we will allow you, as a church, to determine the size and the speed in which we move forward with this vision. So the way you commit will inform us on how fast we can go and how big we can go.

What we want to do is operate off of really good information so that when the opportunity comes to buy a new facility or to buy land to build off of, we will know that our church is going to be giving at a certain rate. Each of us can take our next step in generosity, and that’s what we are asking.

There are cards in the seatbacks in front of you. You can also do this online. If you have yet to turn in a card we would love for you to do so. On the left are some tools to help you come up with your number, what you will give over the next two years in total. And then on the right is what you turn in. The information is optional. You don’t have to put your name on it if that makes you uncomfortable. You can just tell us, “Hey, here’s what we (or I) will give over the next two years.”

These cards are really important. They give us the information to make really good decisions. If it sounds like I am begging—I am. Just fill out the card. We love you. Fill out the card. That will really help us make good decisions going forward. We love you guys. We’re just excited about this and we want to make sure that we are wise in the steps that we take.

Two more things. Next weekend is our big-give weekend, June 6 and 7. Like Petie said last weekend, we want this to be the single largest, one weekend offering in the history of the church. What happens is that, for this project, if we can infuse it with some giving up front, if you can give a good portion of your commitment up front, it will really help us when buying a building because banks prefer cash to commitments. That’s kind of the way it works. So, if we had some of that it would be great. If you could consider what portion of your commitment you can give early that will really help jump-start the momentum of the project and keep it going.

Last thing is this. If you are interested in going, if you want to be a part of this launch team, if you want to contribute your time and your talents in going, then on June 14, it’s a Sunday morning, at 9 a.m. we’re going to be in the block and it will be our first call out for the people who will go to the north side. There you will hear the vision again. You will get to meet some people who will be going with you. And you can learn how to volunteer, how to get signed up. So, June 14, 9 a.m. We’re really excited to get together, pray with each other, and dream about what could be on the north side.

Now, we have said from the beginning that we want this to be God’s vision. We will only go through doors that He opens up. So, what I want to do right now is press pause, just go to Him and say, “God continue opening doors, continue guiding our steps as we take more ground for Your Kingdom for Your glory alone. So, will you pray with me?”

*Father we are humbled that You have called us to such a big vision, such a big idea. We are burdened by the hundreds and thousands of people who are disconnected from You and the gospel has not taken root in their lives, it has not changed them yet. That You have called us to be a part of Your vision is so encouraging, so humbling. So we want to gratefully take this step of faith, we want to go, we want to be*

*bold, and ultimately we want You to get the glory. So, guide our steps. Be with us this summer as we prepare, as we get ready for what is going to happen this fall. Father, we love You. It's in Your Name that I pray. Amen.*

So, week two of *Flawed Hero*. Matt kicked us off last week. If you missed that I would encourage you to go back online and check it out. We're going to be studying through the life of David this summer. Now, David is a central character in the Bible. He was a brave shepherd, he was a talented musician, he was a fierce warrior, he was the greatest king in the history of Israel, he was in the blood-line of Jesus, yet he was no super hero. He was flawed just like you and me.

What we're going to do is take a highlighted package of David's life and ask the question, "Okay, this scene in David's life, what does it teach us about God and how should that change the way that we live?"

In 1 Samuel 16 Matt showed us that God chose David to be the next king of Israel. God anointed him, set him apart. But the problem was that David wasn't invited to the draft. All his brothers were there. They stood tall, and they stood out, and they looked very kingly but God did not choose any of them. He chose the younger brother, the small brother, the pip-squeak of the family to be His next king.

Here's the truth. God calls people who we wouldn't and uses them in ways that we couldn't. This is true all through the Bible. God chooses people, He calls people, and there is no way that we would have chosen them and then He uses them in ways that we, in no way, could have pulled off. That's what we're going to see here in chapter 17. David has been called to be the king of Israel and now God's going to use him in a way that none of us would have seen coming.

Now, if you are already at 1 Samuel 17 you may have read the header. This is one of the most famous moments in the Bible. This is the story of David and Goliath. Now, even if you have not been in church, even if you've never read the Bible, there is a really good chance that you have heard a reference to the story of David and Goliath.

It happens in sports all of the time. In the month of March during the NCAA tournament there will be a power house school matched up with a small mid-major and they will say, "This is a David and Goliath match-up." Or, maybe in politics there will be one candidate who is wildly less popular than his opponent and they will say, "This is a David and Goliath race." And every once in a while the David will win, out of nowhere, a surprise, and they will say, "David has slain Goliath."

Maybe you've been in church and you've heard this preached before. What can happen sometimes with this particular story is that it turns into somewhat of an inspirational speech. It's kind of like the Tony Robbins of the Bible. If you try hard enough, and if you throw that rock hard enough, you can overcome your giant and the people in attendance give high-fives and feel really good about themselves. That's kind of the story of David and Goliath.

But what I would like to propose today is that it is possible that we have misread David and Goliath. This actually may not be a story about human grit and determination. In fact this may not be about us at all.

As a matter of fact, it might not even be about David. What we want to do is spend some time in chapter 17. We're going to take it piece by piece and ask, "Who is this really about, what does it teach us about God, and how should it change the way we live?"

1 Samuel 17. Here's what's happening. At this moment in the history of Israel they find themselves in a military battle with the Philistines. They're in a valley. They are on one side of the valley while the Philistine army is on the other side of the valley. The Philistines are this traveling band of pirates. They are always messing with Israel. They are the hang-nail that won't go away. The Philistines just keep bugging Israel. And they find themselves in a valley in a military stand-off, ready to fight a battle. And look what happens in verse 4.

It says, "And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. The 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."

Let me introduce you to a guy named Goliath. He was a mighty warrior. Now I know that there are some foreign terms of measurement here so let me translate for you. First it says that Goliath was six cubits and a span tall. That means that he was around nine feet tall. Imagine that. He would have looked really good in a Pacers uniform, right? Just one play. Throw the ball to Goliath—catch, dunk, game over. I could coach Goliath.

So Goliath is nine feet tall. Then it says that he had a coat of mail—that's what he would have worn over his body to protect him, a sheet of metal. And it says that it was around 121 pounds, 121 pounds. That's like six-grader. A sixth-grader of metal was on him. That's what he was wearing. This guy is massive.

And then on his spear—it says that the head of his spear was about 14 pounds. This guy was huge, he had the latest and greatest of military technology draped over him, he was terrifying, he looked invincible. So here comes Goliath marching out from the Philistines standing in the middle of the valley.

Now this description of Goliath is actually pretty unique when it comes to Hebrew history. When you read the Old Testament most of the stories are going to be very direct and simple and to the point. There won't be much elaboration, there won't be much detail. But here Samuel slows down the story, describes Goliath in great detail because he's trying to prove a point.

In the New Testament when you read it, guys like Paul and Peter what they will do is that they will be very direct. They will say, here's who Jesus is, here's what that means, and here's how it changes the way you live. All of their letters are very direct and to the point—here's how Jesus changes your life.

In the Old Testament they employ narratives (stories). And so what they do is they use stories to illustrate truth. So Samuel is going to use different contrasts. He's going to say, "Here's what God's

people look like. Here's what God's enemy looks like. Here's what the righteous look like. Here's what the wicked look like." That is going to illustrate the truth of this Scripture.

So Samuel slows down the pace and he says here's who Goliath was. Here's how tall he was. Here's what he was wearing. Here's what he was holding. And we know that Goliath was a terrifying individual who seemed to have everything going for him.

Watch what Goliath says here in verses 8 through 11. Goliath walked out to the valley, "He 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. If 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.' And the Philistine said, 'I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together.' When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid."

So out comes this behemoth of a man, dressed in all of this metal, looking like a RoboCop and he just yells at the other side. He says, "Look, enough of this whole thing where my army fights your army and we clash in the middle. You send your best, I will fight him, and whoever wins the losers will become their servants. If we win you become our servants." It's going to be a representative battle. One on one. Mono on mono. Right here in the valley.

Now, that's a very convenient proposition for a guy who is nine feet tall. Of course he would like this set up. And so he comes and he says, "You fight me. Whoever wins wins the whole deal." And, not surprisingly, all of the Israelite soldiers look at Goliath and they do not volunteer. They do not say, "Hey, I'm in on that." They shake in their boots. In verse 16 it says that for forty days and for forty nights Goliath came out and taunted them, insulted them, defied them. So this is going on over, and over, and over again.

Now, in the mean time we have David. And David was not at the battlefield. Like Matt said last week, when David was set apart to be king he was still very young, he was a teenager. He was not in the army yet. He wasn't old enough. But his older brothers were. David's role was that he had to stay home and help his dad, Jessie, tend the sheep.

Then, every once in a while, Jessie would send David to his brothers to bring snacks and then he was supposed to bring back a report to his nervous Dad whose sons were at war as to how it was going. This is a classic little brother role. His brothers get to fight the cool battle and he has to bring the orange slices and Capri Suns. He's basically a soccer mom at this point. That's his role.

Here comes David, he has his orange slices and Capri Suns. There is one day that he comes and then here comes Goliath and he yells, and he taunts, and David is there and he has the snacks he's probably helping his brothers get the straws into the Capri Suns—it's like supper confusing. So, he has that going on. And so here comes Goliath and he says, "I defy you." It's amazing that the soldiers on this same day have the same response. They are just terrified. But the one person in the entire camp who sees it differently is a young shepherd kid who is there with the snacks.

Watch how David sees this. Watch the questions that he asks here in verse 26. It says, “And David said to the men who stood by him, ‘What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?’”

Now David’s questions really allude to his character here in this moment. There are a couple of things that we want to notice. First of all it’s this. As we study through the life of David there will be multiple moments where the Bible just illustrates how real David was. David was a normal person, he was a normal young man. He asked normal young man questions.

Did you see his first question? He comes to the guys and he’s like, “Hey, theoretically speaking, what would someone get if they killed the giant?” A little bit like, “What’s in it for me?” See, there was a rumor going around that if someone were to kill Goliath then they would get the king’s daughter in marriage. And David is a shepherd, hanging out with sheep, kind of hard to get a date and so he’s like, “Hey, I have to kill a giant to get a date? I’ll do it.” He’s a normal young dude, “What’s in it for me?”

And then the second question is all the more important. It’s, “Who is this guy? Who is this guy who is coming out here and yelling at the armies of God?” You see, David saw the Goliath problem very differently.

This is the first contrast that Samuel lays out for us here in chapter 17. It’s between David and the rest of the soldiers. See, the rest of the soldiers for forty days and forty nights had seen the same man say the same words and challenge them in the same way and they had the same response every single time—fear. They were terrified.

See, they were going through some risk analysis in their heads. And they said, “Look, he’s nine feet tall, he’s wearing a bunch of metal, he has a big spear. I’m five feet tall, I don’t really work out, I’m not sure this is going to work out for me. I don’t know that the risk is worth the reward and so I’m going to stay back in camp and I am not going to volunteer for this battle. It just doesn’t seem worth it.”

David, on the other hand, sees Goliath in a very different light. See, David realized that because of Goliath’s trash talk he had changed the game. See Goliath’s trash talk changed the battle from physical to theological, from physical to theological. When Goliath was coming out into the valley and yelling at the army of God, he was not just saying, “I’m nine feet tall. I’m clothed in metal. I’m a trained warrior. I can beat up any of you.” What he was saying is, “I defy your God.” That was a very dangerous thing to do.

See, Goliath didn’t realize that even though he was tall, even though he was strong he had nothing up against God. David understood this. David understood it through this lens and said, “Look, yeah, he might be bigger but my God is undefeated.” I love the way one commentator wrote it, this may have been the very first time that David had ever heard anyone insult God.

David grew up in a God fearing home and he was around a God fearing dad and God fearing brothers and so for the first time he was encountering someone who was insulting his God. So he was indignant,

he was frustrated, he was angry that someone would talk about his God in that way. So he knew that no matter how big Goliath was, God was on his side and he could do it.

Here's the big question that this poses for you and me. When we are called by God to something how do we see the challenge? When you are called, when you are asked by God to do something, how do you see that challenge?

Over the last few months we've been saying this over and over again that all of us have been saved from something for something. We were saved from our sin, we were saved from our past, we were saved from darkness but not so that we can ride the lazy river of life until heaven shows up. We were saved from something so that God could use us for His glory.

So you may be thinking, "Look man, I'm not David. I wasn't called to fight a giant. I'm not called to preach—that's not me." It doesn't matter. All of us have been called to do something. In your life, whether you are an accountant, or a teacher, or a stay-at-home mom, or a high school student—it does not matter. All of us have been saved from something for something.

But what happens is often we feel called by God to do something and we assume that He called us because He needs us to do it. Like, "God called me to this thing. God called me to this action. He called me to this relationship. He called me to this behavior because He needs my unique skill set, my experience, and my resume or else no one else could possibly do this. That's why He called me."

I hate to break it to you. That's not why He called you, okay? He actually called you because He wanted you to see the problem differently. He didn't call you because of your skill-set. He called you because He wants to use you—much like he called a young shepherd boy to the battlefield.

God did not call David to the battlefield because he was a trained warrior, because he had some trick that would kill a giant, he called David to the battlefield because He knew that he would see the challenge differently.

So it's possible that God, right now, is trying to mess with you. He has you unsettled and you're a little off of your rocker, you're off balance, and you're not quite sure why. Let me ask you this question. What have you been avoiding? You know what it is. It's the thing that you know that God is asking you to do but you're not really ready for it, you're not really sure that you can pull it off. In your daydreams you'll get there someday and you're like, "Man, I wish I could. I really want to but I don't think I can."

So, "I don't know that I'm ready to share my faith with my co-worker." "I don't know that I'm ready to share my faith with my classmate." "I'm not really sure that I'm ready to share my faith with my family member because I don't know all of the answers, I haven't even read every single verse in the entire Bible, and I don't know because sometimes they get really angry and I don't know if I want to deal with all of that. So because I can't, I'm not going to."

Maybe God's calling you to a career change. And your entire life you've been headed in one direction with one purpose and you can't imagine ever changing directions. But God is saying, "No, no, no, I'm going to use you this way now. You're going to have more time to serve, you're going to have more

resources to give, and you're going to be with your family more." And you're saying, "Look, I don't know if I can because I would have to relearn everything and I've been working for this for so long. So because I can't, I'm not going to."

Or maybe God is calling you to serve in a greater capacity and going from just an entry level volunteer to actual leadership. You're not sure that you have what it takes, and you're not sure that you have the chops, and you're not sure that you've read enough books, and you're not sure that you are perfect. And so you are saying, "Because I can't, I'm not going to."

Listen, God did not call you to this action, God did not call you to this relationship, and God did not call you to this behavior because of what you can provide. God called you because He wants to use you. So how are you going to see the challenge? Are you going to see the challenge like the soldiers who said, "Because I can't, I won't." Or are you going to see the challenge like David who said, "Because God called me, I can. And He can use me in a very real way."

David sees this problem very differently and he says, "Look, who is this guy? Does he even know who he is talking to? He's talking to the army of the Living God. No way he should want to do that." So word kind of gets around in the camp that there's someone crazy enough to actually fight Goliath.

And Saul, the king and leader of the army, he's been hearing these taunts for forty days and forty nights. He is worn down, he's discouraged, and he's defeated. So he says, "I will take anyone at this point." So he summons David and David comes to Saul and Saul starts asking some pretty logical questions like, "You are a young child. How are you going to defeat RoboCop? Why in the world do you think this is going to work out?"

I love David's explanation. It is simply and it is clear. It's almost so simple that it's laughable until you and I sit back and realize that God loves to use the laughable. He loves using the least likely.

David explains it like this, "Saul, I'm a shepherd and my main job as a shepherd is to protect the sheep. That's my main job. That's my number one the job description. That's at the top of the list. Protect the sheep. There was a day when I was protecting the sheep and a lion came and stole one of the sheep. So I went after him and God delivered me from the lion. I killed a lion to protect the sheep. On another day a bear came. The bear stole a sheep and I went and did the same thing. I went after him. God delivered me from the bear. I killed the bear to protect the sheep."

Seriously, that is a real thing. That is a real thing. I love the way that David describes the story. If it were me, if this were my story I would tell the story very differently. I'd be at a dinner party on a Thursday night. Some dude would be telling me about his trip to Hawaii, be on his iPhone showing me all of his pictures. And then he would say, "Oh, what did you do?" I'd say, "I killed a bear. I killed a bear with my bare hands—I win." That is the ultimate story topper of all times.

But here's how David tells the story in verses 36 through 37. This really reveals his character. It says, "Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one



of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.’ And David said, ‘The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.’”

Man, I love that. I love how beautifully simple it is. All David is saying is, “Look, God delivered me once, and He delivered me twice He’s not going to bail on me now. I have faith that God is going to be faithful to me just like He has been all of my life.” It just seems so simple. It’s almost silly.

But you and I suffer from this disease. I don’t know if you knew this. We suffer from a disease called spiritual amnesia. We have a very forgetful nature when it comes to the faithfulness of God.

Let me describe a pattern to you and see if this resonates in your life. Here’s kind of the way it goes in my life. A problem arises. A challenge arises. And my very first response is to fix it. Anybody here a fixer? How many of you would say that you are a fixer? Like you just jump into fix it mode. Your wife is kind of like bumping you, “Yeah, that’s you. Stop fixing my feelings.” The whole thing—not that my wife has ever said that to me.

I’m a fixer. I have to come up with a plan. I have to come up with a strategy. And so my first thing is that I make a list of pros and cons and here’s how we’re going to attack this whole deal. And then I run out of options. I can’t figure it out. And ultimately this moment of clarity happens, “Oh, maybe I should have talked to God about it. Maybe I should have prayed about this. Maybe I should have given it to Him.”

And then, amazingly, what God does is He says, “Hey, here’s the thing that you were missing. Here’s the insight that you needed. It wasn’t within you. It was Me working in you all of this time.” So God solves the issue. He solves the challenge for me. And I thank God for it. I praise Him. I share it with my friends, my small group—the whole thing.

Then about a month later another problem arises and what do I do? Well, I make my list. I have my pros and my cons. I come up with my strategy. I worry and I stress. And I completely forget that God was the One who delivered me last time, He delivered me the time before that, and He’s not going to bail on me now.

I do not mean to make light of the fact that there are some very big burdens in this room. I get it. Each week we invite you to fill out a Communicate Card and it’s how we can know what’s going on in your world and how we can pray for you. And I just have to tell you there’s just some heaviness, there’s just some real life stuff that we all carry in here.

I know that we look good, and I know we smile, and I know we sing along, and I know that we kind of seem that we’re all put together but there is some real hurt within the people who are in this very room right now, at this moment. And I do not mean to trivialize the fact that it hurts and you are scared, and you’re insecure about the future. But I promise you that God has come through for you before and He will not bail on you now.

I few years ago I shared a story from our lives regarding the birth of our first daughter. It was really, really hard. There were a bunch of complications even during the pregnancy. At the birth there was this moment when they lost the heart beat of our daughter while she was still in the womb. And I’m no

medical professional. I don't live in that world. This is still the scariest thing that ever, ever, ever happened to me because here was someone that I love and she was in pain and I thought, "I don't know what would happen to me, I don't know what would happen to me if this didn't go well."

So, I prayed and started bartering with God. I starting giving everything to Him, I was yelling at Him, I was mad at Him—the whole thing. And the doctors are coming in and they figure out what is going on. That moment just revealed the lack of trust in my heart. I assumed that in the scariest moment of my life—I couldn't offer anything. I couldn't fix it, I couldn't make my wife feel better, I couldn't save my baby, I couldn't do anything,

And it showed me, in that moment, that I had forgotten who my God is. I'd forgotten that I could trust Him. I'd forgotten that He cared just as much as I did in that moment. He loves my daughter even more than I love her, which is hard for me to understand. I had spiritual amnesia in the moment. I thought that it was my responsibility to come up with a solution and I had nothing to offer. I love the beauty of David's logic. That God has been faithful thus far and He's not going to bail on me now.

Saul hears David's confidence and he says, "Okay, man. This is all yours." Saul offers him his armor and his protection and David says, "No, man. I'm not going to do that." He walked into the valley, I promise you, with a staff, with five rocks, and a sling. A teen-aged kid faces a RoboCop of a warrior with a staff, five rocks, and a sling. It's laughable. God loves using the laughable.

Watch how Goliath responds. His arrogance is kind of predictable. It says here in verse 43, "And the Philistine said to David, 'Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?' And the Philistine cursed David by his gods." Notice, little "g", unnamed gods. "The Philistine said to David, 'Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.'"

I just have to warn you, what David is about to say next is the coolest thing ever. Just brace yourself, "Then David said to the Philistine, 'You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a 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. This 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 host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,' capital "G", singular name God, "and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand.'"

Alright, first of all *Braveheart*, *Gladiator* they have nothing on David right now. I want to run through a wall for David. Turn to your neighbor and punch them in the arm—don't do that, just kidding. Man this is so, so freakin' cool. So how in the world does a teen-aged shepherd who is not trained for battle at all, who is holding five small rocks and a sling—where in the world does he get the confidence to talk to Goliath like that? He threatened to cut off his head. Did you see that!? Where in the world, how in the world did he come up with that kind of courage?

See, this is another contrast that Samuel is laying out for us. He says that there were two types of courage in the valley that day, Goliath courage and David courage. And the question for you and me is which kind of courage do we have?

See the Goliath courage is this. Goliath was proud of himself. He found his confidence from within. He was physically imposing. He was most likely undefeated. I have a feeling that in the Philistine camp he never heard, “No.” No one said, “No, Goliath. You’re not allowed to have more soup.” They said, “Would you like more soup?” This is the way Goliath’s entire life had gone. He had the best technology. He had the best resources. And he had the most self-confidence. Goliath found his courage from within.

David was different. David’s courage came from his identity. And that is wildly different. David did not know that he was going to win because he was bigger, because he was stronger, or because he was better trained. David did not know that he was going to win because of himself. He knew he was going to win because he was a child of God and that God had his back. God had given him some very clear promises. God had given His people some very clear promises. Promises like I will fight for you. That’s a killer promise. So David found his courage because of who he was in the eyes of God, not because of what he could do.

So, here’s the question for you and me. Where do we find our strength? Where do you find your strength? See the world, if you’re listening to the world, the world has a very clear message that if you dig down deep enough in yourself you will have enough power, you will have enough courage, you will have enough intelligence, and you can figure this out. You are innately good. You are innately strong. So, all you have to do is believe in yourself and you can overcome any kind of challenge, any kind of battle.

This is like *The Little Engine That Could* motivational pep talk. You think you can, you think you can, you think you can—you will. But here’s the problem with that message. For thousands of years it has been disappointing millions of people. Many of us have tried this game, “I can live life on my own. I can figure out the solutions. I am independent. I am an island. I do not need anyone else. I do not want to be dependent so I’m going to figure these things out.”

Here’s the problem. You and I are broken, and we are flawed, and we are sinful. And if you were really, really honest with yourself—some of you know this from your past, when you’ve tried, you’ve failed. Some of you know this from today. You are currently in a mode of trying to do this on your own and it is not working.

See, one of the worst things that you and I can do when we are reading the story of David and Goliath is put ourselves in the shoes of the hero. A lot of times this is what happens when we come with this half-time motivational speech, “This is what you are. You are David. And if you fling that rock hard enough you will win.”

Here’s the problem. You would have missed. You would have missed. And you are like, “No, no, no. I have four more in the pouch.” You would have missed all five times. That’s what would have happened. It just does not work.

Do you know who we are in the story of David and Goliath? We're the Israelite soldiers on the field. We're the ones who heard the challenge for forty days and forty nights and we did not respond. We are scared and we don't have the answers. And we assume that it is our responsibility to come up with a plan to win the battle. That's who we are.

We need someone else to fight the war for us. Here's the good news. Here's the good news. We can't miss it. Someone has. Someone has. See there's this battle going on right now for our souls. There's this battle going right now that we cannot win and we need someone else to fight it for us. And the beauty and the good news is that someone has. God fought our battle for us.

David steps out in the valley and he comes with a sling and he tosses one rock. He hits Goliath in the head and he knocks him out cold on the ground. David grabs Goliath's sword and cuts off his head just like he said he would. David won the battle but more importantly—what you and I know now is that David did not slay the giant, God did. God used the least likely of all the warriors to defeat the giant who no one was willing to fight. David did not take credit for this much like he didn't take credit for the lion and the bear. He said, "God delivered Goliath into my hands."

Now, throughout this series we're going to keep saying the same thing. And it's going to sound a little tricky. Even when we're talking about David, David is not the main character of his own story any more than you and I are not the main characters of our stories. In fact, Jesus is actually the main character of David's story.

So, what in the world does David and Goliath have to do with Jesus? The point is this. This is how David and Goliath have to do with Jesus. God didn't send an example, He sent a Savior. God did not send an example, He sent a Savior. This is true both of David and Jesus.

David did not show up to the battlefield so that he could train all of the warriors on how to be more effective warriors. He did not conduct some kind of seminar on how to be a Samurai and how to effectively wipe out the Philistines. That was not David's job. David's job was to step out in the valley by himself with the entire weight of responsibility of the army. His victory would be their victory but so would his defeat. He did not come to be an example, he came to save the army and fight the problem.

The same is true of Jesus. When God was dealing with the sin problem, He did not send an example. Jesus did not come down to be our moral life coach who provided some goal-oriented plans so that we could live a life that would honor God, and He wouldn't be mad at us, and we could get into heaven. That's not Jesus' plan. It does not mean that Jesus did not live a good life that sets an example for us. He did, but that's not His main objective.

See, there was a sin problem. There was a sin battle that you and I could not fight, we could not win. So Jesus fought it for us and He was victorious. So He took the punishment that we deserve and in turn gave us the reward that only He could earn. His victory is our victory. God did not send an example, he sent a Savior and His name is Jesus.

The second way that David and Goliath are like Jesus is this: God uses foolish methods. God loves using foolish methods. Like I said before, God is really into using the least likely approach. See, He used the stuttering shepherd to be His spokesperson in Egypt. His name is Moses. He used a Persian cupbearer to

rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. His name is Nehemiah. He used a Jericho prostitute to save the lives of the Israelite spies. Her name was Rahab. He used a teen-aged girl to give birth to His Son. Her name was Mary. He used a legalistic Pharisee to plant churches all over in the First Century. His name was Paul. He used an ill-equipped shepherd to defeat Goliath. His name was David.

Then He used the cross to save us. See, the cross is foolish. Paul says it in the New Testament over and over again, the cross is foolish. It was a tool of capital punishment. The cross was a sign of defeat that God redeemed to be a sign of victory. Here's how Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians. He says, "Look, you guys have probably tried to articulate your faith. You've probably tried to articulate your confidence in Christ and have been met with eye-rolls, scoffs, and disbelief." Paul says, "I know. I expect that."

Here's what it says in 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, verse 25, "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

Paul said, "Look, I get the eye-rolls. I get that this won't be easily believed. This is where we find our courage. This is where we find our confidence and our identity. Broken sinners who were in need of a Savior, scared soldiers who could not fight the battle—but Jesus came and he fought a battle that we could not win and gave us the reward that we could not earn.

See, there is no room for pride and arrogance at the foot of the cross because the cross says that we couldn't save ourselves. We are completely dependent upon Jesus. And because of that gift of grace now we live as a response to it.

So, let me ask my question again. What have you been avoiding? What's that thing that you know God is asking you to do? And it's the right thing and genuinely—in a perfect world—you want to do but because you've convinced yourself that you can't do it, because you've convinced yourself that you're not smart enough, strong enough, brave enough to do it, it's not going to happen. Can I encourage you that God did not call David because of his skill? God called David because he wanted to use him. He calls you, not because of what you bring to the table but because of what He has done for you.

Today is the day where we no longer shuffle our feet. Today is the day where we stop avoiding eye contact. Today is the day when we embrace our identity and have the courage to take that step of faith.

I'm going to pray for you and we're going to take communion. Communion is our weekly opportunity to remember the sacrifice of Jesus. We're going to remember the victory that Jesus won on the cross. There's the bread and the juice. The bread represents Christ's body, the juice represents His blood. And what we get to do is to come to Jesus and say, because of this, because of salvation, because of Your victory, I have the courage to do what You have called me to do.

Let me pray for you.

*God, we are humbled and grateful that You have called us. We are honored to be a part of Your kingdom. We don't totally know why You have called us. We don't really have all of the answers. We don't really think that we can pull this off, but we trust You. We trust You that You have called us for a*

*reason and You're not going to leave us hanging. You're not depending on us to figure it out. You have the solution. We just need to be obedient and we need to trust You. Lord, we thank You for David. We thank You for Your word. And, most importantly, we thank You for Your Son who saved us and gave us new life so that we can live in response to Your grace. It's in Your Name I pray, Amen.*