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1 SAMUEL 17:46-58

1 Samuel Series

Let's go before the Lord now. In this prayer I want you to prepare your hearts for what God's going to do because I believe God is going to speak to you. He's going to speak to you from His word today, and as He does you're going to be able to take something with you home, take Jesus home into your life and practice it this week. So let's bow before the Lord and pray together.

[PRAYER] Lord, this idea of your name being a great name is quite the thing to ponder. That you would say in the Ten Commandments *do not take the name of Yahweh in vain* just startles us. That your name is just so important. When we trust in your name we can be saved. You exalt in the name of Jesus Christ higher than any other name under heaven. That name is powerful. Lord, it's not just saying the word, the name Yahweh or Lord or God or however we might say it. There's just something in that. When we take that on, it just does something to us. We have that power that's in your name. We have that peace that comes with your name. We have that presence that we enjoy and that comradery that we experience because of who you are. Lord, make that name real to us in our lives. Rescue us from the challenges that we face. Reveal to us who you are right now in the moment. We take that name seriously and we call ourselves Christians, little Christs, because of that name. We want to exalt your name today, Lord. We want to lift you up and we do that in our hearts and our lives. Speak to us now in Jesus' name, amen.

If you look at the Bible as a magic book of rules then you'll miss some of the most significant things that God wants for you and me. But He wants us to learn valuable lessons that will change our lives, that will help us to grow, and help us to be different people.

Now we are in the middle of a story, in fact we are coming to a third sermon of three in this whole dealing with giant problems. We're taking the story of David and Goliath in slow motion. I love the slow motion football recalls. But along those lines, let's just do a review like the halftime review, going back and looking what's happened now so far. We learned last week that we want to fight the right battles, we want you to do it with the right thinking and we want to use the right kind of weapons. If you weren't here, I want to go back and review for you what we're talking about.

When we say fight the right battles, what we mean is just out of the text Eliab, the brother of David, says, "*Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle.*" So now David has got another battle besides Goliath. But David knows that Goliath is really the battle, so what does David do in this story? The Bible says *he turned*

away. There's an application here for somebody here today. When you get caught up in the battles that aren't the real battles and when you're fighting the wrong battles you get sidetracked from the big ones that God wants you to fight. That's the first thing. We need to fight the right battles.

We need to do it with the right thinking. Now as the story continues, David goes to Saul and says, "Hey, I'll fight this giant." And Saul says, "*You are not able. You are only.*" Which is sometimes what we hear from our own heart or other people tell us you're limited because you're only this, and you failed so many times before, or you just don't have the skills, you're not able. Notice David's response. He goes back to his victory stories from the past. Maybe you don't have any victory stories yet. Maybe God is delivering those to you now. *The 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*. It's not how big your giants are; it's how big your God is. So our right thinking is so important.

And then thirdly we talked about fighting with the right weapons. Because this is what David says as he's speaking to Goliath. *You come against me with sword and javelin* (those are his weapons), *but I come against you* (not with stones – that's not what he says) *in the name of the Lord Almighty*. The power of God's name.

Now when we understand those three principles that we need to fight the right battles with the right thinking using the right weapons, then we understand how to be on the battlefield. When I say the battlefield, I'm talking about the stresses that you and I face every day. We face stresses. Just think about the top three or four things that bother you in the course of your day, in the course of your week. The things that are encroaching on your energy level right now because they bother you. What are they? Those are the things that you want to be able to address. Those are the giant problems that we're trying to overcome and we're trying to address in our lives.

Let's go on to this verse in verse 46 as the story continues. David says to the giant – *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* (notice these words) *the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel*.

This is one of those post-it notes sayings you want to put up somewhere. The current trial you're involved in, the current problem you're experiencing is an opportunity for the whole world to see the grace of God. I'm not saying it always comes out great. You might not have the job you want. You want some better job. Maybe it's not getting the better job that's going to reveal God's grace. Maybe it's the ability to live in the present job you're in and be able to be joyful in the midst of that, and that's the testimony that the whole world will see. Maybe you're struggling in school and trying to get through, but now you're experiencing that joy, not just when you get the graduation certificate, that proves or demonstrates it to the whole world. *The whole world will know that there is a God in Israel*.

God is working. God is doing miracles. He continues to do miracles today in our lives. We tend to think about miracles as the results, like the giant falling down. But I would suggest it's often

the miracle of being able to hold up or withstand the pressure of life that we're trying to address in our life.

These words are so important. Verse 47 – *All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves.* It's not by this particular way or that particular way, the way we tend to think as humans, how we tend to look at life and say, "Well God is going to do it this way," or "God is going to produce this victory in my life." It's not in that way. It says *the battle is the Lord's*. Not just the result, but *the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands.* Wow. The confidence that David has is amazing.

There are some battles that you will not fight if you don't know how big God is. God is doing something on the inside of our lives. That's why it's so important for us to take Jesus home when we leave here because the battlefield, although it's often fought in a spiritual way here as we gather, it's fought when you go home and then we have to face the challenges of your situation, whatever that situation is. There's a testimony in your life eagerly awaiting to come out based on your ability to allow God to change you, to be the person He wants you to be.

We live in a place where the whole world is broken. I'm broken, you're broken, and everybody around us is broken. So we can't start looking down at people and say, "Oh, those people are broken and we're not." Every one of us experience brokenness in our lives. People are afraid today. People are hurting. They can't believe that a God will love them or would help them, but He does. They need to have the faith stories. They need to hear how God is working in our life right now so that *all the world will know* is what the verse says. *All the world will know.*

Now just keep in mind we're down on the battlefield here. David is facing Goliath and he's speaking to him and we're about to throw the stone. So get ready for that. I know you've been waiting for that for three weeks. He's about to throw the stone.

But I want you to come out of that for a minute and look at the battlefield. Because if you look behind you here there's a whole army of people who are afraid, waiting for one person to take a stand, one person to say, "I believe in the name of God and I'm going to go forward and follow Him." David's testimony did not only speak to the whole world, it's going to speak to that army that's right there who's watching that need the message that God provides in each one of our lives. People need to hear your life story. They need to see your testimony that God wants to draw out of you now this week.

So are you ready? Because here we go. The giant's going down. Finally we're going to let the rock come out of his sling starting in verse 48. A bunch of stuff here. Let's just look at this.

As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. 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 facedown on the ground.

Was that just a lucky shot? I don't think so. We already looked at this idea that there are slingers and there are those who are involved in hand-to-hand combat. Goliath had already made this statement of *come down here and fight and I'm going to cut off your head and I'm going to feed*

your carcasses to the birds of the wild animals. That's what Goliath said to David and that was a true statement.

If David would have gone down and fought the battle the way the giant was fighting it, he would have lost the battle. But God has equipped with him air-based missiles. Like the archer or the slinger. Like we have. We have air-based missiles that God wants to conquer based on those different kind of fighting than the world fights. It wasn't just a lucky shot. Yes, God was with that stone as it went up and hit the guy in the head. But He was also using the skills of a young man who practiced this for a long time. He had used this sling many times before.

It was common. I shouldn't say it was common, but I'm going to show you another verse that talks about slingers because I want you to see that this wasn't a situation that was just over this one particular situation. In Judges 20 we have a description of a battle going on there. I'm not going to talk about that whole battle, just a description of the army. There was a group of special forces from the tribe of Benjamin. *From among all these soldiers there were seven hundred select troops who were left-handed.*

If you are left-handed, you can rejoice in this. Left-handed are often more intelligent because they have to live in a right-handed world. I'm left-handed. How many of you are left-handed? Ah yes. My comrades. If you were a right-handed guy and you had to fight, you knew how to fight right-handed with right-handed people. But if you got a special forces guy who's coming at you left-handed, you've got to switch things around. But the left-handed person has the advantage because he knows how to fight right-handed people. So he's fighting in that kind of way.

But these guys not only knew how to do that, they also *knew how to sling a stone at a hair and not miss.* Seven hundred slingers, special forces guys who could go out there and do that. All I want you to see is that this is something that wasn't just for David, that he was on his own with a slingshot. There were other people who had developed this skill and it was a very profound skill that resulted in very accurate target practice. David's going to get some real target practice here as he moves forward.

I have bird feeders in my backyard. One of my birdfeeders is attached to a branch that hangs down. It's part of my battle against the squirrels. The squirrels and I battle to feed the birds. Usually the squirrels win, but in this case what I'm trying to do is hang this bird feeder from this branch because the squirrels usually can't get to it, although they have amazing skills.

Well it fell down. So Hayden and I last weekend were trying to put it back up. Now all I had to take was this rock with this rope tied around it and throw it over a branch that's about twenty feet high. I just had to get it up there. It took me twenty times probably of throwing a rock over the branch and then getting it to spin so it would stay up there. So it's up there now. I've got birds eating and it's great. Twenty times. As I'm doing it I'm thinking, "I am not a slinger. I am not a David that's going to be able to fight like this." This guy had some real abilities.

Last week Rich was telling us some stories about how he was a slinger when he was a kid. He took an apple and he threw it at a rabbit and knocked out this rabbit with it. You've got to be kidding me. I just would not be able to do that.

So anyway this guy had some skill. Was it a lucky shot? No. It was God ordained. But the fact that God was working and He's using the human skills and abilities of David is very important because both of those are wedded together when we fight the battle. We can't just sit back and say, "Let God fight the battle. I wish God would show up here on the battlefield." No. This guy David is stepping out, he's running toward the giant, and he's going to use his skills to fight him, and God is of course in control of all of it.

Notice it says in verse 48 –*David ran quickly toward the battle line*. I want to draw one practical application for someone here probably. Sometimes when the battlefields are out there, the giants are out there, you just have to attack them quickly. If you're sitting around worried about it all the time, it's going to hinder your ability to have peace. Sometimes you've just got to go out there and fight the battle. He runs quickly toward the battle line to meet him.

We can't run away from our problems, like these guys who were part of the army would run away every day. Maybe they're hoping the guy is going to go away. I don't know. That's what we do sometimes. We hope the giants are going to go away. Sometimes we need to face it head on and we need to deal with it. Praying is a very important part of that. But along with that prayer we often have to get our hands dirty. We have to go out and do the work that goes along with prayer and not just wait for God to show up on the battlefield and knock over this giant. God is using this person to do it.

It means that sometimes you have to get into that rehab because that's your part to work in the healing that needs to take place. You have to learn new skills about relating. You have to deal with your own addiction or your own anger issues. You have to work on some of these things because that's part of what it takes.

I just want to say there's help out there. You do not have to live your painful life alone. You think you're the only person who's ever gone through a divorce, or lost a loved one, or is in debt, or has an anger problem? No. There are other godly people who have gone through this path before who can walk with you and guide you and support you. That's one of the purposes of God's church, one of the beauties of us coming together and walking together and enjoying that privilege of being together. Because we are all broken people. All of us are broken. Some of us hide it better than others, but we're all broken people and we need God's grace. Don't get stuck trying to do it yourself. Get help. Rely on God's grace.

David goes out there, fires his weapon, and he knocks this guy down. So verse 50 tells us the success story. *So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.*

David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword (catch this – a great application) and drew it from the sheath. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword. I know this is an R-rated part of the story and I apologize for the gruesome pictures you're going to see here as we go forward.

You have to understand if you're trying to help people get well, it's often a bloody battle. If you're trying to help people who are in difficult situations, you're going to see some ugly stuff. It's hard. People need healing, they need growth, and it's not easy for us to be able to do that.

I want you to see a very important piece of the story. I want you to see that he took the sword that was designed to kill him for him to obtain victory. Do you see that? Look at the passage. He took the sword and drew it from his sheath (that's the enemy's sword) that was designed to kill him, and with it he obtained victory.

If you're struggling in your life with something, I just want you to know God wants you to have complete victory. If you're struggling with an addiction, I believe God not only wants you to stop engaging in that addiction, but wants you to move from the desire to engage in it. Total victory. Let's cut off his head. That's what he's saying. He went out there and just cut off his head.

Some people are going to have to make an important decision. Am I just getting saved so I can get into heaven, or am I really doing the work necessary to fight the battle so I can enjoy the abundant life that God promises for me today. I'm not going to live this stressed out life like everyone else.

Don't you find it interesting that if you start to live in a peaceful world and you're having some peace, everybody else is looking at you like you're weird or something? Because everyone in our American culture should be stressed. Right? If you're not stressed it must mean you're lazy or you're not doing your part. Everybody should feel stressed. So if you're trying to live this peaceful life that God called us to live, you're weird. It's just an odd thing for us to experience. Something is wrong with you.

God wants us to have total victory and it will take the problem that you're experiencing that the attacker wants to destroy you with and turn it into something so powerful that you'll say, "I'm not only going to live with my wife, I'm going to love her." "I'm not only going to raise these kids, but I'm going to build into their lives." God wants to do these amazing things in us and the same thing that's meant to destroy us is the thing that God wants to use to advance His kingdom and provide a testimony that all the world will hear that there is a God in Israel. He took the sword that was designed to kill him.

Now furthermore this thing that you battle right here may be what saves you in the future. So in order to get to that, we have to zip ahead to a story that's fourteen years later in David's life.

David happened to be on the run and he didn't have any weapons because he had to leave so quickly. He comes to a priest and he says, "Hey, you've got a weapon here?" Ahimelek says, "We don't have weapons. We're priests. But there is this one sword from Goliath, the giant that you killed, wrapped in the ephod in the back there." *David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."*

That's what he says. He says I remember when I went on that battlefield just to deliver cheese and bread and then a giant was killed. I remember when my brother told me, "Who are you with

this wicked heart and conceited, just coming out here to look at the battle.” I remember when Saul told me to put on his armor and I realized I couldn’t do it his way. I remember when Saul says, “You’re not able, you’re only.” I remember when the Philistine tried to provoke me and tried to get me to fight the battle his way. I remember when I picked up that stone and let it loose and it hit him in the head. I remember. I want it. Give it to me. I want that weapon.

I just have to tell you that now the battlefields that you’re fighting are the same ones that are going to provide you with the tools you need in the future that are going to make your success. It’s a beautiful thing that God wants to do in our lives and it starts today. Today’s attack might be what provides you the victory later in your life.

Back to our story. What verse do you go to when you’re under attack? I’m going to show you one I go to. You may go to different ones, but I really like this one. *The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; but I have come that they might have life and they may have it more abundantly.*

I see there’s an attack waging war in my life. I don’t know about you, but I hear the voices in my heart, maybe not audible voices, but those feelings of whatever inside of my heart (“you’re an idiot,” “you’re never going to get it right,” or “you ought to do this,” or whatever) and I have those voices that are godly that are telling me to love your brother, to forgive, to take care of somebody else, to take initiative. You’ve got those going on. What’s going to win here? There’s a thief that’s trying to steal, kill, and destroy in my life and I don’t want to let that happen. I want to let God reign in my heart and in my life.

Back to 1 Samuel 17. *When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath and to the gates of Ekron. Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron. When the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp.*

Look at verse 54. I’m just trying to picture this. You’re on the story, you’re on the battlefield, picture what’s going on here. Verse 54 – *David took the Philistine’s head and brought it to Jerusalem; he put the Philistine’s weapons in his own tent.* I’m going wow, that’s really interesting. How did he carry this thing? Was he carrying it by the hair? Did he use this helmet as a bucket to carry this guy’s head in? I have no idea. But he’s walking around carrying this head of this Philistine around down there. Wow, what a trophy. This guy is dead and I want all of Israel to know he’s dead and I’m going to carry this head around. That’s what he’s doing.

We have a flashback now in this story in verse 55. So we’re going to come back onto the battlefield and I want you to see what happens right after. It’s taking us right through the battle.

Verse 55 – *As Saul watched David going out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner, commander of the army, “Abner, whose son is that young man?”*

Now remember David has been working in the palace. David has been playing his musical instrument for Saul who has been tormented by this evil spirit and whenever he played the music

then the evil spirit would depart. Saul knew who this guy was, kind of. He's the harp player. But now that he's on his way to the battlefield (we're back in the beginning here), watching David going out to meet the Philistine, he says to his right hand man, Abner, "*Whose son is this young man?*"

Abner replied, "As surely as you live, Your Majesty, I don't know." I don't know who this guy is, but I'm going to go find out. *The king said, "Find out whose son this young man is."* So they're having this conversation while the battle is going on.

Verse 57 – *As soon as David returned from killing the Philistine (which probably didn't take a whole bunch of time), Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with David still holding the Philistine's head. We just keep being reminded that he's holding this head in his hand. "Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked him. David said, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem."*

I want you to know that God wants us to experience victory. We live in a broken world and the world that we're broken in causes all kinds of bad things to happen. Just because you're suffering right now in a bad situation doesn't mean necessarily that you caused it. Maybe you did. And if you did then you need to change and get out of that. If asked forgiveness, maybe you caused where you are now and you need to do the work to get out of there.

But there's sometimes the pain that we experienced wasn't caused by us. It's just caused by the fact that we live in this broken world, by people that came before us, the people around us. It's a painful place to live, this world that we live in, and that's why the beauty of redemption is so powerful because the brokenness is met with the redemption of God. God wants to provide total victory in our lives today, now. We can walk out of here as different people. Total victory.

Difficulties that we experience in our lives are opportunities for us for God to send us on errands. Not errands to get us out of His hair or get us out of the way, but because He has confidence in us and He wants to empower us to move forward.

If you're badly in debt, you need to face the fact that you're spending more money than you're bringing in. You've got to face it and you've got to deal with it. You've got to find out where every one of those dimes is going for and start tracking that so that you can allow God to work in your life. You've got to change the way you operate so that God can do some amazing things in your life through your finances. You've got to do that difficult work. God wants to give you total victory.

One man came to me several years ago and he wanted to know how to invest in the stock market. I invest in the stock market, so I told him let's talk about your personal finances. So I asked him about his personal finances. He told me that he was in debt. I said, "I'm not telling you anything about investing in the stock market. I'll tell you what you need to do. You go and work on getting out of debt. It's going to take you a year, two years, five years. Whatever it takes you to get out of debt, that's what you do first because that's your first step towards financial freedom. You want to turn your finances to the Lord, you want to be giving to the Lord in his work, you do all those things that God has established and then come back and talk to me."

I didn't hear from him again for two years. Two years later he came back and he said, "Hey, I'm done with all of that. I got it. I'm out of debt. I'm moving forward." Wow.

It takes a long time to get where you need to be sometimes when you end up needing to change. But God wants to do victorious things in our lives. There are some people here who are addicted. You know you're addicted and you need to get out of that and move forward. Amazing victory you can have in your life. But that is so hard. I don't pretend to make it sound easy. It's hard.

I work with people regularly and I work with broken people that are broken just like I am. But some of their situations seem harder than mine. The pain that people experience is really, really hard. I know that God wants me to have my hand holding their hand and their brokenness for this reason. Because if I don't then I'm going to give trite answers, simplistic answers in ways that aren't helpful. I need to experience the pain of that broken person and recognize that their brokenness is so hard and so painful. It's hard.

But this other hand has to be somewhere else. It has to be reaching out to the hands of God's grace because I want to bring those two together. Maybe God will use me in the life of this person who's experiencing tremendous pain to see God's grace touch them in a new way, in a special way so that a miracle can take place. Maybe, just maybe God will allow me to watch something like that happen. And His grace will have this great affect on someone else's life.

God has placed us all in that place. We live in a broken world. There are people all around you that need to hear the success stories of what God wants to do. But it means stretching both hands out. One hand to experience the pain of a hurting person, and the other is to reach out to God's grace and enjoy who He is and bring those two together in a way that's just so powerful.

I want to be a giant killer. I want to help others, like this army experienced, that God is great and He is powerful. They were empowered. Did you see what they did? Once they were empowered by this leader, they went out and started fighting the battle and they were victorious as well. That's what happens when people see the victory in our own lives.

I want you to know that as you face the battle that you face in your life you have the advantage. I just want you to know that. It may not look like it, but you have the advantage. God has given you the advantage. It's called grace. He wants to do this powerful thing in your life. It's strategic.

I'm going to have us sing a song you've never heard before, probably. I had never heard it before this morning, but it's a song that Kimberly brought to church with her this morning. We're going to sing it as a worship song because it's a great worship song. It's written by Francesca Battistelli. I'm going to read the story about the song and how the song came about. The song is called *Giants Fall*. It's very appropriate for us. That's what the song is called.

Here's what she says about why she wrote the song: "A couple of years ago we got an email from a little girl named Mallory. When she was eleven she started a project called Project Yesu that ministers to girls and women in Uganda. She has raised over \$30,000 for kids to go to school in Uganda. She wrote this email and said, 'Basically everyone is telling me that I'm crazy for

writing you, that you're too busy and you'll never write back. But I have this organization and I'm hosting a benefit lunch-in on Orphan Sunday and I would love for you to be there.'

My husband was reading the email to me at dinner at a Mexican restaurant and I was just so struck by her faith because she said, 'Even though everyone is telling me I'm crazy, the one thing I've learned over these past two years is that when we step out in faith, God does fix things.' I was just so blown away by that because so many of us say that. But to actually believe that and act on it and sort of live that crazy faith life that she was living at fourteen years old just blew me away. I kind of wanted to tell those naysayers that they were crazy and that they were wrong. We just really felt like we needed to. We felt like I needed to say yes.

What ended up happening is a couple of days after I got that email I was in the studio writing with a couple of friends and I was telling them that story. They said, 'What do you want to write about today?' I said, 'I want to write about that. I want to write about Mallory.' We wrote this song *Giants Fall*, which is a song about Mallory. It's really just a song saying don't be afraid of giants in your way. That whatever obstacles are facing you, God is with you and it doesn't matter if what you have seems like a little, He can turn it into a lot. I wrote this song for her, but I didn't tell her. It was just a really powerful moment and it reminded me that when we're obedient, God does amazing things. That goes for Mallory, that goes for me writing this song. Being there I think of nothing else. She'll be able to look back and say that was one thing I asked God for that He did. It was cool."

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we want to thank you for the challenges that we face right now, recognizing that they are not insurmountable challenges. We feel overwhelmed sometimes when we face the challenges of our lives, but we know that you are bigger than the challenges we face. We know that you are our God and that we love you. In your name there is power. Power to overcome, power to be victorious, power to do amazing things so that the world can see that there is a God in Israel. So Lord, I ask you to do that deeper work in each person's heart right now. In Jesus' name, amen.