

Rev. Janet R. Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
19th Sunday after Pentecost
World Communion Sunday
Sunday, October 4, 2026
Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:26-50
Sermon: But God...Caused the Giant to Fall

It can be challenging to navigate through the world and all its issues. But where do we cling to for strength?

Do we cling to the world or to God? Or maybe we cling to a little bit of both at times.

When David fought Goliath, a nine-foot giant dawned in heavy armor and weapons, David had no fear. He only needed his faith and trust in God to win against Goliath. It can almost feel as if we are fighting our own Goliaths. No matter how small or unprepared you may feel, God fights our battles for us. We can look to the story of David and Goliath as an example. This story is one where the underdog is able to overcome and take the lead — standing tall despite the disadvantages.

David was often seen as the underdog. David was the youngest son of Jesse, so he wasn't the tallest or strongest. What set him apart from his brothers was David's heart. God doesn't judge from outward appearance, he only can judge by faith, character and how your heart looks.

Goliath taunted the Israelites for 40 days, waiting for someone to challenge him in a fight. All of Israel was fearful of Goliath, from seeing how big and intimidating he is. David was the only one who saw Goliath for who he really was, a simple man defying God. David approached Goliath wearing no armor and carrying no weapons other than five smooth stones and a sling.

"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, and he will give all of you into our hands." 1 Samuel 17:47, NIV

What Goliath didn't realize was that he wasn't just fighting David, he was also picking up a fight against God. David had such a great amount of trust and faith in God, that he didn't even think twice about fighting Goliath. David already knew what was going to happen, he knew that God was going to

protect him. The smooth stone hit Goliath on the head which made him fall to the ground, defeated.

Sometimes our problems look like Goliath. A nine-foot giant decked out in armor and spears, ready to strike down on us. Some of the challenges that we face can sometimes seem impossible to fight and win. Many things in life can be intimidating to approach. The easiest thing to do is turn around and run instead of fighting it head on. It's important to keep in mind that God is on our side here to fight our battles. Fear is a weapon from the enemy, and we need to recognize that God protects us. He never leaves us. The battle belongs to the Lord.

God is able to turn some of the biggest strengths into weaknesses, and weaknesses into the greatest strengths. Goliath's biggest strength was his size, but that became his weakness as David triumphed over him. David was at a disadvantage but was able to conquer Goliath despite that.

David fought Goliath on his own terms. He was not persuaded to fight in Saul's armor or to use the traditional methods. He went up against Goliath in a way he felt most comfortable. The lion and the bear were challenging, but now it can be seen that they were life experiences that bolstered David's ability to slay the bigger foe. Life can change quickly, and we sometimes wonder, "why me?" It may be that God is preparing us for an even bigger event where we need to stand on His behalf.

Goliath knew exactly what he was doing and even knew what the response was likely going to be from the Israelites. The easiest way to win a battle is to get folks to be afraid of you. Fear, as you may know, can be very paralyzing to a person.

Fear of Goliath certainly paralyzed the Israelites for forty days. For forty days, they sat around and did nothing while Goliath taunted and mocked them. Imagine sitting still and not moving on something because you were so afraid. Can anyone relate to that in their life? Fear can paralyze us and keep us from moving forward. The Israelites were supposed to have laid claim to the Promised Land and defeat their enemies. Fear held them back from being able to fully lay claim to their blessing of the Promised Land.

Fear is always a tool of the enemy. The enemy will often use fear as a means to control what others do.

David watches as the men in the Israelite army cower in great fear (1 Samuel 17:24). David did not stand in fear of Goliath. Notice that his brother, the other men, including King Saul, tried to influence what David believed in

his heart (1 Samuel 17:28-33). Saul specifically says to him, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.”

In David's heart, he knew exactly what he was capable of doing with his faith and trust in God. In a way, David's brother, the others, and Saul had become minor Goliaths for David. You see, the enemy will often tell you what you cannot do!

This was the same attitude that David had in his heart. David stood firm in his faith.

Saul tried to clothe and arm David for battle (1 Samuel 17:38). David tells Saul that he could not even walk around in the battle armor Saul was giving him. Saul was trying to help arm David but he could not provide the type of help that David would need in this battle because he did not understand the battle that was being fought.

David took all that worldly armor off and dropped the sword. He picked up some stones from a nearby brook and went on the battlefield with them and his sling (1 Samuel 17:40). The stones and sling were the only weapons that David took out on that battlefield with Him. Remember the words that he said to Saul: *“The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”*

So, David took his biggest weapon onto this battlefield with him. That weapon: his faith in His deliverer – God! Sometimes we find ourselves on the battlefield with our Goliath. We also need to stand firm in our faith in our deliverer – God – that we can overcome whatever our Goliath may be!

On the battlefield, David said to Goliath (1 Samuel 17:45), “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin.” David saw this and then said to him, “But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts.” Confirmation that David stood on the battlefield in the power of God to defeat his enemy. Our Goliath's will come at us fully armed with everything to try to defeat us! It is very hard to win any battles when you're afraid you're not going to win! At the very same time, some of us try to take on our great challenge without carrying God into the battle with us. What can we do by ourselves? Nothing.

David said, the battle is the Lord's, and He will give us the victory (1 Samuel 17:47). When you come up against your Goliath, walk forward with this type of faith and you will have all the power you need to step over and defeat him because God will cause the giant to fall.

Jesus was the one to whom David pointed. "His battle was the Lord's." David only saved his people from physical death. David only risked his life for his people. Jesus saved us all with the cost of his life. David only went into the valley of the shadow of death, Jesus went into death and hell itself and David needed this descendent of David, he needed Jesus, this champion who stood before a giant. He needed a champion to save him from his own sin. We also need this Savior. We need Jesus.

Fourteen hundred years after David had defeated Goliath, Augustine wrote, "*Without God, we cannot; without us, he will not.*" The truth that Jesus Christ had impressed upon his disciples on the night before his death he said: "*Apart from me you can do nothing.*" (John 15:5) When Jesus told his followers, "*Apart from me you can do nothing*" he never meant that you and I should therefore do nothing! What he means is that apart from him we can do nothing and that our "doing" should always be bearing fruit and glorifying God. He tells us that apart from him we can do nothing and that we must never be idle or useless. The battle is the Lord's.

The difference between David and the other soldiers was not that he had faith and they had doubts. Or that they had doubts and he had none. The difference is this: David acted on his belief and ignored his doubts while they acted on their doubts and ignored their belief.

Max Lucado says in his book, Facing Your Giants "You have a choice: battle your giants in your own power, run from your giants, allow your giants to paralyze you, or turn your giants over to God and let him overcome them. It's your choice..what's it going to be? God took an ordinary boy with ordinary tools and accomplished an extraordinary feat."

As you come to the Lord's Table today bring your fears and doubts and God will stand with you to cause the giant in your life to fall.