

Remnant Life Church
May 24, 2026
**Familiar Stories Retold:
David's Vision of Goliath**
I Samuel 17:4-50

How you view your circumstances is a primary factor in how you respond to them

- One of the foundational elements of our mission here at RLC is how we live our daily lives as Christians
- Not just knowledge of how to live, but actually doing it
 - Those are two very different things, aren't they?
 - As I have said many times, to sit in this environment and nod your head as I am teaching is not the same thing as when confronted with whatever you struggle with during the week
 - The good news is, God is greater than your struggles and He is there in the person of the Holy Spirit to guide you
- But only if you set your vision on the right things, the things of God with the spiritual eyes of faith.

Because what you see determines your decisions

- In 1952 Florance Chadwick set out to swim from Catalina Island to the coast of CA
 - A distance of approximately 22 miles
 - The weather, however, is very unpredictable off the west coast and almost as soon as she set out, a heavy fog settled in
 - After several hours she became so disoriented that she had to be pulled into the escort boat
 - Only to discover that she was just 300 yards from shore
 - When asked about her decision she said, "What you must understand is all I could see was hopelessness"
- Our vision or how we view things will always play a large part in whether we experience victory or suffer defeat in the day-to-day challenges of life

This morning, as we continue our series on Familiar Stories Retold, we turn to the ultimate underdog story and one that is filled with the vivid imagery that reveals profound truth.

READ – I Samuel 17:4-50

Now the most often utilized analogy of this account is that Goliath represents the big challenges of our lives

- And while there is certainly truth in that, I want our focus this morning to be not on Goliath, but on David
- Because the fact is, David had a choice on how to view what was going on around him
 - And his choice was to see things in faith or in faithlessness

- One of those views meant embracing the conventional wisdom of Saul and his army
 - The other meant ignoring the obvious and believing in something far greater in power and purpose
- And that same choice is facing each of us every single day
- Will I look at the challenges of my life with the limited vision of the faithless, or through the eyes of faith?
- Evangelist Hadden Robinson
 - Distinguished Professor of Preaching and the former President of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
 - He wrote this in one of his books – *In any situation, what you ARE determines what you see, and what you see determines what you DO.*

Before we look into that, let's set the stage leading to this encounter between David and Goliath: The first thing we should ask is who were the Philistines?

- They were descendants of Noah's oldest son – Ham (**Gen 10:13**)
 - Ham was the son who was cursed by Noah (**Gen 9:24-25**)
 - And along with that, God said that Ham would be a slave to his brothers Shem and Japheth
 - IOW, there would be contention and strife for all time
 - The Philistines likely came out of the area of modern-day Greece – one of the regions settled by Ham's descendants
- The other lineage from Noah that is important are those of his son Shem (**Gen 10**)
 - Who were the descendants of Shem?
 - The nation of Israel beginning with Abraham
 - Who are the modern descendants today of Ham's line?
 - The Arabic nations who along with Abraham's son Ishmeal, would father the middle eastern people
 - There will never peace between those two sides until Jesus comes again
 - And so it was that the Philistines would be a continual thorn in the side of the Israelite nation

The Philistines worshipped two primary gods

- The first was the male god Dagon
 - Yet God always made it very clear to the people that He was the only one, true God
 - **I Sam 5** – the Philistines had captured the Ark of the Covenant and taken it to the temple of Dagon
 - The next morning the statue is found lying on its face before the Ark
 - They set it back up but the next morning it is on its face again with its head and hands broken off
 - And when Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle Saul's body was displayed in the temple of Dagon (**I Sam 31**)
- Their second god was the female counterpart Ashtaroth

- She was their goddess of the moon who eventually became the Roman goddess Venus
- And what is so hard to believe is the nation of Israel actually embraced the worship of this idol for long periods of time
 - **2 Kings 21-23** – Manasseh put up an Asherah pole in the temple of Jerusalem which King Josiah, the last of the godly kings of Judah, then had torn down
- Solomon even built an altar to this idol for one of his 700 wives - **Kings 23:13**
- While the Philistines were wholly and completely pagan God used them several times as an instrument of discipline when dealing with the disobedience of the Israelites
 - Much in the same way He did Nebuchadnezzar

Back to our story – the Philistines and Israelites are at war and we are now at the Valley of Elah

- We find the Philistines encamped on one side of the valley with the Israelites encamped on the other
 - Nothing is happening except for one man who walks down into the valley each day
- Goliath had a plan and stuck with it for nearly 6 weeks (**17:16**)
 - He actually came out twice a day to challenge and taunt the Israelites
 - He would do this every day at sunrise and sunset
 - Why then?
- These were the times of day when the Israelites prayed, and Goliath wanted to strike fear at what would normally be their times of greatest comfort
- And so, David comes into the camp and wants to know why no one is dealing with this obvious threat
 - David demonstrates a righteous indignation against this man who defies God's people
 - He is grieved and angered by it
 - Do we feel that way today about things that are against God or do we tend to just accept it?

David saw an obstacle that needed to be dealt with

- The question is how did he see it?
- In faith or faithlessness?

How are things seen differently when viewed through the eyes of the faithless versus the faithful?

The limited view of the faithless brings fear

- Fear comes when we live by sight and not by faith
 - In **2 Cor 5:7** Paul tells us that we must live by faith not sight
 - That does not mean that we deny physical reality!
 - David could not deny the reality of his circumstances
 - Goliath was imposing – we read that he was 6 cubits and a span tall

- A biblical cubit approx. 18” (the elbow to the tip of a man’s finger)
 - A span was one third of a cubit or approx. 6”
 - Goliath was approx. 9’5”
 - The armor he wore weighed between 130-150 lbs
 - The head of his spear was about 18 lbs
 - He was definitely imposing!
- So, you can see why we read in verses **24-25**
 - *Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him in great fear. Now the Israelites had been saying, “Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel.*
 - Defy means to taunt, humiliate, and blaspheme
- Isn’t that what Satan wants to do to Christians in order make us afraid?
 - Fear makes way for and embraces doubt and doubt keeps us bound in unhealthy and destructive patterns of living and behavior
- A secondary effect of faithfulness is it will spread to others
 - We see the truth of this in Saul’s actions
 - In that day, if the enemy was willing to send their biggest and best fighter out to issue a challenge then the other side was expected to do the same
 - Who was the biggest man in the Israeli army? Saul (**I Sam 9:12**)
 - And who was it that was leading this fear-filled army? Saul
 - But why was Saul filled with fear and unwilling to accept the challenge of Goliath?
 - He had lead the Israelite army into battle many times before
 - Because when Saul had directly disobeyed Samuel’s instructions in one of those previous battles, God removed His Spirit of authority, His presence from him – (**I Sam 15:23**)
 - Saul was destined to live the rest of his life without the presence of God in his life
 - No wonder he was always being tormented by evil spirits!
- Then along comes young David who in verse **26** says, basically, why hasn’t someone done something about this big-mouth?
 - But because all of the men were consumed with fear and doubt they replied to him in verse **33** – you’re too young, you can’t win!
 - Doubt brings with it many companions
 - And one of them is the spirit of negativity
 - And negativity breeds fear, which keeps this destructive cycle in motion

Now, contrast that with the view of the faithful

The view of the faithful brings courage

- Courage is an unshakable confidence in the unlimited power of God
 - This type of godly courage takes the focus off of our own physical, mental, and emotional limitations
 - And sets it on the source of our strength and resolve
 - It then allows us to see an obstacle, not just as a hinderance to our path, but as a defiance and insult to our living God
- And that is how David saw Goliath – not just as a physical threat but an insult to the God of His people

And it was in that faithful courage David picks up 5 stones

- But why 5 stones?
 - Did that show a lack of faith on David's part?
 - Or did it foreshadow the skills David would one day need to lead God's people?
 - I think there are two reasons why he chose 5 stones
 - First, while God had obviously assured David's spirit through his faith of the victory, did David know how many stones it would take?
 - Many times in our lives, when we pray, it requires a persistence before God will answer
 - Perhaps God had something else in mind rather than just one stone
 - David did not know but he was prepared
 - This was not weak faith rather the experience that God had given him with the bear and the lion earlier in his life
 - But second, not only was David prepared for what God wanted, but God prepared David
 - We read later in **I Samuel** that Goliath had four relatives who were also soldiers, also giant men
 - They are called brothers in some biblical accounts (**2 Sam 21**) and so David had a stone for each of them as well

What steps did David take to defeat this obstacle that we should still use today?

1. He ignored the doubts of the faithless (17:33)
 - Saul expressed his doubts
 - David's brothers expressed their doubts
 - In fact, I would think any soldier who overheard David would have said, "Seriously?"
 - But what we can be assured of this morning is not one great thing was ever accomplished without having to encounter those who doubted saying it could not be done

- In the early 1950's two brothers by the name of Richard and Maurice wanted to open a restaurant that focused on only one main food
 - They were told by nearly everyone they knew that it would never work
 - They pressed forward with their plan anyway
 - And as of 2025 there are over 41,000 McDonald's restaurants in over 100 countries around the world
- Remember even Jesus had Thomas
- The important thing is to not allow the doubters to dissuade you from what God has called you do or be

2. The second step David took was he remembered his "Only God Stories"

- These are those miraculous things that only God could do in our lives
 - The Bible is filled with them – Red Sea; fiery furnace; Lazarus, the feeding of the 5000, etc.
 - We all have experience with these accounts but satan wants you to either forget them or fail to recall them
 - David recounted his "Only-God" stories of the bear and the lion when speaking with King Saul
 - David was in essence saying – God did it for me then and He will do the same for me now!
 - You can choose to either dwell on the limitations that we each have or you can recall your "Only-God" stories and know that God is able

3. The third thing David did was he acted boldly in the face of intimidating seemingly overwhelming circumstances (17:43-47)

- It is not enough to simply believe – it takes action!
- *What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (James 2:14-17)*
- Verse 20 tells us that the Israeli army lined up for battle every day, but they never did anything
- One of my favorite verses in the Bible is... 17:49 - *As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him*
- This was a physical demonstration of the faith David had in spite of his opponent being a giant, his inexperience, the words of discouragement he heard from everyone around him

- Those things were not going to squelch the overwhelming faith David had in the power of God

4. Finally, David gave God all the Glory!

- What is so often missed is David did this before he even went out to meet Goliath
 - Listen to not only the words that give God the glory but how filled with faith and confidence in God they are
 - (17:46-47) *This day the LORD **will** deliver you into my hands, and I **will** 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. 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."*

There is one more thing I would like for you to take with you this morning:

- Just as David fought against the giant on behalf of an entire nation so too Jesus fought for us against satan on behalf of the entire human race
 - David is one of the forerunners, a foreshadowing of Jesus who was yet to come
 - David did battle in the power of God's might
 - Jesus did battle on our behalf in the power of His Father's might
 - Today we do battle against sin and the schemes of satan in the power of our risen Lord and Savior's might

What is your vision as you walk through your day?

- Is it a vision of faithlessness that is dependent on your limited strength and resources?
 - Is it one that is based in fear, that brings doubt, that keeps you locked in an unhealthy, hopeless, and godless cycle of defeat?
- Or is it a faith-filled vision that sees beyond the natural because you know who and what you are? A child of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

And you can begin to encounter your Goliath in a very different way with a very different expectation of the outcome

- One that reflects the truth of God's power in you
- What might that sound like?
 - Well, every soldier looked at Goliath and said, "He's so big, I can't kill him."
 - David looked at that same giant and said, "He's so big, I can't miss!"