

The Boy and the Giant

The shepherd boy and the Philistine giant,
two adversaries who have given sports reporters
around the world a simple phrase to describe
a contest between two vastly unequal opponents.

Picture Dollar Academy's
first 15 playing host to a much stronger team,
say the British Lions or the All Blacks.

The local sportswriters would refer to that
as a David and Goliath contest.

The good news being, that David still wins occasionally.

Dollar's Pipe Band on the other hand,
Might be considered the goliath
by a number of other Scottish schools,
following their tenth consecutive Scottish championship.

Our must know story this morning,
Is that of David and Goliath.

Let me remind you of the setting for this story.
Some 3000 years ago in the land that is now Israel,
The Philistines went to war with
the people of God--called the Israelites.

The armies were evenly matched.
King Saul and his Israelites on one ridge
and the Philistines on the other.
But, Into the valley each day marched Goliath.
Whom the Bible says he was over nine feet tall.
Picture him as a teenager of 15 or 16.
I wonder how many trips his parents made to supermarket.
Just the armour that this giant wore weighed almost fifty kilos.
The pointed end of his spear weighed over a stone.
Goliath was bigger than any first row rugby player
Or heavy weight boxer I know of,
and had the disposition of a dictator to boot.
Each day Goliath would bellow at the Israelites,
daring one of the them to come out and fight him.
He cursed and threatened and bragged, a really bully.
It would be similar to Lennox Lewis fighting Mother Teresa.
Everyone in King Saul's army was terrified;
Everyone except a teenage shepherd boy named David.
He was visiting his brothers in the army.
The Israelite soldiers compared themselves
to Goliath and thought--How small I am!
But David compared Goliath to God and thought:

What a weak giant! Poor wee soul!

The Spirit of God resided in David.

Therefore, whereas the Israelite soldiers

saw Goliath as too big to hit,

David concluded that he was too big to miss. PAUSE

You know the story, don't you???

David volunteered to fight.

Saul tried unsuccessfully to dissuade him.

Then he tried to arm David with heavy metal protective gear.

But David wasn't comfortable wearing that stuff.

All he took with him was his shepherd's staff,

a slingshot, and a few small stones.

Can't you see it now?

A fair- faced teenage boy strides down

into the valley to meet a giant as thousands look on.

What would Sky have paid to televise it as a sports special?

Goliath watched that youngster coming toward him.

The giant was puzzled, then embarrassed, then insulted.

He cursed and threatened the boy, hoping to intimidate him.

"What am I?" he asked.

"A dog, that you come after me with a stick?"

Goliath was watching the wrong hand.

It was the slingshot in the other hand

he should have worried about.

David's little speech which followed was a classic.

He said, "You come to me with a sword and a spear,

but I come to you in the name of the Lord...

Today the Lord will conquer you and I will strike you down...

The battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand."

You know the rest.

One stone from David's sling hit Goliath right between the eyes.

PAUSE

The story of the one on one battle between

David and Goliath is one of the most familiar

of all the 'heroic' tales in the Hebrew Bible,

a tale of strength in adversity, of last being first,

of the underdog winning the day.

In Scotland, like most small nations with bigger neighbours,

we tend to have a natural sympathy for the underdog.

In New Zealand popular t-shirt slogans say things like

"We support the All-Blacks, and anybody who'll beat Australia."

Change the names and these shirts would do well here also!

So we tend to like giant-killers,

The wee guys who knock bigger ones off their perches.

David plays well with us.

However, the popular version of this story,

And the references to it in our modern day society,

Often revel in the details and ignores the fundamentals.

For, this is not chiefly a story about the wee shepherd boy,

And his huge opponent going head to head.

It is first a foremost a story of God's presence with us,

And his power to deliver us from life's most formidable opponents.

For, David's confidence lay not just in his prowess with a sling,

but in God and the rightness of God's cause.

This story of God's power and David's bravery

has a message for us all.

For, all of us are meant to be in the giant- defeating business.

The Apostle Paul, in our call to worship,

refers to all Christians as "more than conquerors."

Everyone of us has some kind of giant facing us.

Your giant could be a marriage that is sick

or an illness that is threatening

or a personal habit that is destructive.

Your giant could be a job situation that is unfulfilling

or a difficult boss or an impossible financial situation.

Your giant could be a temptation that is almost impossible to resist.

Maybe your giant is the threat of cut-backs or downsizing at work.

If you are a single person, perhaps your giant is loneliness.

If you are a student, perhaps your giant is a person
or group at school that you don't get along with
or your inability to communicate with your family.

Everybody faces at least one giant of some size,
Whether it be physical or mental, social or financial.

Many of us in Dollar are now familiar with the giant
that wee Imogen James is fighting,
as she battles the effects of Optic Nerve Hypoplasia,
we pray that she can get the help she needs,
to overcome it.

For, God wants to help us all be giant-defeaters in our time.

So, in closing, let's look to David's example
and see what we can imitate in our efforts to face our giants.

I see in David three giant-defeating strategies
that I am convinced will work for us.

First strategy, Be prepared.

Perhaps David would have been a good boy scout.
In 1 Samuel 16 David was anointed with the Holy Spirit,
Here was a young man who knew what he believed
and was certain of God's presence with him.

He made decisions about how he would act before

He found himself in the situation and

we can do the same.

When I was at school, doing peer counseling,

I always used to say to people that it was far easier

To make a conscious decision about drinking, or drugs,

Or having sex, as a matter of principle,

Before you found yourself confronted by friends at a party.

Peer pressure is a real GIANT,

And in the heat of the moment, if you aren't prepared,

The Giant might just win.

A second strategy of David's: Use what you have.

King Saul tried to arm David with that heavy metal gear,

but it wasn't for him...he was much more confident,

equipped with his own gear, as simple as it was.

You can't do battle with someone else's armor.

You have to use your own gifts, experiences, and abilities.

God has equipped you with all things needful for victorious living.

Just use what you have, and be confident

in your ability to achieve great things.

FINALLY, DAVID'S MOST IMPORTANT STRATEGY

NOT JUST FOR GOING TO BATTLE WITH GIANTS,

BUT FOR DAILY LIVING WAS THIS:
INVITE GOD INTO THE ARENA WITH YOU.

David said to Goliath,

"I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts."

If you place yourself in a moral position that God can support,
and if you call on him in faith for a purpose that is in his will,

God will go to battle with you.

As Paul said to the Romans he was writing to,

"If God is for us, what does it matter who is against us?"

With God's on side, the word impossible
is banished from the dictionary.

Whether in the boardroom, the classroom,
the hospital room or the sitting room,

God still works together with us for good.

For, If you had asked David how he prevailed against Goliath,

he would not have bragged on his marksmanship
with the slingshot.

Nor would he have called it a lucky shot.

He would have claimed that God guided that stone in flight.

For David Knew that his battle
was bigger than Himself and Goliath.

How wonderful it is to know that God is bigger

than any problem you can have in life today...

If we remember David's winning strategy and imitate it:

Ask God to help you prepare before the battle comes.

Use what you have. And invite God into the arena with you.

Name your giant; then, with God's help, watch him tumble!

The story of David and Goliath is not

A moral lesson on the power of positive thinking,

Or an epic novel on the power of good over evil,

Or even a sports article about the underdog

upsetting the favourite.

It is the story of a God who whispers to us that we can do it;

that He will be with us; that with His help, we shall prevail.

May the same God who went into battle with David be with you in

your battles Trust in Him. He will give you the victory!

This story is a heroic tale, featuring an underdog

(who is as unlikely as he is undersized),

going up against a foe (who is as fearsome as he is formidable).

No way can the underdog win. Except he does.

So there you have it. A must know story for the ages,

Which I hope will help you face your giants

with a bit more faith and confidence.

