

KILLING THE GIANTS SERIES
“KILLING THE GIANT OF FEAR”
 I Samuel 17:1-50, Psalm 27:1-14

“Many years ago (a man) worked at the old Houston Public Library in downtown Houston.

Among the crew that worked at the library it was always a toss-up as to who would turn off the lights in the upstairs stacks. You had to walk along the stacks, turning off the lights as you went, and when you got to the final switch you were in darkness. And there were busts of Sidney Lanai, Andrew Jackson, and others. It was very musty in that section of the library, and very few people, except real bookworms, would go to the third or fourth floor of that library. So the crew hated to turn the lights off.

“One night it fell to one of the younger fellows on the crew to have to turn the lights off. Well, (this man), knowing that the young guy was already jumpy, slipped up the back stairway and hid behind the stacks. This little guy was walking along turning off lights and humming to himself. You know how you do when you are scared. You bump things. And you sing, ‘Jesus loves me, this I know.’ So this kid’s walking along. Hum, hum, click, hum, click, hum, click, click, click. He gets to the last switch and as he turns off the light, (this guy who was hiding) says, ‘What are you doing up here?’

“(The story goes that) that was the last time they ever saw that young man. He ran down those stairs and out into the street. He never even came back to get his paycheck.”¹ You see, he had just encountered the giant of fear. And that giant had control of his life.

Giants are like that. They are big bullies that make life difficult for everyone, especially those who are afraid of them. So during the season of Lent this year, we’re going to look at the various giants that are affecting our lives, and I’m going to offer ways that we can reduce and even kill those giants in our lives so that we can be free from their influences. Today we’ll look at the first giant, FEAR. In the coming weeks, midweek and on the weekend services, we’ll look at the giants of bitterness, jealousy, lust, depression, loneliness, resentment, grief, pain, procrastination, and rumor. I hope to give you standard advice as to how to kill those giants in your life that are affecting your quality of life. So let’s look at fear and then begin to discover ways that we can eliminate this giant.

¹ (Charles Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Ultimate Book of Illustrations*, [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998] pg. 207

The Scripture text I chose for us today is I Samuel 17, the account of David killing the giant, Goliath. Most everyone knows a little bit about the encounter, but I invite you to turn in your Bibles to that chapter so that you can follow along.

Here we have an attack on Israel by the Philistines. They had come face to face with each other at the Elah Valley where the two armies occupied opposite hills of the valley. It is there that the Philistine's champion emerges to challenge the army of Israel. Goliath was not just a big man, he was a giant, standing over 9 feet tall. He wore armor that weighed around 125 pounds covering him head to toe. Only his face was unprotected. He carried a spear on his back that was as thick as an average man's forearm. The head of that spear was over 15 pounds alone. This guy would be a dream of any football or basketball coach. He was a brute, and he knew it. He even had another soldier carrying just his shield. I mean, this guy was gigantic.

Every day Goliath would come out and taunt the army of Israel. He even went so far as to make a challenge that if anyone could come out to him and possibly defeat him, the whole Philistine army would surrender and become the slaves of Israel. But if they were to lose to him, the whole army of Israel would be the slaves of the Philistines. For forty days, this guy comes out and makes the challenge, "I dare you – send someone out to me!" And for forty days the whole army of Israel stood paralyzed and hypnotized by Goliath. No one dared to even speak up to him. Fear got ahold of them and there was no way that anyone was going to move while he was there.

I guess that they waited the forty days, hoping that something might happen to him during that time. King Saul tried inspiring the men to take courage by offering a handsome reward for the man who would step up and kill this giant. And not only that, but that man would get the king's daughter in marriage AND be tax exempt for the whole family forever! Wouldn't that entice you to risk your life to try to kill this giant? Nope, not a peep from anyone in the Israelite army. Not even King Saul, who was a head taller than anyone else (except Goliath), would go out to do battle with him.

Now, it's interesting that God most often uses the weak and the small to bring to ruin the strong and the powerful. So along comes David, the youngest brother in the family of Jesse of Bethlehem. His

special training included keeping watch over the family sheep, throwing stones, and rescuing an occasional lamb from the paws of a bear or a lion. God had trained him in trusting in God's ways, to the point that when David hears Goliath's challenge when he is providing food to his brothers, David has no problem saying, "Well, what are we waiting for? Let's go get him!"

You see, what David had, and what the rest of the army didn't have, was the courage of God. Goliath was the voice of the strength of the world, big, brash, and boisterous. David trusted in the God of Israel, who is the One and True God Who created all things. He had experienced the deliverance of God from the paw of the bear and the paw of the lion, so he knew that God would protect him even in the face of this brute, Goliath.

Now, one might ask why David might have this kind of courage. Well, not long before that time, God had told Saul that he was no longer to be king because Saul had not obeyed the Lord God's commands. Samuel had relayed to Saul that God was no longer going to be with him, and that the position of king was going to go to another man. And it so happened that the one that God chose was David. Out of all of the eight sons of Jesse, it was David, the runt of the family, whom God chose, because God saw David's heart and knew that he would follow God's ways. David had an unbending confidence in his mighty God, and he took offense at what Goliath was saying about the Lord God. So when David stands up to Goliath, he states boldly to Goliath, in the hearing of all of the Philistine army, *"You are coming against me with sword, spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the Israelite armies, which you have defiled. This very day the Lord will put you in my power; I will defeat you and cut off your head...Then the whole world will know that Israel has a God, and everyone here will see that the Lord does not need swords or spears to save His people. He is victorious in battle, and He will put all of you in our power"* (I Sam. 17:45-47).

That's pretty gutsy for a young squirt in the face of a giant. But while Goliath trusted in his own strength, in the power of his spear, and sword and javelin, David trusted in the power of God who is more powerful than anything in the universe. While Goliath trusted in his size, in his armor and in his shield for protection, David trusted in the God who is in authority over all people.

It is so important that we know that “prevailing over giants isn’t accomplished by using their technique. That’s ‘lesson one’ for all of us. Goliath might have been mistaken for the battleship *Missouri* with all his noise and iron and bronze. Not David...he didn’t even carry a sword! His greatest piece of armor, the lethal weapon that made him unique and gave him victory, was his inner shield of faith. It kept him free from fear, it made him hard of hearing threats, it gave him cool composure amidst chaos, and it cleared his vision.”²

While David could have listened to his brothers tell him that he needed to have military training and wear the right equipment in order to engage the giant Philistine, David chose rather to trust in the One who had never let him down, the One who had more power in His little toe than anyone on earth combined. David chose to keep faith in the God who was and is and is to come, the Almighty, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. The One who could establish all that is could be trusted to have more strength than any army on earth. This bully from Gath, Goliath, was hardly the one who could stand up to the power of God.

And how did David know this? He listened well to the lessons of the history of Israel. He had learned how God had used the men and women of the time of the Judges to defeat the enemies of Israel; Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Samson and several others. He had learned about Joshua leading the army of Israel to capture the Promised Land from the Amalekites, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Amorites and the Canaanites, and how God delivered them all to them so that they could possess the land. He had also heard about how Moses delivered the people of Israel out of the hands of Pharaoh, from slavery to freedom, by the grace and power of God. In these and many other lessons, David had learned the wonderful power that came to those who were obedient to the God of Israel and trusted in His commands. He put his trust in The Lord God and would not let anyone else rule his heart. And we see that in the words of Psalm 27 (**READ Psalm 27**).

Charles Swindoll gives us some powerful advice. He says, “Conquering giants isn’t accomplished without great skill and discipline. To be God’s warrior, to fight His way, demands much

² (Charles Swindoll, *Killing Giants; Pulling Thorns*, [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1994] pg. 15)

more expertise and control than one can imagine. Using the sling and stone of the Spirit is a far more delicate thing than swinging the club of the flesh. But oh, how sweet is the victory when the rock finds its mark...*and how final.*”³ And David’s small stone killed the giant of fear called Goliath.

So how do we defeat the giant of fear? What steps can we take to defeat this powerful enemy? First, Be Faithful to the Lord God! Come to know that the Lord is the only One in authority in our world today that we are to follow. There may be leaders in governments, leaders in religions, professors and teachers in school, and even leaders in the community, but there is only ONE God Almighty to whom we are to give our allegiance. He is above all and He is the One we are to give our loyalty to. While we are called to obey those in leadership over us, we are called over all to be faithful to the Lord God. No one is to be worshipped besides Him. Worship the Lord and Him alone. Let no one or no thing become more important to you than the Lord our God!

Second, Trust In His Power and Authority! The Lord God Almighty has more power in His weakness than anyone has in their strength. God is Lord of all, and He sits on the throne of heaven and earth. **He** is our King and no other. **He** is our God and no other. We have seen His power and authority in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God’s own Son given to us for the salvation of the world. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and only by Him do we have access to God the Father (John 14:6). Jesus healed the sick, cured the lame, gave sight to the blind, calmed the storm, brought the dead back to life, and fed the multitudes with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. Jesus cast out the demons by the power of His word and even restored the ear to man in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus died for the penalty of sin, bringing life to all who will believe in Him and trust Him as Savior and Lord.

Third, Seek His presence and guidance every day. God knows the plans that He has for each one of us (Jeremiah 29:11), so as we trust in those plans we find prosperity and receive a future and a hope. As we seek the Lord’s presence in our lives each day, He is delighted to show Himself to us and direct us in the things we can do for Him. If we seek the Lord Jesus Christ, He promised to go with us always, even to the very end of our life (Matthew 28:20), to teach us His ways and show us His direction. And

³ (Swindoll, *Killing Giants*, pg. 15-16)

when Jesus goes with us, whom do we have to be afraid of?

Fourth, Know His Word. God has given us His Word in order that we might know His will and His way. The Bible teaches us all of God's commands, and opens our eyes to Who He is. When we memorize the Word of God, we can use it against the giant of fear to strengthen us and encourage us and empower us to face life, no matter what. When Jesus was tempted by Satan, He used the Word of God to defeat every temptation that Satan put before Him. God's word in the Bible is our offensive weapon that we can use to defeat the things that would lead us away from God, and strive to defeat us.

The Word of God has great power to heal those sick from sin, to release the captive caught in bondage to addictions, and to empower those who are weak to do great things for the Lord. When we have the Word of God in our lives, when we can quote His word, even the enemies of hell cannot overcome us. Then the giant of fear has no power whatsoever in our lives.

Fifth, Prepare Yourself For Battle. We are surrounded by evil and wickedness that strives to defeat us. When we discipline ourselves to read God's Word, memorize it, and implement it into our lives, we begin to put on the full armor of God and we prepare ourselves for the battle of our souls. Satan prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). Unless we prepare our hearts and minds and bodies to live for the Lord, we are helpless to defend ourselves from the attacks of Satan, and we fall for any of his devices and schemes to destroy us.

Daily devotions, spending time in God's Word, empowers us to live according to His ways. Those who tell you that the Bible has no relevance for our world today tells the lie straight from hell itself. When we get into the Word of God, when we crack open the Book and scour the pages of the Word of God, the demons tremble and run away in fear. When we spend time praying, asking God's power and direction in our lives, Satan has a heart attack. When we stand up to the giant of fear with the power of God, fear melts away and retreats into the pit of doom. But if we neglect to prepare ourselves for the battle ahead of us, Satan has already won, and we fall prey to all that he wants us to do.

Sixth, Decide Today To Only Follow The Lord Jesus! This must be done each and every day, choosing to live our life following God's Way. Yes, we become Christians by choosing Jesus Christ as

Savior of our life, but it is not a one-time only event. We must choose Jesus to be the Lord of our life every single day, every minute, every second of that day. For the moment that we choose anyone or anything else, we lose the power and authority of Jesus in our life and we end up doing the exact opposite of what God desires. Deciding to follow Jesus, and Him only, is absolutely essential in order to defeat the giant of fear.

Seven, Don't Be Buffaloed By the Bully Of Fear! The giant may be big, it may be overwhelming, it may be powerful, it may be daunting, but at its best it is only filled with hot air. The threats spewed by fear are meant to intimidate, and paralyze, and even hypnotize those who listen, and we are lulled into believing that it is more powerful than anything else. Yes, bullies are big and sometimes strong, but inside they are hurting, and crying, and seeking love from someone who will call them a friend. So because they are hurting, they feel better by hurting others. They do to others what has been done to them. But when love shows up, when compassion and gentleness and kindness surround that bully, the hurt is relieved and the threats go away, and the fear leaves.

Franklin D. Roosevelt said it best in his 1933 inaugural address, "We have nothing to fear, but fear itself." Fear is what drives a wedge between our faith and our future. Fear is what separates us from the hope we have in Jesus. Fear is looking at the worst that can happen in the future, before it happens. When we trust that Jesus is the Lord of All, even fear has to submit to Him, and we can be at peace knowing that Jesus has even defeated the enemy of death so that we need not even fear the grave.

Eighth and finally, we must Step Up And Fight For The Lord! Just like David refused to be intimidated by the bully Goliath, so we, too, must have the confidence that the Lord will not only defend us, but use us to defeat the enemy of Fear. Fear prevents us from boldly telling others about the Great Good News of God in Jesus Christ. Fear forces us to accept the things we know to be wrong. Fear convinces us that there is no other way. Fear deceives us into believing that God's ways are no longer beneficial for us. Fear tries to make us believe that there is no God and if there was, He doesn't care about us anyway. Fear makes us believe that we don't have to follow God's ways and that we can follow the world's ways with no consequences. Fear lies to us so that we choose the wrong and no

longer follow the right.

By putting these 7 first things into practice in our lives, being faithful to the Lord God, trusting in His power and authority, seeking His presence and guidance, knowing His Word, preparing ourselves for battle, deciding to follow only Jesus, and then not being buffaloed by the bully of fear, we find God doing marvelous things in our lives. We find God helping us to stand up for the down-trodden. We find God empowering us to stand up in the face of lies and false teachings. We find God guiding us to touch the lives of hurting and the sick. We find God using us to comfort the lonely and build up the abused. We find God giving us the courage to combat the wicked and correct the deceived. When we put these things into practice in our lives, fear has no power over us, and we are released into the world as the warriors of the Lord our God to do mighty and wondrous things for Him.

But it involves us putting feet on our faith, stepping up to make it happen, and deciding to follow God's ways. Had David listened to those around him and decided to become a victim of fear, he would never have stepped up to even face Goliath. But because He trusted in God and stepped up to fight for the Lord, the giant of fear left him and the giant, Goliath, was defeated.

We are told in Isaiah 41:10,

*“Do not fear, for **I am with you**; Do not anxiously look about you, for **I am your God**. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with **My righteous right hand**.”*

That's the promise of The Lord God Almighty, and He is always good on His word. God cannot do anything evil or wicked, nor can He lie, so when He tells us that HE will be with us and empower us to live for Him, that's a promise we can bet our life on. This world needs more people of faith who will stand strong in that faith and stand up to the bully of fear in our world today. The church needs people who will step up to live for the Lord God Almighty, doing all that HE commands so that they might become a witness to the power of God. Then, we will become people after God's own heart, just like David was, and we will defeat this giant called fear in every aspect of our life. It can be easily summed up with this statement: Have faith in Jesus Christ and you will have no fear; live without Jesus Christ and you will always have fear. The choice is up to us.

Live for Jesus today and bring honor and glory to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.