

Coram Deo
Soli Deo Gloria, Soli Deo Gracia, Soli Scriptura
Agnus Dei, Qui Tollis Peccata Mundi
Deo Volente

Sermon Preach at Stouffville United Church

By the Rev. Dr. John S. Niles MSM CD

“Battling Your Giants”

2nd in the Series on David

September 10, 2023

1 Samuel 17: 20-50

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81FDbtPXo34>

The movie "Mighty Ducks", is a David vs Goliath type of film. Gordon Bombay, a high priced lawyer with a prestigious law firm is arrested for DWI and ordered to perform 500 hours of community service. His assignment is to coach a pee wee hockey team made up of a bunch of misfits and troubled kids from the inner city of Minneapolis. By his own admission, Gordon Bombay states, "I hate kids and I hate hockey." First game he coaches, the team has to play the best team in the league, the Hawks. The Hawks were a well coached team from the wealthy suburbs. They were big and mean and knew how to play hockey. Their coach was a win at all cost type of guy. They beat up this team of misfits 17-0.

Eventually, Gordon begins to overcome his own giants and takes a real interest in this group of misunderstood ten year old hockey players. Things begin to turn around and the eventually earn the last spot in the Minnesota State Pee Wee playoffs. They win their first two games and earn a spot in the championship game vs the Hawks.

Murphy's Law states: "Nothing is as easy as it looks; everything takes longer than you expect; and if anything can go wrong it will and at the worst possible moment." I could just see things going from bad to worse fast and so I thanked him and said no.

However, that is the problem isn't it. Things can turn on a dime. Things can go from good to bad to worse – fast. And then a crisis comes.

When a crisis comes, what then? How do we cope? Will we be able to take control, and come through it; or will we be crushed?

Our world seems to stumble from one crisis to another. We open our newspapers or switch on a television, and we are inundated with story after story about some crisis in our country or in some other country. Somewhere there are is national, international, political, industrial, or environmental crisis. The lists of crises are endless.

In our personal life, a crisis is always possible. None of us knows when we will have to come up against a crisis. And the question is, how will we cope? Will we come through it? Will we be able to take control of the crisis?

David was faced with an insurmountable obstacle, seemingly undefeatable foe and yet, he refused to retreat and he refused to use the tools that were offered him. He simply stepped forward in faith using a few simple strategies and won the day. And showed us all we could do the same.

I

We overcome the giants in our lives when we first **minimize our fears**. “32 David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.” 33 Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.” 34 But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them

“Let no one lose heart over this Philistine...” David said.

Fear is a funny emotion. When we allow it to take control of us it empties us of energy and enthusiasm. But when we take control of it, and face it; it infuses us with a new energy and forces us to move forward.

When we allow our fears to take control of us we are always crushed. If we take control of our fears, we begin to see more clearly the direction we need to take.

Now, David had to face a 9 foot tall Goliath who carried a sword or shield. I guess we can be grateful that we don’t have him to face, but the Goliaths we have to face are giants like unemployment, abandonment, abuse, depression, loneliness, defeated heart and bad relationships.

Your Giant may not parade up and down the hills of Elah. But it prances through your office, or your bedroom or your classroom. It brings bills you cannot pay, grades you cannot make and people you cannot please; or whisky you cannot resist, temptations you think you cannot refuse and career you cannot escape. It brings you a past you cannot shake and a future you cannot face.

Some people have compared the economic crisis that we are in to the Great Depression causing stress, and strain on individuals and families alike.

During the Great Depression Mr. JC Penney was hit particularly hard. It even endangered his health. Anxious and desperate because of huge financial losses, he felt he had nothing to live for. In the hospital he grew demoralized he expected to die before morning; but then he heard singing coming from the hospital chapel. The words of the song said, "Be not dismayed whate'er betide; God will take care of you." Entering the chapel, he listened to the song, the Scripture reading and prayer. He later wrote, "Suddenly - something happened. I can't explain it. I can only call it a miracle. I felt as if I had been instantly lifted out of the darkness of a dungeon into warm, brilliant sunlight." From that day, Penney was never plagued with worry, and he later called those moments in the chapel "the most dramatic and glorious twenty minutes of my life." When he died at age 95, he left behind 1,660 stores named after him.

II

We overcome the giants in our lives when we first minimize our fears and secondly, **muzzle the fickle**. “33 Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.” But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it

turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 37 The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you.” (1 Sam 17:32-37)

When David said he would go and fight Goliath. Immediately, he was dismissed and written off as inexperienced and untried. Saul said, *“You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.”*

Taking control of a crisis is having the courage to continue even if everyone around you says you can't. You have to muzzle the fickle. You have to ignore the vacillating naysayers.

Little boy with some others go out to play baseball. He throws the ball up into the air and says to himself, “I’m the greatest hitter in the world” – swings and misses. The other kids jeered and laughed. He ignored them critics and again says to himself, “I’m the greatest hitter in the world swings and misses”. Then there is more jeering by the other kids, he decides to try one more time – swings and misses. And then says, I’m the greatest pitcher in the world.

Unlike the boy with the ball, David, had been protecting his flock by fighting off wolves, bears and lions with nothing. He knew what he could do, even if others didn't.

III

We overcome our giants when we minimize our fears, muzzle the fickle and thirdly, maximize **our faith**.

32 David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.” 33 Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.” 34 But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 37 The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you.” (1 Sam 17:32-37)

After David explained how he had faced equally difficult struggles and overcame them and declared his faith in God, Saul replies, “Go and the Lord be with you.” Faith is the foundation for any success. We all believe in something. The question is, is it worth believing it.

Don MaKula in his book *the Trivialization of God*, talks about when Marilyn Monroe was making the movie "The Misfits", She kept going to buy drugs and booze. She was married to Arthur Miller, the playwright at the time. Arthur Miller went into the bedroom when her manager had just finished convincing the doctors to give her one more shot of drugs, so she could get on the set and finish the movie. And he looked down at his wife who he loved, and he wrote later, "I found myself straining to imagine miracles--what if she were to wake, and I was able to say to her, 'Marilyn, God loves you darling' and she was able to believe it. How I wish she still had her faith. How I wish I still had mine.'

Saul tried to have David face Goliath the way he would. Saul didn't believe that David would actually win. He believed that he would lose. While he was offering him the best advice of the day; it was advice that wouldn't work for him and David knew it. He also, knew that Saul

was only trying to help. He knew this because once he refused the advice and decided to use his own formula and strategy he didn't have to argue with Saul. Saul simply said, go with God. The greatest enemy to progress is the opinion, "But we've always done it this way before."

The story is told of a one-legged schoolteacher from Scotland who came to J. Hudson Taylor to offer himself for service as a missionary in China. J. Hudson Taylor asked him, "With only one leg, why do you think of going as a missionary?" George Scott responded, "I do not see those with two legs going."

Nelson Mandela

Our greatest fear is not that we are inadequate,
but that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us.
We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant,
gorgeous, handsome, talented and fabulous?
Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small does not serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel insecure around you.
We were born to make manifest the glory of God within us.
It is not just in some; it is in everyone.
And, as we let our own light shine, we consciously give
other people permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our fear,
our presence automatically liberates others.

You think about that. Amen