

Who Can Stand Against the Armies of the Living God?

Facing Your Goliath

Introduction:

Many of you have probably watched the movie Sea Biscuit.

You'll probably remember that Sea Biscuit was a horse no one ever thought would be winner.

In the horse racing world, he was a small horse, what they called less than 15 hands high, about the size of a big pony.

And to make it seem more impossible for the horse to win, the jockey was taller and bigger than the average jockey.

He was very unlike typical race horses because back then the winning horses were big and muscular.

Thoroughbreds were the "giants" of race horse-dom!

But not Sea Biscuit! No—he was a little guy—and he also had obvious flaws.

One thing that frustrated his FIRST owners was the fact that even though he was small Sea Biscuit ate twice as much as other horses.

Another thing—unlike his aggressive peers, Sea Biscuit was born with a gentle nature.

His favorite past-time (other than eating) was to lay around dozing under the juniper trees.

Because of all this his first owners dismissed him as having any real value when it came to winning races.

In fact they set him up to lose races as a way of giving other horses confidence.

But this one trainer saw something in Sea Biscuit and convinced his boss to buy him. He worked with Sea Biscuit and as you know this little guy went on to win all kinds of races!

There was another scene about halfway through the movie that recounted the time Sea Biscuit was pitted against a huge thoroughbred from the east named War Admiral.

When both horses lined up at the starting line it seemed inevitable that Sea Biscuit would lose.

Let's watch that race and see the results. (Clip)

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Well, as Sea Biscuit's career grew so did his fame. It seemed as if the entire nation had fallen in love with this little guy.

You see, the 30's were a tough time in our nation's history.

We were just coming out of the Great Depression and everyone in the nation felt like they were facing problems that were bigger than they were.

Everyone felt like the underdog so they all rooted for this underdog of a horse.

They decided that if Sea Biscuit could win against overwhelming odds then they could as well.

So all over our nation people gathered around their radios to cheer a small horse on as they listened to commentators describe Sea Biscuit's races.

Story:

A young woman named Florence Chadwick attempted to swim from Catalina Island to the California coast in 1952 in an attempt to set a record for covering that distance.

When she entered the water, a heavy fog had settled itself on the path before her.

Blinded by fog, she became disoriented and discouraged and gave up.

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When she finally decided she couldn't go on, her escorts in a boat helped her out of the water. The escorts feared to tell her the truth--Florence was less than 300 yards from the goal.

Her only reply after learning how close she actually came was, "All I could see was hopelessness."

Her clouded vision kept her from victory.

How do you see your challenges?

Do you see them through your eyes or through the eyes of God?

When you stand on a hillside and see a 9-foot tall giant warrior taunting you, how do you view him?

I. First, David's example shows us that to defeat the giants of life we must have good EYESIGHT.

In other words, you and I have to be able to SEE our "goliath"— whatever it is — from the clear perspective of God's limitless power.

We have to ask ourselves the question: **Is he an insurmountable obstacle or an opportunity for the glory of God to be revealed?**

We can't avoid the Goliath's of our lives--he is necessary to our growth as Christians.

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When we focus on God instead of the Giant, we immediately come to an understanding that God is infinitely bigger than any 'giant' we might face.

To defeat the giant we must have God-confidence and not try to depend on self-confidence.

We have to be able to see our giants through the lenses of faith in God.

Friend, your Goliath may be an addiction, habit, maybe you have tried time and time again to get rid of that habit and failed.

Maybe you have a bad attitude, a critical spirit and you know it's wrong to gossip, yet you struggle in your life to get the victory over it.

Possibly it could have been a job layoff, the company downsized and you became a part of the downsizing and you've been bitter – a Giant you haven't been able to get peace over.

Could you be facing some kind of financial problems, your credit is maxed out and the giant that facing you is trying to pull you under.

Could it be a marital problem, you've sensed for quite a long time that there is something going on and you haven't been able to get victory.

For many of us we face illnesses that become giants to us; cancer, heart problems, and the list goes on and on. Just giants that come in our lives!

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By reviewing this incident in David's life, we can learn some principles about facing the threatening, discouraging obstacles that come up in the life of every Christian believer.

We can look at Goliath in one of two ways:

1) The eyes of the faithless, or

2) The eyes of the faithful.

Haddon Robinson said, "**In any situation, what you ARE determines what you see, what you SEE determines what you DO.**"

Keep that in mind as we study the two views of Goliath.

II. The limited view of the faithless brings about fear, which results in dominance by the enemy.

Fear comes when we live by sight, not by faith.

In fact I am convinced that the way we live is a direct reflection of our perception of the size of our God.

Think about this, when we wake up in the morning what happens if we believe in a "small" God?

What happens is we live in constant state of fear and anxiety because everything depends on us.

We feel exposed and weak and vulnerable to the giants of life.

If we believe in a small God, then when we have an opportunity to share our faith we don't take it because we think that our success depends on us.

If we believe in a small God, we won't be generous in our giving to people who need help because we believe our financial security depends on us.

John Ortberg writes, **"When human beings shrink God, they offer prayer without faith, work without passion, serve without joy, suffer with hope. It results in fear, retreat, loss of vision, and failure to persevere."**

When we don't have the faith to believe in a Big God who is able to defeat all giants then we are limiting our God and are defeated ourselves.

It is a limited view of God because the spiritual is not involved, only the natural, physical.

We see obstacles as undefeatable giants because of their imposing physical character--Goliath is estimated to have been 9 ft 9 inches tall.

Look at v.24-25--

"And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he

come up"

This word **"defy"** means "to taunt, ridicule, humiliate"; isn't that what the evil one wants to do in your Life and my life?

The devil wants to see us cower so that he can mock us?

Goliath for you may be he a habit, bitterness, an unsettled matter, problems from the past, a difficult moral decision, etc.; if I try to quit that habit or fight that problem, my life will change too much--I'm afraid I stand to lose too much if I try to defeat Goliath.

It is therefore heavily armored, and it controls us, just as Goliath controlled the mental peace of the Israelites.

If we face up to our sin or obstacle, we fear that the giant will fight back, which it undoubtedly will.

Living by sight, we are defeated before the battle even starts.

Notice in v. 24- ***"when they saw the man, they fled from him, and were sore afraid."***

BEFORE THE BATTLE EVEN STARTS THEY FLEE.

They laid their eyes on Goliath, and all they can see is the physical--"We're going to be slaughtered."

When we live by sight, it leads to defeat and being dominated by the enemy.

The real tragedy happens when we try and pass off our defeated attitude on others.

David comes walking up, and asks, ***"Why doesn't somebody put a stop to this?"***

The reply which is given by Saul in 17:33 is typical--***"You can't win this victory; you're too young!"***

Don't you get tired of hearing that?

"Our churches can't do that, we're too small; you young people can't do that, you're too immature; you can't do it because ...,"

But it doesn't have to be this way!

Let's look at Goliath from another viewpoint.

III. The unlimited view of the faithful brings about courage, which results in totally dominating the enemy.

Courage comes when we live by faith and not by sight.

Courage comes because we have confidence in God's unlimited power, not in our own physical limitations.

Because we live in unwavering faith and trust in God, our Father it helps us to see obstacles as potential victories because what God can do.

Any obstacle that comes our way is not just a threat to us, but a defiance and insult to our Living God and His abilities.

David saw this.

It really upset him when he saw the soldiers of the Living God cowering as if they had no Helper.

Look at the attitude David displays in 17:26--

"For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

David gets upset and yells, **"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? Open your eyes! You're soldiers of God's army! What are you guys doing cowering in fear?"**

David's example shows us that to defeat the giants of life we must see the giants for what they really are.

You see, the eyes of faith see a completely different issue: it is not a threat to my security, but

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it is a defiance of the power, presence, and very character of the LORD of Hosts!

David sees it not as the armies of Israel being run down, but bigger than that--the armies of the living God!!

It is not my reputation at stake here, instead it is Jehovah's--and for me to allow Goliath to have victory is equal to telling the Almighty God that this is one problem He's not big enough to handle.

What do we do with the verse that challenges us, ***"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*** *Phil. 4:13*

APPLICATION: Let us notice the steps David took to defeat this giant, the same steps you and I can use to observe the victory from the Lord.

1) Ignore the doubts and criticisms expressed by the faithless around you, 17:33.

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."

Saul expresses his doubts and fears of David's ability to fight Goliath.

People will tell you, "Just quit; you'll never get that church, that ministry, that class off the ground."

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I've come to the conclusion that you and I are always going to have to face people who are critical, it's just going to be a way of life in the church.

Look at verse 28, David's older brother confronts him and the verse says, ***"When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle."***

Now remember Eliab was the older brother and when Samuel came to his house to anoint the next king he was passed over.

His little brother David had been chosen over him.

You talking about jealousy.

Instead of Eliab doing his duty and attacking Goliath, Eliab attacked his little brother David.

There are Critics who will want to argue over the Trivial and neglect what Jesus wants them to do.

And as Christian believers, if we're not careful, we will get sidetracked arguing about sheep while the enemy of our souls roars around our territory winning victory after victory.

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I want you to notice with me that David's response to the criticism of his jealous brother was basically ignored by David.

And folks, if we can, the best thing we can do is to ignore them too.

Satan will whisper those doubts in our ears

Your God has said certain things and made certain promises.

Folks, we have to believe in the promises of God!

When we listen to doubts, we are listening to the physical limitations.

We must ignore them just as David did.

2) Remember your "Testimonies" 17:34-37.

You know, so often when facing our own giants, we often act like Saul does here, forgetting what God has done for us in the past.

I heard this story and it is a good one.

This Believer told about a group of her friends who would get together and share poof stories.

It all began when one of the group was out windsurfing on a lake, and discovered he was out in the middle of the lake with no wind to blow him back in to the shore.

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Well, he prayed to His Heavenly Father and asked for God to help him get back to land, and POOF--God sent a breeze that did the job!

A poof story is simply something God did in answer to a prayer, a job nobody but He could perform.

You might want to study how often the saints in the Bible refer to their poof stories to find comfort.

David's poof story concerned a lion and a bear tried to steal some sheep out of his flock.

When they attacked, POOF--God delivered both beasts into his hand. David slew both of them.

What David is reminding us to do here is to remember that the same God

- Who has answered prayers before,
- Who parted the Red sea,
- Who stopped the sun from setting,
- Who raised the dead,
- Who provided a ram caught in the thicket for Isaac,
- Who has done all these things--HE IS STILL GOD! He's the same God He was yesterday and the God today and He'll be the same God in every tomorrow!

Testimonies help us remember that our Father will come through in the clutch. I call it in the “Nick of Grace time.”

He is there, He is active, and He will deliver us from our Goliaths.

To dwell upon and share with others answers to your prayers, testimonies, will encourage you and those with whom you share.

How many of you can testify that God has been there for you?

I’m reminded of a song that the kids use to sing, “My God is SOOOOO big so strong and SOOOOO mighty. There’s nothing my God cannot do!”

Bruce Larson tells the story in one of his books of how he helped people who were struggling to defeat their giants in their lives. He writes,

“For many years, I worked in New York City and counseled at my office any number of people who were wrestling with these situations. Often I would suggest they walk with me from my office down to the RCA building on Fifth Avenue. In the entrance of that building is a gigantic statue of Atlas, a perfectly proportionate man who, with all his muscles straining, is struggling to hold the world on his shoulders. There he is, the most powerfully built man in the world, and he can barely stand up under his burden. “Now that’s one way you can live,” I pointed out, ‘trying to carry the world on

your shoulders. But now, come across the street with me.’ On the other side of Fifth Avenue is St. Patrick’s Cathedral, and there, behind the altar is a statue of Jesus as a boy, perhaps 8 or 9 years old, and with absolutely no effort, He is holding the world in one hand.”

Personal Testimony:

While I was in Jackman, Maine there was a beautiful golden life-size statue of Jesus hanging on the cross in front of a Catholic Church.

When I first saw it I was enthralled with how it looked so real and so majestic.

And the Jesus spoke to me in my mind and said, “Dan, I’ve given my life for your struggles you are going through. I’ve fought every fight and I’ve won the victory for you. I’ve been through every trial that you’re facing and I’ve come through victorious.”

How often the remembrance of God’s saving acts in the Old Testament and the New Testament, especially in the book of Exodus, are recounted to remind us of how God can act in a great and mighty ways.

Instead of dwelling on doubts, the one who sees with faith dwells on their testimonies.

Has God ever let you down? No! Will He? No!

But the enemy wants us to think He will.

3) Forsake fleshly means which have not been proven of value in favor of the God has been proven--38-40.

38 "Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. 39 David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine."

Saul offers David his armor, but it doesn't fit. David says, ***"This stuff hasn't been proven. I haven't tested it to find out how well it works."***

But he has, in a sense, tried out YaHWaH and found out that He fits on every occasion.

David does not fear Goliath because he knows Who goes before him into the battle.

When I face my Goliath, do I have the confidence to understand that repentance might be more valuable than psychotherapy in dealing with my condition?

Do I believe that memorizing scripture can bring as much peace, if not more, than what's in that bottle?

Am I holding onto God's promises or seeking my security in a bank account?

Has God been given the opportunity to prove His power?

You see, this goes back to our Testimonies.

If He did it before, I can trust Him to do it again.

4) Act boldly in the face of intimidating circumstances, 17:43-47.

David took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand went out to meet the Giant Goliath.

The giant Goliath cursed David and said, ***"Am I a dog that you come at me with sticks?" and he said, "Come here and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field."***

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with the sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut

your head off. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, 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."

By the way for your information Goliath had four other brothers who were also giants and that's why he picked up five stones instead of just one, it wasn't because David thought he was going to miss.

Now I want you to see what I mean when I say we have to stand face to face with our giants and trust in God to come through for us.

All of a sudden the giant came at David and David ran quickly toward him, reached into his bag took out a stone, slung it from his sling and the power of that stone hit the giant Philistine in the center of the forehead and he fell face down – dead – defeated and David took his own sword and severed the giants head from his body.

Now Believer friends, that's victory over your giants.

When everything has been believed, prayers made, testimonies remembered, it is now time to act.

All the wonderfully blessed things shared up to this point are meaningless if they are not acted upon. Goliath must be faced.

He must be confronted.

Whether your Goliath is a present dilemma or pain carried over from your childhood, it is time to face him.

Had David said all these things about courage and faith, and then went back home without acting on the conviction that this giant insulted David's God, he would be as big a coward as the men who fled at the sight of Goliath.

If our church is going to make progress in the Great Commission, there's going to be a small gathering of Goliaths that don't care for "all them new folks whose names we don't know," then we, like David, must act boldly, trusting the Lord, and be prepared for a battle.

This morning I want you to know that the enemy will cause giants to come against us when we decide we are going to do something for God.

You may wish to avoid saying what you feel needs to be said to your husband, wife, or best friend, but Goliath will not fall unless you load your slingshot and go to that person.

No matter how much you pray, there comes a time to act and stop praying.

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A country preacher was making his way through the woods to church and came upon a bridge over a small river.

Halfway across the bridge, a bear appeared at the other end.

Immediately the preacher dove into the river, floated downstream, and got back on course for church.

When he arrived, he was still soaked.

After he related his story to everyone, a little boy asked him, "Preacher, didn't you pray when you saw that bear?"

The preacher replied, "Son, prayer is fine for a prayer meetin', but it don't do a whole lot of good at a bear meetin'."

There comes a time when prayer has to be ACTED upon.

Conclusion.

Can you trust that He will deliver you out of whatever you are facing now?

Difficulties are God's promises wrapped up in blessings for your life and mine.

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When we are sent on them, it is not a sign of His distaste for our company, but of His confidence in us.

The question is, are we confident in Him?

What are your Goliaths?

What is it you live in fear of, that dictates how you will live, act, and feel?

If my life is dominated by someone other than the Holy Spirit of God, I am being defeated by Goliath.

Is it your temper? bitterness? pain from the past? your future that scares you?

It is time for the army of the Lord to stop allowing these issues to dominate us and thus ridicule the reputation of our Father in Heaven.

We must ignore the doubts.

Remember your Testimonies.

Forsake the fleshly.

Act boldly.

Watch that giant drop.