

## TO TELL THE STORY



LUKE ITALIANO

# The Little One and the Giant

On one side of the valley, an army prepares itself for battle. Men don clanging armor. They heft swords and spears and shields. They prepare to fight and die to protect their nation.

On the other side of the valley, the invaders stood their ground, ready to attack to claim what they thought should be theirs.

And in between stood the giant.

Nine feet tall. His armor weighed 125 pounds. The tip of his spear was fifteen pounds. And he shouts his challenge: "Face me! If I win, my army will take over. If you win, we'll all surrender. One on one. Me, Goliath, against your champion. Send him out!"

And Israel's army shook in fear. It would take a great man to face this giant.

The next day Goliath shouted his challenge again. The wind whipped in the faces of the Israelites as they took their stand, but none was great enough to face Goliath. The next day Goliath roared. And on until the end of that week. And the second week. And the third week. For forty days Goliath roared his challenge, and for forty days no one was great enough to challenge him. No one was great enough to defend Israel's army.

David rode into camp. He was bringing a care package from home for three of his big brothers. And as he entered the camp, he heard Goliath's challenge. "Well, who's going to fight him?"

But no one would.

So David said, "I'll do it."

The report was brought to the king. King Saul, a man known for his strength and his height, wasn't great enough to face Goliath. And here was this kid. A shepherd, whose dad addressed him as, "The Little One." Saul's willing to listen to this kid's reasoning though.

David says 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, 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. 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. The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of the Philistine."

Did you catch that? David didn't tell Saul, "I killed a bear and a lion. I can handle this guy." Nope! "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of the Philistine." David doesn't claim to be great enough to take down Goliath. He claims that God is great enough.

Saul permits David to fight the giant. And David goes, armed only with his shepherd's sling and five smooth stones. He's not great enough to face down this giant. No way. When Goliath sees him, he laughs. "What is this, a dog? Go home, boy! I'm going to kill you!"

And David answers, "You come against me with 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 off your head. 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."

God will hand you over to me. David didn't trust in himself. It wasn't about what he could do. He wasn't great

enough to face down this giant. But his God was.

The giant roars. He charges. David can't face that. The ground trembles under the giant's feet. David slips a stone into his sling. He swings it around. He releases the stone.

It strikes Goliath between the eyes. The giant falls. He has met one greater than himself, and it wasn't David.

It was God.

Brothers and Sisters,

When you hear the story of David and Goliath, I betting there's usually some moral about not underestimating the underdog or how you can defeat your biggest giants by standing your ground.

That misses the point.

David understood. "The battle belongs to the Lord." Not "The battle belongs to me because I'm strong enough" or "The battle belongs to me because my cause is righteous." Nope. The battle belongs to God. God defended David, and he knew it.

And this God has defeated your biggest giants: Your shame and your guilt.

And in this story, you're not David. We're the Israelite army, whom God defends. And he has defended you.

And this story is true.

I Samuel 17

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