**Week 11: 1 Samuel 17 (November 1/2 , FTLT Week)**

**Introduction -** Where does our courage come from? While we would like for that answer to be God, we can often try to find courage within ourselves or from other things. **Where do we find ourselves drawing courage from?** Ultimately, true courage comes from trust in God. Over the past few chapters, we have been introduced to David and Saul. In this chapter, we will learn more about David’s character and how it reflects Christ.

**Read 1 Samuel 17 verses 1-11**

At the start of the story, we get a front-row seat to a conflict between the Israelites and the Philistines, and the most prominent person at the onset of this conflict is the Philistine champion, Goliath. **In verses 4-7, what terms are used to describe Goliath? What about him made the Israelites afraid?**

The Israelites had a lot of physical reasons to fear. Goliath was tall, strong, and well equipped. The Israelites, in contrast, are far less powerful than their challenger. Saul and the other Israelites viewed the conflict in worldly terms and were therefore terrified. **Where are areas in your own life where you find yourself looking at the situation in worldly terms, and how can this cause you to become afraid? What would it look like to view these situations through a godly lens?**

In verse 8, Goliath asks, “Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul?” Goliath similarly phrases the conflict in very worldly terms, in what is physically apparent.

**What do you or other people say you are a servant of? Do other people see you as a servant of God or of something else?**

We as humans typically tend to judge based on outward appearances, and both the Philistines and the Israelites fall into this trap in the passage. But God, of course, is completely different. We read just last week how God told Samuel before he anointed David that “The Lord sees not as man sees: man looks outward on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7) And this leads us to the next part of the passage, in which David, the unlikely hero through whom God saves His people, comes into the story.

**Next, read verses 12-37**

Here we are introduced to the position of David in the story.

We see him rush to the battle line and express righteous outrage at the challenge of Goliath. **From his actions and conversations in the camp, what can we discern about David’s character?**

Even here in his youth David displays his character of a “man after God’s own heart” through his courage. David responds to Goliath’s challenge to God and His people with true courage—a courage that is rooted in trust in God.

**How do we respond when no one else is willing to defend the gospel?**

It is often easier for us to act more like the cowering Israelites than the courageous David, especially when faced with obstacles.

When David expresses courageous trust in God, David’s brother Eliab and Saul both discourage him. Even though they should be on the same side, Eliab and Saul do not take David’s courage seriously. **How does David respond to the discouragement of his faith? What can prevent or discourage you from acting in faith?**

He doubles down on his trust, answering Eliab and Saul with faith in how God has empowered him. In v. 37, he declares, “The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Saul in particular doubts David’s courage because of his youthfulness. This brings to mind 1 Timothy 4:12, where Paul tells his young friend Timothy, “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”

**How can we set an example for others “in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, [and] in purity,” just as David and Timothy did, during this time in our lives as college students and young adults?** In this part of the passage, we witness this strong contrast between the cowardice of Saul and the other Israelites and the courage of David, and next we will get to see David’s courage in action.

**Next, read verses 38-50**

In this portion of the passage, we see David’s courage in action as he strikes down the Philistine. **Verses 38-40 describe David getting ready for battle. He refuses a helmet, mail, and a sword, but takes stones and his sling. What is the significance of this?** David is fully confident that God can win the battle, even if David is not heavily armed. (*Consider the significance of the stones and how far and with what force it had to travel tossed by a sling. How does this show God’s hand was in the battle?*)

**Contrast Goliath’s reaction to David and his taunt against him, and David’s reaction to Goliath and his challenge against him.** Goliath saw that David was young, small, and unarmored, and he was insulted that the Israelites sent David against him. He trusted in his own strength, so he assumed he could beat David because he was physically stronger. On the other hand, David trusted in God, declaring in v. 47, “the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand.”

**What do verses 45-47 reveal about the way that God works in our lives?**

God works through David to defend His people with an unconventional method. David is able to be fearless in the face of danger because he has complete confidence in God. David does not fight for his own glory, but for the glory of God.

Now that we have seen David’s courage in action, we shall see the results of David’s courage.

**Next, read verses 51-58.**

David’s victory inspires the Israelites to action. **In v. 51, David cuts off Goliath’s head. What other imagery from the Bible does this action reflect?**

Genesis 3:1 predicts Jesus “crushing…[the head] of the serpent,” completely defeating Satan and sin.

Once the Israelites realized that God was with them and could successfully kill their enemy, then they had the confidence to fight the rest of the Philistines, not worrying that they wouldn’t be able to succeed. **What are some ways that we doubt God and what He can do?**

After killing Goliath, Saul asked David who he was because of his promise reported in v. 25. David responds simply with “I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem”. **Are there times in your life where you’ve taken the credit for something that God did?**

The unlikely victory of David over Goliath once again reminds Israel that God supports them in their battles. **What is a time in your life that God has used something or someone unlikely to bring you closer and refocused onto Him?**

David’s one act of courageous faith inspired the Israelites to be brave, too. This is typically the case in our lives as well; we can look to the faith of others to inspire our own faith. **Who in your life have you looked to and who in your life can you look to inspire faith?**

**Conclusion**

David is just one of many Biblical heroes that is foreshadowing of Christ. Just as David’s one act of courage inspired the Israelites to bravery, so Christ’s ultimate act of courage, the most courageous act in all of history—bearing the weight of our sin and the wrath of God on the cross in all of its agony—can encourage us to trust in God more. Christ defeated the giant of sin and death, and we don’t have to face it. And as the Isralites shared in David’s victory over Goliath and the Philistines, so we share in Christ’s victory over sin and death. The battle has been won by Christ and Christ alone, and we have nothing to fear, and we can have confidence to display courage, true courage, which is trust in God.

**Read Romans 15:12**

Just as God used David to provide hope and courage for Israel, so also God continues to provide hope and courage to the world through Christ. So where should our courage come from but Christ, God’s continuations of hope and courage.

**How can we remind ourselves of Christ’s courage each day, and how can we look to this example to be more courageous in our own lives?**

(*The above question does not need to be answered in study, but can be.*)

**(Extra) NOTES!!!!!!**

**Verse 49 describes the very short fight between David and Goliath. David threw one of the stones with his sling, it struck Goliath in the forehead (even though he was wearing a helmet) and dropped him. Given what a sling can do, is this unexpected?**

Experienced slingers can have a range of up to 300-400 meters, but almost never can punch through solid metal armor. Looking at images of the area, David might have been farther than that max range of a slinger, but it is uncertain. However what is not uncertain is that the sling would not have been able to penetrate Goliath’s bronze helmet without God’s help.