

I Can Through Christ

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The nation of Israel and the Philistines were at war. The scripture (1Samuel 17:1-3) describes the stage for the showdown between the Philistines and the Israelites. The Philistines were gathered on one hill and the army of Israel on another. Each camp was to send a representative who would meet in the valley (like in a heavyweight boxing match) for a fight. The success or failure will determine the destiny of an entire nation. The loser would become servant to the winner. So it was a crucial fight and the pressure to win was great.

The Philistines chose Goliath who was from Gath to represent them. He was a military giant, well-trained, equipped and excellent in built. Somebody estimated this huge hulk of man weighed about 440 lbs.! He was more than a fighting man; he was mean and cruel. The Bible says, "He was over nine feet tall. He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armour or bronze weighing five thousand shekels, on his legs he wore bronze greaves and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him."

Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me." (1 Samuel 17:4-8).

Daily for forty days Goliath would stand and shout to the ranks of Israel, taunting and challenging them to send a man to fight with him. On hearing Goliath's words, the Israelites would tremble and they were all terrified.

Is there a Goliath in your life? Is there someone that scares the daylight out of you? Something that puts fear in your heart and feel you are no match for it?

When I was growing up, my greatest fear was a white sheet of paper. It threatened me because I had to write answers on it for a panel of examiners to review. Every time I walked into an exam hall, I felt my inadequacies were about to be exposed by that white sheet of paper.

For some of you, your Goliath could be some kind of bad habit. For others, Goliath could be some kind of situation. Are you threatened by your physical handicaps or spiritual shortcomings? In business, do you face unchristian principles and you look like a loser. Sometimes circumstances loom so large that they are like a Goliath too big for you to overcome. Whoever or whatever your Goliath is, you do not want to submit yourselves to it, yet you do not have the strength or ability to overcome it.

The Word of the Lord records the incident in 1 Samuel 17 for your benefit. Whenever you face your Goliath, like David, you will always meet at least three forms of opposition.

Recognizing Your Opposition

David was a shepherd boy who had three brothers in the army of Israel. It was a very normal and natural thing for his father, Jesse, to do when he called his youngest son and said, "Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them. They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines" (1 Samuel 17:17-19).

So David left his sheep and went. When David arrived at the camp, he met his *first opposition*.

David heard shouts of Goliath and witnessed the fear of the soldiers of Israel. He began to testify of how as a shepherd boy he killed a lion and a bear that came among his sheep. When Eliab his eldest brother heard David speaking, 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" (1 Samuel 17:28). David's first opposition was a put-down attitude from his own brother and having to face false accusation.

It is hard to believe that sometimes opposition comes from your own ranks. Whenever you want to step out in faith, someone from your own Christian family comes along and puts you down.

David met the *second opposition*, when he was brought before King Saul.

The king had heard about David's exploits with lion and the bear, and asked to have the shepherd boy brought before him. Standing before the king, David repeated his experience of God's protection and strength and asked to be allowed to go fight the Philistine giant.

The king 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" (1 Samuel 17:33).

To all intents and purpose, King Saul meant good and it was wise and logical counsel.

But do you know when you begin to move in the realm of faith, you cannot depend on good, logical sense?

Does that mean faith is blind? Of course not. True faith is founded on God's Word and God's Word is certain. The Bible says, "Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

The Bible says the natural man understandeth not the things or ways of God. We have to step out in faith, trusting in the power of God to enable us. When our faith is based on the promise of God's Word, we have the best foundation to stand on. Salvation is a gift from God, not by our works or man's methods. Salvation is more than being saved from sin. It is also victory over the power of sin, Satan himself and circumstances he creates to hinder us. David's confidence was in God's power through faith.

So David answered the king, "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" (1 Samuel 17:37).

The king agreed to let David go out only if David did it his way. This was the *third opposition*: David had to put on the armour given by the king. But David was not a military man. The armour was too heavy and inhibiting as he was only a young boy.

You see, we often think that things should be done the only way they have always been done. Sometimes the Holy Spirit wants to do something different from what we have been accustomed to. We must not allow set forms and ways to control us, become our masters, and prevent us from doing the work of God. The Bible says, His ways are higher and wiser than our ways.

Four Steps To Overcome Your Goliath

Having understood the opposition factors, how can we overcome our Goliath?

1. Have a personal experience with God

David had a personal experience with God. He knew God by faith. His faith in God gave him confidence and boldness to stand up and face the challenges.

We can only experience victory by first having had a personal experience with God. Before you even try to overcome your Goliath, you must have a definite experience of being born again. You must experience Christ's love and forgiveness in your life and know you are His child and have His Spirit dwelling in you.

2. Know how to pray

David said, "I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty" (1 Samuel 17:45). This simply means, "I know how to pray." In the New Testament, Jesus gave us the authority to use His name. "You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it" (John 14:14).

Develop your prayer life. Victory must first be won on your knees. When we have won the battle on our knees, we will win it on the field.

3. Give God the glory

David said, "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 Philistines 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" (1Samuel 17:46).

We must give God the glory so that people may know we serve a true and living God.

4. The battle is the Lord's

Finally, it not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's (1 Samuel 17:47). David was as human as any of us and therefore must have trembled when he picked up the stone and the sling. But as good and accurate as David might be, I believe it was God who gave direction to the stone, and that brought Goliath down.

As this year presents new challenges, our tomorrows are unknown to us. Yet you can face them with the confidence of David. You can – because you know God in a personal way, you can pray, you always give glory to God and you are not alone. Paul said; "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13). Praise God!

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