



1 Samuel 16/17 Selections
The Story
Slaying Giants: Davidⁱ

Rev. Brian North
November 19th, 2017

This morning we are continuing the chronological walk through the Bible we've been in since early September, called The Story. It follows the main thread of Scripture, starting with Creation and then following the story of God's relationship with people. Today's message correlates to chapter 11 in The Story book that many in the church are reading.

Last week we saw how Israel wanted a king, which in and of itself was not wrong or bad, but their motives were not good. Their motives revealed that they cared more about what the nations around them thought of them and pleasing them, rather than caring what God thought of them, pleasing him, and resting in his grace. They wanted a king to be like everyone else. But they got their king: Saul. Saul started out ok, but in the end he was not a great king. He struggled with some of the same issues that the nation of Israel did as well: he cared more about what others thought of him, rather than what God thought of him.

So, about 27 years into Saul's kingship – he ruled for 42 years – Samuel is led by the Lord to find Saul's eventual replacement. He's led to a man named Jesse, in Bethlehem, and particularly to his 8 sons. One of them is whom God is calling to be the next king.

He starts with Eliab. When Samuel first saw Eliab, he thought, "He's the man!" But then the Lord made it clear to him that physical appearance wasn't the most important thing. Apparently, Eliab was impressive looking, a leader like that needs something deeper than that to lead well. Saul, the first king, was chosen because he was tall – a head taller than everyone else according to 1 Samuel 9:2. God is not going to let them make the same mistake twice. So the Lord says to Samuel, **"The Lord does not look at the things that human beings look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"** (1 Samuel 16:7). In other words: don't judge a book by its cover. This is a truth with some broad application. Don't assume you have the answers and know everything at first glance. Instead, look deeper and be open to the Lord moving in ways you don't expect. God just

might do something that you don't see coming – He might open a door to a new relationship, might put in your lap a ministry opportunity you weren't expecting, might put someone in a leadership position you wouldn't have thought would ever happen, or something else. And it's easy to miss those opportunities when we make a hasty decision based on surface appearances. This is always a temptation for us, because looking at the surface is simple. It's easy. You just take a look, make judgment, make a decision, and hit the Easy Button. Boom! Done. But it can also be mis-leading.

There's one person here at the church who - a while back after moving to Kirkland - wanted to find a new church (and he has given me permission to share this story, by the way). And in that search process, he visited well over 20 churches before coming here, and had he found a church that felt right before coming here, he never would have made it. We were the very last ones on the list. Do you know why? **Because from what he could see on the outside – from pictures on Google maps' "street view," and so forth – our church didn't indicate that it was particularly alive.** The appearance projected an image of "not much must be happening on the inside." I don't say that to blame anyone here...I know that there's been a lot of maintenance and so forth over the years that has been carried out by a lot of very faithful people who worked within the vision that was set out for the church. Now, in an effort to reconnect with our community and present a more welcoming and inviting street presence, we've made some good changes on the outside since then, though we've got a lot of work to do still. (By the way, some of you have asked about the progress on the Master Plan for our facilities and seeing that come to fruition. I have struck out in finding a person, or a husband and wife team, to lead a small team of people in a capital campaign to raise funds. It's not for lack of effort on my part, and I'm continuing to work on putting together a group to lead us all in a fundraising effort. We need the right people on this team with the right gifts, talents, and abilities, so if God hasn't put the burden on someone's heart to lead this team, then that's fine. It's in His timing, and maybe there's a really good reason why things have slowed down a bunch this year.)

So after this gentleman visited over 20 other churches in the area, and not finding one that really felt like the right place, he finally came here, and Rose

Hill has become his church home. The heart of this church is in a different place than what the outside might project. That's not to say we're perfect. We definitely are not, and he would say that himself, as would I. In fact, there's no such thing as a perfect church; but if you do find one, don't join it, and definitely don't become pastor of it, because you'll ruin it. The point is, we all tend to look at the outward appearance – of a potential king, of a church, of a neighbor, of a community, a school, a company, etc., - and it's easy to make a decision based on that. But that's not the best way to make a decision – it's easiest, but not the best. Instead, we want to get down to the heart. It's the heart that matters.

This shows us that it's important to recognize both parts of this verse (1 Samuel 16:7) are true: People look at the outside and the Lord looks at the heart. And for us here this morning, and for anyone who follows Jesus, the goal is to be more Christ-like in our living, and therefore to look past the surface and into what's inside of a person: their motivations, their loves, their character, and most importantly, their relationship with Jesus. That's a message for how we as Christians interact with others, carry ourselves, make decisions, and so forth. But the first half of this statement is also true – not only for us, but for people outside the church as well. That's why we want our outer appearance – the stuff that people see – to line up with what's on the inside. **We want congruence between people's first impressions of us, and what is true about us at a deeper level.** That certainly includes the building, but also the collective reputation of the church in the community – we want our reputation to be one where people say: that church and its people are full of joy; that church and its people are a huge blessing to our community, that church and its people love their neighbors as themselves and shine the light of Christ where they live and work.

If the people in our community only had a surface glimpse of us as a church or of you as a Christian: Would the conclusions they draw be accurate at a deeper level, at the level of the heart? Does the exterior look better than the interior really is? Or is the opposite true? Or is it an accurate representation.

As Samuel stood there with Eliab in front of him, he realized that although

he's a handsome dude who would look great on the cover of GQ or Men's Health, he's not going to be the next king. The outside isn't lining up with what's on the inside. So, then, in comes Abinadab...and it's not him, either. Then comes Shammah. He's not the one either. And on it goes through seven sons.

And after looking at the 7, Samuel says to Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "Is this all you've got?" As if 7 isn't enough, right?!? Maybe Samuel was wondering if he'd come to the right Jesse. But Jesse says, "Well, I have one other. He's the youngest, and he's out tending sheep." **The Hebrew word here for "youngest" is Katan, and it has several meanings: young, small, insignificant, or unimportant.** So there's this underlying meaning of the word that is a bit negative, and would color the word for them here: There's another son, yes, but he's the small one...not as significant or as important as the others...he's the youngest.

In fact, even Jesse doesn't consider David worthy to come before Samuel; he's not there along with his brothers. Now, in Jesse's defense, the text is a little vague about how much he knew about why Samuel was there, but still...Samuel coming over is like Russell Wilson, or Felix Hernandez, or Paul McCartney or the pope coming to your home. If that were happening to you, you'd drop everything, get the *entire* family there, put on your best clothes, and get the selfie-stick...right?

But David is left out of the gathering! His own dad didn't invite him in! I don't know...maybe there's a good excuse. Maybe the sheep couldn't be spared for a few minutes or there wasn't a hired hand to take over for a bit, or maybe David was just too far off. I think: **It's mostly because he was the katan...the little one...the baby of the family...the least significant of the eight brothers, in his eyes.** But Samuel asks Jesse to call him in. So he does. And it turns out, he's the one. He's the one who's heart is in the right place – he's a man after God's heart as the Bible calls him. He may not look so impressive, but something about him makes it clear to Samuel, that the Lord is going to raise David up to be the next king. And so Samuel anoints him as the king-in-waiting, to replace Saul – though it would be 15 more years.

Some time later, after David was chosen as successor – and it’s in the next chapter 1 Samuel 17 – but with Saul still the king, Saul led their army into a battle with the Philistines. David’s brothers are in the battle, and he goes to visit them and see how they are doing. Well, it turns out that the Philistines have a giant of a man who has challenged the Israelites to send a man out to fight against him. None of them will do it.

David sees this guy, named Goliath, and says, “Hey I’ve taken out lions and tigers and bears – Oh my!...” actually, just lions and bears, “and I can take down this guy, no problem!” And that’s exactly what he does. At first, he puts on Saul’s armor, but after walking around in it, David takes it off and says, “this isn’t working. I gotta do this in the way that I’m made to do this.” And so he goes out to the battle line, puts a stone in his sling, whips it around a few of times, and then lets it fly. And immediately Howard Cosell, who had the play-by-play call for the local broadcast, started calling out, “Down goes Goliath! Down goes Goliath!”

A person after God’s own heart can step out in faith and step into the plans that God has for him or her. It was a major victory for the Israelites...Saul invited David to be more involved in the King’s palace...as a result David and Saul’s son Jonathan became best friends...All kinds of stuff started happening. But the key verse here comes after David killed Golaith. David says, **“All those gathered here will know that it is not by the sword or spear that the Lord saves; *for the battle is the Lord’s* and he will give all of you into our hands” (1 Samuel 17:47, emphasis added).**

When your heart is lined up with the God of the universe...the Lord of Creation...the one who gave you life...when your heart is in that place and you’ve said “yes” to him, then you have God on your side. And what we see is that the battles we have in life are, in fact, *the Lord’s battles*. God is for you and with you and leading the charge against whatever it is that stands against you. As Paul writes in Romans 8:31: **“If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).** You don’t have to face cancer, and joblessness, and homelessness, loneliness, addictions, broken families, broken friendships and all the other stuff that gets thrown at you...you don’t have to face that alone. The Lord is with you in the midst of it, even fighting your battles for you. Do

you believe that? Do you lean into the Lord when you're in the midst of the fight? So often, we rely only on our own efforts in the midst of those situations. We forget that God is with us, and go it on our own. And yet there comes a time, at death – where we are completely helpless, right? I mean, once you're dead, you've got no power on your own to shape your future. And when you breathe your last, you're completely helpless. And it's there, in the midst of the ultimate battle, that we see most profoundly in the resurrection of Jesus, that God our Heavenly Father fights our battles. The gift of eternal life doesn't come about because of anything we do: It's all a gift of grace, an outcome of the victory that Jesus has over death because of the power of our Heavenly Father. **You're not alone, and when you're at your weakest and most vulnerable, God is there, on your behalf.**

Upon graduation from the UW, my parents' gift was to contribute toward my first car. (Good advice, btw: don't buy a car for your kids; offer to help instead. Let them have some skin in the game, take ownership, let them research, pay for some of it, etc., so they have ownership in it.) I looked and looked in the classified ads. Remember those? Do papers even have classified ads anymore? Obviously, this was pre-craig's list, and I looked in the paper every morning for cars that would fit my budget and fit my desires. Like every college age kid, I wanted low miles, sporty, fast, red, cheap, and it had to get me skiing in the mountains. Thanks to my parents' gift, coupled with the small amount I had to contribute, my budget was like \$6,000 or less, from my recollection. I quickly learned that it's hard to find a Lamborghini or Ferrari for that price, and that I would have to settle for something that wasn't sporty or fast. Plus, they're not good in the snow. One Saturday morning, I found a Ford Escort four-door sedan for sale. It was red – so that was cool – and it was in my budget and would be a good snow car to get me skiing...it was perfect. The guy was asking \$5,000, it had about 36,000 miles or something like that, and it was only 3 years old.

I was the first one to call him that Saturday morning, and my dad and I went over and looked at it, with cash in hand. After taking it for a spin, I felt like it was the one. It ran great, it was everything I wanted – except fast and sporty, but I was willing to sacrifice them. I told the guy I wanted to buy it, and was willing to pay his asking price. He said no. He wasn't going to sell it for the

price he'd advertised. He was pulling it off the market, and I was crushed...I was literally in tears...it was just a really sad moment in my life.

And at that moment, my dad stepped in and fought my battle. I don't remember everything he said, but I do remember him saying, "You'll hear from our lawyer...." I didn't even know my dad had a lawyer. Actually, I don't think he probably did. But it sounded really impressive. And so my dad stepped in, defended me, went to bat for me, went to battle for me...and that guy sold us the car for \$5,000 right then and there. My dad fought my battle for me when I could not. I was overmatched. And had I been there on my own, I would have never gotten that car. I remember as we were about to leave, the guy who sold the car said something to me about my dad. I don't remember the exact words, but it was a compliment about my dad, something along the lines of, "you have a good dad."

Much the same: **You have a good heavenly father who fights your battles for you.** In fact, we see from this early part of David's life that you have a heavenly father who does two things. **First, he looks at your heart.** He sees what's on the inside. The world may tell you that you're insignificant, too young, too old, too poor, not educated enough, to little this or too much that. But God looks at your heart. I pray your heart is in tune with Him through faith in Jesus, and that your faith permeates out to every facet of your life. **And then secondly, the Lord is with you in the difficult times, and is even fighting your battles for you.** He cares about you, he is your defender, the one who stands up for you, takes the hits, and defeats the Goliaths you face, that would seek to tear you down. He *is* the lawyer that my dad threatened – and the judge and the jury and the army general and more. He fights your battles in this life, and He does it in the life to come, fighting the battle with the Goliath of sin that we all face. And the victory that your Heavenly Father has becomes *your* victory through faith in Jesus. And with that faith, you can go forward in life confident that just as He is victorious, so will you be – in this life, and in the life to come, because you have a good heavenly father. Let's Pray...Amen.

ⁱ Today's sermon correlates to Chapter 11 in "The Story." We took orders for copies of the book, "The Story" at church, but now you can get a copy of the book on your own online through many websites (Amazon.com, cbd.com, etc.). In fact, cbd.com (Christian Book Distributors) has them for \$5, hardback. Just search for "NIV The Story Bible" at their website.