

Simple Servant 1 Samuel 17

Introduction

- Meeting with Superintendent of Belpre City Schools
 - Profile of a successful graduate
 - Challenge- students preparing to graduate today will have up to 10 jobs in their lifetime and 8 of those jobs don't even exist yet
 - Let that sink in for a moment...
 - Job change, maybe advancement
 - The ever changing world that requires students to adapt at a faster rate than ever before
 - Not the traditional approach to education, but instead providing the right skill set or tools to navigate a world that will require graduates to adapt throughout their life in order to be successful.
- Impact on the church
 - Seminary student changing¹
 - “In a survey of over 5,000 seminary students, ATS found almost 40% of them (seminarians) intended to use their degrees to serve in contexts outside of the local church.”
 - “Almost half of Theological schools now offer degree programs completely online.”
 - Scott Cormode, professor at Fuller Seminary, “The old model of education uprooted students from their communities and asked them to move to the site of the seminary. The current student remains, instead, embedded in her community. And that allows me as a professor to create assignments that keep the students’ learning grounded in their specific context.”
 - Very missional!
 - While these changes may seem overwhelming, its quite possibly the hand of God at work in preparing the necessary need for sharing the gospel in our world today.
- It goes without saying that our world is becoming more complex than ever before
 - The desire for simplicity in a complex world seems like a welcome escape, but almost nearly impossible.
 - For many Christians the simple answer is for Jesus to quickly return and teleport us out of what seems so overwhelming.
 - So the Focus this year is: KEEP IT SIMPLE
- Today, I want to offer you a very simple approach to being a servant of God.
 - I would venture to guess that you are familiar with the story of David and Goliath. Even the secular world is familiar with the basic story-line of David and

¹ Abby Perry, *Non-Traditional Seminary Students Are Changing the Church: A new class of seminarians emerges.* www.christianitytoday.com Accessed January 18, 2020.

Goliath. It is often used in the sports world to describe the overwhelming task of the underdog team.

- 1 Samuel 17
- David was a simple shepherd boy
 - He was the youngest of Jesse's 8 sons
 - He was small
 - And by all signs, unfit for war
 - However if you know the story, you know that all it took was one stone from David's slingshot to kill Goliath, the Giant.
 - David was a simple servant of the Lord who:
 - Adapted his faith to resolve a complex problem
 - Teaches us that Faith can defeat any giant

Simple Focus

- Set the scene of the story
 - 1 Samuel 17:3-4a Philistines gathered for battle on one side of the mountain and Israel stood on the other side with a valley separating the two armies
 - Goliath the *Champion*
 - Goliath challenges any Israelites to fight him one-on-one, whoever wins determines the fate of his people
 - Goliath's description is overwhelming (1 Samuel 17:4-7)
 - Size
 - Armor
 - Saul and Israel were dismayed and afraid (1 Samuel 17:11)
 - Not only were the people afraid, but their king was afraid
 - Interesting aspect about King Saul
 - King is supposed to be the champion for the people
 - He is supposed to remind them of their faith and give them confidence
 - Instead the king is afraid too!
 - God's original intent was for the people to recognize that God was the only King they needed (*see 1 Samuel 8*)
 - Demanded of the Prophet Samuel to have a king
 - The purpose was to be like all the other nations
 - Except that Israel wasn't supposed to be like all the other nations
 - Now the complexities of survival and Goliath's size and strength have overwhelmed the faith of Israel
 - Do you ever feel overwhelmed by the circumstances in your life?
 - Probably seems like an obvious answer
 - But think about how we can take one problem and allow it to grow into a giant

- Before long we feel paralyzed because we feel ill equipped to slay the giants in our life
- Experience of Rock climbing
 - Start out at the bottom and ready to tackle the wall
 - Comes a moment when I get tired, I'm hanging on by my toes and fingers, I look up and see that I have so much further to go, and I look down and see just how far up I am
 - Panic begins to set in, even though there is a rope that I know will catch me, I struggle to make the next step or find the next ledge, my muscles start to lock up
 - Skill learned- Stop, Close my eyes, Take a deep breath, Refocus on what I'm doing, and then take my next step- adaptive skill to resolve a complex problem!!
- God desires to refocus the leadership of Israel
 - I've rejected Saul as king because he has not been faithful
 - Anoint a new king, "A man after God's own heart" (*see 1 Samuel 13:14*)
 - That man is the simple shepherd boy, David
 - Simple Focus
 - **Matthew 6:33 (ESV), "But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."**
- Refocus on the One we serve
- We can choose to focus on the Giant, or we can choose to refocus on God!

Adaptable Faith

- **1 Samuel 17:14-16**
 - At this point, David was non-essential: too young and too small
 - In many ways Israel resembles David
 - Smallest Nation
 - Seemed insignificant to the rest of the world
 - It was out of this inferiority complex that Israel requested a king (like all the other nations)
 - Problem: Israel's faith does not seem to translate to life. Goliath seemed greater than the faith they possessed.
 - Relate to the Giants we face
 - Circumstances grow in our mind the more fear we apply to the situation
 - The faith we had on Sunday seems minimal compared to the complexity of our circumstances.
 - Faith seems too simple of an solution to our problem
 - Result: We freak out and abandon our faith, because we are unable to adapt our faith to resolve the complex problems in our life.
 - There are always going to be Giants. Adapt our faith to life
- **1 Samuel 17:24-27**
 - As David is running errands between his father's house and the battlefield, he begins to hear about the Philistine Giant

- Curious about the problem facing the Israelites, David inquires about the situation
- Simple Focus, “Who should defy the armies of the living God (vs. 26)?” - *this is repeated throughout this chapter by David*
- David’s focus is not on the inferior qualities of the Nation or the size of the Giant. His focus is on The Living God!
- David’s simple focus allowed him to adapt his faith to the complex problem and instead of fear, David had faith.
- How do you respond to the Giants in your life?
 - Focus on the Giant or on God
 - Respond in Fear or Faith

The Battle is Not about You, but God

- David’s response to the crisis at hand **1 Samuel 17:31-37**
 - David’s preparation was not on the battlefield, but the sheep fields. He faced loins and bears. God had prepared him in a different way from soldiers in Saul’s army.
 - David also had faith. He believed that anyone who disrespected Israel was disrespecting God. The risk of fighting the Giant was worth it because David knew that God would prevail!
 - David understood something about this complex problem. The battle was much bigger than David. It was about God. Because David understood this, he was able to exercise faith despite his youth and size.
- When we understand that the battle is about God and not about us, then we are ready to be a Servant of God.
 - I know it sounds too simple to be true
 - Think about this and see if it is true in your life: When the battle is about us, then selfishness becomes the main focus, our weaknesses begin to show, and we have the tendency to become defensive and crumble with an inferiority complex
 - It takes a simple focus on God to tackle the complexities of our life. In faith we find power. No longer do we serve ourselves, but we recognize that we are serving the One who is bigger than anything else!

Faith Can Defeat A Giant

- **1 Samuel 17:38-40**
 - David was not comfortable with Saul’s armor. He had not tested it, but it also was not who David was.
 - David was “a man after God’s own heart”
 - His focus was simple
 - As a Simple Servant, David was most comfortable with his slingshot
 - David knew who he was at his core
 - Do you know who you are at your core?
 - Giants have the tendency to reveal the core of who we are
 - Israel had a Giant God, but they could not adapt their faith to life

- David was small, but he was “a man after God’s own heart”, and when the Giant stood in the way David knew how to respond, because he knew he was a Servant of God
 - Act and Make decisions from the core of who we are
 - Our Being is connected to our doing- can’t separate the two
 - Last week, God’s response to Israel’s sin in Micah 6
 - Simple Focus: Make Christ the Center of your Life, Relationships, Service
 - With Christ at the Center He will impact every part of your life
 - **Matthew 6:33 (ESV), “But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”**
- David’s faith was represented by what he chose to fight with: 5 Stones and a Slingshot
 - **1 Samuel 17:41-49**
 - All David needed was one stone
 - With one simple stone, the complex problem presented by a Giant, was dead
 - A Giant was defeated by a Simple Servant
 - Simple Truth: Faith can defeat any Giant!

Conclusion

- One way to bring this sermon to a close is to ask you what Giants are you facing in your life?
 - Certainly it is important for us to be aware of what those Giants are
 - BUT, experience tells me that we are probably already aware of what those Giants are because they consume our focus.
- Instead, I would like to conclude this sermon by asking you whether your focus is on The Living God
 - When our focus is on God, then a Simple Servant has the power to adapt their faith to resolve the complex problems they face
 - Discover that Faith can defeat any Giant
- You may not realize this yet, but at your core, God has created you to be a Great Warrior
 - Sin is not what is supposed to define us
 - Our brokenness is not the end of the story
 - The end of the Story tells of a Savior who keeps his promises and defeats every enemy that stands to defy the armies of the living God.
- Which side of the mountain do you stand on?
 - Are you on the Lord’s Army?
 - Are you a Simple Servant?
 - Do you faith to defeat the Giant?
 - I guarantee you one thing: There is a God who plays second to No One! He stands ready to fight for you!