

CCL//16.2.20// Conquering Giants

It was a David and Goliath battle. Phrase that has sneaked into our culture that comes from a story in the Bible of a small shepherd boy a child, fighting and defeating a giant that looked undefeatable.

Malcolm Gladwell – underdogs misfits and the art of battling giants – probability of unlikely outcomes. “When you read it you feel like you can topple giants.”

And so, we look at David and Goliath stories and think we are supposed to be inspired to stick it to the man, weak little me can sometimes win against the government or the system or my personal giants.

Truth about most of us is that the weather today meant that we considered whether to come to church or not – probably means we are not a rebel force that will take down the government.

David had been chosen as a king to rule God’s people, from working as a shepherd. He steps in when the normal people are unable to fight their enemies. Shepherd king, who looks unlikely, small, pathetic, is able to take on and defeat our worst enemies.

David is a Jesus picture, not calling us out to fight a battle that can’t be won, but fighting the battle for us and easily winning. Jesus calls himself the shepherd king and by dying for us, he takes away the punishment for our sin and any power Satan has to accuse us, rising to life he defeats death, anyone who trusts in him can be sure of eternity with God.

Jesus is David in this story, we are the Israelites – scared people, unable to fight the battle, but having a hero who goes in and fights for us.

Last week saw Jesus heart for us reflected in what he says about the people

“Let no one lose heart, on account of this Philistine, your servant will go and fight him” – not resentful, angry, annoyed with us, looks with great compassion on people who need a champion and steps in for them. Jesus, bruised reed he will not break – tenderly, with love, without resentment loves to serve and give himself for his people that he loves.

So when the battle is won, what do the Israelites do?

Another way to ask that question, several people have asked me over the last few weeks: do we the people who feel so defeated and intimidated, do we have any part to play in this story at all?

Join the story in the middle, where David is volunteering to Saul the king, to fight this giant for the people.

Reading: 1 Samuel 17: 32-53

King’s victory, people’s surge

Question I have often asked, and am often asked. If what we said last week was true, Jesus totally defeats sin – that is he takes away any debt we owe to God for not obeying – why obey? This person standing at the front is not allowed by Jesus to accuse me with my law breaking (they are not, power to do that broken by Jesus dying for us) what motivation is there to live the Christian life?

Picture here – the shepherd king kills the giant, the leader, the hero.

The Israelites surge forward and take on all the giant’s helpers. Goliath was the hero of an army – a league of people also putting his plans into action in the world, God’s people take them on and win, surge forward against them – because the giant, their hero, is dead.

Questions about violence in the text, not go into now.

Clear that for Christians in this picture there is no violence against people involved. “Our battle is not against flesh and blood.”

Not to say that Christians haven’t used violence, no Christian can use violence to try and serve God without being a hypocrite, Jesus banned it.

Rather for us picture here is that once the giant is dead: once we know not enslaved to do wrong things any more, know death is not the end, we know God will eventually get rid of all evil (sin, world, Satan) the people of God who felt fear, who felt intimidated, who felt like they couldn’t do anything, move forward, bravely, because of their champion and take on all of what is left in the world of the giant’s influence.

We saw last week that one of the victories Jesus wins is the one that frees us from accusation. Satan who holds up the law to us, all the things we know we should have done, and tells us we are disqualified because we are law breakers.

Jesus breaks his power to do that by saying, I have died to take every single last bit of condemnation there is for your law breaking. Satan cannot accuse you. Push forward by not living under condemnation. Nobody can force you to do the right thing by making you feel like

you are inadequate if you don't. No guilt. All your failure is forgiven by Jesus.

Why do anything different then? Why come here today? Why do many many things Christians have done which are really really difficult to serve God? Why do it?

Pause, and say, if you are asking that question, guess your service of God at the moment is pretty miserable. If the reasons you have for doing what is right are pressure from other people, or because you'll feel guilty if you don't – joyless and dead service. Continually stuck in the Christian life – could it be occasionally do what is right because feel you have to, but just a fight between what I'd rather do, what makes me feel guilty?

Atheist:

Totally different picture of the Christian life. Death which threatens us, sin which enslaves us, God's enemy who against us is defeated, and now we, in his wake, take on all of those things in the world which are leftovers of their rule.

Christians share the Gospel – why – because the rulers that people are giving their lives to are defeated, rule of a new and glorious king on offer – surging forward in wake of his victory.

(Resurrection lunch bar)

Christians have always been at the forefront of healthcare for people – sickness is one of the enemy's great tools to crush devour and control, and praying for, serving and healing the sick is a way for the Christians to follow in the wake of conquering life giving king.

Some of those people did because felt guilty and tortured for not doing enough – great surge forward is because our champion won the victory.

Explosion of missionary activity was because of the courage comes from a hero who has conquered death. Push past our own selfishness to offer education to women and girls came from people sin and selfishness crushed by Jesus. Commitment to offer sanctuary and care to those with deep struggles with grief or depression, joyfully serving others rather than ground down by weight of life – because our shepherd king has conquered the giant Satan, we will take on his helpers.

The story of David and Goliath for us, is about how the people surge forward to join in the shepherd king's mission when he defeats the enemy.

The book of the Bible that really shows us that this historical story of David and Goliath is also a picture of a

spiritual reality about Jesus and evil. Historical event, a day when Jesus who was God's son, the good shepherd, one God has chosen to rule history, died on the cross. Day 3 days later when he came back to life, and in those two acts he knocked the power out of sin, out of death, and out of Satan. Everything his people have done then is surging forward in the wake of that victory. Explain what happening in spiritual world Revelation gets us behind the curtain, see the spiritual difference Jesus' work makes, have that read to us now.

Jesus wins the victory against Satan

Hardcore that isn't it. Insight, to spiritual truth of what happened when Jesus died on the cross and came back to life. Middle eastern peasant one of many crucified by a human empire.

In fact the death blow was struck against evil system that has ever existed. Shepherd king David with a little stone knocked out a whole evil empire. Shepherd King Jesus by dying, knocked out all evil that ever existed.

His robe is dipped in blood – picture that his death is his armour that means he can defeat the enemy.

Word of God – not violence but truth that wins this battle. Words that come out of his mouth that means that defeats the nations. He is the one who brings the fury of God to bear on the people and things that oppress the world.

Beast in Revelation is a picture of the devil, personification of evil. Kings of the earth, picture of the world, all the systems that are setup in defiance of God that look so powerful and undefeatable and want to crush and get rid of the message of Jesus.

Easily, Jesus, the warrior catches the beast and his prophet and throws them down. All the others killed and the birds eat their flesh – might remember that from David's story. All the forces and powers and people who have enabled them will come to nothing in the end.

Sword that comes out of his mouth that does that – those things are brought to nothing through the words of the word of God. War is won not as people on earth fight other people on earth – wicked systems are brought down as the words of this person get out there into the earth and bring them down.

Small stone from David's sling brought down Goliath, so the words of this word of God fling down empires. Of course it's true. First 300 years of Christianity's history, persecuted by the Roman Empire. First readers experiencing. By 313 AD adopted as official religion of

empire. 100 years later no Roman Empire – still a church. Still today, existing an undermining evil rulers – people know death is not the end, sin has been defeated and Satan will not win.

Why tell us this story? Why show us that Jesus death and resurrection doesn't just give us individual salvation, me forgiven, but begins the destruction of the giant and all his helpers?

Because I am a scared Israelite. Call is to surge forward in this battle – our battle is not against flesh and blood, battle to fight, reason is not because I feel condemned if I don't, but because sin and death and Satan are on the way out.

Nervously looking at what seems to be facing us, and it all looks big and intimidating to me. In fact what happened when Jesus died was that Satan, and evil and sin and death, and all the systems they create lined up against Jesus the word of God, and he defeated them all, this tiny looking shepherd king knocked the giant down, slowly being eaten up, disappearing.

Call to me, the fearful Israelite is to enter into his victory, chase down all of the tools of the giant and do what I can to wipe them out. To listen to, obey, and enjoy and pass on this word of God that tips evil empires upside down and brings the rule of the Shepherd. Surge forward knowing the victory is won.

Wilberforce

Mindset change: but I can't abolish slavery. Inaccessible. What does surging forward look like for me?

Trevor Noah – a society where it was thought it was ok.

Every society every time, culture where things that are bad are accepted as ok. Way Satan removes the power of the normal Christian, the Israelite soldier, is to say – my society is too big and too scary for you to step out of. Just fall into line.

Call of the story of David and Goliath is to say "No." I know you are defeated already by Jesus. You cannot tell me my sin is too strong and have no options. You cannot threaten me with death because Jesus has defeated it. You are not going to tell me this system of accepted things are too strong. End of the story for this society fuelled by evil is that Jesus will judge it and bring it down with it's words.

"Come out of her and give her grief"

Step out of the way this society says it's right to live. Plenty of things around us that we think, I am just living

way others are. Not right, but it's the way that everyone does things round here. If what's evil in the culture is on the way out don't join in with it.

Instead become a fly in the ointment, an irritant, don't rest in saying and doing and pointing out where it's all wrong.

Wielding the word against my own wrong desires, my desire to fit in with evil to not rock the boat and be respected, and against what is wrong in this society.

Jimminy Cricket.

Why? Feel guilty if not. No, no condemnation. Our shepherd king has already defeated the giant, evil and systems that support are on their way out, to be replaced with his eternal kingdom.

That in place – Jesus is David, Sin, the world and Satan are Goliath, I am Israelite, beckoned forward into his mission. Knowing that will call you into passionate whole hearted energetic joyful service.

Question is, where you are right now, what is the way that your obedience to this word, or the passing on of this word means you step out of what society says is right, give grief to what's wrong.

Abolish slavery seems more than I can manage today. If you are willing to come out of her in your attitudes then there is something that you can do to surge against the power of the giant.

Like the actual battle, these movements often look small and unimpressive. Like the little cheese carrying shepherd, or the first century criminal, easily overlooked. Step out of way society tells us to think and act as conscience to world around us, chasing down servant of the giant, bringing Jesus' victory to bear on this world.

People who are doing it:

The Spiritual Warfare of peeling potatoes. Closed door, nuclear family approach to life we are told, even by Christians, is healthy. Put your kids, their hobbies, their education first in where you live. Everyone is doing it. Our home is going to be a place where people who need help can come, eat, have community. I have had to accept my kids will not be Olympians, had to give up opportunities to promote my career as a writer and speaker. Stepping out. Giving grief, seems right. Surge forward, shepherd king has killed the giant.

The Spiritual Warfare of choosing where to live. Friend who went one of our church plants, start a new

community in place in city few Christians, a lot of social problems. Policeman said to her “do your parents know you are moving in a place like this?” Stepped out of our society that says, do what’s best for you. She said “I’m not sure that’s a very good way to talk about people who live round here” – step out and give the system grief. Surge forward. Shepherd king has killed the giant.

The Spiritual Warfare of speaking up. Lots of medics in our church, constantly impressed by way they model stepping out of career orientated system and giving grief giant’s ways. One medic recently saying that in one area conscience clause against doing a particular procedure. Christian ethics of life. People don’t want to rock the boat, upset the system, not going into that speciality, no one using the conscience clause. Remove it. I’m going to go into it and use the conscience clause. David vs Goliath. System giant sets up says: don’t make a fuss. Step out of the argument, you will never win. Shepherd king says, the giant is on his way out. Step out of the giant’s way of thinking you give the system grief. Apologise, surge forward in his mission. Shepherd king has killed the giant.

In your situation, where you are, where can you step out of the way everyone else thinks, and then give the system grief by obeying, speaking, living by God’s word. You can work it out. Shepherd king has killed the giant, take on some of the giant’s helpers. Give the system grief.

One tiny looking but immensely powerful way we can all step out. System that giant sets up that says, embarrassing to talk about faith in awkward to get to know your neighbours, offended if you invited them to that. Shepherd king killed the giant, only a world in the future where people are talking about Jesus. Each chat about faith, each invitation, each reaching out to a neighbour, is chasing down of giants helpers, surging forward in his mission.

Time to reflect.

One of the ways we do this is by praying for Christians on the front line of this, Christians who are actively persecuted for their faith, persevering because they believe Jesus has won.