

1 Samuel 17:1-16

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[0 : 00] 1 Samuel 17. Very familiar portion of scripture. So familiar at times. We learn it as children. Our kids learn it very quickly.

It's the story of David and Goliath, right? I agree with the author of Moody Bible Commentary. I made the comment, and I would love to tell you which one it was, but if you know anything about the Moody Bible Commentary, each book has a different commentator because it's comprised of the staff at Moody Bible Institute.

He said the story is really not the account of David versus Goliath. The story is really an account of Saul versus David.

There's a reason why it's here. There's a reason why everything is arranged as it is. Remember when we looked at the 16th chapter, we highlighted, those of us that were here, how the brothers of David were passed over, and we said that when we come to the 17th chapter, they will get jealous.

And probably some of the jealousy was the fact that they were passed over. The raging question is, why was David the one God sought?

[1 : 17] He's a man after God's own heart, right? We don't have to get very far in Scripture before we find that validated for us. Not that God has to validate himself.

Not that he has to show us what he's doing behind the scenes. We have seen the character of Saul. We, if we had been present, much like Samuel, would have probably looked at Eliab and said, there he is.

He's the son of Jesse. He's the oldest one. He's the biggest one. He looks right. Only three of Jesse's sons are old enough to go to battle. David's not one of them. We'll see that as we make our way through the text.

But why David? Why David? What character traits of the heart were revealed in David that weren't revealed in others?

We see that greatest as in everything else. True character displays itself in the midst of battle. When things aren't going as we thought they should, when things seem to be falling apart, because, I mean, let's be honest, we can all put on a pretty good front when everything is going okay.

[2 : 27] True character is displayed when the enemy is present, spiritually or physically. So when we open up the text, it is David versus Goliath.

There's application there as well. But there's a lot of time spent in the text on Saul, David's brothers, the rest of the men of Israel, and then David.

Really what we see in the text, I believe, is the character traits the one God uses. Now we'll break it up in two parts. Okay, so this evening, and if the Lord allows us to tarry until Sunday evening.

So this evening, we will look at character revealed, those who fail. And then we'll look at the second part, the remainder of the 17th chapter, the character revealed, those he uses.

I do that because we can take some time and go through it. It's a long chapter. There's a great amount of time spent on this chapter, especially in light of every other battle they fought. How many battles do we read?

[3 : 33] It says they went to war with these people, and boom, there we go. They went to war with these people, and they annihilated all of them, and they went on. They went to war with these people, and they went on. But in light of that, we don't want to pass over what's being displayed in the battle.

My brother upstairs up there handed me a book recently, and I've just finished it, Beyond Valor. It tells the account of an individual that I've already had been exposed to in a short story form through a men's study of Red Irwin.

Red Irwin still stands as the man to receive in the shortest amount of time the Medal of Honor, the Congressional Medal of Honor, which is the highest medal ever issued to anybody in the armed forces.

That's six hours after he completed what he got the Medal of Honor for. He was awarded that medal. In 1945, in the midst of an air raid going into Japan, he puts a story quickly.

A phosphorus bomb that he dropped from the B-29 that he was flying in kicked back into the B-29 on fire burning at 1,500, 1,800 degrees. Without gloves, wearing short sleeves, Red picked it up and carried it to the front of the plane, asked his superior officer, said, excuse me, sir, can you move, and threw it out the window.

[4 : 56] And in that, depending on the estimates, suffered anywhere from 20 to 50% of third-degree burns all over his body.

He was blinded. His face had caught on fire. His right arm was... They aborted mission because the superior officer happened to be on board. They landed at Iwo Jima. And miraculously, they didn't think he would survive, so that's when they pushed that honor through so quick.

But he lived. Lived well into his 80s. Suffered much. His grandson wrote the book. And his grandson wrote the book after his death. And there's this question that just kind of rages on.

And he wanted to know, how could someone do that in that moment? He had like three seconds. Because if he didn't get it, it was going to burn through the bomb bay doors and land on the bombs and blow up and kill everybody on the plane.

The plane was already descending. It was down to like 300 feet by the time he threw it out the window. They were going to either crash in the ocean or everything was going to explode. So he saved not only his life, but he saved everybody on board's life. And he saved a lot of people.

[6 : 03] A lot of generations. So the grandson was kind of afraid. He said, how could he do that? He initially struggled with that until he met someone else who'd received that honor and yet lived because most of them were given posthumously after the individual dies.

And he asked him how. And he explained it to him. It's not a decision you make in that moment. It's really who you are up until that moment. Because when the moment comes, you just do what you always do.

Red had a very deep conviction of faith. He had a deep love for his brothers in arms. He had a complete trust in the Lord.

And he had this character forged throughout the Great Depression, a number of things. So it's not the moment that makes the hero. It's the hero that was made for the moment, so to say.

Usefulness in the kingdom is much the same way. When the moment comes to be used, it only reveals who we are up to that moment. When Goliath stood on the hill, who everybody was to that moment was put on display.

[7 : 19] And it revealed who they were because he's the biggest thing they've ever faced. And that shows us the character revealed of those God uses.

So tonight, we'll read 1 Samuel 17, verses 1 through 16. If the word carries and allows us to Sunday night, we'll pick it up in the 17th verse and finish the chapter.

The word of God says, Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. And they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah. And they camped between Socoh and Ekron in Ephes, Ramath.

Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah and drew up in battle of Ramoth to encounter the Philistines. The Philistines stood on the mountain on one side while Israel stood on the mountain on the other side with the valley between them.

Then a champion came out from the armies of the Philistines named Goliath from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. About nine feet, a little bit over nine and a half feet.

[8 : 29] Nine feet, nine and three quarters of inches, somewhere in there. Okay? Nine feet, nine and three quarter inches. I don't want to put doubt into your mind, but the earliest manuscripts have four cubits, which may seem six feet, nine inches.

Either way, he's a big guy. But let's stop right there because more than likely, Saul is about six two. Okay?

So, he's either nine feet nine or six feet nine. Either way, he's a big guy. But we'll get to the rest of that in just a moment. Okay. So, he comes out, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a bronze helmet on his head and he was clothed with skull armor which weighed 5,000 shekels of bronze, 125 pounds, or 126, however you want to do the math.

He also had bronze greaves or shin guards on his legs and a bronze javelin slung between his shoulders and the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam and the head of his spear weighed 600 shekels of iron or 15 pounds.

His shield carrier also walked before him and he stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, why do you come out to draw up and battle a ray? Am I not the Philistine and you servants of Saul?

[9 : 43] Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me then we will become your servants but if I prevail against him and kill him then you shall become our servants and serve us.

Again the Philistine said, I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man that we may fight together. When Saul and all the army or when Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah whose name was Jesse. He had eight sons and Jesse was old in the days of Saul and advanced in years among men.

The three older sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle and the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn and the second to him Abinadab and the third Shammah. David was the youngest.

Now the three oldest followed Saul but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem and the Philistine came forward morning and evening for forty days and took his stand.

[10 : 47] We stop right there because we continue on and we don't need to stop because here we begin to see now we'll have to overlap into what comes after this and we'll see it in just a moment of character revealed those who fell.

Now by this time David has been anointed Samuel has went and visited him he has been covered with the spirit from that day forward he is going into the presence of Saul anytime Saul's spirit is dismayed and playing the harp and trying to calm him down but he's not yet made his abode with him he's going back and forth the text tells us the three older brothers are in battle because they're old enough to fight Jesse his dad is too old to fight and David's not nowhere near old enough to be there in the battle yet but we see the battle forming and we begin to see even at the very beginning of it the character being revealed because of what's happening the first thing we notice is there is a misguided focus the very first thing that kind of takes us captive in the text is the focus of the first part of it now the focus shifts when David shows up on the scene we will see that later the explanations and the descriptions of Goliath really are confined to the first part of the chapter and we see this misguided focus because it says that when the army of the Philistines drew up in battle array and they came to the land of Judah so they came in on the offensive and Judah also drew up or Israel drew up in battle array and they were on this mountain they were on this mountain there's the valley by the way the valley below them means the line of blood so many battles that's what that name means had been fought there and they're standing on opposite hills from one another and Goliath comes forth and said am I not a Philistine and this is where we talk about red flags in scripture your flag should go off he said are you not the servants of Saul now Goliath had it wrong we know that later because David doesn't claim to be a servant of Saul

David doesn't fight to battle in the name of Saul you know the story right you defy God but yet no one here sees that because the focus is only on Goliath he's a formidable foe he's a big man I mean if he's nine feet nine or six feet nine either way he's a big man we don't have to cast doubt upon scripture just to understand that there could be some difference there but either way I mean we can take the nine feet nine he's a very imposing figure his armor alone weighs 125 pounds his spearhead weighs 15 pounds his shield would have been large enough to cover his whole body so he has a man probably smaller than his shield carrying his shield and he's going out there with all of these weapons right he's got a sword he's got a spear he's got a javelin he's got three weapons he's got a shield he's got another guy he is an imposing figure but what we notice is that when he comes out and he makes this taunt all that Saul and everybody else sees is Goliath that's all they see now who is this these are the

Philistines I want you to hold on to that for just a little bit because all they see is that man that man's man one big unit of a man standing on the hill who is a champion later Saul would say he's been a warrior from his youth he's fought a lot of battles this is or was a very popular method of warfare why should we put everybody at risk why don't we just send one man out to fight with one another and whoever wins the battle then the other we make this agreement and evidently this army in particular the Philistines was used to that because they had Goliath right he's got a champion because he's a champion and what an easy way let's just go let him do all the fighting he does all the dirty work and we get all the captives and the plunder and so when he comes out the only thing that everyone could see the thing that dismayed them the thing that caused them to fear the thing that upset them was the thing that they were focusing on and the thing that they were focusing on was the man Goliath because every time

God puts us at a place of usefulness there will always be an enemy who opposes us but too often the people of God are more concerned about the size of the opposition than they are the power that's moving them behind them God never asked us to fight battles depending upon the size of the enemy he appoints us to fight spiritual battles depending upon the size of the one who fights with us God had made all these promises all these covenant promises that he made to the nation of Israel throughout the wilderness wanderings and then when they finally crossed over into the promised land he made all these covenant promises promises they forgot about in those 400 plus years of the judges when there was no king in the land and every man did what was right in his own eyes and those promises were that when you go out no one will be able to stand before you that you will go against thousands with just a few you will put you will cause the enemy to run that you will not be the tail you will be the head and I will go before you and I will fight the battle and I will do all this all these promises these promises are forgotten the first moment that a bigger man shows up and that's the same today it really is because the church of God operates in the kingdom of God based upon the promises of God and I promise you the moment we begin to do what God has commanded us to do a seemingly bigger guy than us is going to stand on the other side every time

[17 : 02] I had breakfast this morning with someone from Tennessee Baptist and he was just asking me how are things going at the church things are going well it's a really sweet season really good season I was just sharing with him I was so excited about all the things we got going on and he's interim pastor he's been interim pastor different churches several churches and I was sharing with him we got this going on this going on this going on he said oh that's great I said yeah it's great I said so I'm waiting and I didn't have to get any further he goes yeah you know it's coming right you know it's coming the attacks and the fight and the battle and the Goliath and then the question is whether I as a pastor and we as a church will trust the God who goes behind us more than we fear the enemy who stands in front of us and it's really a matter of focus it's a matter of focus because what happens is when we have a misguided focus all we see is the resistance and we go back

Saul and all the people of Israel weren't focused on the Lord God they were focused on Goliath the champion and therefore they retreated battle always always reveals focus because it's easy to praise him in the sweet times it's a little bit harder to praise him in the hard times it gets even harder to serve him in the hard times or to be used by him in the hard times Jesus shares the parable of the souls in that right he speaks of the reality that it's the cares and the concerns of this life when the enemy starts showing up and cares and concerns and choking out usefulness because we're focused on other things each of us deal with that misguided focus the second thing we see that's even more astounding and remember we're comparing at least in particular two people

Saul and David and we know Saul's failures right but what did God see in the heart of David that wasn't in the heart of Saul not only was there focus the second thing that we know is because I promise you the focus of David is going to be so much different than the focus of Saul we'll get to that you know the account but we don't want to go too far the second thing we see is a shunned responsibility it's a shunned responsibility Goliath was a Philistine if you go back to 1st Samuel chapter 9 1st Samuel chapter 9 I believe it's 17th verse 16th verse God is speaking to Samuel about this man that's about to walk into the city looking for some donkeys remember that Saul is looking for donkeys and God is speaking to Samuel saying there's going to come someone here who's the son of Kish looking for some donkeys he's going to be the king the people have asked for a king in 1st Samuel chapter 8 1st Samuel 9

God's going to use Samuel to privately anoint the king in the 16th verse there's this phrase here God makes a declaration pay attention to that declaration God's declaration concerning Saul I will use him to deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines that's God's declaration right God's declaration is when Saul gets here anoint him as king because I will use him to deliver my people now Saul was from which tribe tribe of Benjamin right there was someone else from the tribe of Benjamin that God made a declaration that I will begin to deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines right remember him also started with an S name was Samson okay so Samson began the deliverance Saul was intended to complete it I will use him to deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines because the Philistines were the greatest enemy of the people

God had in the promised land because they had not eradicated them when they came into the promised land and therefore they were just this nuisance that kept showing up now you notice in this chapter the Philistines are attacking them they're not trying to expand they won't expand until we get to Solomon's reign David expands a little bit but Solomon really expands so they're just trying to maintain they're trying to set themselves free from their enemies so God this was the purpose that God had declared now the people had asked for a king remember this in the 8th chapter the people asked for a king and their request was very specific they said we want a king just like every other nation what did they request that will go before us into battle and lead us to victory right so the people wanted a king who would go before them into battle and lead them to victory and God says Saul is going to be the man that I will use to deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines now you go to the 17th chapter here's Goliath Goliath's on the other side of the hill

[22 : 26] Saul let's say Goliath is 9 feet 9 the tallest man in Israel is Saul right he's head and shoulders taller than everybody else we were told earlier in the text that the only ones who had a sword in all of Israel to fight battles with were Saul and his son Jonathan so the most well equipped individual to go fight Goliath is Saul Saul has armor because when David volunteers Saul puts his armor on David right Saul has armor which is a high commodity especially if you're going against a guy with a sword and a spear and a javelin Saul has a sword Saul is head and shoulders taller than everybody else and God had declared you're going to be the one that I used to deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines that's his responsibility but what we find from the text is when Saul looks at Goliath he does nothing nothing as a matter of fact he goes further than doing nothing when we read further on we'll see a little bit later

Saul offers a reward for whoever else will stand up and do it right his family will be free from taxes they won't have to serve in the army anymore whoever I'll give him the king's daughter in marriage they won't have to pay taxes it's a big deal they won't have to pay taxes and they won't even be commissioned to fight in the army if somebody else will go do it what Saul is doing is if somebody else will do what I'm supposed to do I will give you whatever you want just to go do it he shunned his responsibility because now it got personal so I was like well I'll charge in the battle everybody else is charging but if I'm going to charge in the battle you know just me against him I don't know about that the rest of the story Paul Harvey would say is David does go before the people and lead them to victory

David assumed the responsibility that should have been Saul's now we know because there's the sovereignty mindset right if God is sovereign then how could God make that declaration and in his sovereignty know that it would not come about well the purposes of God are sovereign but he has not created us robots is the best way I know how to explain what God has declared will be done yet we have the divine ability to walk in relationship with him if we shun the responsibility he has given us his purposes and plans that he had appointed for us will not stop they will be brought about we just forfeit we will read again if the Lord allows us to make it till Sunday 1st Corinthians chapter 3 I don't know if we'll get there but that's where

Paul starts speaking of each man's work being examined the gold will last the wood hay and stubble will burn up right the work we're not talking about working for salvation the work we're given because of our salvation the responsibilities God gave us because of our salvation Paul makes this declaration that when the fullness of the Gentiles comes to faith then God will call them home and we'll get to the nation of Israel and begin to work on the nation of Israel Romans 9 and following he starts speaking there that word fullness of the Gentiles means that God has an appointed number it's the way I read it that God has an appointed number that when the last Gentile comes to faith he's going to begin to work on the nation of Israel which does not mean that I don't know what that number is you don't know what that number is I don't understand but God knows and God understands that whatever that fullness is but my lack of evangelism or the church's lack of evangelism is not going to thwart the purposes of God he will continue to bring about what he has divinely ordained would come about but we would shun the responsibility of having a part in it right the king did deliver the people just not king Saul but what we notice here is Saul fails to do what

God called him to do because the enemy looks too great each of us have that divine calling upon our life we are told in scripture God's got a purpose for us over and over and over again so many times he's called us he's given us responsibilities he's given us tasks and we respond in those moments of kingdom usefulness either by shunning that responsibility or fulfilling that responsibility but I can promise you that every time we have that task there's an enemy that opposes those who fail to be used are those who shun their responsibilities let someone else do it let someone else do it I came across a picture the other day in my desk and it's a picture I took somewhere and I have to get it back out of somebody's gonna get mad at me okay don't get mad at me said after years of research it's finally figured out how many people it takes in every denomination to change a light bulb in the church so it went through every denomination right I'm not gonna do all them because this is online and I can do that on Sunday night when I'm not being videoed okay because I get in trouble my favorite one was universalist said we don't know if there is a light if you want to be a light you can be a light if you want to be a fluorescent or incandescent you can be whatever you want to be we're not here to tell you but let's all get together and celebrate gonna be a light but anyway when it got to the baptist it said it takes approximately 16 people 15 to form three committees of five and one to actually do the work while the three committees decide do we really need a light bulb and it's true people who want to give off the responsibility right and it's laughable because we're talking about lights but how often do we do it I mean the honest the honest response is listen we don't have to have a committee about everything we don't really even have to have discussions about things that God has called us to do commands that were commanded to do are really not up for discussion they're just up for obedience what I have found is quite often discussions are shunning of responsibilities how can we find someone else to do what it is we know we're supposed to be doing we'll give them our daughter in marriage we'll make them free from taxes and they won't have to fight the battle anymore as long as we can find somebody and I know that's offensive but I mean it is what it is that's usually what that is now we may need to discuss how we do it how we go about it and we won't be wise but whether or not we should rather or not we should do it is really not up for discussion those are commands those are purposes right don't shun our responsibility so we see the misguided focus of shun responsibility third thing finally is delayed action and we see it in that last verse the 16th verse the delayed action

[29 : 59] David shows up he's really not there yet he comes in the 17th verse we're told about David's brothers that are there because just in case you wondered why God didn't choose the three older brothers everything Saul's doing they're doing too okay the character of everybody being revealed this isn't just Saul this is everybody that's there and their character is further revealed when David shows them comes on the scene but they're doing it too they're present it's kind of ironic when Jesse tells David to go to his brothers because he makes this comment go to them in the valley for they are fighting the battle because when David gets there they're neither in the valley nor fighting the battle they're doing a battle cry and getting together for battle but nobody's in the valley nobody's fighting they're on the mountaintop trembling but what's astounding is that 16th verse the 16th verse tells us the Philistine came forward morning and evening two times a day for 40 days and took his stand 40 days that means twice a day every day Saul and everyone else there had the opportunity to do what

God was calling them to do for 40 days God is patient and long-suffering the Bible tells us in the book of Lamentations his loving kindnesses are new every morning and that's an Old Testament text I love that right that loving kindness is the word hesed that means everything for our good new every morning every morning they have the opportunity to respond but for 40 days they do nothing 40 days it's almost like God just is putting there here you go here you go here you go and they delay they delay they delay what I like about David is David shows up on the scene and he doesn't delay at all he only hears him one time we're getting ahead of ourselves but that's a reality because the character that's revealed is maybe if I do nothing the problem will go away you know the great tragedy in

America is the church thought that for so many years the church just thought that maybe if we do nothing the problem will go away and that's kind of what led our nation into what it's in today there's a lot of things that we did nothing about and I say we because even if I wasn't present I'm part of it right even today maybe we just delay maybe if we just do nothing it will go away maybe if we close our eyes and we just just act like it's not there we get in our we huddle together I mean we're on a mountaintop right we're over here in this cool camp and we can give a battle cry because that's what they do they're giving a battle cry every morning and we can act like we're warriors and we can act like we're soldiers and we can act but the reality is is none of us at least for the nation of Israel none of them are in the valley fighting they were on the mountaintop waiting thank God for the mountaintops that lets us see where we're about to go to fight the battle we praise him for the mountaintops because he gives us a perspective of what we're about to encounter but we got to go into the valley psalm 23 you know psalm of david by the way though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil

I know that psalm is used so often in graveside I've used it there but it's a psalm of life not a psalm of death right because david says for you will prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies I'm glad I'm on the mountaintop but I'm about to walk through the valley david says what happened is they just delayed action let's wait it out friend I don't care how long you delay the problem is always going to be persistent and delayed action is really active disobedience too often inactivity is active sin I said too often because sometimes we are to be still and know that he is God but Matthew 16 Jesus says upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it right gates are defensive measures which means something else is on the offensive the church is offensive moving forward pushing darkness but we see this delayed action these are the character traits that are being revealed of those who fail have a misguided focus have shunned responsibility and have delayed action now we get to the other side of those who God uses later but right now we just pause and consider much like again

Solomon David search me oh God and know me I don't want to be that guy on that mountaintop not just Saul I don't want to be any of them but too often just to be honest I have found myself in that army just waiting but I don't want to be there and we see it in 1 Samuel 17 verses 1 through 16 thank you my brother so so Thank you.

[37 : 14] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.