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Defending YHWH's Honor I Samuel 17

Intro: We've come to 1 of the most well-known stories in the entire Bible: David & Goliath. Folks who've never been 2 Sunday School still know this story. People who don't even know what a Philistine is 2 know Goliath was a giant. But here's the danger: there is so much drama, action, spectacle in this story that it's easy 2 miss the proper focus of the passage. Many think this is an underdog story; of the little guy giving a giant his comeuppance. Or some speaker will soliloquize about being courageous in the face of your Goliath. This story is about much more than a battle. In fact, the battle only makes up 5% of the entire narrative. If we fail 2 listen 2 the text, we also may miss the true focus the author intends 4 us 2 see. How 2 prevent this? Pay attention 2 where the story talks about God! There's also a **key word** that provides the main theme (**harap: 2 reproach, defy, mock, deride**) used 6Xs, each connected w/ Goliath which tells us he's not just a big goon from Gath, he's got a big mouth that like 2 dishonor Israel's God. (**large chunks**)

1-25 Goliath- Even tho **Goliath** isn't the main focus of the story, he still makes quite an impression. The writer makes sure we are sufficiently shocked by his detailed description of **G**'s size, armor, weaponry & its weight. It'd be hard 2 miss a man who stood **9' 6"**+, wearing **126#s** of armor carrying a spear w/ a **16#** iron head on it: he's a **walking tank!** Then, we're forced 2 listed to 3vs of hairy-chested trash talk as **G** hollers 4 a challenger 2 come out & take him on. It appears no 1 has any trouble hearing his big mouth b/c **vs11** says Saul & Co **dismayed & greatly afraid**. You might say they were both **impressed & depressed** but who wouldn't be, right? Of course, that's **G**'s exact intention in all of this: he wants 2 **demoralize** his opponents, strike **fear** in their hearts, **beat** 'em w/o fighting 'em. Saul may have felt the brunt of this challenge himself b/c, as you should recall, he's the biggest guy on the Israelite side of the valley.

But, is this the proper focus God's people should have at this point? No! If we listen closely 2 our hearts, there's a still, small voice that reminds us that we've heard something recently about **impressions**, a spiritual lesson that applies just as much 2 giants as it does 2 kings – **16:7** "**do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature**" If Saul & Israel had practiced this spiritual principle, they might have looked on **G** differently. But 4 all the shock & awe the author conjures up, it's all just **external appearances**; yet another opportunity 4 proper application of **16:7**.

Now David- Relief! The gloom & doom begin 2 fade as writer kindly introduces David on 2 the scene. His providential arrival releases a lot of the tension from the previous vs. We see the armored tank from Philistia, hear his foul challenge & watch Saul & Co scramble 4 the panic button for 40 days straight. Then David appears & a boring genealogy breathes life back into the story. But this isn't just happenstance – its **providence**. Jesse just happened 2 send David 2 the Israelite camp not knowing how critical this mission would be. David just happened 2 arrive on the last day of **G**'s 40 day challenge. Everything seems so natural, so casual & yet, those things that seemed the most casual were actually links in the providential chain that led 2 the most serious of issues. Then **G** talked 1 time 2 many & **David heard it** & you know the rest. All casual, all low key but don't forget 2 worship b/4 you move on from here.

More often than not, that's exactly how God works in our lives & how He works thru our lives 2 affect the world around us. Not in major, pitched spiritual battles, those are rarely seen by any but the most intimate friends, if that. No, God's providence works on us & thru us in the most casual, common place details of our lives; the little things, the small inconveniences that plague us daily, hourly & how we respond 2 them. Do we blow up, fall 2 pieces, protest the lack of fairness or complain that God must have it out 4 us today? Or, do we accept them in obedience & trust the Word when it tells us that "**all things work together 4 good 2 those who love God**"? Jesse could have delayed, David could have complained & balked but they didn't & God used their obedience 2 fulfill His deliverance!

26- David spoke- important 4 2 reasons: **1) 1st time David speaks in the Bible!** Up 2 this point, he hasn't said a word. Some people talk nonstop (legs off a chair) & the only defense 1 has is 2 tune them out. Then there are those who talk so little that when they do speak, others tend 2 perk up & listen. That's what's happening here. But we should perk up & pay attention 2 David's words not just b/c they are rare but, more importantly, b/c they are right!

2) 1st mention of YHWH in the story! David hasn't spoken b/4 this but now, not only is the silence is broken but the darkness begins 2 lift. W/ his comment, David introduces a whole new world view into the narrative. Up 2 this point, the story's been **godless** (like **fretting over things we can't control**) until David asks the godly question: "**Doesn't having a living God make a difference in all of this?**" It should! Saul & Co probably thought, "He's only mocking us." But David sees greater ramifications: **G**'s doesn't just mock the army, he mocks the army **of the living God!** If **YHWH** identifies Himself as the covenant God of Israel, do you think He'd be indifferent 2 any foul slurs on His reputation? Would a living God allow an uncircumcised pagan 2 get away w/ trampling His name in the theological mud? It's a perspective Saul & Co. desperately needed; they saw **G** as **invincible**, David merely saw him as **uncircumcised!** Adding a living God 2 the situation gives a whole new view of things. David's words are as **heavy** as Goliath!

uncircumcised- we've heard this b/4 too. In **ch13-14**, it seemed like Jonathan was the only believer w/ any faith in Israel (**sans Samuel**) but now David fills that role. David's faith as it relates 2 **YHWH's** honor is the theme of **ch17**.

David's question isn't some magic charm 4 dealing w/ problems but it does teach us the importance of starting off on the right foot. The Christian life, whether personal or corporate (church) requires **God-centered thinking**. Everything we think, say or do should be filtered thru the reality of God's sovereignty & Christ's mastery over our lives. If some1 were able 2 hear our thoughts in the midst of our greatest trials, would they ever guess we have a **living God**?

27-33- Eliab- David's faith is tested b/4 he even faces **G**! Eliab's the typical older brother: "What do you think you're doing?" Of course, David responds like a typical youngest brother, "What have I done now? Can't I even talk?" Why was Eliab so angry w/ David? As the youngest of the brothers, maybe he thought David was acting too big 4 his britches. He clearly question David's motives, thinking he was just trying 2 provoke someone else in 2 fighting **G** just so he could watch the battle. Mainly, I think Eliab was angry at David b/c David was right! When you are dismayed & greatly afraid, the last thing you want is 2 have your youngest brother telling you 2/b courageous!

But, Eliab's words have greater meaning. Eliab is a mirror. In ch16, he was a mirror 4 handsome Saul (9:2) but now he is a mirror 4 someone else. As his mouth spews contempt 4 David (**few sheep, pride...**), Eliab = **G**! He's **G** b/4 **G**! **G** is going 2 express much contempt 4 David but sadly, Eliab beats him 2 it!

Saul- He's not much better than Eliab: "**You're not able...you're too young.**" Saul was looking at the battle solely in natural, outward terms. "**He's been a soldier longer than you've been alive!**" True, the **physical "tale of the tape"** said there's no way David could win. But, the "**tale of YHWH's tape**" said there's no way David could lose! Saul could not perceive the spiritual dimensions of this battle. He was operating completely on **external appearances**, assuming that only the experienced & equipped warrior had the greatest odds of coming out of the fight victorious.

In a way, David has 2 fight 3 **Gs** in this story. In Eliab, he faces the **contempt** of **G**; in Saul, the **mind** of **G** (**worldly**); all this b/4 he faces off w/ worthless the **carcass** of **G** himself. Thankfully, tho Eliab's words may have **hurt** David, he didn't let them **hinder** him. Tho Saul doubted David's experience, he clued the king into his sacred little secret.

34-40- all?- It seems the life of a shepherd wasn't as docile as some believed as they lived in constant threat of life & livelihood. If a lion or bear took a lamb, David was obliged 2 go after it & retrieve it. If the brute wanted 2 fight over it, David would grab the dangerous end & strike it until he killed it. His point: Don't worry about my experience, striking down enemies is part of my job; it's just that they are usually **ferocious mammals** not **arrogant giants**. But now he's put himself in the same category as lions & bears b/c he dares 2 mock the army of the living God! **vs37=** bottom line

Note: David doesn't credit his victories 2 luck, skill or bravery but 2 **YHWH**, "**He delivered me!**" Looking back in faith enable David 2 look forward in faith, "**He will deliver me!**" What **YHWH** had done 4 David in the wilderness of Judah, He will do in the valley of Elah. We've seen this same spiritual principle b/4 in Joshua's memorials: **memory & logic = assistants 2 faith**. We recall what God's done 4 us in the past & realize if He can handle that, He can handle this. In the economy of God's kingdom, no experience is wasted.

41-54- know- tho **G** tries 2 monopolize the scene, David's not about 2 let him. W/ his 3rd speech, David gives as good as he gets! He asserts that what is about 2 happen will serve 2 purposes: **1)** show the whole earth that there is a God, a real God, in Israel; **2)** show all attending that **YHWH** doesn't save by human power but thru the weakness of His servants. **G** relied on his size, strength & superior equipment but David didn't have any of that. He's only armed w/ what amounted 2 little more than a child's toy. **YHWH** gave victory thru what the world considers 2/b **weakness**.

This theme's been projected thru the chapter. All the main characters see David as weak: Eliab said: **You're a pain!** Saul: **You're green!** **G**: **You're puny!** Yet, he's the 1 **YHWH** uses 2 deliver & even w/o the proper equipment! He refused Saul's armor/ sword & instead, insults **G** w/ his staff; thus, **showing** that **YHWH** brings deliverance w/o the symbols of man's strength. **Hudson Taylor**; founder: China Inland Mission, "**All God's giants have been weak men who did great things 4 God b/c they reckoned on His being w/ them.**" What matters is not having the best weapons but in having the real God. In fact, your lack of ability may very well be your best qualification 4 serving God b/c His strength shines most brightly behind the foreground of our weakness (**II Cor 12:9**) "**made perfect in weakness**"

55-58- whose- Did Saul & Abner really not know who David was? Note: the question is concerning David's father. If Saul's going 2 release Jesse from paying taxes, he wants 2 make sure he gets the right man!

What's the main concern of **ch17**? Key word **harap**: (mock, defy). **G** did & Israel confirms he did but David's the only 1 concerned about stopping it b/c he associates mockery of Israel w/ mockery of Israel's God. So, the main concern on **ch17** is the **honor** of **YHWH's** name (**26, 36**), His **reputation** (**46b-47**), His **glory**. David's driven by a passion 4 the honor of God. This truth should discourage us from focusing 2 much on David's courage, cleverness or skill. The focus isn't on David's bravery but on God's adequacy in David's weakness. David wasn't delivered b/c he had **true grit**, he was delivered b/c he knew the **true God**, had fellowship w/ Him & desired 2 uphold His honor w/ his own life.

That was the focus of David's faith, but is it the focus of our faith? There are plenty of situations in our own lives, our own various worlds, where God's honor is at stake. "**Like what?**" There are things the Bible clearly says we shouldn't do – do we refrain? God's honor is at stake. There are certain things the Bible says we as His children, should do – do we? God's honor is at stake. Can we honestly say that God's honor matters more 2 us than our advantage, reputation or security? Do we serve a living God? Of course – so that truth should bring life & light, clarity &

confidence 2 every dark trial in our life. It should give us a God-centered perspective. While everyone else thot, “**G** is so big, I can’t beat him.” David thot, “**G** is so big, I can’t miss him!” A wrong perspective will lead 2 defeat.

God will see us thru our trials & we will reap on the other side what we have sown in the midst. Will the harvest be a good crop or bad? If our primary focus is 2 honor God above all else – it w/b a victorious harvest! ☺