

Are You Ready to Face the Giants?

1 Samuel 17

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Introduction:

Are you familiar with Calvin and Hobbes? Calvin and Hobbes is the comic strip creation of Bill Watterson. Calvin is an adventurous six year-old; Hobbes is his stuffed tiger, who is just your usual stuffed animal to everyone except Calvin. One day Calvin comes marching into the living room. His mother is seated there in her favorite chair. She is sipping her morning coffee with book in hand. She looks up at young Calvin. She is amused and amazed at how he is dressed. Calvin's head is encased in a large space helmet. A cape is draped around his neck, across his shoulders, down his back, and is dragging on the floor.

First Frame:

"What's up today?" asks his mom.

"Nothing, so far," answers Calvin.

Second Frame:

"So far?" she questions.

"Well, you never know," Calvin says, "Something could happen today."

Third Frame:

As Calvin marches off he says, "And if anything does, by golly, I'm going to be ready for it!"

Fourth Frame:

Calvin's mom looks out at the reading audience and she says, "I need a suit like that!"

How many of you need a suit like that? I want to talk to you this morning about facing our giants—about being ready for what might happen today.

Introduction to Text: Our text today is one of the most well known stories of the Old Testament—David and Goliath. Before David became King David, he was a shepherd. David is the youngest son of Jesse. First Samuel 17 reveals that David has seven older brothers, three of whom have gone off to war with King Saul. The text tells us that the army of Israel is lined up in battle formation against the Philistines. There is not much of a battle going on, though, because every morning Goliath, a giant of 9 feet, 9 inches, has taunted the armies of Israel. Goliath challenges them each morning to a one on one winner take all battle. If Goliath wins, the Israelites will serve the Philistines. If an Israelite wins, the Philistines

will be servants of Israel. For forty days, not one Israelite can be found who is willing to take on mighty Goliath.

At this point in the story, Jesse sends David to go check on his brothers. David finds his brothers and also hears the taunt of Goliath. David also hears what will be done to any man from Israel who defeats Goliath. David hears, “The king will make the man who kills him very rich and will give him his daughter. The king will also make the household of that man’s father exempt from paying taxes in Israel?” (v. 25)

Text: ³² David said to Saul, “Don’t let anyone be discouraged by him; your servant will go and fight this Philistine!”

³³ But Saul replied, “You can’t go fight this Philistine. You’re just a youth, and he’s been a warrior since he was young.”

³⁴ David answered Saul: “Your servant has been tending his father’s sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the flock, ³⁵ I went after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its mouth. If it reared up against me, I would grab it by its fur, strike it down, and kill it. ³⁶ Your servant has killed lions and bears; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.” ³⁷ Then David said, “The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Saul said to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you.”

³⁸ Then Saul had his own military clothes put on David. He put a bronze helmet on David’s head and had him put on armor. ³⁹ David strapped his sword on over the military clothes and tried to walk, but he was not used to them. “I can’t walk in these,” David said to Saul, “I’m not used to them.” So David took them off. ⁴⁰ Instead, he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the wadi and put them in the pouch, in his shepherd’s bag. Then, with his sling in his hand, he approached the Philistine.

⁴¹ The Philistine came closer and closer to David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. ⁴² When the Philistine looked and saw David, he despised him because he was just a youth, healthy and handsome. ⁴³ He said to David, “Am I a dog that you come against me with sticks?” Then he cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴ “Come here,” the Philistine called to David, “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts!”

⁴⁵ David said to the Philistine: “You come against me with a dagger, spear, and sword, but I come against you in the name of Yahweh of Hosts, the God of Israel’s armies—you have defied Him. ⁴⁶ Today, the LORD will hand you over to me. Today, I’ll strike you down, cut your head off, and give the corpses of the Philistine camp to the birds of the sky and the creatures of the earth. Then all the world will know that Israel has a God, ⁴⁷ and this whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the LORD saves, for the battle is the LORD’s. He will hand you over to us.”

Truths about the Giants:

1. **We all will face the giants.** Pastor and author, Charles Swindoll seems to get it when it comes to the giants of life. Across the years he has written several books on subjects related to the difficult experiences of life. Listen to some of the titles: *Living on the Ragged Edge of Life*, *Living*

Beyond the Daily Grind, and Stress Fractures. A more recent book is entitled, *Getting through the Tough Stuff of Life*. The subtitle of this book says it all: "It's Always Something." Listen how Swindoll concludes his book.

I don't care how old you are, where you live, or what you do for a living; if you're single or married; childless or have a household of kids; own your own home or rent your place...it's always something. It makes no difference which hobby you enjoy, who you know, how much money you make, whether you're a workaholic or completely retired from the workplace, whether you're a person who has little or no faith or you're a stronghearted follower of Jesus...it's always something!¹

It really is always something, isn't it?

2. **We never know when we might face the giants.** Like Calvin said, "Something could happen today." What might come is temptation, a decision, a problem, a diagnosis...the list has no end. I have often said out of my own experience, "Life can forever change with a single phone call."

David did not know he was going to face Goliath. He left that morning to check on his brothers. The uncertainty of facing the giant is communicated in the text in verse 23, "While he was speaking with them, suddenly the champion named Goliath...came forward." Suddenly! That's the way it is with our giants.

3. **We want to be ready to confront the giants.** So, again, as Calvin said, "If anything does (happen), I'm going to be ready for it."
4. **Facing our giants requires courage.** For forty days, "When Saul and all Israel heard these words from the Philistine, they lost their courage and were terrified." (v. 11) But not David. He had courage.

Where Do We Find the Courage?

- **Rest in your preparation to face the giants.**
Revisit verses 34-36. David was just a shepherd, but he had developed courage. He had been prepared to face this present giant by encountering previous giants.

Frances Ridley Havergal lived from 1836-1879. She was a hymn writer. She wrote the hymn, *Take My Life and Let it Be*, for example. She endured frequent illness throughout her life. She remembered her mother telling her as a small child, "Frannie, dear, pray to God to prepare you for all that He is preparing for you." This is God's promise to us. We might face some giants, but He has prepared us for the giants.

- **Remember the past victories over giants.**
See verse 37. David revisits the victories over previous giants. He revisits that his victories had come because of God.
- **Rely on the power of God.**

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, *Getting Through the Tough Stuff: It's Always Something!* W Publishing Group, 2004, 223.

How many times do we rely on our own power or the programs and philosophies of the world, when our real power is in God?

- **Recognize the purpose of God in giving you victory.**
See verse 46-47. Why does God give us victory? So that His name would be made great!
- **Realize that your courage produces faith in others.**
Verse 52 tells us that now all of Israel gained courage.

Conclusion: Courage is in walking with Jesus.