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Pastor Matt Woods

## “Reasons to Trust in God Above All Things”

Ever try in a trust fall? A person crosses his arms and with eyes closed, falls backwards into the arms of a waiting friend who catches the faller. The lesson is to learn how to trust. In a recent video that was shared with me I saw a young lady preparing for a trust fall into the arms of her boyfriend by a lake. I don't think she understood how it all actually worked. Instead falling backwards into the boyfriend's waiting arms she closed her eyes, crossed her arms and fell forward, right into the lake as he watched helplessly in disbelief.

One of the most famous events in scripture is David taking down Goliath in 1 Samuel 17. Today's text leans in on the conversation between David and King Saul in verses 33-37. <sup>33</sup> Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth.”

<sup>34</sup> But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, <sup>35</sup> I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. <sup>36</sup> Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. <sup>37</sup> 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 the LORD be with you.”

David's trust relies on the character of God. David would not place his trust in Saul's armor which was naturally too big—Saul was a head taller than other men. David would take with him five smooth stones, more than enough for the Lord to accomplish His work through David.

Notice David's argument to Saul. As a shepherd David had to protect the sheep. He gives credit to the Lord for his success against a bear and a lion. “What's the difference here? This uncircumcised Philistine will be like them...The Lord will rescue me from the Philistine.”

We remember what happens next. David's stone hits the giant in the forehead, the only unprotected place on this highly trained armored killer. Down He goes. Without hesitation David kills him with his own sword and rallies the courage of Israel against the army of the Philistines. The main lesson is that God is going to bring down all of our giants as many of us used this passage. The main lesson is about the character of the Lord as well as those who trust in the Lord.

In the midst of Covid, national elections, border crises, inflation, health costs, and just watching too much news; for many Christians feels like facing giants and is enough to shake a person's courage these days. And, if we are honest, we have plenty of reasons for mistrust. Doctors often miss the real problem. Friends who sell things haven't been as helpful as promised. People who are supposed to represent us in Washington are more cringe-worthy than reliable. So where does one start to summon the courage?

Well, David started with the character of God above himself. First, David trusted in the Lord because God was with Him. The Lord was with Him when he had to defend the sheep from the bear and the lion. We hear Jesus promise to be with us, and never to forsake us in Joshua 1:5 and Matt 28:20. We think this is just a promise. It's not just a promise. It is His nature. It is who He is. Remember at the 7<sup>th</sup> day of creation when God rested, He made it a point to be with Humanity. You are His favorite part of creation and wants to be part of your life so He stays close. Your Baptism connects you to Jesus and draws Him in close. For 40 days the Israelites, including David's older brothers, huddled and hid staring at the giant, listening to his threats. However, David knew that the Lord would be with him as he faced off with the Philistine and so went out boldly to face the Philistine.

David also relied on the Lord's strength over his own. --<sup>45</sup> David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. <sup>46</sup> This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. <sup>47</sup> All those gathered here will

know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

It is by the Lord's strength that David wins. The Lord does the delivering of Goliath into David's hands. The battle itself is the Lord's. Same can be said of cancer or other illness, of troubles, unforeseen financial stress. Rather than putting on Saul's armor David wore the full armor of God. He placed his trust completely in the hands of the Lord not just save David but give Him victory over his enemy. Likewise, our greatest battle with sin itself is a battle that belongs to the Lord. It was fought and won on the cross and sealed in His resurrection. Our battle with illness, trouble, and even death are the Lord's too. Such things are not overcome with our vitamins, exercise, great budgeting or the things we do; and should be doing to stay in the fight. The biggest things are a battle that belongs to the Lord. David was confident of his outcome because the Lord was his strength. If we can believe that the Lord is enough to raise us from the dead it seems pretty reasonable that the Lord will see us through everything else.

Finally, David relied on God's faithfulness to His people. The Lord was consistent in David's mind; first with the bear, then the lion, and now with the Philistine. The Lord is consistent in his faithfulness to us and the promises He makes to us. If the Lord says He will hear our prayers he will. If the Lord promises to forgive those who repent, He will. If the Lord says He will deliver us from the grave and bring us into His Father's house, He will. Jesus doesn't operate like the characters in Washington. Jesus actually follows through with what He promises.

We do not come against this world on its terms any more than David faced off with Goliath on Goliath's terms. We come against the world in the name of the Lord Almighty. If we face a battle take a lesson from David who focused on God's character over his own abilities. He trusted that God was with him. David trusted in the Lord's strength and way of doing things. David also trusted in God's faithfulness to His people for deliverance. And the Giant fell. So, when facing your giants start by considering the character of the Lord instead of looking at what you can or cannot do. The same Lord is with you, will strengthen you, and remains faithful in His promises. May the Lord bless us with eyes to look to Him.

And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with His favor and give you His peace in Jesus. Amen.

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John 3:30