

Order of Worship for June 23, 2024

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “O God, Forsake Me Not”- Hymn # 731

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

C: But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

P: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C: I, a poor sinner, plead guilty before God of all sins. I have lived as if God did not matter and as if I mattered most. I have not honored my Lord’s name as I should; my worship and prayers have faltered. There are those whom I have hurt, and those whom I have failed to help. My thoughts and desires have been soiled with sin. Amen.

P: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of the Word, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

Entrance Psalm: Psalm 35:1-4

P: Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me;

C: fight against those who fight against me!

P: Take hold of shield and buckler

C: and rise for my help!

P: Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers!

C: Say to my soul, “I am your salvation!”

P: Let them be put to shame and dishonor who seek after my life!

C: Let them be turned back and disappointed who devise evil against me!

ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray... Almighty God, because You know that we of ourselves have no strength, keep us both outwardly and inwardly, that we may be defended from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: Amen.**

Hymn of Praise: *“The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want”* - **Hymn #710**

First Reading: David and Goliath: 1 Samuel 17:4-11, 32-37, 40-50

R: And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And his shield-bearer went before him. He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, “Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? 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 be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.” And the Philistine said, “I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together.” When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. ... And David said to Saul, “Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth.” But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.” And David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!” ... Then [David] took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine.

And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. And the Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.” Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hand.”

When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell

on his face to the ground.

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David.

R: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:27-31

R: But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

R: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Third Reading: Luke 21:12-19

P: Jesus said, "But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for My name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness. Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives."

P: In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.

C: But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.

Children's Message:

Sermon Hymn: "*Fight the Good Fight*"- **Hymn #664**

Sermon: "*David and Goliath*"

Stephen Prothero, in his book on religious literacy, says that "religious literacy also includes knowing the key characters, images, and stories in the scriptures, rites, and history of the church. And so, in addition to doctrine, this book's definition of religious literacy includes narrative. ... To be religiously literate today is to be familiar with the creation story in Genesis and the apocalyptic horrors of Revelation. It is to know that David triumphed over Goliath, even though David was small and Goliath was big, perhaps to know as well that David felled the giant with a stone. Religious literacy, in short, is both doctrinal and narrative..."

Even as we've moved into a post-Christian culture, stories and ideas from the Bible continue to be important in our society. We have Good Samaritan laws, to protect those who stop and help their neighbor, which take their name from Jesus' parable. People know about the sibling rivalry between Cain and Abel. And we know the story of David and Goliath.

But even if we're familiar with it, sometimes familiarity breeds contempt. Or at least, familiarity keeps us from seeing what's really going on in the story, because we're trapped by our preconceptions of what happens. Goliath the Philistine is big, beefy and belligerent. David the shepherd boy from Bethlehem steps out of obscurity, refuses the bulky unfamiliar armor offered him by Saul, the king of Israel, and, taking five smooth stones and a slingshot, leaves Goliath lying in the dust.

And that's how we often see this story, and how we see it used today. The story of David and Goliath is a story of the little guy triumphing over the big guy. It's Iowa State beating Texas in football, or Kansas in basketball. It's a group of ragtag amateur hockey players for the US beating professionally trained players from the USSR in the Miracle on Ice. It's a group of working class rowers from Washington state winning Olympic gold against professional rowers in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. It's a ragtag volunteer army in need of a shower defeating a global superpower during the American Revolution. The story of David and Goliath is about the little guy beating the big guy, and whoever we are identifying with is the little guy, who we think deserves to win.

Our problem is that we misunderstand what's going on when David meets Goliath. We miss who has the advantage. And we miss that David and Goliath isn't about David, but about God.

There were three types of military units in the ancient world. Goliath is a good example of the infantry, those used to fighting in close quarters. Some groups had cavalry, which are speedy units that can go on raids, attack from the flank or the rear, but have trouble when forced into close fighting with infantry. Then there are the ranged weapons. Before artillery, riflemen, or even archers, slingers provided a powerful ranged attack.

In the movie Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark, there's a point where Indiana Jones is supposed to do an elaborate sword fight with an enemy, but instead just shoots him. The scene was changed due to actors being sick the day the scene was to be filmed, but it turned into one of the iconic scenes of the film, and proves a good reminder of the weaknesses of infantry. Don't bring a knife to a gun fight.

Goliath expects to be fought on his own terms. He expects someone else to get all armored up, come closer to him, and fight in a way where he has the advantage. That's what Saul and the Israelite army expects to happen, as well. That's why they're all afraid, and that's why Saul tries to give David his armor before he goes to fight Goliath.

But David isn't fighting on Goliath's terms. He changes things up. His sling means he can hit Goliath before getting into range of Goliath's giant sword or spear. His lack of armor gives him speed, allowing him to close before Goliath is ready. But most of all, David knows God is on his side.

When David marched to meet Goliath, he wore no armor, but he was certainly armed—armed with his sling, a weapon he'd used to defend his flock from bears and lions. More importantly,

though Goliath came with sword, spear, and javelin, David came armed with “the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel,” whom Goliath had defied.

And that’s what is really at stake. Goliath isn’t just looking for a brawl but challenging Israel to engage in what the Greeks would later call monomachia (“single combat”). Rather than two entire armies battling it out, each side pitted their #1 fighter against the other. The last man standing determined which army stood victorious. And in a time when each nation had their own god, those one on one battles took on a divine meaning, as well. Whoever won had the strongest god.

David knew that. And he knew the God of angel armies wasn’t only the god of a small piece of land, or a small group of people. He knew the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, was the God over the whole world. And he knew that God would fight for him, as God had fought for his people as they’d entered the Promised Land, and as the judges had defeated the Philistines and other enemies in times past. He also knew that God had been with him when he was out protecting his flock from hungry animals, and that God would be with him here, as well.

That also points us to God’s greatest work. One of the ways we can look at Jesus, the son of David, and what he did, is that he personified the people of Israel. As David represented Israel and Goliath represented the Philistines, so Jesus would represent, would embody a whole people. And Jesus sure looked like David against the Goliath of sin, death, and the devil, against the Pharisees and the Romans. But just like David, God was on Jesus’ side, and through his seeming defeat would come the greatest victory of all.

So what does the story of David and Goliath mean for us? Sometimes sermons will try to go into an allegorical interpretation, talking about how the five smooth stones David picked up and brought with him into battle represent five qualities we should possess, or five things we should have with us to defeat the Goliaths in our lives. But God wouldn’t hide the key to our happiness in some sort of riddle like that.

No, if we’re going to move in that direction, we move more in why this is a great Sunday School lesson. David defeats Goliath because God fights with him. It reminds us of the purpose of fairy tales, to remind us not that giants or dragons exist, but that they can be defeated. It’s not about us finding the American Dream.

David, though, can be a warning story to us, as well. He doesn’t just stay a shepherd boy who trusts in God to protect him from giants. He becomes a king who is content to stay in his palace while others go off to fight battles for him, which is why he’s still in Jerusalem to watch Bathsheba bathe on her roof. He forgets the lessons he learned as the youngest son, and deals with family turmoil and conflict that ends with one of his sons dead after leading a rebellion against him.

Ultimately, the story of David and Goliath reminds us that we have a God who fights for us and with us. We have a God who has defeated the enemies of sin, death, and the devil. Though we

may outwardly look weak, if God is on our side, we will be victorious. The battle belongs to our God.

Prayer for Courage:

P: Be strong, and let your heart take courage,

C: all you who wait for the LORD!

P: But I trust in You, O Lord;

C: I say, "You are my God."

P: My times are in Your hand;

C: rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!

P: Make Your face shine on Your servant;

C: save me in Your steadfast love!

P: O God, our caring creator:

C: Make us bold to trust You as beloved children.

P: Christ Jesus, our redeemer and friend, who for joy became our servant:

C: Lead us to joyful service of the needy.

P: Holy Spirit, giver of life to the church:

C: Nourish our life on the courage of Christ.

P: Heavenly Father, give us courage when we are afraid.

C: Hope when we are discouraged.

P: Clarity in times of decision.

C: Boldness in times of change.

P: Give us courage in speaking Your truth

C: and compassion in showing Your love;

P: Make us ambassadors of Gospel joy in every difficulty

C: and agents of Gospel hope in all affliction;

(other petitions)

P: Trusting in You, we are bold to pray:

Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayers:

P: Almighty God, merciful Father, who created and completed all things, on this day when the work of our calling begins anew, we implore You to create its beginning, direct its continuance, and bless its end, that our doings may be preserved from sin, our life sanctified, and our work this day be well pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **C: Amen.**

All: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Blessing: (Pastor) **C: Amen.**

Closing Hymn: "God of Grace and God of Glory" - Hymn # 850

Postlude