

1 Samuel 17:20-23, 32-49

The Message

²⁰⁻²³ David was up at the crack of dawn and, having arranged for someone to tend his flock, took the food and was on his way just as Jesse had directed him. He arrived at the camp just as the army was moving into battle formation, shouting the war cry. Israel and the Philistines moved into position, facing each other, battle-ready. David left his bundles of food in the care of a sentry, ran to the troops who were deployed, and greeted his brothers. While they were talking together, the Philistine champion, Goliath of Gath, stepped out from the front lines of the Philistines, and gave his usual challenge. David heard him.

³² “Master,” said David, “don’t give up hope. I’m ready to go and fight this Philistine.”

³³ Saul answered David, “You can’t go and fight this Philistine. You’re too young and inexperienced—and he’s been at this fighting business since before you were born.”

³⁴⁻³⁷ David said, “I’ve been a shepherd, tending sheep for my father. Whenever a lion or bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I’d go after it, knock it down, and rescue the lamb. If it turned on me, I’d grab it by the throat, wring its neck, and kill it. Lion or bear, it made no difference—I

killed it. And I’ll do the same to this Philistine pig who is taunting the troops of God-Alive. GOD, who delivered me from the teeth of the lion and the claws of the bear, will deliver me from this Philistine.”

Saul said, “Go. And GOD help you!”

³⁸⁻³⁹ Then Saul outfitted David as a soldier in armor. He put his bronze helmet on his head and belted his sword on him over the armor. David tried to walk but he could hardly budge.

David told Saul, “I can’t even move with all this stuff on me. I’m not used to this.” And he took it all off.

⁴⁰ Then David took his shepherd’s staff, selected five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the pocket of his shepherd’s pack, and with his sling in his hand approached Goliath.

⁴¹⁻⁴² As the Philistine paced back and forth, his shield bearer in front of him, he noticed David. He took one look down on him and sneered—a mere boy, apple-cheeked and peach-fuzzed.

⁴³ The Philistine ridiculed David. “Am I a dog that you come after me with a stick?” And he cursed him by his gods.

⁴⁴ “Come on,” said the Philistine. “I’ll make roadkill of you for the buzzards. I’ll turn you into a tasty morsel for the field mice.”

⁴⁵⁻⁴⁷ David answered, “You come at me with sword and spear and battle-ax. I come at you in the name of GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies, the God of Israel’s troops, whom you curse and mock. This very day GOD is handing you over to me. I’m about to kill you, cut off your head, and serve up your body and the bodies of your Philistine buddies to the crows and coyotes. The whole earth will know that there’s an extraordinary God in Israel. And everyone gathered here will learn that GOD doesn’t save by means of sword or spear. The battle belongs to GOD—he’s handing you to us on a platter!”

⁴⁸⁻⁴⁹ That roused the Philistine, and he started toward David. David took off from the front line, running toward the Philistine. David reached into his pocket for a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine hard in the forehead, embedding the stone deeply. The Philistine crashed, facedown in the dirt.