

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 6th

5 Smooth Stones

The Challenger

1 Samuel 17:1-11

Do you know the story of David and Goliath – it is one of the Bible’s most well-known stories of God’s ability to deliver His people through an unlikely hero.

As a child did you ever make and play with Sling shots? I must admit my brothers and I did and used to use the red berries from the mirror bush to shoot at things – never people or animals. They are now illegal. The sling that David used was made differently but still could produce the same power.



You may have heard the saying: it’s a David and Goliath situation. This is where you have two people facing each other – one who has the power and resources and the other who has much less.

This morning we are going to focus on the one in our story who appeared to have the power and resources – **the Challenger Goliath.**

Let’s picture what he might have looked like. Here is one image.

The Bible says he was 9ft tall – that’s around about??? I have never met anyone that tall but of course, there are many taller than me. It is easy to see why the Israelite army would have been intimidated because they were confronted with a clear and dominant-looking enemy, all decked out in his armour.

Perhaps we can identify a challenger in our life – they may not be an actual person, it could be a situation, circumstance or illness.

The first thing we see is that the enemy will question.

Goliath asked the Israelites – Why are you all coming out to fight? What does this question do – it casts doubt in our minds.

Doubt, which is an age-old tactic and one of the most important things the enemy uses.

The reality is, we all have a natural tendency to doubt from time to time. And the devil, the evil one, is the king of doubts. He is constantly planting doubt in our head that leads us to question God. We see this in the beginning, with Adam and Eve doubting God in the book of Genesis.

In the case of Goliath, I can just image the Israelites dropping their heads as they say: “he’s right, we are wasting our time. Saul is only 6ft tall. We can’t defeat him. We can’t fight against him.

And they are right – the Israelites on their own cannot defeat Goliath. The Bible makes it clear we were never meant to fight the enemy on our own. In fact, if we try to do it all on our own, we will fail.

Goliath makes a profound statement. He says: “I am the Philistine champion, **but** you are only the servants of Saul.”

The second thing the enemy does is to condemn.

The use of the word ‘**BUT**’ is important here as Goliath is trying to elevate himself above the rest of the Israelite army.

Goliath certainly has the advantage, and he speaks with confidence and condemnation, with the words – you are only the servants of Saul.

Makes us question our trust. This is another tactic that the devil uses – telling us we are alone and only have another person to call on.

When we remove everything else, who do we trust? Who do we serve? Who do we look to?

The devil uses this tactic to convince us we don’t have God to help us. Some of us have associated ourselves with our church affiliation more than our identity in Christ. Others look to a secular leader rather than God Himself for our hope.

When we hear a voice of condemnation, do we automatically believe it to be true? Or do we confidently respond with: “I serve a risen Saviour who is all-powerful, all-loving and all-protective.

The final thing the enemy does is to strike fear.

We know that the devil wants to distract us from God. He will do whatever it takes to make that happen. As he uses questions, doubt and condemning words to strike fear in us.

How many times have you believed the lies of the devil when you have been afraid, listening to the wrong voices and the fear spirals out of control, stopping you from stepping out in faith.

In Matthew 14:24-28 we read of Peter who stepped out in faith, into the swirling waves of the water, to walk towards Jesus' outstretched hand. When he kept his eyes fixed on Jesus, he was fine – but when he took his eyes away and focused on the waves and the wind, he started to sink.

Which voice are we listening to – which face are we fixed on.

For this coming week, think about the times you are relying on your own strength and the outcome and the times when you fix your eyes upon Jesus and His strength and the outcome.

Next week we will be looking at David – the defender.

