

GOD'S SUPER HEROES - DAVID

GOD'S SUPER HEROES-(PART 7-DAVID)

If we were to judge to the human race throughout history as to its obedience to god, I am afraid that we would not do very well. More often than not, people have turned away from god and followed the philosophies of this world. In spite of that, god has always had men and women who were willing to stand up for him and to be counted. These people are god's superheroes, and for the last few weeks we have been looking at some of their lives. We have seen Gideon, Moses, two lessons on Elijah and two lessons on Daniel. Today, we see another huge champion for god as we study the life of David. It may interest you to know that David is mentioned in the Bible more than any other person. His name occurs three times more often than either Abraham or Moses. He is mentioned more even than the Lord Jesus Christ. Over 1100 times his name is mentioned in the Bible, including 58 times in the New Testament. Four books (and 61 chapters) of the Old Testament tell his life story. He wrote at least 73 psalms. In the 30 centuries since his death, he is still being talked about, and we can still learn by his life.

DAVID WAS GOD'S UNLIKELY CHOICE

Psalm 78:70-71, "He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance."

David's story begins with him tending sheep on the rocky hills near Bethlehem. It is no doubt there, alone out in the starry night that he developed much of his love and passion for God. He later wrote in psalm 8:3-4, "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"

We "fast forward" to a scene where God tells Samuel the prophet to go to the house of Jesse where he would show him his choice for a new king to replace Saul. When Samuel arrived at Jesse's house, Jesse had all of his sons to pass by Samuel, and some of them were very impressive.

1 Samuel 16:6, "When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord.'

Samuel thought this man Eliab had to be the lord's choice because he was tall and handsome. Had it been left up to Samuel, this would have been his man. People still often choose their leaders on the basis of how they look. It is said that Kennedy beat Nixon in 1960 in part because he appeared more youthful and vigorous on television. This week I read that in most elections, the taller candidate usually wins, but God doesn't think that way.

1 Samuel 16:7, "But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'"

So each one of Jesse's sons passed before Samuel, and God made it plain to Samuel that none of those men were his choice.

1 Samuel 16:11-13 "So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep."

While all his brothers are with Samuel, David is out with the sheep. His father didn't even think consider the possibility that David might be God's choice.

1 Samuel 16:11-13, "Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one." So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power...."

There stands the future king of Israel. He's maybe 16 years old. He doesn't look like a king. But that doesn't matter. God has found his man. God says to Samuel, "Anoint him." The anointing was God's way of saying, "This is my man. When the time comes, he will be king."

That story tells us that God chooses people and raises them up to do specific jobs for Him. It also tells us that when He makes those choices, it's not on the basis of anything outward. God is not the least bit impressed with how tall you are, what kind of degrees you have or any other outward thing. God looks deep inside your heart where no one else sees.

DAVID WAS A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

David had a wide range of abilities. As a shepherd, he represented the working class of Israel. As a musician and poet, he spoke to the hearts of the people. As a soldier, he led them into the greatest victories they've ever had. Perhaps the greatest statement made about this man is that he was "a man after God's own heart." What does that mean? It does not mean that he was perfect because the bible describes many of his imperfections, some of which were really bad. It means that I love God; I want His will done in my life. The eye sees what the heart loves. The person who loves God sees God everywhere and in everything. That was David. God was at the very center of his life. God is looking for a people after His own heart.

1. David understood the greatness of God

You can always judge a man's spirituality by the greatness of his god. All over the world there are two theologies: One says, "Big Man, Little God." The other says, "Big God", and Little Man." David's God was a GREAT GOD to him!

In 1 Chronicles 29:10-9, David is an old man. His son Solomon is to about to take over the kingdom, and David prays.

1 Chronicles 29:10-19, "David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, O LORD, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name."

When David considered who god was, he was in awe. God is eternal. Everything belongs to Him and comes from Him. He is the Ruler of everything that exists. Without Him we couldn't think. Without Him, we couldn't breathe. Without Him, we couldn't move. Everything we have, God gives to us. He is exalted above all.

2. David understood the love of God

Psalm 69: 12-13, "Those who sit at the gate mock me, and I am the song of the drunkards. But I pray to you, O LORD, in the time of your favor; in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation.

David understood that god really loved him, and that is one of the key ingredients to a successful Christian life. We need to understand that god loves us totally apart from our performance. There is nothing that we can do that will cause him to love us any less or anymore because we're already totally loved. He knows all the times you have messed up, and he has a complete knowledge of all the times that you'll mess up in the future. But he loves you just the same. When you understand that god loves you with an absolute and unchanging love, you are free to love him back without fear or reservation.

Psalm 73:25-26, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

David said, "God you are all I want and all that I need. You are my portion forever." David was a man after god's own heart because he understood how much God loved him, and he loved God.

3. David understood the power of God

Psalm 27:1. "The Lord is my light, and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?"

Lets "fast forward" to another story that illustrates David's faith in god's power as we look at David and Goliath. The story begins this way in I Samuel 17:1-3: "Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Socoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Socoh and Azekah. Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them."

When the word is given, the battle will begin. But the word is not given because a strange thing happens. The Israelites see something huge coming into the valley. When the thing got close enough, the Israelites were shocked to see that it was a man, the biggest man they've ever seen. He stands 9 feet 9 inches tall. He wore a bronze helmet and a bronze coat of armor that weighed nearly 125 pounds. His spear was like a small log. The head of the spear had an iron point weighing 17 pounds.

1 Samuel 17:8-10, "Goliath says, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.' Then the Philistine said, 'This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.'"

What Goliath proposes is the ancient tradition of single combat. The Israelites would choose a man to represent them, and the philistines would choose a man to represent their army. Those 2 men would fight to the death, and the army of the winner would win the entire battle. This plan saved time and potentially avoided useless bloodshed. The problem at this point was that the Israelites were all terrified. Goliath came out 40 days straight, twice a day, morning and evening, to challenge the men of Israel. Each day it was the same: No one would answer the challenge. No one knew what to do. Then young David is sent by his father to take some food to his brothers. He gets there just as Goliath is making his daily rounds for the 40th time.

When David arrived and saw what was happening, he said in 1 Samuel 17:26, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" David did not say the army of Israel or of Saul. He said the "The armies of the living God."

David was no match for Goliath but when that Philistine took on God, he got in over his head.

Off he goes into battle with his staff and sling. As he heads down the slope, he pauses at the creek bed to pick up five smooth stones. The sling in David's day was a deadly weapon. The stones were not pebbles or small rocks. One authority said they were

usually round, smooth stones slightly larger than a baseball. In the hands of an expert slinger, the stones would leave the sling at speeds approaching 100 miles per hour.

Goliath says to David, "Come on over here and I'll feed you to the birds and the beasts." Notice how David answers back in verses

1 Sam 17:45-47. "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. This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 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."

With that, David suddenly starts to run. As he runs, he puts a stone in his sling and throws it. The stone hit Goliath right between his eyes and lodged in his forehead. Goliath never knew what hit him. One moment he's watching David run, the next everything goes black. And with a mighty crash he falls to the ground.

Sometimes we will find ourselves in situations similar to the one in which David found himself—in a valley, alone, facing a giant. Your giant might be a person who opposes us or it might be a combination of circumstances. It may be an impossible situation at work or at home. It may be a task before you that you know you can't handle. Giants are intimidating, but they are necessary for our spiritual growth. We will never be all God wants us to be until we are willing to face our giants by faith.

I heard a definition of faith. It goes like this: "Faith is belief plus unbelief and acting on the belief part." The difference between David and the other soldiers was not that he had faith and they had doubts. The difference was that David acted on his belief and ignored his doubts while they acted on their doubts and ignored their belief. Faith is not waiting until all your doubts are gone. If you wait for that, you'll wait forever. Faith is seeing the giant, and taking that first step to defeat him by faith.

Lessons from the life of David

1. When God wants to prepare us to do a job for him, he is never in a hurry.

At least ten years—and maybe more—passed between the time God told David he would be king and the time he actually ascended to the throne. The years in between were years of training and preparation. Ten years is a long time to us, but not to God. We saw earlier that Moses' life was divided into 3 forty-year periods. He spent 40 years in Egypt being trained by the Egyptians. Then he spent 40 years in the desert being trained in the school of humility. The last 40 years of his life was used in ministry. That's an 80 years of preparation for 40 years of service, but that is sometimes the way God works.

I read a while back that a Texas oilman and his wife visited Oxford University while on a trip to England. The oilman asked the greens keeper how he achieved such beautiful lawns. The greens keeper replied: "We plant a seed. We water it. We mow it. We water it-for 500 years." If you want to raise bean sprouts, you can do it in a week. If you want oak trees, it will take a lifetime. Be encouraged. God knows what he's doing in your life. You don't have the full picture. He does, and he won't stop until he's finished. And nothing you can do will hurry him along.

2. When God wants to prepare us, his best tool is adversity

Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us, to everything there is a time and a season. Sometimes we laugh, sometimes we cry. Sometimes we build up, sometimes we tear down. Sometimes we embrace, sometimes we refrain from embracing. If you live long enough, you'll probably live through it all.

When God wants to prepare us for bigger things, he first teaches us to be faithful in small things. When God wants a man to be king, he first puts him with the sheep. That's because God's best tool is adversity. It may take awhile, and the road may be bumpy, but there's a reward for those who persevere.

3. There is hope for those who are confused about the future

Samuel had no idea which son would be king, and David certainly didn't have a clue about what life would hold for him. God's will is like a sunrise, not a sunburst. It reveals itself to us a little bit at a time. Our job is to take the next step and trust God for the future, and in due time, God will make the way plain. He always does. You can count on him.

4. God is a God of grace

David was a man who learned the most basic lesson in God's curriculum—all of life is lived by grace. David was not a perfect man, but in spite of all his imperfections, his heart continued to turn towards the lord in repentance and faith, and God showered him with His undeserved blessings.

God's grace means that it does not matter what you have done in your past. God's grace is greater than your past. Grace means that god is sufficient for whatever you may be facing in the present. Grace means that god's care and love for you will be in your future when you get there.

The chorus of an old hymn says "grace, grace, god's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within! Grace, grace, god's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin."

Thoughts to take home

1. God's plan may not be understood, but it can be trusted

We would like to be able to see the whole picture that looms in front of us, but if we could, we would not be able to walk by faith. Faith is believing without seeing. It is knowing that God is there and that he is active in our lives. Never fail to trust the unknown future to the hands of a known God.

2. God's plan is good, but we must act upon it

God's plan for your life is the best plan possible, but you have to be willing to step out to face the giants in your life. You can stay in your comfort zone and play it safe, but you'll miss the blessing. Giants don't fall down by themselves. They only fall when we face them by faith and in the power of God.

3. God's plan must be our choice, but many other people will experience the repercussions of our choice

What if there had not been a David to face Goliath? Things would've been very different for the whole nation of Israel. In the same way, the way that you face your spiritual battles will affect those around you.

4. God's plan cannot be defeated

The scariest thing that you can do sometimes is to step out the faith to do God's will, but it is in reality the safest thing you can do. It is not the giants on the battlefield that are the problem. It is the rust in our spiritual lives