

That is a great story, isn't it? I went ahead and had the whole chapter, because like most stories, the details make it all the better. Maybe we take the details out so it can be toned down to a kids' story, rated G or PG. But, no, this is an adult story.

The other thing is , the details make us relate to the characters in the story better, also.

Let's start with David. He's the unlikely hero of the piece. As mentioned in last week's sermon, David had been anointed as the one God had chosen to become king. Between that time and the time of this story, David had become kind of an assistant to the present king, King Saul. It seemed that David's musical ability helped the king shake of his deep depressions.

David was the youngest of the 8 brothers—and it is clear that his big brothers did not appreciate him. Even though David was only doing what his father had told him, Eliab got mad at him.

There are lots of reasons to get mad—we all know that, or maybe I am the only one. In any event, one time when people get really mad is when they are in the wrong, and feel guilty.

That's how it was for Eliab—he felt guilty that he (along with everyone in the army) had not stepped up to Goliath's challenge. He hadn't fought, he hadn't even spoken up about how Goliath was blaspheming Almighty God.

So, that's the attitude of the big brothers. And you know, it is kind of humbling and embarrassing when someone younger and less powerful has the right answer and we don't. My children did that for me when they were younger, from time to time—humbling and embarrassing for sure.

Then we have this nasty giant, Goliath of Gath. Try saying that for a tongue-twister: Goliath of Gath.

According to Michael E. Williams:

“Giants were the embodiment of evil, malevolent forces in Israelite stories . . . [Goliath was an] evil force seeking to overcome good.”  
(The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible, volume 3, Judges-Kings)

About the only good thing to say about Goliath is that he was what he was. He was big and bad and ready to tell you about it. He wasn't evil disguised as good or neutral. Nope, he was evil. He had the whole army of Israel shaking in their boots . . . or was that sandals?

So finally, King Saul sends for David. He's known David a while, as assistant and musician. But send this kid off to fight a giant?

“Thanks, kid, but you're too young. You're no warrior. He is. And just look at the size of that guy!”

David was firm in his desire to fight. He had fought off lions and bears when looking after his sheep.

Now, here is something pretty good about David—he recognized his own abilities and experiences and talents, and was ready to use them in a new situation

So often we can get so used to our talents and experiences that we forget that they are assets to situations, or even new battles.

Maybe we need to think about this—

“What passion[s] and gifts are there among [us here] to address head-on the blasphemous claims of many dominant forces in culture against the name and way of Jesus? Who uses their own gifts and passion well?” (United Methodist worship resources)

Well, we have Edna and her caps!

How can we take David’s example and use what we have to fight against the big bad stuff in our lives, the big bad guys that would shut down Christian values and living?

The other thing David did well in preparing for battle was to use what had worked for him. This was no time to wear armor that didn’t fit, armor that weighed him down so much he couldn’t walk.

How about us? How do we shake out on this one? This is a great reminder “not to try to put on someone else’s gifts or to pretend to be motivated by a passion not our own.” (United Methodist worship resources)

Well, as we all know, David won the battle. He killed the giant, Goliath, using his trusty, wonderful, now world-famous slingshot.

David won because David was on the right side—that is, God was with David, empowering him to use the knowledge and wisdom and cleverness he had.

Getting rid of this evil, threatening giant was “rescuing the land from chaotic forces” and bring order to the nation of Israel. (Michael E. Williams, Storyteller’s)

As Christians, we are meant to fight and resist evil. It is part of our baptism vows, whether we make them ourselves or our parents do, and we grow up into them:

Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin? And the promise is “I do.”

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves? And the promise is “I do.” (The United Methodist Hymnal)

These days there might not be any giants, probably not. But there is evil, and we have not only promised to fight it, God has equipped us to do so. Not with a slingshot, but with our Christian faith. The Lord is on our side.

Amen.

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