

Year 2: *Session 8 – God and Conflict*

Class 23: 1 Samuel 17:1-52 – David and Goliath

CONCEPTS that will be covered in the lesson

- Note David's trust in God
- Highlight how David believes that God saves, not military might
- Discuss how acting in his trust of God leads to David experiencing God's saving

Materials needed:

1. Movie clip (available on rfour.org) from *Big Hero 6*
2. Electronics that show the video clip
3. For activity:
 - a. Sticky notes (paper with tape on the back)
 - b. A place with a high-ish wall (10 to 12 feet, at least)
 - c. At least two adults to make sure everyone stays safe

THE LESSON

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION

- One of the things we do every class is ask and answer the opening question at the beginning of class – because it helps us 1. Learn more about each other and 2. Helps “warm us up” for some of the ideas in the upcoming lesson. So we’re going to do that now.
- So here’s the opening question for today’s class. I [the teacher] will ask the question and then to give you some time to think of an answer, I will answer first.
- Once I answer the question, we’ll go around the circle and each of us will answer.
- When it’s your turn, start with your name and then answer the question to the best of your ability.
- ***Here’s this week’s question:*** What is a situation where you wish you had more power / control?

TRANSITION TO VIDEO CLIP

- We are currently in a session focusing on Bible stories about God and conflict
- As we noted previously, this session is difficult because the stories have many different outcomes, which makes it difficult to glean just one understanding from them.

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- But, we're giving it a try despite the higher level of difficulty!
- In our previous class(es), we've read and discussed stories where the conflict(s) did not turn violent.
- But, in today's story, we'll see that violence is not avoided.
- Today's story is one that's pretty well known – it is of David and Goliath.
- And one of the obvious reasons it is so well known is because it is a classic story of BIG vs LITTLE
- So, to help us get warmed up for the story, let's watch the opening scene from the movie Big Hero 6
- In it, a very powerful fighting robot is challenging all other robots to a duel.
- Let's see what happens.

WATCH Video clip

ASK

- What robot won? (The big one won twice, the small one won once)
- What could the small robot do that the big one could not do? (could heal itself, could move quickly, had a decent amount of strength despite its small size)
- Is that typically how things work – that the smaller side wins?
- But there's something attractive about that idea, isn't there?
- Why do you think that is? (because we rarely think of ourselves as the "big" side – especially as youth / students)

TELL

- Today's story can stand by itself and not too much (if any) explanation is needed to understand what happens in it.
- However, a few things that might help understand the characters a little bit better.
- King Saul is the first king of the Israelites. And he's not doing a great job of it.
- And now, he has an enemy country attacking his country.
- So Saul has gathered up an army, but, as you'll see, not much is currently happening
- But the Israelites are probably pretty stressed out because the Philistines have a much stronger army than they do.
- In the meantime, there is David – and at this point in his life, he's already been anointed as the next king of Israel by Samuel the prophet, but no one else knows this in today's story, including, it seems, his own brothers.
- Finally, David is pretty young – maybe 12 years old? Certainly not old enough to serve in the army.
- So, with all of that said, let's see what happens.

READ 1 Samuel 17:1-52 (Since this passage is so long, you, the teacher, might want to read all of it outloud)

1 Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. 2Saul and the Israelites gathered and encamped in the valley of Elah, and formed ranks against the Philistines. 3The Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. 4And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath, of Gath, whose

height was six cubits and a span. 5He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. 6He had greaves of bronze on his legs and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. 7The 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. 8He 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. 9If 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.” 10And the Philistine said, “Today I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man, that we may fight together.” 11When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

12Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years. 13The three eldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle; the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. 14David was the youngest; the three eldest followed Saul, 15but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem. 16For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening. 17Jesse said to his son David, “Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers; 18also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See how your brothers fare, and bring some token from them.” 19Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. 20David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, took the provisions, and went as Jesse had commanded him. He came to the encampment as the army was going forth to the battle line, shouting the war cry. 21Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. 22David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage, ran to the ranks, and went and greeted his brothers. 23As he talked with them, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him. 24All the Israelites, when they saw the man, fled from him and were very much afraid. 25The Israelites said, “Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel. The king will greatly enrich the man who kills him, and will give him his daughter and make his family free in Israel.” 26David said to the men who stood by him, “What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the

reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” 27The people answered him in the same way, “So shall it be done for the man who kills him.” 28His eldest brother Eliab heard him talking to the men; and Eliab’s anger was kindled against David. He said, “Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart; for you have come down just to see the battle.” 29David said, “What have I done now? It was only a question.” 30He turned away from him toward another and spoke in the same way; and the people answered him again as before.

31When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul; and he sent for him. 32David said to Saul, “Let no one’s heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” 33Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth.” 34But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock, 35I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it. 36Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God.” 37David said, “The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine.” So Saul said to David, “Go, and may the Lord be with you!” 38Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a bronze helmet on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail. 39David strapped Saul’s sword over the armor, and he tried in vain to walk, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, “I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them.” So David removed them.

40Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the wadi, and put them in his shepherd’s bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine. 41The Philistine came on and drew near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. 42When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was only a youth, ruddy

and handsome in appearance. 43The Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44The Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the field.” 45But David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with sword and spear and 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. 46This very 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 Philistine army this very day to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s and he will give you into our hand.”

48When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground. 50So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, striking down the Philistine and killing him; there was no sword in David’s hand. 51Then David ran and stood over the Philistine; he grasped his sword, drew it out of its sheath, and killed him; then he cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. 52The troops of Israel and Judah rose up with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron.

ASK

- Verse 1 and 2 – What two armies are squaring up for battle? (Israelites and Philistines)
- Verse 3 – Where are the two armies located and what is between them? (There is a valley between the two armies – each army is on a hill on opposite sides of the valley)
 - a) This means that the attacking army would be at a great disadvantage (having to fight while climbing an incline), so the two armies are just looking at each other – no one willing to give up the advantage of the high ground.
- Verse 4 – While the two armies watch each other, who goes into the valley to challenge the Israelites? (Goliath)
- What do you think, is he a big, strong warrior? (certainly sounds like it)
- Verse 11 and 16 – At first, do any of the Israelites accept Goliath’s challenge? (nope!)
- Verse 14 – Is David in the army? (No. Sounds like it’s because he’s too young)
- Verse 17 and 18 and 23 – So how does David happen to hear Goliath’s challenge? (while he’s delivering food to his brothers who are in the army)
- Verse 26 – What does David want to know? (the reward for defeating Goliath)
- Verse 28 – Who does not like David’s question? (his brothers)
- Verse 32 – What does David tell King Saul? (that he will fight Goliath)
- Verse 36 and 37 – Why does David think he can/should fight Goliath? (because God defended David when David fought off bears and lions AND because Goliath is speaking against God and God’s people)
- Verse 38 and 39 – What does King Saul offer David that makes sense, but David rejects? (sword and armor)
- Verse 40 – What does David bring to battle instead? (a sling, a pouch, and five smooth stones from a shallow river – aka the wadi)
- Verse 45 – What weapon does David tell Goliath he, David, is wielding? (the name of the Lord of hosts)
- Verse 47 – Why does David say he is fighting Goliath? (so that everyone may know that God does not save by sword and spear)

- a) Seems like a weird reason to fight ("I fight to show God that God doesn't need fighting"), but what I think David is saying here is that this is why *he*, a boy, is fighting – because God does not need conventional warriors and weapons to save the Israelites)
- Verse 48 – 52: What happens? (David wins and the Israelites win)

TELL

- In the story of parting of the Red Sea, we saw God provide a way for the Israelites that involved avoiding violence.
- In today's story, we don't see God offer that path.
- In fact we don't hear *anything* from God in today's story.
- But we do hear *about* God from David two different statements – both of which are about God and conflict.
- In verse 37, David says that just like God saved him from wild, dangerous animals, so too will God save him and the Israelites from the Philistines.
- What is interesting here is that David then acts on this trust by not using the sword and armor that King Saul offers him.
- Instead of trusting that military form of offense and defense, David puts his trust in God and rejects the traditional "tools" of war.
- Then, in verse 47, David tells Goliath that it is not sword or spear saves, which seems to be what Goliath is trusting in.
- Overall, this is a pretty significant statement, since military force was (and still is) often seen as the way a country saves its citizens from oppression from other countries
- But it's an even more brazen statement when you think of a 12 year boy facing a 7-foot tall warrior.
- What is significant about these two statements by David, though, are not just the words, but that he acts on those words.
- He believes these words so much that he puts his life on the line to live those words.
- His actions, in the end, prove his words. It is *not* an army or a sword that saves Israel, but a young boy who trusts God.

TRANSITION TO ACTIVITY

- Even though David is a small, young boy, he is able to overcome a giant obstacle.
- But he does not overcome this obstacle on his own. He does so because he is actively trusting God.
- It is that trust in God that I want us to focus on today while we do the following activity.

EXPLAIN Part 1 of STICKY WALL Activity

- First, everyone gets a sticky note.
- Write your name on the sticky note.
- Now, using ONLY yourself – this means no one else can help you, you cannot use furniture, you cannot use tools, etc – using only yourself, place that sticky note that you've just received as high up on this wall as you possible can...
- You have to make it stick. It's not about how high you can get the paper, it's how high you can get the paper to stick.
- Any questions?

DO Part 1 of Sticky Wall

THEN, EXPLAIN Part 2 of STICKY WALL Activity - Roslyn

- Ok, now that you've stuck the sticky note as high up as possible, let's leave those sticky notes there AND let's get into two groups (if the class has 6 or less students, keep them all in one group)
- Now that we're in groups, give your group a name.
- Once you have a name for your group, write the name of the group on sticky note that I'm giving to your group.
- Now, as groups, using only yourselves – this still means no tools or furniture – get your sticky note as high up on this wall as possible.
- **NOTE TO TEACHERS** – While students are planning how to get the sticky note higher, keep stressing safety, BUT let them lift, carry, push each other higher up the wall. **In so doing, be very observant and get ready to catch students that get lifted off the ground, just in case the students don't support or catch as well as they should.**

DO Part 2 of Sticky Wall

ASK/TELL

- So what sticky note made it higher on the wall, an individual's sticky note or a group's sticky note? (hopefully the group sticky notes are higher)
- What were the groups able to do that individuals were not able to do (lift each other higher; help each other jump higher)
- But in order to receive that help, you had to trust your teammates to not drop you – at least you trusted them enough to get the sticky notes higher on the wall.
- So even though there is violent conflict in today's story, one of the main things to focus on is that David and God are working together.
- That David trust God and in that trust, David is lifted up by God.
- David is lifted so high, in fact, that David can overcome a giant obstacle.
- Now, I know it is easy to read today's story and think, "This is a story about God taking sides."
- But I think the more important thing to keep in mind is that David chose God's side.
- And once David chose God's side, then God said, "There's a giant obstacle that needs to be addressed."
- But, instead of saying, "No way!" David says, "Ok, show me the way."
- When we choose to be on God's side, and we trust God's direction, we will then receive direction and support from God that will help us overcome giant obstacles.
- On the rare occasion, will that obstacle require violence? Today's story says yes, though in highly unconventional ways which highlights David's trust in God, rather than highlighting David's own abilities.
- But, in many many other stories, we see how choosing to be on God's side empowers us to heal, forgive, love, and share God's abundance.
- And that's the good news for today.

CLOSING PRAYER