



Kirknewton and East Calder Parish Church of Scotland

Minister: Rev Dr André J Groenewald

8 Manse Court, East Calder, Livingston, EH53 0HF

Tel: 01506 884585, Mob: 075 888 458 14, email: groenstes@yahoo.com

www.knec4jesus.org.uk



Date: 23rd January 2011

Sermon: Rev Dr André Groenewald

Reading: 1 Samuel 17:45-50

Background and Sermon

The text verses for the sermon are: ⁴⁵ David said to the Philistine, "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. ⁴⁶ 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.

This is a remarkable story. In those days that is exactly what would have happened. One nation would invade another's territory or land, overpower them and the use them as slaves to build and expand their kingdom.

In this case it was the Philistines who had a long history of war with the Israelites. They occupied the five cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath, in the south-western corner of Canaan.

Now David was the youngest son of Jesse from Bethlehem, who was a shepherd. He took food for his brothers who were soldiers fighting in the battle against the Philistines. In those days you were responsible for your own food. Then he heard the heathen Goliath swearing at God and he said to king Saul he would go and fight Goliath the tall giant who was feared by the Israelites.

At first his brother was jealous of him and said bad things about him. But the word got out that David was not scared.

So when king Saul called for him and saw that he was only a "boy", he had his doubts. But then David convinced him that as a shepherd he was prepared since he faced danger on a daily basis. But God would help him. Then the king offered him the best protective clothes but David could not walk with them. So then he resorted to what he was comfortable with – his own shepherd kit of a sling, 5 stones, a sling pouch and his staff!

And then the remarkable outcome which no-one expected - David took one stone in his sling and it hit Goliath on the only place on his forehead where he was not protected.

Then the Philistines started running...Why? Well they definitely were heathens or as it says in our text the "uncircumcised" meaning they were not part of the covenant

with the Almighty God and were very suspicious of the miracle of one stone penetrating the unprotected part in Goliath's armour.

David did not claim the victory as his own. He said he came not in his own power but the power from God. David was a "vehicle" in the hands of God in order for everyone to accept the fact that He was the One and Only Almighty God the creator of Heaven and Earth.

What is the message for us? Well metaphorically speaking we also forget about the Almighty power of God and His involvement in our lives through his Holy Spirit. Sometimes our fears, our problems and our grief can be as gigantic as Goliath. And we tend to be like Israel – ignoring them, too scared to challenge or to change them. And it often causes us much hassle, pain and feelings of guilt.

But how do we address our fears?

Well the story of David and Goliath teaches us lessons. First of all we must never forget who we are. We belong to God in Christ Jesus of which we are reminded this morning through communion. We are reminded that He made it possible for us to have a living relationship with our Lord and God. We have received God's Holy Spirit to help and guide us just like it happened with wee David. Although our fears and problems might seem massive like a Goliath, we must trust the Lord's presence with us!

Secondly we must just be ourselves just like David who approached Goliath not with some unknown armour but only with what he knew and felt comfortable with – a staff, 5 stones, a sling and sling pouch! He trusted God more than his armour. And yes, God gives us enough armour to guard and guide us through His Word. He provides us with gifts and talents to deal with the challenges we face. We must just come to God in prayer and revive those gifts and use them – not only to our own advantage but also to the advantage of others.

Thirdly we must not sulk and ponder too much on the why questions. They do not have answers. It is only God who knows what He is doing. The Israelites might have thought why on earth God was allowing Goliath to insult him. They must have wondered: Does our God really exist? But God had a reason and a plan. God wanted to show all the Philistines and Israel that He is powerful. And the same is true today. God often uses our gigantic problems and fears to show us how He can change it for the better. We must hang in and be patient – trusting him!

Fourthly the story of David teaches us that nothing happens by chance. We cannot sit backwards and let life pass us by. God allows things to happen to us because He uses us to make a difference. And we can make a difference because we belong to Christ. We have received God's pardon. We are supposed to be able to cope because we have received God's Spirit. The Key is that we must make sure through the reading of the Bible and prayer that we maintain our relationship with God at ALL COSTS AND DESPITE ALL THE DIFFICULTIES THAT WE FACE!

Last but not least life is not all doom and gloom, always full of fears and suffering. Life is a wonderful opportunity to serve the Lord God as best as we possibly can with joy, laughter and gratefulness just like David did. If we believe in God we also have to believe that the sun will always shine after the storm!

Whatever you face in life, whatever you fear, trust in God and take up your sling - your Bible and confront your "Goliath fear" with faith. Remember that although our problems, fears and suffering often approach us with sword and spear, we do not have to be afraid because we take each step in the name of the Almighty God. What more can we ask for?

Amen