

**“Two Kings, a Giant, and the Story of the Universe”**

**1 Samuel 17**

**June 16, 2019**

**Faith Presbyterian Church – Evening Service**

*Pr. Nicoletti*

Our text tonight is a well-known one, from First Samuel, chapter seventeen.

Please do listen carefully, for this is God’s word for us this evening:

<sup>17:1</sup> Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. And they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. <sup>2</sup> And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in line of battle against the Philistines. <sup>3</sup> And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. <sup>4</sup> And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. <sup>5</sup> He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. <sup>6</sup> And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. <sup>7</sup> The 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. <sup>8</sup> He 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. <sup>9</sup> If 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.” <sup>10</sup> And the Philistine said, “I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together.” <sup>11</sup> When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

<sup>12</sup> Now 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. <sup>13</sup> The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. <sup>14</sup> David was the youngest. The three eldest followed Saul, <sup>15</sup> but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. <sup>16</sup> For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening.

<sup>17</sup> And Jesse said to David his son, “Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers. <sup>18</sup> Also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See if your brothers are well, and bring some token from them.”

<sup>19</sup> Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. <sup>20</sup> And David rose early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper and took the provisions and went, as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the encampment as the host was going out to the battle line, shouting the war cry. <sup>21</sup> And Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. <sup>22</sup> And David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage and ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers. <sup>23</sup> As he talked with them, behold, 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.

<sup>24</sup> All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were much afraid. <sup>25</sup> And the men of Israel said, “Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up

to defy Israel. And the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel.”<sup>26</sup> And David 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?”<sup>27</sup> And the people answered him in the same way, “So shall it be done to the man who kills him.”

<sup>28</sup> Now Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, “Why have you come down? And 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 to see the battle.”<sup>29</sup> And David said, “What have I done now? Was it not but a word?”<sup>30</sup> And he turned away from him toward another, and spoke in the same way, and the people answered him again as before.

<sup>31</sup> When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him.<sup>32</sup> And David said to Saul, “Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.”<sup>33</sup> And Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth.”<sup>34</sup> But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock,<sup>35</sup> I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him.”<sup>36</sup> Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.”<sup>37</sup> And David said, “Yahweh who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and Yahweh be with you!”

<sup>38</sup> Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail,<sup>39</sup> and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.” So David put them off.<sup>40</sup> Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine.

<sup>41</sup> And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him.<sup>42</sup> And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance.<sup>43</sup> And the Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.<sup>44</sup> The Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.”<sup>45</sup> Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of Yahweh of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.<sup>46</sup> This day Yahweh 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 host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,<sup>47</sup> and that all this assembly may know that Yahweh saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is Yahweh's, and he will give you into our hand.”

<sup>48</sup> When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.<sup>49</sup> And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

<sup>50</sup> So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David.<sup>51</sup> Then David ran and stood

over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. <sup>52</sup> And the men of Israel and Judah rose 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. <sup>53</sup> And the people of Israel came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. <sup>54</sup> And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.

<sup>55</sup> As soon as Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, “Abner, whose son is this youth?” And Abner said, “As your soul lives, O king, I do not know.” <sup>56</sup> And the king said, “Inquire whose son the boy is.” <sup>57</sup> And as soon as David returned from the striking down of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. <sup>58</sup> And Saul said to him, “Whose son are you, young man?” And David answered, “I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Let's pray ...

Lord,  
We rejoice at your word,  
like one who finds great spoil.  
We hate falsehood,  
but we love your commandments.  
We know that those who love your law have peace,  
and nothing can make them stumble.  
And so help us now to keep your testimonies from the heart,  
and to love them exceedingly.  
Help us to pursue a life of faithfulness,  
knowing that all our ways are before you.  
Grant this, we ask, for Jesus's sake. Amen.  
[Based on Psalm 119:162-163, 165, 167-168]

This story we are covering tonight is so well known that in some ways it can be hard to come at it and really hear what it has to say to us. There are a few reasons for this. First, we tend to think we already know what this story has to say to us, so we are tempted to zone out when we come to it. So, our first challenge is to pay attention to it, and try to come at it with fresh eyes. Second, we tend to put the story in the wrong framework when we *do* think about it. And so, our second challenge is to dislodge this narrative from that wrong framework. And third, we need to root this story in a proper Biblical framework.

So, as we come at our text, we need to pay attention, we need to clear away some assumptions, and we need to see how this story connects to the larger Biblical story we live in.

It was funny that I spent some time at a coffee shop this week, doing sermon prep work, and as I walked out, *The New York Times* on the newsstand caught my eye, because the first headline, on the top left of the front page was: “Smaller Rivals Aim Slingshots at Tech Giants”. It was an article on some smaller tech companies that are going after Google. [*The New York Times*, June 11, 2019, Vol. CLXVIII .... No. 58,355]

And it's a perfect example of how we tend to read this story in First Samuel seventeen. The two actors we focus on are David and Goliath, and the arch we place the story in is that of the powerful favorite versus the smaller, unlikely underdog. And it makes sense that we do that because that is the kind of story arch we really like in our culture. We love the story of the little guy taking on the giant and winning. It's a very American, "You can do anything you put your mind to" kind of framework.

And while the differences in size, skill, and strength are key to the story ... they're not really the *main* point. And while David and Goliath are major players, I'm not fully convinced that the contrast between them is the most important contrast our story has for us to consider.

In the Christian church many of us grow up hearing this story and being encouraged to have faith like David. And let me say that that lesson is good and true. David is a positive example for us, and we should want to be more like him. But the more I've considered this story, the more I've come to see that as a secondary lesson of this text – not the primary one.

Well ... what then *is* the primary lesson of this passage? Thankfully, the text gives us some pretty overt clues.

Our text alludes to two earlier stories in the Hebrew Scriptures. And those earlier stories will give us a framework to see both what is going on in First Samuel seventeen, and where *we* fit into this story.

While the fight between David and Goliath is the climactic action of this text, the author spends forty verses setting the scene for us – and in those forty verses he shows us four major actors: There are two kings here: King Saul, and the Anointed-But-Not-Yet-Crowned King David. There is Israel. And finally, there is Goliath and the Philistines along with him.

And the first forty verses set the scene of where each one of these actors is coming from. And that background will point us back to those earlier stories in the Bible.

Goliath is the giant who comes out as the champion for the Philistines. He puts himself forward as the representative fighter for the Philistines and asks for a representative fighter to be sent out from Israel. In verse four we read that Goliath was from Gath. And that is significant. It gives us a window into Goliath's origin. Gath, we read in Joshua 11:21-23, was one of three Philistine cities where the Anakim remained.

And who were the Anakim? Well, back a bit further, in Numbers 13:25-33 we read that the Anakim, the descendants of Anak came from the Nephalim and were people of great height. In other words, it seems likely that Goliath is a descendant of the same Anakim discussed in Numbers 13. And by mentioning that, the author is telling us to go back and take a look at that story in Numbers 13 to better understand what is going on now. And if we do, we quickly see how the two stories are connected. [Leithart, 106]

Back in Numbers 13 Israel has been freed from Egypt, and they come to Canaan, the land that God has promised to give to them, and they send twelve men into the land to spy it out. And the spies observe the land for forty days. And then they come back and report to Israel. And they tell

them both that the land is very fruitful and is flowing with milk and honey *and* that the people there are strong and well-fortified.

Caleb and Joshua are ready to fight – they tell the people that the time has come to go and take the land from God’s enemies, and they are convinced that God will give them success, as he promised.

But the other ten spies feel differently. They say to the people: “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.” And they go on: “all the people that we saw in it are of great height. And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”

In Numbers thirteen the people of God face the threat of Anakim giants. After observing the giants for forty days ten of their leaders who observed them urge the people to passively hold back from the Anakim giants, while Joshua and Caleb urge them to fight the giants with faith in God.

In First Samuel seventeen, the people of God again face the threat of an Anakim giant. They again observe him for forty days (as we read in verse sixteen). And again, Israel has two leaders – King Saul, who is passively holding back from the Anakim giant, and Future-King David, who is ready to fight the giant with faith in God.

Back in Numbers thirteen the question that hung in the air was: Who would Israel follow? What would Israel do? And in Numbers fourteen we read the tragic story of Israel’s faithlessness as they follow the ten faithless leaders and refuse to go out behind Caleb and Joshua against the Anakim giants.

The author of Samuel is pointing us back to that story, and it is reasonable to think that the same question is to hang over the early portions of First Samuel seventeen.

When we read the first eleven verses of our text we are given Goliath’s connection back to Numbers thirteen, we are given a description of just how big and powerful he is, we hear his challenge, and then we read in verse eleven “When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.” At this point, King Saul seems to have taken the role of the ten faithless spies, and the people seem to be following him. And so far, there is no sign of a Joshua or a Caleb.

And then in verse twelve David shows up. And in the verses that follow he presents himself as a faithful warrior who follows in the footsteps of Caleb and Joshua.

All of this raises the question of where *we* fit into the text. Where should we place ourselves?

Back in Numbers thirteen, we belong among the Israelites. And what I mean by that is that Numbers thirteen does not primarily press on us the question of what kind of *spy* we would be. It primarily pushes us to ask: if we received these two reports, whom would *we* follow? Whom would *we* line up behind? Would we align ourselves with Joshua and Caleb and trust in the Lord ... or would the fearful speech of the ten faithless spies sway us, so that we would cry out and lament as Israel did, and refuse to take action against the enemies of God?

And I think the author of First Samuel is asking us to consider something similar. While we might speak of whom you should emulate in this story, in a deeper sense, you are not King Saul or Future-King David, because you have not been appointed as the head and covenant representative of God's people. None of us here have been.

We *are* members of that covenant community though ... just as the Israelites encamped in the Valley of Elah were. And those Israelites had, in a sense, two kings – one reigning, and one a king-to-be. One, by his actions at least, urged them to passively hold back from the blaspheming giant before them. The other stepped forward in faith, and expected the Israelites to line up behind him in faith.

The question for us, the challenge for us to consider, is whom we will stand behind: King Saul or King David? The ten faithless spies or the two faithful spies?

That connection to Numbers thirteen begins to give us a framework for understanding this text – and a framework for where we fit into it. We are not *primarily* David or Saul, we are primarily the Israelites, and we must choose whom we will trust and follow.

That is helpful ... but as I said, there are at least two important allusions the author makes ... and we've only covered one.

The second allusion is subtle at first ... but becomes more obvious as we move on.

In verses five through seven we get a detailed description of Goliath's armor and weapons – a far more detailed account of such things than we typically get in the Hebrew Scriptures. [Alter, 101] The account tells us a few things – that Goliath not only has the most state-of-the-art weaponry of his day, but that he and it are massive in size and weight. The coat of mail alone weighs about 125 pounds.

But the description of that coat of mail also tells us something else. Because while “coat of mail” is an accurate translation of what the Hebrew is referring to there, the actual Hebrew word used there means “scales.” [Leithart, 106-107] The description in verse five could be translated “he was armed with a coat of scales” What's being described *is* armor on Goliath ... but this should still cause us to pause.

Because it seems to evoke an even earlier story in the Bible.

In First Samuel God's people are seeking to live peacefully when an enemy invades the land. Saul has been called to guard and protect the people. And now a scaled enemy has stepped forward and defied God ... and Saul, the covenant head, passively does nothing to confront or contradict him.

This sounds a lot like Adam in the garden, doesn't it?

Adam was charged in Genesis 2:15 to work the land and to guard it [Regarding translation of “guard” see Leithart, *A House for My Name*, 54]. And in the next chapter of Genesis, a scaled enemy, the serpent, came into the land and confronted the woman, Eve, (who was to be under

Adam's protection) and the serpent began to defy God and urge the woman to betray her faith in God. And Adam, who was with her as all this happened, just stood back passively and failed to confront the scaled enemy.

Saul's inaction points us back to the inaction of Adam.

But as we realize that, we also need to remember that the story of Adam and the serpent did not end there.

In Genesis three Adam, the first king of creation, is promised that another king, the seed of the woman, will come after him and will crush the head of the Serpent. And so, when we are told that Goliath is scaled ... and when a second king shows up in First Samuel seventeen... then we should really be paying attention.

And what do we see once we're paying attention? What do we see after Goliath, the scaled one, enters and defies God and Saul stands back in fear?

In verses twelve through twenty-three David shows up. He is sent by his father to the front lines to bring provisions for his older brothers. That David himself is not already there to fight may indicate that he is not yet twenty years old, the age for service in the military – and so he is likely in his late teens [Leithart, 107, n.7]. And having been sent to the battle, David hears the words of Goliath defying Israel and Israel's God.

Then in verses twenty-four through twenty-seven David learns what is at stake. Four things are held out to the one who would defeat Goliath: he will stop the mouth of the one who openly defies God, his household will be freed from the typical obligations to Saul's kingship (such as tribute, taxes, and royal service) [Leithart, 109], he will receive wealth, and he will receive a bride. That second reward, by the way, is a likely explanation for why Saul is asking about David's family in the last paragraph of the chapter. It is not that Saul doesn't remember David from his service in chapter sixteen, but that he is more specifically identifying David's family now, so that they can be relieved from some of their obligations to the king, as promised. David is motivated to defend God's honor, to bring relief to his brothers from Saul's reign, and to receive a reward and a bride.

And it's hard here again to not see parallels to the second Adam, the Greater David, Jesus Christ, who would enter battle with the forces of sin, death, and Satan in order to put an end to their defiance of God, to free his brothers from their status in Adam, to receive a reward in heaven, and to receive his bride, the Church.

In verses twenty-eight through thirty David's own brother reviles him for his interest in defeating this enemy of God's people, reminding us of how Christ's very own countrymen in Israel mocked and scoffed at him.

And then in verses thirty-one through thirty-nine David and Saul discuss David's intent. Saul is at first doubtful. But then David explains that as a shepherd, he has already faced other enemies, and he has already seen God be faithful in delivering him in other ways, and so why should he doubt that the same would be true here?

Christ too, we remember, did not enter battle with sin, and death, and Satan for the first time on Calvary. He too had fought off his share of lions and bears before that. As a man he had confronted sin in others, and brought them to repentance. He had confronted evil spirits and driven them from those they were oppressing. He had faced death and prevailed by raising others from the dead. And all that is to say nothing of Jesus's pre-incarnate experience of rescuing a people from Egypt, as Jude puts it. Jesus did not approach sin and death and Satan on the cross in an inexperienced way. He knew what he was facing, and he placed his trust in his Heavenly Father.

In verses thirty-eight through forty-one we get a window into both Saul's mindset and David's. Saul assumes you need to fight fire with fire – you need to fight bronze with bronze and sword with sword. But David is not used to Saul's armor or weapons and so he leaves them behind. Instead, he takes five smooth stones. As one commentator points out, Goliath in defying Israel's God had blasphemed. And in the Pentateuch the sentence for blasphemy was to be stoned to death. [Leithart, 108; Leviticus, 24:10-16] Saul approached the fight with Goliath as two rivals at war on the same terms for their own self-interest and self-preservation. David approached the valley to follow God's law by carrying out the sentence for blasphemy and stone Goliath to death.

Finally, in verses forty-one through fifty-one we have the fight between David and Goliath. They exchange words at first, and the contrast between their size and weaponry is emphasized. David: small, young, unarmored, and without traditional weapons, stands before Goliath, who is massive, covered in bronze, and carrying a huge weapon. And Goliath mocks. We might imagine a similar scene when Christ, weak, stripped, and beaten, approached sin, death, and Satan, carrying his cross. How they must have mocked him. How arrogantly they must have boasted. "You come at us with sticks?"

But David is unshaken in his resolve. Despite how things may appear, he will defeat this enemy of God, and he will do it in a way that obviously displays that it was no human power that brought victory, but only the power of God.

In verse forty-eight Goliath approaches David, and David begins to run at Goliath. David puts his hand in his bag, takes out a stone, slings it and strikes the Philistine on his forehead. "The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground." Goliath's helmet left his forehead exposed. And a stone from a sling like David's could reach speeds of 150 miles per hour. [Davis, 187] David had crushed the head of the scaled enemy of God. And to finish the job, David uses his enemy's own weapon to cut off his head ... just as Christ would use death, the weapon of sin and Satan, to ultimately defeat sin and Satan – to crush Satan's head and render him powerless. In the same way, David uses the sword of Goliath to slay Goliath. By their own weapons the enemies of God are slain.

The Apostle Paul, in Romans five, tells us that all human beings are either *in* Adam, or *in* Christ. They either follow Adam in this life – Adam who made peace with the serpent ... or they follow Christ – who took the serpent on and crushed its head. Every person must choose whom they will follow ... and each person's choice will shape their lives from now into eternity.

Why are we tempted to follow the way of Saul ... the way of Adam?



Why are we tempted to allow sin to live unchallenged in our lives – in our hearts which are supposed to be devoted to God? Why, so often, do we leave sin unchallenged in our hearts?

Well ... it's often because sin is powerful. And intimidating. And scary. And we hope that if we let it have a piece of our heart, and leave it alone then maybe it will stay in its little area of our hearts, and it won't cause any trouble beyond that region.

And so, we leave the serpent unchallenged. We let lust have a corner of our lives, and we do not challenge it. Or we let anger and bitterness have a corner of our hearts. Or we let envy and covetousness have its corner of our souls. And we leave them unchallenged, hoping they will go no further. Like Adam and Saul, we say and do nothing against them. But like the serpent in the garden and like the Philistines in the land, sin is not content with a corner of your heart or life. It wants everything. And so, it grows. It invades further. And we do not know what to do with it. And like Adam and Saul, left to ourselves, we are slowly overcome.

Paralysis and avoidance are bad strategies when it comes to sin. But the fear behind them is often understandable. We feel powerless before sin because in ourselves we *are* powerless before sin.

Which is why it's important to see that *we are not David*. We don't go out as the king to crush the head of the serpent. *We* trust and then follow the faithful king who goes out to the battle before us.

We look to Christ who has confronted sin, death, and Satan, who on Golgotha on Good Friday invited them to battle, and who at the tomb on Easter Morning walked away victorious, leaving them defeated and powerless.

And looking on his victory – on his victory *already won*, we are then to take up our arms and follow him into battle to finish the victory that he has already achieved for us. Verses fifty-one through fifty-four, are key to this passage, though they are often neglected. There we read: “When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and Judah rose 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. And the people of Israel came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.”

David defeated Goliath and brought his head back as a trophy. And the forces of Goliath fled. And the people of God, following David's lead, then pursued the already defeated Philistines, to bring about the victory David had already won for them.

And so with us. Sin persists in our lives. But Christ has defeated its champion. He has the trophy to prove it in his resurrection. And our calling now is to run into battle and pursue the fight with sin, knowing that in Christ's victory our victory is already assured.

The battle is still real. It can be hard. It can be painful. But the victory is ours. And so, we fight on, not cowering in fear, but confident in victory as we follow Christ, our Greater David.

Where, specifically, do you need to apply this to your life?

What are the sins you have allowed to live in your life or heart, that defy God, but which you, like Saul or Adam, have left unchallenged?

Is it covetousness in your heart? Gossip with your lips? Vainglory in your life? Lust with your eyes, mind, or body? Anger with your words? Arrogance in your thoughts? Impatience in your close relationships? Self-centeredness in your friendships or marriage?

What are the regions that you have ceded to sin and allowed it to defy your God and your Christian commitment?

Look to the Greater David. He has crushed the head of the enemy. He has decapitated the leader of the host of sin. Look on his victory over sin, death, and Satan in his death and resurrection, *and believe*.

And then, like the Israelites, take up your sword with a shout and pursue those sins in your life which Christ has already defeated. Run after them, with brothers and sisters in Christ at your side, and with Christ your king before you in battle. Attack your sin like the invading and blaspheming enemy that it is.

Looking only to our sin – only to the invading army – can leave us afraid. Acknowledge the enemy forces, yes. Open your eyes and see them clearly.

But then take your eyes off of them, and put your eyes on Christ, your champion, the Son of David, who holds the crushed head of the serpent in his hand. Look upon his victory, and know that in him you too will be freed from the enemy of your soul.

And trusting your king, leave behind your tent, raise up your sword, and enter the fray, knowing as the Apostle Paul says, that he who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion [Phil 1:6]. For the battle is the Lord's and he will give your enemies into your hand [1 Sam 17:47].

Amen.

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**This sermon draws on material from:**

Alter, Robert. *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.

Davis, Dale Ralph. *1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart*. Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2000.

Leithart, Peter J. *A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel*. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003.