

Following His Lead – 1 Chronicles 20:4-8

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Read vs. 4-8*

B. *Sister Serfina*

1. Sister Serafina was on a much desired mission assignment to the Apaches.
2. She was so excited she drove past the last gas station without noticing her gauge read “Empty.”
3. She ran out of gas a mile down the road & had to walk back to the station.
4. The attendant told her he’d like to help but had no container for gas.
5. She said, “Can’t you find anything at all?”
6. Sympathetic to her plight, he agreed to search thru an old shed behind the station.
7. A few minutes later he reappeared with a beat up bedpan. The grateful nun said that would work fine.
8. He filled it with gas & she carefully carried it back to the car.
9. As she was pouring it into the tank, a trucker saw her, slowed down, rolled down his window & yelled, “I wish I had your faith Sister.”

C. *Faith*

1. We’re taking a look today at some guys who had faith.
 2. They had it because of the great example of another.
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II. TEXT

A. *Set the Scene*

1. David is older now.
 2. Israel has begun her Golden Age, enjoying great wealth, power, & prestige.
 3. Her only distress comes from the unruly Philistines who just won’t accept their domination by Israel.
 - a. Every few years, a new ruler rises & stirs them to try another grab at Israel’s land.
 - b. So David leads the army out in yet another campaign to put down the uprising.
 4. In 2 Sam. 21 we read that during one of these campaigns, one of Goliath’s relatives managed to get close to taking David out.
 - a. This spooked the captains so they told David he’d gotten too old & ought to stay home.
 - b. Battle is for the young, which David’s wasn’t any more.
 - c. But he’d left a great example for the younger men to follow.
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5. Goliath’s sons & brother were still a part of the army of Philistia.
 - a. Like him they were giants who specialized in warfare.
 - b. And just as David had taken on Goliath, there were men now in Israel’s ranks who followed his example & faced these giants.
 - 1) Sibbechai killed Sippai
 - 2) Elhanan slew Lahmi
 - 3) David’s nephew Jonathan took out another unnamed giant.
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6. This is a huge turn around from before, when years earlier Goliath had first come out to challenge the men of Israel.
 - a. You remember the story; The Philistines & Israelites were lined up for battle against one another at the Valley of Elah.
 - b. As they were getting ready to go at it, Goliath, the 9 foot tall champion of Philistia, waded across the field between the 2 sides & challenged Israel to representative combat –
 - 1) he’d fight for the Philistines against Israel’s champion.
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- 2) The outcome would decide who would serve who.
- c. But there were no takers. No one had the courage to face Goliath though he came out day after day to mock the men of Israel & blaspheme God.
- d. Then one day young David arrived with provisions for his brothers serving in the army.
- e. He watched the spectacle of Goliath's challenge, heard his blasphemy & was *outraged*.
- f. He couldn't understand why NO ONE rose to the challenge.
- g. The men of Israel were afraid because they measured themselves against Goliath & came up *short*.
- h. David, full of faith, measured Goliath against God; Goliath came up *dead!*
- i. He understood that God was waiting for someone who would look to Him & not the circumstance & said, "Let it be me. I'll do it."
- j. We all know what happened – Goliath fell.
- k. And when he did, it was like a veil lifted from the minds of the men of Israel –
 - 1) Of course, how could Goliath **NOT** fall?
 - 2) Little David standing in victory over Goliath made the perfect picture that it's not about our *ability*, it's about our **availability** to God.
7. David's faith inspired others.
 - a. His example set them free from the fear that had paralyzed & kept them from entering in to all God had for them.
 - b. As people began to follow David & spent time with him, they realized there was nothing all that special about him other than the fact he loved & was sold out to God.
 - c. Together, they began to do great things!
 - d. Again, not because they were great but because they let God be great thru them.
 - e. The result was the nation of Israel set as a jewel among the nations.
 - f. All the blessing God promised Moses would come upon His people was fulfilled during David's reign.
8. When the giants rose to once again trouble them, there were several men of faith who were ready to take them on.
9. They knew what to do because David had shown them.

B. Again

⁴ Now it happened afterward that war broke out at Gezer with the Philistines, at which time Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Sippai, who was one of the sons of the giant. And they were subdued.

1. A revolt was put down & one of Goliath's sons was slain.

2. Now, notice the next word . . .

⁵ Again there was war with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. ⁶ Yet again there was war at Gath, . . .

3. This is a picture of *spiritual warfare*. This side of heaven, it *never ends*.

4. The victory you've just won will be followed by an attack on another front.

5. And the ground you've just taken, the enemy will try to get back.

6. It's like the old joke we tell husbands – that fight with your wife you just won isn't over.

7. And so it is in our long war with our spiritual adversary.

a. It never ends. "He'll be back." [Arnold voice]

b. Any respite you experience is just another of his tactics to get you to lose vigilance.

8. But here's the thing—Israel prevailed in all their battles during David's reign because they waged them by a deep & abiding faith in God.

- a. Giants fell by stones, swords, & spears,
- b. But it was *faith* that wielded them.

C. Following His Lead

1. The 3 heroes of Israel mentioned here were simply following David's example.
2. His faith that defeated Goliath fired theirs so they could defeat his sons.
3. The Son of David defeated the devil & conquered the giant of sin & death at the cross.
4. His example now fires our faith so that we can *stand* in His victory, His authority & see the fall of satan's kingdom in our lives & those around us.
5. We need to realize the devil hasn't changed his tactics in 6000 years.
 - a. Goliath tried to terrorize Israel just as satan tries to terrorize us.
 - b. He shouts 2 lies at us that are aimed at *paralyzing* us – he says we're *unworthy* & *unable*.
 - 1) We're *unworthy* because we still mess up.
 - 2) And we're *unable* because compared to him, what strength do we have?

6. These 2 crippling lies are answered in Colossians 2:13-15 where we read –

¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

- a. That upends the lie that we're *unworthy*.
 - 1) All that the devil could lay claim to in us ended at the cross where Jesus took the list of our sins – ALL of them, past, present & future,
 - 2) And nailed them there
 - 3) In Rev. 12:10-11 we read–

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. ¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, . . .

- 4) Satan is the accuser who without let up points out you faults to anyone else who'll listen.
- 5) But that's the point – we don't have to listen!
- 6) Yes, *in ourselves* we **ARE** unworthy – but we don't stand before God in ourselves, we come in Christ Who's approved by the Father.
- 7) We overcome the devil by the blood of Christ **AND** by the word of our testimony.
- 8) When the devil accuses you of being unworthy, remind him of the cross.

¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

- b. This refutes the lie that we're *unable* to overcome the giants the devil throws at us.
 - 1) Jesus conquered sin & death & stripped the enemy of all his power.
 - 2) Paul uses clear military terms here.
 - 3) He refers to a Roman victory parade where a conquering general presided over a procession thru the streets of Rome exhibiting the captives & loot taken in his victory.
 - 4) What was clear to all was the *utter loss* of the enemy's power.
 - 5) Jesus defeated the devil & stripped him of his power.
 - 6) All he has left is his lying mouth which he uses to great effect in making people think he's big & bad.
 - 7) But he's only a toothless mouse who casts a giant shadow.

7. Goliath's trick was to get the men of Israel to look at *themselves* compared to him.

- a. As long as they were looking at *their* ability he knew they'd see it as *inability* & do nothing..
 - b. David wasn't fooled because he didn't heed Goliath's lie.
 - c. It wasn't a contest between Goliath & David; it was between Goliath & God!
8. Christian – nothing's changed.
- a. It's not a contest between the devil & you, it's between the devil & God & God's already won!
 - b. David understood that & made himself the *vehicle thru which* that reality could be made visible on earth.
 - c. These 3 guys caught that truth & lived it themselves. Now it's *our* turn.

III. CONCLUSION

A. On Two Fronts

1. We face giants on 2 fronts . . .
 - a. There's the *personal, inner battle* with those things that stand in the way of God's blessing.
 - 1) Sin, attitudes, habits we know we ought to conquer but constantly struggle with.
 - 2) What's going to bring you deliverance & victory is faith in God, trusting in Him.
 - b. Then there's the *external front* where we battle spiritual forces of evil *in the world*.
 - 1) We see the enemy going after our family, friends, neighbors.
 - 2) We see the culture war that's raging all around us.
 - 3) The giants of secularism & materialism seem like modern Goliaths.
 - 4) What can we do about gangs, drugs, godless theories in the schools?
 - 5) That's what the men of Israel said as they cowered before Goliath.
 - 6) Then David showed up.
2. The victory on both fronts is found in living what Paul says in Galatians 2:20.

B. Joseph Ton

1. Joseph Ton was a believer living in atheistic Romania in the 1960's.
2. He left his country to study theology at Oxford but in 1972 felt God calling him back to Romania to lead the church there.
3. He told his friends at Oxford of his plan; they all tried to talk him out of it.
4. They warned he'd probably be arrested at the border & thrown into prison.
5. One student asked him, "What chance do you have of success?"
6. Ton didn't know what his chances were; only that God had told him to go.
7. He sensed strongly he was not to let his *survival* determine his choices; that the crucial issue was obedience to the call of God. So he went.
8. He wrote:

After our return, as I preached uninhibitedly, harassment and arrests came. One day during an interrogation an officer threatened to kill me. Everything became so clear to me. I said to him, "Sir, your supreme weapon is killing. My supreme weapon is dying. You know my sermons are all over Romania on cassette tapes. If you kill me, I will be sprinkling them with my blood. Whoever listens to them after that will say, 'I'd better listen. This man sealed it with his blood.' They will speak ten times louder than before. So, go on and kill me. I win the supreme victory then."

9. They sent Ton home. He said,

That gave me pause. For years I was a Christian who was cautious because I wanted to survive. I had accepted all the restrictions the authorities put on me because I wanted to live. Now I wanted to die, and they wouldn't oblige. Now I could do whatever I wanted in Romania. For years I wanted to save my life, and I was losing it. Now that I wanted to lose it, I was winning it.