

1 Samuel Series #8

“Bloom Where You’re Planted” - 1 Sam 17:31-37

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Greatness*

1. History reserves the title of “greatness” for only a select few
2. In fact, there’s one man whose title of greatness seems to have become his last name
 - a. he was the son of Philip of Macedon
 - b. by his early 30’s he had conquered the known western world
 - c. of course I’m referring to *Alexander the Great*
 - d. he is called “Great” because of his incredible military genius and charismatic leadership
 - e. but really, that’s as far as Alexander’s greatness went
3. If we are going to give the title of greatness to Alexander for his military accomplishments, then there is someone *else* who deserves the title even more
4. Let me tell you about this man
 - a. he too was a brilliant military strategist; led his nation to their widest borders, and made them one of the world’s most powerful nations of that time
 - b. he, personally, was a great warrior and managed to defeat foes who were many times his size and experience
 - c. he was a charismatic leader of his people, so much so he had a dedicated band of followers who would gladly give their lives for him
 - d. he led his nation into a golden age which rivaled the world’s greatest empires in wealth, might, and influence
 - e. beside these, he was a gifted poet;
 - 1) in fact, we continue to read his poetry today
 - 2) for centuries his poetry has served as an incredible expression of the full gamut of human emotion
 - 3) millions of people have found it to be a tremendous comfort and source of insight
 - f. add to all that, this: He was a skilled musician
 - g. But there’s more: He was also an administrator and organizer without peer
 - h. he was a master architect
 - i. and on and on the list goes

B. *David*

1. You may have guessed that the man I’m speaking of was King David of Israel
2. Today, we’ll be taking a look at the *beginning* of his career

II. TEXT

A. Set The Scene

1. God has rejected Saul from being king of Israel and has anointed David, a young shepherd boy from the little village of Bethlehem to be the king
2. But Saul has turned the throne over to David; he still sits in the seat of rule
3. The Philistines have once again gathered for an attack on Israel
 - a. and the armies of Israel, under Saul's leadership have gone out to meet them
 - b. on one side stood the Philistines who were dug in on two low hills that meet each other at their base
 - c. across from them were the men of Israel on a ridge overlooking the small valley or Elah which lay between the two armies
 - d. each day, a giant of a man named Goliath, came forth from the Philistine line and approached the camp of Israel
 - e. and each day he would issue a challenge to the men of Israel
 - f. he called for them to send forth one man to enter into battle with him
 - 1) if Goliath won, then the Israelites would lose and become the servants of the Philistines
 - 2) if Goliath lost, then the Philistines would surrender and become the servants of the Israelites
 - g. seems like a pretty good deal
 - h. but the problem was this - no one in the army of Israel wanted to fight this 9' tall monster whose armor weighed 125 lbs. And whose javelin was the size of a fence post
 - i. after a couple days, when it was clear no one would take him up on his challenge, Goliath began to mock the men and the God of Israel
4. Well, one day, as Goliath was standing before them, uttering his curses and taunts, along comes young David
 - a. his father, Jesse, sent him from their home in Bethlehem to take some food to his three oldest brothers who were part of Saul's army
 - b. he arrived just as Goliath was issuing his challenge
 - c. David listened, then looked around as if he expected one of the men of Israel to go out and take on Goliath
 - d. when no one stepped forward, David asked why
 - e. they replied with a scoff at the young upstart
 - 1) what was wrong with this young whippersnapper?
 - 2) didn't he have eyes?
 - 3) couldn't he see how big and powerful the Philistine giant was?
 - 4) it was sure suicide to fight him in a one on one contest!
 - f. but when David realizes no one else will step forward, he volunteers
 - g. let's pick up the story at that point . . .

B. Vs. 31-33

{31} Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported them to Saul; and he sent for him.

{32} Then David said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.”

{33} And Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.”

1. Word was quickly taken to King Saul that there was someone saying he would go against Goliath
2. Saul ordered him to be brought in; but when he saw that he was just a lad, and not one of his might men of war, Saul dismissed him, probably thinking his men were playing a joke on him
3. But David was deadly earnest in his desire to fight Goliath
4. And he had good reason to believe God would give him the victory . . .

C. Vs. 34-37

{34} But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock,

{35} I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it.

{36} “Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.”

{37} Moreover David said, “The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!”

1. David spoke with such passion and conviction that Saul was persuaded he just might have a chance against Goliath
2. As a shepherd, watching the family flock, there had been times when predators had come and tried to steal a lamb
3. While a regular shepherd would chalk up such a loss as part of the business of raising sheep, David saw each lamb as a solemn trust given to him by his father and by his God
4. He would not just casually let predators take what they wanted
5. He would contest their attacks and seek to save what was stolen
6. So once, a bear attacked his flock and tried to make off with a lamb; David pursued it and rescued the lamb from its jaws
7. Another time, a lion attacked and stole a lamb
 - a. again, David pursued it and delivered it before it was consumed
 - b. now, lions don’t like being interrupted when they when they are eating, so it turned to maul David
 - c. but he grabbed it by its mane and thumped it
8. David had killed both a lion and a bear with his hands

9. God had given him victory over these formidable beasts all because he had a heart to protect a flock of sheep
10. He reasoned that if God would give him victory on the account of sheep, how much more would he give him victory on the account the flock of Israel?
11. David spoke with such conviction and passion, Saul was convinced there was more to David than met the eye; and he sent David out to meet Goliath

III. CONCLUSION

A. *David's Preparation*

1. This is one of the most beloved of Sunday School stories
2. People who may know very little of the rest of the bible, at least know *this* story
3. But there is something in these verses that we've looked at today that I want to focus on
4. It has to do with the preparation David went through to meet Goliath
5. You know, when we think of David, we usually think about him standing before the giant in the Valley of Elah swinging his sling around his head
6. But I want to ask you to stop and consider what David had gone through that would bring him to the place of being able to stand there
7. David's job as a young boy had been to tend the family flock;
 - a. he was a shepherd
 - b. *not* a tremendously important job
 - c. in fact, as the youngest member of the family, he would have been given the very last job, the one no one else wanted
 - d. he spent many long hours alone, leading the flock from place to place, trying to find lush, safe pasture for the sheep
8. It was during these long hours of solitude that he learned to play the harp
 - a. he became quite skilled at it
 - b. and composed many songs that would later delight others
9. It was also during these lonely days that he wrote so many of the Psalms that we continue to read today and find such comfort and solace in
10. Consider the greatest of them all: 23rd

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

11. The loneliness and isolation of those days had provided David the

- opportunity to think hard on God
12. As he sat on the hillside and looked out over *his* flock he thought about how God oversees and takes care of *HIS* flock, and over him personally
 13. It was in those early days of his young life that David determined to walk with God and do all within his power to follow in the Lord's leading
 14. When God looked out over the nation to find a new king to replace Saul, the only one that qualified was young David, alone on his hillside, tending the flock
 15. You see, God wanted to provide a *shepherd* for the nation
 16. David knew what it meant to shepherd; he knew what is required of a shepherd, and he was willing to give it
 17. So when danger presented itself to the sheep, David lay down his life for them

B. The Lesson

1. Friends, the point in all of this is this . . .
2. David was ready to face Goliath because he had been faithful in the smaller events and challenges of his life before this
3. When given the lowly task of shepherd, David didn't balk and complain
4. He went out and did the very best job at shepherding he possible could
5. In fact, he made the ultimate sacrifice: He put his life in harm's way to save some stupid sheep
6. All too often, when we are called to some menial task or some lowly or despised job, we think it *beneath* us
7. When we are called upon to sacrifice some of our time or energy, we look at what for and conclude it isn't worthy of us
8. And then we wonder why God doesn't give us *greater* opportunities
9. We dream of some great challenge: we picture ourselves as David standing toe to toe with Goliath and we think, "I could do that!"
10. You know what? Unless we, like David, have been utterly faithful in the little things of our daily lives, there is no way we can go against the giants

C. Doing Great Things For God

1. Do you want to do great things for God?
2. Then be faithful and diligent in the little things today and tomorrow
3. Like David, if you're single, be diligent to use this time of being alone to get to know God; turn the seeming *prison* of your isolation into a *university* of learning about Him
4. If you're married, be diligent in your relationship with your husband or wife, patterning your marriage after Christ and the church
5. If you are a parent, be diligent to lead and feed and protect the flock God has given you
6. At work each day, work as to the Lord
 - a. don't do just enough to get by
 - b. give it your all, your best
 - c. don't grumble when given lowly tasks
 - d. rather, learn to delight in doing that which others despise for the

- opportunity it gives you to show people you live by a different standard and set of values
- e. friends, if God is your God, then quite frankly there is no job which is too lowly - because it is an opportunity for you to give glory to God
 - f. story of Brother Lawrence turning washing dishes into an altar of worship
7. Jesus told a parable about 3 men who were given some money
 - a. two invested their money while the third just kept it
 - b. the two who put what they were given to work were rewarded by their master by being made rulers over vast parts of his kingdom
 - c. the guy who just sat on what he was given received nothing, and lost even what he had been given
 - d. the point of the parable is that we must be faithful to use what God has given us
 8. In 1 Cor 7:17 Paul writes, "As God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk."
 - a. in the context, Paul is writing to people who were asking whether they should get married or not
 - b. Paul tells them not to worry about it
 - c. the issue was not whether they should or shouldn't get married
 - d. the issue was "What are you doing right now?"
 - e. the answer should have been, "I am serving the Lord!"
 9. Friend, bloom where you're planted!
 10. Don't defer living for God till some later time when it's more convenient
 11. Don't let yourself fall into that trap of saying, "I know I should be doing this or that, but . . ."
 12. If you know you should be doing something, *JUST DO IT!*
 13. Bloom where you're planted