

You can Trust in the Lord

Reading: Proverbs 3:5-6 “.....*trust in the Lord*.....”

Introduction:

Having the trust of others is one of the most valuable qualities that a person can attain. Gaining someone’s trust can take a long time to achieve, but it can also be lost very quickly. When we need to put our trust in someone, it is often because we need them to do something for us. It may be that we need someone to confide in. It may be that we need someone to help us to perform an important task. Or, it may be that we have to completely hand over a task for them to do, but we have a vested interest in the outcome.

Very rarely do we put our complete trust in someone about whom we know nothing. When we require someone to do something important for us, unless there is absolutely no choice, we first want to have a certain level of confidence that the person is able to do what we require, and can be relied on to do it in the way that we want (or what is best).

I guess for most of us, there have been times when either, someone in whom we have put our trust has let us down, or, we ourselves may have been the one to let others down. But there is someone in whom we can have a 100% complete trust. There is someone in whom we can have absolute confidence that they will faithfully do what is right. That “someone” is God, and His Word exhorts and encourages us to place our trust in Him¹.

David often spoke in the Psalms about how he put his trust in the Lord², and the Lord watched over him. In this lesson, I want us to look at an event that took place early on in David’s life that showed the complete trust that he had in Him, and draw some application from it for our own lives.

LESSON

1) The setting for David and Goliath

In **1 Samuel 17**, we read the historical account of one of the many battles between the Philistines and the Israelites. The timeframe is probably about half-way to two-thirds of the way though Saul’s 40-year reign as King³. This particular battle is remembered mostly because of one of the Philistine soldiers - a man named Goliath.

The opposing armies had gathered at Sochoh, in the tribal area of (southern) Judah (**1 Samuel 17:1**), the location about half-way between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea⁴.

During his early years, Saul had achieved some military victories in opposing the Lord’s enemies (**1 Samuel 11:1-15; 14:47-48**). But he soon disobeyed God

¹ e.g. **Psalm 37:3; 91:2-3; Proverbs 29:25; Isaiah 26:4**

² e.g. **Psalm 7:1; 11:1; 16:1; 18:2; 25:2, 20; 31:1, 6; 52:8; 55:23; 56:3**

³ Saul was King for 40 years (**Acts 13:21**). David was 30 years old when he became King after Saul (**2 Samuel 5:4**), meaning that he was born around the 10th year of Saul’s reign. In **1 Samuel 17:33**, David is described as being “a youth”, probably meaning that he was around teenage years.

⁴ The Philistines normally lived in the coastal areas.

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(**1 Samuel 13:13⁵; 15:26⁶**), with the result that the Lord had rejected him from being King. As well, he no longer had the benefit of Samuel to make enquiries of the Lord on his behalf (**1 Samuel 15:35**).

The battle at Sochon was “bogged down” in a bit of a stalemate. The two armies faced each other from mountains on opposite sides of a valley (**1 Samuel 17:2-3**)⁷. Every morning and evening, Goliath would come out and issue a challenge to the people of Israel. He called on Israel to send someone out to fight him. The battle would be determined by a one-on-one contest. The nation of the loser would serve the nation of the victor. (**1 Samuel 17:4-10**).

This had been going on for 40 days (**1 Samuel 17:16**).

Due to the intimidating size of the man (Goliath), no-one from the army of Israel was prepared to take up the challenge. “...*They were dismayed and greatly afraid*” – **1 Samuel 17:11**.

It was into this scene that David appeared, when he went to visit his brothers who were in the army of Saul (**1 Samuel 17:12-24**).

2) David was not intimidated by the foe

Goliath wasn't your ordinary sort of man – he was a giant⁸. His height was 6 cubits tall - around 2.7 metres (9 feet). His armour and weapons were also intimidating – **1 Samuel 17:4-7**;

- he was heavily protected by a bronze helmet, armour on his legs, a coat of mail weighing 5000 shekels of bronze (about 57.5 kilograms⁹), and a shield carried by his shield-bearer.
- he carried a bronze javelin between his shoulders, a spear like a weavers beam (typically 50-60 cm in diameter¹⁰), with the spearhead alone weighing 600 shekels (about 7.9 kilograms¹¹), and a sword (**17:50-51**).

But this did not deter David. Rather than seeing an intimidating giant, he saw an uncircumcised Philistine defying and ridiculing the armies of God. This was not right. This was an insult to God. The unanswered taunts of Goliath were a shame on Israel.

*“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?”*¹²

– **1 Samuel 17:26**.

⁵ He offered up a sacrifice after being told to wait (**1 Samuel 13:1-14**).

⁶ He spared King Agag instead of killing him (**1 Samuel 15:1-23**).

⁷ Any fighting that took place was done down in the valley, the Valley of Elah (**1 Samuel 17:19**).

⁸ The area had a history of giants – **Numbers 13:32-33**.

⁹ One Shekel is approximately 11.5 grams – The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible, Volume 5 Q-Z, Weights and Measures, Page 920.

¹⁰ The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible, Volume 5 Q-Z, Weaving, Page 912.

¹¹ See footnote 9 above.

¹² New King James Version Bible

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David was not prepared to let the arrogant boasting of this uncircumcised Philistine put to shame the people of God.

Point: We also face a foe, for we too are in a battle. Not a battle where we face a physical enemy, but a spiritual enemy; spiritual forces (**Ephesians 6:12**). Satan is our "...*adversary*.." (**1 Peter 5:8**). He wants us to do his will (**2 Timothy 2:26**), instead of the will of God (**Colossians 1:10**).

We live in a sinful world (**Acts 2:40; Romans 3:23; 2 Peter 1:4b; Genesis 8:21**¹³; a world that can intimidate us by its many deceptions and attractions that appeal to the flesh¹⁴; a world that often ridicules and mocks people who take a stand for God's truth¹⁵. Sometimes we can even feel over-whelmed by our own desires that are contrary to the Word of God.

But like David, we need to be ready to shun those things that are wrong, and have the courage and strength to do those things that are right (**1 Corinthians 16:13**). And just as David knew that he wasn't really facing his opponent alone, so too, we also have someone with us in this battle.

3) We cannot succeed on our own - we need the Lord's help

When David told King Saul that he would go and face the giant (**1 Samuel 17:32**), Saul's reaction was what we would expect from a worldly point of view. David was still "...*a youth*...", meaning that he was probably aged in his teens. Goliath, on the other hand, was an experienced warrior, having been "...*a man of war from his youth*.." (**1 Samuel 17:33**). The difference between David and Goliath was not just their physical sizes, but also their experience in military battle.

But then David gave the reason for his confidence. It was a confidence placed not simply in his own abilities, but a confidence in God. As he told Saul about how in the past he had protected his father's sheep from the lion and the bear, he also made this statement;

"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."
(**1 Samuel 17:37**).

The "physical odds" seemed to be overwhelmingly in Goliath's favour. The army of Israel was "paralysed" because they simply put their trust in their own abilities (**1 Samuel 17:11, 24**). But David put his trust in God, just as Joshua did when the Hebrews were frightened off by the report of giants by the 10 spies during the wilderness wanderings (**Numbers 13:26 - 14:9**).

And so David went out to face Goliath – not with sword, not with spear, not with armour – but with his staff, his sling, 5 stones (**1 Samuel 17:38-40, 45**).... and with God. And with these, he defeated the giant (**1 Samuel 17:48-51**).

¹³ **Genesis 8:21** "...*the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*..."

¹⁴ By using the word "*flesh*", I am not just referring to physical attractions, but am also including worldly thinking and attitudes.

¹⁵ I have read in scientific magazines where those who believe in the creation account (**Genesis 1; Romans 1:20**) are considered as being "illiterate and dangerous" by those who support the theory of evolution. Those who speak out against the sin of homosexuality (**Romans 1:26-27**) and same-sex marriages are considered as being "bigots and un-loving".

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Point: As we face the battles of life, we will not succeed just on our own. While it *is* possible for man to live a life without sin (**Hebrews 4:15**), we never seem to be able to do so completely (**Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8, 10**). None of us can boast in our own works (**Ephesians 2:9**). We need the Lord's help, and He doesn't abandon us. In fact, He helps us in various ways;

- He is working His good will and pleasure through us (**Philippians 2:13**).
- His Word equips us for the task ahead (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**).
- He loves us and cares for us (**Romans 8:35-39; 1 Peter 5:7**).
- He does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear (**1 Corinthians 10:13**), *i.e.* He will not allow our "battle" to be beyond us.
- He is active in the world and working things out for our good (**Romans 8:28**).
- When we stumble, He is there ready to forgive us so that we can continue (**1 John 1:7**).

And through Jesus, we are conquerors (**Romans 8:37**); we have victory over the world (**1 Corinthians 15:57; 1 John 5:4**). "...*If God is for us, who can be against us?*" (**Romans 8:31**).

4) Can God be trusted to keep these promises?

But can God be trusted? Absolutely! You only have to look at Biblical history to see that when He says something, He means it, and He keeps it.

- When He told Noah that He was going to destroy the world by flood (**Genesis 6:13**), that's exactly what He did (**Genesis 7-8**).
- When He told Noah that He would save him and his family through the ark (**Genesis 6:18; 7:1**), that's exactly what He did (**Genesis 8:15-18; 1 Peter 3:20**).
- When He told Abraham and Sarah that He would give them a son in their old age (**Genesis 17:15-19**), that's exactly what He did (**Genesis 21:1-3**).
- When He told Abraham that he would give the Promised Land to his descendants (**Genesis 13:14-15**), that's exactly what He did (**Joshua 21:43-45**).
- When He warned the Hebrews that if they disobeyed Him, then they would be taken away into captivity by their enemies (**Deuteronomy 28:15, 36**), and that's exactly what happened (**2 Kings 25:1-21**).
- When He told Israel that they would return from captivity after 70 years in Babylon (**Jeremiah 25:11-12**), that's exactly what happened (**Ezra 1-2**).
- When He spoke of sending the Messiah to set up His kingdom (**Isaiah 9:6-7**), that's exactly what He did (**Matthew 1:18 – 2:1; Colossians 1:13**).

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Application:

So how can we apply the lessons from this event in David's life to our own lives.

Firstly, we can see that God did not strike down Goliath and save Israel while everybody stood back and did nothing. Someone had to go out and do something. David did, and with God's help, he defeated the giant.

We also have to do our part in our walk with God (**Galatians 6:5; Ephesians 4:16**)¹⁶. God did not intend for Christians to just sit back, put our feet up, and wait for the second coming. There are things that He wants us to do (**Ephesians 2:10**). We each have to grow towards maturity (**Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 5:12-6:1**), allowing the Word to mould our lives (**Romans 21:1-2**), while at the same time, wrestle with our own weakness and strive to overcome them (**1 Thessalonians 5:22; Romans 12:21**).

Secondly, we can use past experiences to build up our trust in God. David's trust in God had been strengthened through God helping him fight off lions and bears (**1 Samuel 17:37**). We have seen above how the Old Testament history demonstrates that God can be trusted 100%. These historical accounts give us comfort and reason to hope (**Romans 15:4**). There may also be events in your life when you have had to hand over problems to God, and He has worked them out for you¹⁷.

Therefore, based on Biblical evidence alone, we can trust God to keep His word.

- When He says that “...*if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us...*” (**1 John 1:9**), then we can trust Him to forgive us.
- When He says that there will be “...*indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil...*” (**Romans 2:8b-9**), then we had better believe it.
- When He says “...*be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life...*” (**Revelation 2:10b**), then we can be 100% assured that that is what He will do.
- When He says “...*all things work together for good to those who love God...*” (**Romans 8:28**), then we can believe that that is what is happening, no matter how things may appear to be.
- And when He says “...*I go to prepare a place for you...*” (**John 14:2b**), and that when the Lord returns, we will “...*meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord...*” in our heavenly home, then we can take comfort in these things (**1 Thessalonians 4:17-18**) because we can trust in the Lord and His Word.

¹⁶ While we each have to bear our own load, we are also to help each other (**Galatians 6:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15**)

¹⁷ Sometimes our prayers may seem unanswered. There can be various reasons why;

- our lives are not right with God (**James 4:1-2; 5:16b; 1 Peter 3:7**)
- we prayed with wrong motives (**James 4:3**)
- we may lack faith (**James 1:6-7**)
- God may have a good reason for leaving things as they are (**2 Corinthians 12:7-9**)