Raising Kids that Become Champions

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The Philistine came on and drew near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of
him. **42** When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was
only a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. **43** The Philistine said to
David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed
David by his gods. **44** The Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give
your flesh to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the field.” **45** But David
said to the Philistine, “You come to me with sword and spear and javelin; but I
come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel,
whom you have defied. **46** This very day the LORD 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 Philistine army this very day to the birds of the air and to the wild animals
of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, **47** and
that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not save by sword and
spear; for the battle is the LORD’s and he will give you into our hand.” **48** When
the Philistine drew nearer to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line
to meet the Philistine. **49** David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it,
and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and
he fell face down on the ground. **50** So David prevailed over the Philistine with a
sling and a stone, striking down the Philistine and killing him; there was no
sword in David’s hand. **51** Then David ran and stood over the Philistine; he
grasped his sword, drew it out of its sheath, and killed him; then he cut off his
head with it.
When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.
(1 Samuel 17:41-51)

1. February is Black History Month

February is Black History Month or African-American History Month in Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, U.K. and U.S. People in these nations remember the people and the events that make up the history of the African diaspora.

When we talk about Black history in the U.S., we remember the civil rights movement. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was one of the key leaders in the movement. One of Dr. King’s focus was on the children in the States. On August 28, 1963, at Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., Dr. King recited, “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

This phrase has become part of American history. We remember this because we all want to raise children in a world where our children are judged

by the content of their character. We remember Dr. King and his impact on making a better world for future generations.

2. David and Goliath

Today's scripture tells us about the battle between David and the Philistine champion, Goliath. In 1 Samuel chapter 17, we read about the context for our passage. In the early years in the 10th century B.C., the Philistine army gathers to wage war on Israel. The armies face each other on opposite sides of a valley. Goliath, a nine-feet giant, comes out every day for forty days to mock the Israelites and challenge them to a fight.

King Saul and the army of Israel are terrified of Goliath. But no one dares to face the giant. One day, David, the youngest son of Jesse, is sent to the front lines to bring back news for his father. David is a teenager at the time. While at the front lines, David hears Goliath shouting. David responds, "***Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of God?***" (1 Samuel 17:26)

David volunteers to fight Goliath. King Saul says to David, "you are only a boy" (1 Samuel 17:33). David says, "***your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he had defied the armies of the living God***" (1 Samuel 17:36). Saul finally agrees to let David oppose Goliath. David goes out with nothing more than a shepherd's staff, a sling, and a pouch of stones.

Goliath says to David, "***Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?***" (1 Samuel 17:43) The Philistine curses David, hurling threats and insults. David says to Goliath. "***You come to me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This very day the Lord will deliver you into my hand***" (1 Samuel 17:45). Where is David's confidence and courage from? His confidence is from his reliance on the Lord.

As Goliath moves in, David reaches into his bag and fires one of his stones at Goliath's head. The stone sank into his forehead. And the Philistine champion falls and David beheads Goliath with his own sword. The fight is over and the Philistines run in terror.

3. How does David defeat Goliath?

This passage is one of the most famous stories in the Bible for children. It shows how God is on the side of the small and least powerful. The passage reminds us that we also can triumph over situations in unexpected ways. We need to remember that David was the youngest of eight sons of Jesse. He was not a soldier. And yet, he would go on to defeat a nine-feet giant, heavily armed, and an experienced warrior.

How did David defeat Goliath? Well, he did the same as he protected his father's flock from the attacks of lions and bears. However, we need to remember that David was empowered by the Holy Spirit. In Chapter 16, Samuel secretly anoints David as King of Israel because God tells him so. 1 Samuel 16:13 says, "***the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward***." David was anointed with oil to set him apart for God's service.

Who made David grow into a man of faith? When king Saul and the rest of Israel was afraid of Goliath, David, somehow had a courage that no one else had. The passage gives us some insight. David was full of confidence in the Lord because he believed God would fight with him against Goliath.

The Bible doesn't tell us if Jesse or anyone around him gave David any kind of special training to grow in his faith. But we can tell from what we know about David that God prepared him and built David for his special purpose here on the earth.

4. David's Childhood

When we study David's life in the Bible, there are a number of passages that leave us a bit confused. Let us take a look at 1 Samuel 16:1-13. When Samuel asks Jesse to bring his sons, Jesse does not bring David at first. Samuel meets seven of Jesse's sons but doesn't see God's chosen one. Samuel asks if there are any other sons. Jesse then remembers that his youngest son is out attending the flock. When David comes before Samuel, Samuel anoints him as the next king of Israel.

Why was David not included initially with the rest of his brothers? If someone asked us how many sons we have, our natural reaction isn't to forget about one of our sons, especially if it is a young son that lives with us. Based on what we know, we believe that Jesse and David did not have a close relationship with each other. David in many ways is an afterthought to his father. He is a son that was easily forgotten.

David may not have received care or attention from his father. But what we know is that David was being trained and raised up for years to rely on God and to trust in the Lord in all situations. My guess is that his mother would always encourage him to trust in the Lord. David was well prepared in his faith to one day have a big impact in the world and become the leader of his people.

5. Conclusion

Today's scripture reminds us that a young, neglected boy would one day save his people. The passage reminds us that when our trust and conviction is in the Lord, God allows us to overcome even giants as his people on the earth.

Can we expect for miracles to still happen today? The answer is definitely, yes. But another question that God would ask us is, are we raising our children and the next generation to become champions of the world for Christ? God

prepares the way for young people throughout the world to change the world for Jesus. In the same way, God calls each of us to raise up children and young people to live as people of faith who become like David and overcome great challenges for the glory of God.

6. Application

Our lives have different priorities. But the priority that God puts in front of each and every believer is to raise the next generation of young people in faith. In our bulletins and our church directory, we find the vision statement of our church. Our vision is "**to create a true Christian family environment that spreads and grows into the community and allows the community to experience a closer relationship to Christ**."

Everyone know how important our children are in our family and in our church. I am so thankful that God keeps sending us new children to our church. God wants us to raise them for Christ. We need to raise the next generation to be people of faith and to confront any fear with the confidence in the Lord.

A Special Session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church takes place February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, MO. The purpose is to receive and act on a report from the Commission on a Way Forward, authorized to examine paragraphs in the Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and to explore options to strengthen church unity. Many United Methodists are anxious and fearful after the decision is made because the decision will make some people unhappy.

This morning my concern is not the decision itself. I would rather concern about the fear we may have after the Special Session ends. I do not think our situation is not so bad. David's case is much more serious than ours. Yet David is full of confidence and moves forward without any fear. He knows who is in charge and who is in control. Do we know who is in charge of our life and our church? The Bible reminds us that Jesus is the head of the church. I believe that God will take care of the United Methodist Church.

Today's story tells us that even the most impossible task can end in victory when we put our trust and confidence in the Lord. Our next generation will face many challenges in their lives in the years ahead. I pray that each of us and our church will take every opportunity to raise a generation of champions of faith so that our next generation would live in their confidence in God and change the world for Jesus.

Would you consider actively participating in Christian education by bringing your children, grandchildren to Christ, praying and supporting Sunday School and VBS? We can make a big difference in the lives of children. God will use our children to save the world. Amen.