

# Facing the Giants in Life & Work

50 Days, Part 7, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017

It's great having you here at the Vineyard this morning as we wrap up our seven-week 50 Days of Transformation series...

- Where we've been pursuing transformation in seven key areas of our lives.
- We've already looked at our spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, relational, and financial health.
- And, today we're going to close by looking our vocational health.

Now, our vocation has to do with **far more than just our jobs**.

Dictionary.com also defines it as a "*driving call to God's service or to the Christian life.*"

- It also defines it as a "**function or station in life** to which one is called by God."
- In other words, our vocation has **as much to do with** the kind of person we're called to be...
- As it does the kind of work we're called to do.

And so, this morning, we're going to look at one particular virtue that ought to characterize all of us as Jesus followers...

- A characteristic that not only stirs one's ability to dream and to travel beyond the borders of our comfort zone,
- But one that expands what's possible in and thru our lives. And that's boldness!

**Proverbs 28:1** says that "*the righteous are as bold as a lion.*"

- So, what is this **link between righteousness and boldness**? Well, a righteous person knows their God...
- They know that if God is for them, nothing can be against them.
- Whether it's at work or in life, **living in boldness** allows us to always be responding to whatever God puts in front of us.
- It allows us to **venture out to do the right** thing at the right time, in spite of the obstacles & challenges.

It's boldness that allows us to see the possibilities ahead of you... it's what releases creativity and raises expectation.

- It's what allows us to venture out beyond our **limits & abilities** to engage the God-sized opportunities around us.
- It's something that is firmly rooted **not in any confidence in our own strengths** but in the giganticness of Jesus.

In **Acts 28**, we read about how Paul “*proclaimed the Kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ unhindered and with all boldness.*”

- But, I want to focus on another hero of the faith who modeled this kind of boldness a thousand years earlier than Paul...
- A young shepherd named David who reminds us of what it looks like to tackle even the greatest giants in our lives.

David was only a teenager **when the Prophet Samuel anointed him as king over Israel** in 1 Samuel 16:13.

- And yet, oddly enough, **the next morning David wakes up the same time** he would always wake up;
- Puts on the **same ragged clothes** he wore the day before;
- And began **tending his sheep** just like he always had.

But sometime later, **while Israel was at war with the Philistines**, David was asked by his father, Jesse,

- to take food **up to his three older brothers** who were at the front-line, about 15 miles from their home in Bethlehem.
- And out of this, comes one of the most famous stories of the bible in **1 Samuel 17:1-11**.

So, we've got the **Philistine army on one hill** and the Israelite army on the opposing hill with the Valley of Elah in between them

- And, each day a huge warrior named Goliath walked to the center of the valley...
- challenging them to send their best warrior to fight him... **winner takes all!**
- But, in verse 24 we see that whenever Goliath would move toward them, the Israelite army would run away in terror.

Even their strongest warrior couldn't dream of taking him down. And yet, **when David shows up**, he can't believe what he's seeing.

- Knowing the bigness of his God, how can Israel's mightiest fighters run away for Goliath like this?
- So, David cries out to King Saul and the Israelites, encouraging them, **in verse 32, saying "Do not lose heart!"**
- But, **what exactly does that mean?** What does it mean to lose heart?

About 40-50 years ago, there was a breakthrough in field of psychology that apparently **opened up our understanding of depression and anxiety...** and why some people ultimately give up.

- They conducted the experiments using a number of dogs who would **hear a particular tone.**
- And then, **just a few seconds later** they'd experience an electric shock.

Now, these **dogs were all in a box with a wall on either side** of them.

- And, whenever they would jump over the wall, the shock would cease.
- Their goal, of course, was to see if they could condition the dogs to eventually jump with only the tone... without having to shock them.
- But it never happened. In fact, **after a while, the dogs would refuse to jump** altogether.

Because the dogs believed that there was nothing they could do to ultimately keep them from being shocked, they just chose to remain on the floor.

- You see, **their belief that they were helpless paralyzed them into inaction.**
- And, once that happened, they were stuck. They had the power to change their situation... jump... but they didn't.

What they called this was "learned helplessness," which they concluded was at the core of much of the depression, fear, & despair we might experience in our lives.

- You see, this is what happened to the Israelites in the face of Goliath. David said they **lost heart!**

- In other words, **they bought into the false belief that in the face of Goliath**, there was nothing that could be done.

So, David says, ***“Do not lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.”***

- But even though David offered to stand up again Goliath himself, we see Saul, who was still acting-King,
- telling him that as a small, inexperienced teenager, **he couldn't possibly face Goliath.**

In the face of Goliath, the armies of Israel just ran away. That's what happens when you lose heart,

- **you end up checking out...** walking off the field and into the bleachers.
- You will never know what God might have done because you no longer try.

But there is an **alternative way to face life...** and that is with a bold, hope-filled heart. That is how David lived.

- He had a **life-giving belief that God would deliver him** no matter how the circumstance might appear.
- It wasn't any kind of earthly self-confidence or arrogance.
- Instead, it was an **attitude of defined courage** where he measured his opponent not so much against himself...
- but against the backdrop of a God who was infinitely bigger.

And so, David cries out in verse 26... ***“Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he is allowed to defy the army of the Living God?”***

- Everyone ran away from Goliath... but because of his bold heart, David ran toward him.
- We all want bold faith in God. But it takes time to grow a bold heart.
- But, **believe me, David's boldness didn't suddenly appear that day.**

There's an illusion that keeps a lot of people **stuck & frustrated** when they face their own challenges....

- That when you face that moment of crisis, a Goliath moment, that **you can't just develop a bold heart out of the blue.**
- If you wait till you face your own Goliath without having cultivated a bold heart, you might not do so well.

A man arrives at the Pearly Gates after just having lost his life... and Peter says to him,

- *“Well, I must say, you haven't done anything particularly good... or bad in your life.”*
- “I don't know what to do with you... Can you tell me about one impressive deed you've done in your life?”

And the guy said, “Well, I once saw a bunch of bikers harassing a young woman.

- I pulled my car up to them, **grabbed my tire iron**, and **walked up to their leader**... a huge man full of tattoos... with piercings all over his body.
- I wanted to intimidate him... so I slapped him in the face and said, *“You leave this girl alone... you hear me?”*

Then I stared at all of them and said, *“You all get lost... or you'll have to answer to me.”*

- Peter was pretty impressed and asked him, *“Wow... when did this happen?”*
- The man said, *“About two minutes ago!”*
- The point is, **if you wait till that big hairy Goliath comes along** before cultivating a wise, bold heart, it might not go so well!

What we need to face those goliaths in our lives... is a bold heart! But bold hearts are hearts that are cultivated over time.

- You see, David faced a number of situations that required boldness before he ever got to Goliath.
- They might not have seemed so big at the time...
- but **God used each of those challenges in David's young life to cultivate a steady heart** in him.

Truth is, in the face of intimidating obstacles and overwhelming circumstances,

- We will **either lean on that bold heart** God is wanting to cultivate in our lives... **or we'll lose heart**.
- For David, there were situations that God used to build that kind of bold heart in him;
- Four sets of circumstances that David faced, and that you and I will face,
- which will **cause you either to lose heart**, OR develop a bold heart:

### **1. Everyday Challenges. We don't like them.... But they provide the opportunity to develop a bold heart.**

As I shared earlier, David had already been anointed as King over Israel. And yet, it would be years before he'd see the fulfillment of that dream.

- In a way, this was really the first giant David had to face... the challenge of delayed or unfulfilled expectation.
- Needless to say, no dream is fulfilled instantly. **God may give you the dream on one day** but He rarely fulfills it the next day.
- There's almost always a waiting period.

And, in the midst of the waiting, it's so easy to **forget** or **doubt** that **God is really at work in us...** that He hasn't forgotten us.

- It's so easy to **lose sight of the fact** that what He's wanting to do in us through the waiting is as important as what it is we're waiting for.
- You see, we want boldness, but **sometimes we don't want the kind of work** God needs to do in our lives to build that **boldness** in our lives.
- We want **God's resources**, and yet we don't always want his timing... but **things like boldness will always require time**.

And yet, because of the intimacy David had cultivated with the Lord, in the midst of all the waiting, he's able to write in **Psalm 31:14-15**,

- *"I trust in You, O Lord... You are my God. My times are in Your hands."*

- Having “*waited patiently for the Lord,*” as we’re told in Psalm 40, He then exhorts us, in **Psalm 27:14** to:
- “*Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord.*”

In other words, David learned to embrace these seasons of delay & waiting as **opportunities rather than obstacles** to what God has next for you.

- Through all those years on his own herding sheep in the wilderness, God was building in David a bold heart.
- It’s why, even after he was anointed to be Israel’s king that God sent him back to his sheep.

Remember that Moses was one of the most powerful, most educated men in the world,

- **but how did God prepare him to lead Israel** from their Egyptian captivity?
- He provided forty years in the wilderness tending sheep. “Wilderness University” I like to call it!!

So, when Saul says to David, “*You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him because you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth,*”

- David replies, in verse 34, “*I’ve been taking care of my father’s sheep... when a lion or bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, I go after it... and take the lamb from its mouth.*”
- Through those seemingly uneventful years as a shepherd, David learned to trust God to protect him from the wild animals that threatened his flock...
- and now he was ready to trust God again.

He goes on to say, “*The Lord who saved me from the claws of the lion and the bear will save me from this Philistine.*”

- Notice that he wasn’t saying, “I learned I could defeat lions and bears,”
- but rather, “*I learned that GOD could deliver me against the lions and bears...*”
- You can hear the words “*God is faithful!*” a 1000 times.

- But you will only come to **believe it in** the marrow of your bones & to **live it** & **know it** when it's really put to the test in your life.

Out in the wilderness, lions and bears come after the sheep all the time.

- Of course, lions and bears aren't the kind of everyday challenges we face.
- And yet, in our own lives they come in different forms.
- Right when you're beginning to get a hold of your finances, your car needs a new transmission.
- Maybe you have a difficult project at work... perhaps you could get out of it with it with just a little lie.

You can do that if you want to. OR, you can pray, ***“God, with your help I'm going after that bear.”***

- And, when you do, **your heart will grow a little bolder.**
- Perhaps you're struggling with a relationship.
- But **rather than filling your life with distractions** or having **one too many glasses of wine** at the end of the day,
- you can say, *“God, with your help I'm going after that bear... I know you'll sustain me.”*
- And **your heart will grow a little bolder.**

You see, **it was in everyday moments when no one was watching**, in his unglamorous job as a shepherd,

- When he faced longer-than-expected seasons of waiting... that **God was developing a bold heart** within David.
- If he had waited till he faced Goliath... he might have run away with everyone else.
- But, through those real-life, every day moments, God was building a bold heart **and, through that, he discovered that God was faithful**...
- and little by little, his heart grew bolder and bolder.

So, let me ask you... How are you doing in the everyday challenges of life? Are you building a heart of boldness?

- If you find yourself **running away or surrendering** to the lions and bears that intrude into your everyday life,

- Would you choose to stop... turn your gaze upward again toward God... and trust that He is with you?

You see, as you walk out your everyday life, whether it's at home or at work or in ministry,

- While circumstances could easily leave you paralyzed on the floor, deflated and losing hope by the minute,
- would you choose, instead, to set your eyes, **not on the size of your goliath but on the size of your God** who surrounds you?

## **2. The second place you build a bold heart is in the face of criticism and opposition.**

As we've already seen, David had been sent to the battle line to bring supplies to his brother and **sees how Goliath is defying Israel.**

- Even worse, he sees the effect it is having on King Saul who **not only doesn't want to fight Goliath himself,**
- but is **offering great wealth** to anyone who will take on Goliath.
- In fact, along with great wealth, he's also offering his *daughter* as a wife and a *lifetime of tax exceptions.*

A pretty good offer. But no one will take him up on his offer... and it's not because his daughter wasn't good looking!

- So, in 1 Samuel 17:26, David asks, ***"Who is this pagan Philistine anyway, that he is allowed to defy the armies of the Living God?"***
- Then in **verse 28**, David's oldest brother, Eliab, heard what he was saying to those around him.

The text says that he burned with anger, saying... *"I know how wicked and conceited you are."*

- Who was he to challenge the men of Israel. Who was he to attempt something our own king wouldn't do?
- But Eliab says more than that. He asks David, *"What are you doing around here anyway?... What about those few sheep you're supposed to be taking care of? I know about your pride and deceit."*

You see, Eliab can't imagine David accomplishing something that he could never imagine himself doing.

- And the problem is, in the face of this disapproval, we can easily begin to doubt what we had just had so much faith for.
- At that point, **David could have wasted all his time and energy fighting his brother...** but he doesn't.
- And the reason he doesn't is that he knows that **this is not the battle he's supposed to fight.**

David knew intuitively that what those people were saying to him were simply reflections their own pessimism, their own lack of expectation & faith & hope,

- Which can easily threaten the confident expectation you've had inside of you.
- And yet, instead, David affirms, in **Psalm 25**, that *"No one who hopes in You will ever be put to shame!"*
- You see, every now and then **it's important to consider who you're listening to.**

Are you listening to those who say it can't be done? Those who are poo pooing your dreams?

- Because if you listen to negative people long enough, you know what happens? You become negative yourself.
- You hang out with a cynical, critical, bitter person, and it will happen...
- Where, more & more, you'll find the words coming out of your mouth reflecting that same cynicism.

And so, while it's good to love a cynical, fearful person, don't spend too much time with them!

- After feeling this shift inside of him from hope to discouragement, David cried out in **Psalm 42:11**,
- ***"Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise Him again, my Savior and my God!"***
- Notice he **doesn't give in to Eliab...** he **doesn't agree** with Eliab... but he **doesn't take his slingshot out** for Eliab either.

Instead, he brings it back to God... to what God is saying... to who God is and what He's capable of.

- What's so important about all this is that David **doesn't allow unfair criticism to have much power in his life.**
- He refuses to get sidetracked... he doesn't let the offense derail him...
- He stays on-mission... **and little by little, his heart gets more & more bold.**

So, let me ask you... **how do you handle criticism?**

- All criticism falls under one of three categories: **true, not true, or a little true.**
- If it is **inaccurate**... dismiss it and move on. If it is **accurate** than take steps to correct it and move on.
- **BUT don't allow it** to make you lose heart.

Look at David's heart here... **if I were David and was about to take on Goliath,**

- I would probably expect others to do nothing but pat me on the back... *"What a brave thing you're doing. What courage!"*
- I'd be thinking, *"The ladies are gonna love me!"* It would all be about me!

But **David gets opposition instead of praise...** but, again,

- he doesn't that opposition derail him from what God has called him to.
- If you get real serious about trusting God and **taking on a goliath,**
- there is a chance that someone in your life will be threatened by it...
- that you'll face opposition.

**Satan works hard to create that.** You can give up...loose heart, become defensive,

- You can spend the rest of your life trying to straighten them out,
- when, in reality, they're not going to get straightened out.

You can do that... OR you can **state your position the best you can and then move forward** in what God is calling you to do...

- **Knowing that**, in the face of all that opposition & criticism,
- **God is continuing to build a bold heart in you.**

### 3. **You build a bolder heart when you resist pressure to conform.**

Finally, after explaining again how God was faithful to him in the past and **his confidence that God would be faithful again**,

- Saul finally relents and says to David in verse 37, ***“Go... the Lord be with you.”***
- But look what happens next: *“Then Saul gave David his own armor--a bronze helmet and a coat of armor. David put it on, strapped the sword over it, and took a step or two to see what it was like, for he had never worn such things before.”*
- *“I can't get in these,” he protested. “I'm not used to them.” So, he took them off.”*

Saul, an accomplished warrior gives David his armor. But **Saul's a 52 long and David is a 36 short.**

- It would have been easy to just say, *“Saul knows best... I'll do it his way.”* But David knew himself.
- And he knew what God was calling him to... **and it wasn't to fit into Saul's armor... but to be the man God had uniquely molded him to be.**
- In a way, Saul wanted to convert David into a little image of himself.

But at the end of the day, **you have to choose how you are going to go to battle...** how you'll face those goliaths in your life.

- Maybe at work there is pressure to be a little dishonest with one of your clients.
- Will you stand up to that pressure and say, ***“I'm not going to be part of that.”***

Maybe there is someone you love who doesn't know Jesus and you are shrinking back from sharing your life and faith b/c of pressure...

- and the question for you is *“Will you be bold? Will you be a witness to what you’ve experienced in your relationship with Jesus?”*
- Maybe our culture wants you to affirm the **“if it feels good do it”** values of our day,
- And yet, faced with the opportunity to lovingly show someone a better way, **will you conform** or **will you be lovingly bold?**

Paul writes to the church in Rome saying, *“Don’t let the world try to squeeze you into its mold.”*

- The battles you face won’t likely be on a battlefield.
- Instead, for you, it **may often come in the form of pressure...**
- *“Will you be bold enough to stand for God... to resist conforming to the pressures being put on you?”*
- You see, the more you do that, **the more boldness gets cultivated in your heart.**

#### **4. You build a bolder heart when you choose to trust in Him.**

In the midst of this incredible scene... where the king of Israel offers his armor to this lowly shepherd boy...

- David says, *“I can’t wear this... I can’t even walk in it.”*
- And now, without any armor whatsoever, to the amazement to everyone but God,
- **David walks to the brook that runs between the two armies...** and kneels down.

Remember... each day for forty days Goliath has come to that place to taunt the Israelite army.

- And now here is God’s man... reaching into a brook picking out five smooth stones.
- And after that, he then stands some distance from Goliath with his sling at hand..

We read in **verse 41**, *“Goliath walks toward David... sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy. “Am I a dog,” he roared at David, “that you come at me with a stick?” And he cursed David by the names*

of his gods. "Come over here, and I'll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!" Goliath yelled."

Then David says, **"You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD Almighty--the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. Today the LORD will conquer you..."**

- "And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel!"
- David basically says, **"I'll give your flesh to the beasts, etc."**

Not very original... it's exactly what Goliath said to him. But David's new at this!!

- And yet, **do you see how David's whole life led up to this moment?**
- What marked David, what prepared him, **wasn't his talent with a sling...** it wasn't the **power of positive thinking;**
- It was his conviction that **there was nothing His God couldn't not do!**
- You see, Goliath never counted on that!

Goliath thought he would be fighting against flesh and blood... and, that **he could handle!**

- But, he never thought about having to stand up to the power of the living God.
- It's why David said what he did to the Philistines in verse 47...
- *"All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give all of you into our hands."*

David knew it **wasn't his power** that would fall this enemy of Israel.

- He knew it **wasn't the power** of his little slingshot... but the power of God.

Listen... a **baseball** in my hands is worth about \$5. A baseball in David Price's hands is apparently costing the Red Sox 31 million a year!

- A **golf club** in my hand is worthless... in Tiger Wood's hands, it is priceless.
- A **rod** in my hands in a piece of wood... in Moses' hands it can part waters.
- A **sling** in my hands is just a toy... in David's hands it can take down a giant warrior.

Imagine his shock... a young, skinny red-headed kid (yes, David is thought to have had red hair)! No armor, no sword, just a little slingshot.

- David said, ***"You come at me with sword, spear and javelin but I come to you in the name of the LORD Almighty..."***
- He hurls a single stone... and it's all over.
- I want to tell you, whatever sword, spear, or javelin you're facing... **what God did for David, God can do for you.**

What is the goliath in your life right now... Health? Depression? Fear? Failure? A significant loss? Difficult person in your life?

- Difficult marriage? Transition? Struggles with finances or kids? Is there a risk you've been afraid to take?
- What about work? Maybe you didn't get that raise; Maybe the promotion passed you by;
- Maybe your boss is unfair & unkind and you're wondering what you're going to do.

In spite of the risks and dangers, David's attention **wasn't on the giant of a man** in front of him but the **giant God beside him.**

- His focus wasn't on the size of his opponent but on the size of His God,
- Which is exactly why he could say with confidence, ***"The Lord will deliver me from this man..."***

Listen, I'm not the smartest guy in the world and certainly not the best looking. I'm not the wealthiest person and certainly not the youngest.

- I'm not the best educated or the most talented or the most fit.
- But, I made the decision early on that I was going to trust God.
- And I don't have to understand all He's doing or where everything is heading.

But, I've made the decision to do anything, anytime, anywhere He asks me. I'm not perfect in that, **but I've resolved** to walk in step with Him

- All I know is that a teenage boy with a sling and a single stone, conquered the enemy of Israel.
- Listen to what David said to the giant he faced: *“You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel... This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands.”*

You see, David knew that his victory would have nothing to do with his gifts or talents.

- Instead, he knew that it was the Lord who would deliver Goliath into his hands. I don't know what your goliath is.
- But **if you let your** goliaths in your spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, relational, financial, and vocational lives **intimidate you;**
- **If you let those challenges convince you that you're helpless;**

**If you run away day after day like the Israelites, you WILL lose heart!**

- But if you turn and face him... **if you choose to run to rather than run away from your goliaths...**
- Then just know that **with one small stone & the power of God, your goliath doesn't stand a chance.**
- And that's because you will have discovered that *“one small stone and the power of God are greater than anything this world can throw against you.” (J.Ortberg)*