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“5 Smooth Stones” (“What Are You Warring Against?”)

1Samuel 17:25,32-40,45-51

Sunday Evening Message



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April 28, 2013

Text:

1Samuel 17:25,32-40,45-51 [KJV]

- ²⁵ And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.
- ³² And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.
- ³³ And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.
- ³⁴ And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:
- ³⁵ And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.
- ³⁶ Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.
- ³⁷ David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

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- ³⁸ And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.
- ³⁹ And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.
- ⁴⁰ And he took his staff in his hand, and **chose him five smooth stones out of the brook**, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.
- ⁴⁵ Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.
- ⁴⁶ This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.
- ⁴⁷ And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.
- ⁴⁸ And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.
- ⁴⁹ And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

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⁵⁰ So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

⁵¹ Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

Introduction:

The account of David and Goliath is captured in the collective scriptures found in 1 Samuel chapters 16 through 18. Saints of God, please understand that this documented account is not just a mere story or fairy tail, but is recorded as an aid to teach us (as Christians) how to be victorious over the giants (or Goliaths) of our lives today. This account, as many others cataloged in the Holy Bible, incorporates symbolism; which is purposed to represent certain ideals or figurative associations for Christians in this dispensation to employ in their every day life.

This evening, God desires to speak to us from His prophet Samuel concerning the youngest son of Jesse of Bethlehem ... David, the shepherd boy ... and the account of David's battle at Socoh in Judah with the Philistine champion named Goliath.

Tonight we explore the symbolic meaning behind David's choosing of "five smooth stones from the stream" in his conquest against Goliath the Giant; and how we can employ these concepts in our everyday life as we face our giants of persecution – whether physical, mental or spiritual.

Pray with me, as we explore together the topic: "**5 Smooth Stones;**" and the sub-topic: "**What Are You Warring Against?**"

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Background:

The setting and background for this lesson is the period of King Saul's war with the Philistines at Socoh in Judah (a city of the tribe of Judah). As the scriptures tell us, the Philistines pitched their camp at Ephes-dammim {meaning: "boundary of blood" – a place in the tribe of Judah where the Philistines encamped when David fought with Goliath. It was probably so called as having been the scene of frequent sanguinary or savage conflicts between Israel and the Philistines.}, between Socoh and Azekah {meaning: "dug over" – a town in the Shephelah or low hills of Judah [Joshua 15:35], where the five confederated Amoritish kings were defeated by Joshua and their army destroyed by a hailstorm [Joshua 10:10,11]. It was one of the places re-occupied by the Jews on their return from the Captivity [Nehemiah 11:30]}; and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah. These two armies were poised for conflict at opposing hills, with the valley between them. All that remained for this confrontation was for an individual representative from each camp to come down off their respective hill to do battle.

As the story reads, the Philistine's champion named Goliath (who was from Gath) taunted the ranks of the Israelites – defying and terrifying Saul and all the Israelites. Fear was embodied in the very stature of this proclaimed "champion." The scripture further states that, for forty days Goliath came forward every morning and evening and took his stand – continuing his taunting of the Israelites. Which (in effect) was an offense against the God of Israel!

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I. The Process of the Smooth Stones

Webster's Dictionary defines the term "symbolism" as: (1) expressing the invisible or intangible by means of visible representations; (2) ideal, or otherwise intangible truth.

Webster's defines the term "**smooth**" as: (1) having a continuous even surface; (2) causing no resistance to sliding; (3) free from difficulties or impediments; (4) even and uninterrupted in flow or flight; (5) to free from what is harsh or disagreeable; (6) to free from obstruction or difficulty; (7) to free from irregularities. In contrast, the term "**rough**" is defined as: (1) marked by inequalities, ridges, or projections on the surface; (2) having a broken, uneven, or bumpy surface; (3) difficult to travel through or penetrate; (4) coarse or rugged in character or appearance; (5) marked by a lack of refinement or grace; (6) executed or ventured hastily, tentatively, or imperfectly.

In the context of this lesson, I wish for us to consider the smooth stones as: (1) *well cultured*; (2) *aged*; (3) *experienced*; (4) *practiced*; (5) *better for aim and flight* – as with a bullet shot through a gun. The process, then, in which a stone's characteristics changes from rough to smooth is one that is long and arduous. The brook or stream constantly flows upon the surfaces of the stones embedded in the water; thereby creating a rounded surface upon an otherwise rugged surface. This continual process produces an abundance of unflawed stones in which David undoubtedly has no problem choosing a mere "five."

Symbolically, we are but "rough stones" – until the "**water of life**" transposes and changes our characteristics through the process called "life" – through our trials

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and temptations. A Christian, on the other hand, has an added bonus of having God to sculpt his/her life through His process of perfecting us for His service! He washes and purges us of any rough edges by the power of the Water encapsulated in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit!

II. Contrasting Goliath – “the Giant” and David – “the shepherd”

As the scripture account reads, Goliath stood six cubits and a span; or nine feet-nine inches tall (where a cubit is 18 inches and a span is 9 inches)! [17:4] The earlier versus of this chapter (verses 5-7) depict the massive armor Goliath wore for battle: (1) a bronze helmet on his head; (2) a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels (or about 125 pounds); (3) bronze greaves on his legs (a piece of defensive armor reaching from the foot to the knee; from the French word “greve,” meaning “the shin.”); (4) a bronze javelin on his back; (5) a spear like a weaver’s rod – with the spear’s head weighing six hundred shekels (or about 15 pounds); and (6) his shield bearer went ahead of him. By the Biblical account of this story, Goliath (the Giant) truly struck fear in the hearts of all the men in the army of the Israelites!

In stark contrast, David’s appearance is described by Goliath as: a mere boy, ruddy and handsome. Verses 38 and 39 of this chapter describes the armor that Saul provided from his personal collection for David: (1) a bronze helmet on his head; (2) a coat of mail; and (3) a sword. Saul’s armor, of course, had not been proven for battle by David (as he stated in verse 39). David was so uncomfortable wearing Saul’s war-clothes that he had to cast them aside. Imagine the boy David barely able to stand in armor intended for a fully-grown adult!

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III. A Shepherd's Weapons

The choice of weapons for a shepherd attending his flock are simple: (1) a rod or staff – used to stave off an animal in close proximity; (2) a pouch or bag in which to carry several stones; (3) a sling – used to propel the stones at a desired target.

As with any warrior, through much practice the user of these weapons can become quite skillful in defense of him/herself. Therefore, through much practice, David had become quite intimate with his weapons of mass destruction!

IV. The Five Smooth Stones Revealed

In my research, I attempted to acquire information from biblical commentators that would lend insight to this text concerning the five smooth stones and the symbolism these stones represent. Unfortunately, I was presented with a plethora of differing viewpoints and opinions on the subject matter. Therefore, I yielded to the holy-inspired revelation from the word encapsulated within the context of the recorded scripture for interpretation.

Through careful examination of the text, we can derive the symbolic purpose and application for the choosing of these five smooth stones. But first, allow me to pose a few questions that you might already be thinking concerning the physical selection of these stones:

1. Do you think that David made a conscious decision to select exactly “five smooth stones” from the brook, when he in effect only needed “one?”
2. Why, then, didn't David simply choose “one” smooth stone?
3. Why did David select smooth stones versus rough stones?

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The answers to these questions are simple:

1. David did not make a conscious decision to select the smooth stones from the brook, because he was already familiar (through his *experience*) with both the terrain and his weapons of choice (the stones).
2. To simply choose “one” smooth stone would lend oneself to the possibility of defeat or even death if a single stone were to miss its intended target.
3. A smooth stone has a much better “*flight path*” than a rough stone. Just as with a bullet’s trajectory through the barrel of a gun can be predicted, so can the flight of a stone – with proper aim through a sling of an experienced shepherd.

A. **Stone #1: Motivation** [1Samuel 17 verse 25]

The first stone is motivation. We must have the right motivation or incentive, which gives us the zeal to go to war against Goliath! Know why you are fighting the battle! King Saul made the following proclamation: “Be it resolved: That the man who kills Goliath will be enriched with great riches, and have the king’s daughter in marriage, and his father's house shall be made free in Israel.” To be certain that this was not just a hoax, David again posed the question to the men standing near him at the battle grounds: “*What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel?*” David was met with the same response.

Without proper motivation, or even more specific, without the proper zeal for motivation we will not accept the challenge to face our giants; we

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(like the soldiers of the entire army of Israel) will simply acquiesce to a defeat posture and attitude – accepting our inevitable defeat!

B. Stone #2: Confidence [1Samuel 17 verse 32]

The second stone is confidence. Do not fear! Fear is your greatest enemy! Be confident! David said to Saul: “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.”

Webster defines “confidence” as: (1) the state of mind characterized by one’s reliance on himself, or his circumstances; a feeling of self-sufficiency; such assurance as leads to a feeling of security; self-reliance; (2) trustful; without fear or suspicion; frank; unreserved; (3) having self-reliance; bold; undaunted; (4) having an excess of assurance; bold to a fault; dogmatical; impudent; presumptuous.

Along with confidence, we must have courage – that quality of mind which enables one to encounter danger and difficulties with firmness, or without fear, or fainting of heart; valor; boldness; resolution.

Fear is your greatest enemy!!! In Apostle Paul’s second letter to Timothy, he writes to encourage him to be faithful and fearless, by saying: ***“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”*** [2Timothy 1:7].

To face and fight the Goliaths of our lives we must exude a high degree of self-confidence and courage within ourselves; and not lose heart when confronting an adverse situation. We must believe that we can be victorious!

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C. **Stone #3: Focus** [1Samuel 17 verse 33]

*The third stone is focus. We must focus on our objective in order to win the battle against Goliath. Do not let others distract or deter you from your objective, by negating your abilities! Saul said to David: “**Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.**”*

It is easy to loose focus on our goal when people offer excuses and reasons why we should quit or even abandon our objective to fight. Consider also, that hidden within the confines of Saul’s remarks is the fact that David may not be considered mature enough to be wed to Saul’s daughter; as he stated: “You are only a boy!”

Also not mentioned is the fact that David was an instrument of peace for Saul – an accomplished harpist. If David should perish, then who would bring relief to Saul when the evil spirit prevailed upon him to torment him?

What ever the reason or purpose that others use to thwart our objective goal toward victory, we must continue to stay focused and remember the reason for fighting the giants in our lives. Conversely, if these people are able to successfully interrupt and discourage us while in the midst of our battle, then Goliath will certainly seize on the opportunity to destroy or inflict heavy damage in our lives!

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D. Stone #4: **Experience** [1Samuel 17 verses 34-36]

The fourth stone is experience. Know your strengths and abilities, learned through your experience, and use them to your advantage! In verses 34 through 36 of our text, David draws on his experience as a shepherd as evidence and proof that he is a capable warrior; and therefore, should at least be considered for the task, and therefore the rewards! “And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. ***Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.***”

We should recount past experiences, where we have already been victorious in battle against the giants that pursued us, when facing current struggles and giant-like situations. The old adages, “Experience is the best teacher” and “Practice makes perfect,” apply to this specific stone. Through trial and error, success and failure the ability to conquer your giant is attained.

We must be able to know our own strengths and abilities, and be able to draw upon them in our fight against the Goliaths of our lives. Not realizing our strengths and/or abilities will leave us in a severely handicapped state – vulnerable to defeat!

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E. Stone #5: Trust [1Samuel 17 verse 37]

The fifth stone is trust. We have to learn to trust in the Lord when going into battle with Goliath. Realize that you can't fight the battle alone ... You need God on your side! David said: "moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, **he will deliver me** out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee."

The writers of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) echo the same theme, concerning this fifth stone:

- Matthew writes: "But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible"
[Matthew 19:26].
- Mark writes: "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" [Mark 9:23]. "And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible" [Mark 10:27].
- Luke writes: "And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" [Luke 18:27].

Verse 47 of the text reminds us whose battle it really is; as David proclaims: "And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: **for the battle is the LORD's**, and he will give you into our hands."

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V. **Victory Over Goliath!**

Through David's choice of weaponry (the five smooth stones) and his shear skill and ability (coupled with the mighty hand of the Lord God Almighty), he was able to conquer Goliath by striking him in the only vulnerable area of his armor – his forehead! We must use the symbolic weapons of these five smooth stones as we face the trials of our lives. We must put the stones in our pockets, and carry them out with us as we face our Goliath, in order to be victorious in these life-or-death battles!

The Apostle Paul reminds us that this is a spiritual warfare in 2Corinthians chapter 10 verses 3 through 6; which reads: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;*) Casting down *imagination*, and *every high thing* that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and *bringing into captivity every thought* to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.”

Paul also instructs us in selecting the proper armor for this warfare in Ephesians chapter 6 verses 10 through 18; which reads: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the *whole armour of God*, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your *loins girt about with truth*, and having on the *breastplate of righteousness*; And your *feet shod with the*

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preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the *shield of faith*, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the *helmet of salvation*, and the *sword of the Spirit*, which is the word of God: *Praying always* with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and *watching* thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

Conclusion:

Finally, my brothers and sisters in Christ, I leave you with these few thoughts as you equip yourselves for the struggles against the Goliaths of your life – by arming yourselves with the symbolic five smooth stones to successfully defeat your giants. Whatever you are warring against, take with you the five smooth stones of: (1) *motivation*, (2) *confidence*, (3) *focus*, (4) *experience*, and (5) *trust*. With these stones you can face the Goliath of:

- Anger
- Poverty
- Abuse (mental, physical, social)
- Spiritual Abuse and Dominance
- Addiction (drugs, alcohol, sex, violence)
- Persecution
- Envy
- Wrath
- Fear
- Conflict

Whatever the giant, “in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us!” [Romans 8:37]

