

Thought for Sunday 11th October 2020

Pastor Gordon Hamilton

Read I Samuel 16:14-17:58

I realise it is a long reading, and the story of David and Goliath is well known, but I felt it would be good to read it through. The story begins with the spirit of the Lord departing from Saul, and in the last verses of chapter 16 we see that David becomes Saul's comforter, in fact verse 21 tells us he became one of Saul's armour bearers and verse 22; *'Saul sent word to Jesse saying, 'Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.'* What we see is that David, who has been anointed by Samuel, to take over the role of king from Saul, is now working in the king's household but David's future is unknown to Saul and maybe to David. I guess there were many times that David would have had to end Saul's life and take over his promised role, the role he had already been anointed for. Although Samuel had been sent to anoint the one to be king, it was to anoint the one who was to be king 'in the future.' David may not have realised the reason he had been anointed, but we know that from that day the Lord's power was on David. As we move into chapter 17 we see in verse 15 that David is still tending his father's sheep, as well as being armour bearer to Saul. I'm sure that the story of David and Goliath is familiar to each of us. The Israelites are lined up against the Philistines, and the Philistines have their champion, Goliath, heading them up, verse 4; *'His was over nine feet tall. He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armour of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him. Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, 'Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.'* We know that none of the Israelite soldiers, including Jesse's sons are prepared to go to battle with Goliath. Even Eliab, Jesse's eldest son, who we surmise from 16:7 was tall, it says; *'Do not consider his appearance or his height,'* We all know that David didn't have the height or build of Goliath, verse 38 tells us; *'Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armour on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.'* I imagine David look rather clumsy and David himself knew he couldn't fight dressed like that. Again I am reminded of my friend David, who I talked about last week, on the mission to the Isle of Wight in 2001, he wasn't the person 'we' expected to do the job, but God knew his heart, for the rest of us it was a humbling situation. I wonder what Jesse's other sons thought of their brother David? We know that in verse 28; *'When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, 'Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle.'* As we have already said 'The Spirit of the Lord was on David,' the only armour that David needed was the armour that Paul talks of in Ephesians 6:10-17; *'Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual*

forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' We're not told what the brothers reactions were after David killed Goliath. It is strange that when David, who is carrying Goliath's head, is brought before Saul, Saul doesn't know who he is and has to ask Abner; *'Whose son is that young man?'* The previous chapter ended with David playing the harp for Saul, to still Saul's heart, but it appears that Saul hadn't noticed David. Some years ago I went to a National Trust property in North Wales, Erddig, the Yorke family lived there and there are the upstairs and downstairs, and although they are kept apart, those downstairs were recognised for the work they did and if you ever go in the building, upstairs are the family portraits, as you would expect, but downstairs the cooks and butlers also had their own portraits, commissioned and paid for by the Yorke family. The servants were respected and looked after. Maybe for Saul, David was still a relatively young boy and not one to be taken notice of, although verse 22; *'Saul sent word to Jesse saying, 'Allow David to remain in my service.'* The way David killed Goliath was to change all that. Yes, David had kept Saul as the head of the Israelites, he was still their king, had Goliath won the battle, who knows what may have been the result. I am sure there have been people who have wondered what would have been the fate of us in the UK if the outcome of the second world war had been different. I thank God for the parts of the world in which I have lived, I pray that you can also thank God for where he has put you in your life's circumstances. Life for David was to change, and he didn't always deal with life the way God wanted him to. It wasn't always a bed of roses What we are told at the beginning of chapter 18 is that Jonathan became one in Spirit with David.

Soldiers of Christ, arise, and put your armour on;
Strong in the strength which God supplies, through His eternal Son;

Strong in the Lord of hosts, and in His mighty power;
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts is more than conqueror.

Stand, then, in His great might, with all His strength endued;
And take, to arm you for the fight, the panoply of God.

Leave no unguarded place, no weakness of the soul;
Take every virtue, every grace, and fortify the whole.

From strength to strength go on, wrestle and fight and pray;
Tread all the powers of darkness down, and win the well-fought day.

That having all things done, and all your conflicts past,
Ye may o'ercome, through Christ alone, and stand complete at last.