

Philistine Giants Defeated

Call to Worship: Psalm 91:1-8

1st Scripture: 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

2nd Scripture: 2 Samuel 21:15-22

Hymn #79- *Though Troubles Assail Us*

Hymn Insert- *O Church Arise*

Hymn #526- *O Lord, by Thee Delivered*

Introduction:

Continuing on toward the end of David's life and reign, the author inserts here, a general description of God's continued faithfulness to David, in granting him (and Israel) significant victories over other Philistine giants. We have already pondered, in great detail, the glorious victory, granted to the young David, during the reign of Saul, when he had defeated the giant, Goliath, with but a sling and a stone. Well here, we are given a quick span, of his victories over a handful of other giants, from the same Gittite lineage, amongst the Philistines, only this time, with the aid of some of his renown soldiers.

There is a two-fold emphasis, which we will seek to draw out from this text. First, the reality of David's declining strength (because of age), and second, the steadfast faithfulness of God, in prospering David, in spite of his former sins.

I. David's Declining Strength (vs. 15-17)

Our text, gives us an accounting of four Philistine giants, who were defeated by David and his men. However, in the first account, we are given important information, concerning the declining strength of the once, mighty warrior, David. As David led his army against the Philistines in this first battle, we are told that he grew faint during the battle. And his weariness was so pronounced, that one of the Philistines, a giant, named Ishbi-Benob, carrying a large and heavy, bronze spear, thought to take advantage of David's evident faint spirit, by setting his sights on killing David.

However, we are told that Abishai, the son of Zeruiah (Joab's brother, and one of David's nephews), came to the rescue, and helped David defeat the giant. This then leads to an unflinching determination on the part of David's men. They had vowed that from then on, they would not allow David to go out to battle with them anymore, lest David should get struck down,

and the lamp of Israel be quenched. It was obvious that David was not the fighter that he once was; he had begun to slow down with the increasing of age; not an uncommon thing for frail human beings, with the sentence of death within them. And so, for the sake of Israel and her glory, they determined to protect her godly king, lest the Philistines (or any other foreign nations), find room to boast in being the cause of the king's death.

II. Three More Philistine Giants Defeated (vs. 18-22)

Following this first victory, David's men, apart from David now, obtain three additional victories against the Philistines, along with three of their "to be feared" giants.

First, we are told of a battle that took place at Gob, where Sibbechai the Hushathite killed a giant named, Saph. Then, we are told of another war at Gob, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite had killed the brother of Goliath, whom David had killed. And then, finally, we are told of a war that had taken place at Gath, where a giant with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, had defied Israel, only to be slain by Jonathan, the son of Shimeah (Shammah), who was one of David's older brothers.

And in verse 22, we are given a summary statement of all that had transpired in verses 15-21, emphasizing the fact, that the four aforementioned Philistine giants, fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

Now brethren, I think that it is important to recognize here, that what seems to be emphasized is the fact that the Philistines, repeatedly put their confidence in a giant, or some alleged champion (super hero), who became the motivation and grounds for initiating a war with Israel. And each time they had done this, beginning with Goliath, they were disappointed and defeated by David and his men. But, it is worth noting that these are four different wars, where each giant, like with Goliath, became the focal point and confidence of the battle. But repeatedly, God gave David and his men the victory, even at such a tremendous physical disadvantage. And so, the repeated vain confidence of the Philistines in their giants, and the repeated emphasis on the giants defying Israel, and the repeated deliverance granted by God, to David, against these giants, is the great emphasis of this overall text, which the author wants us to take hold of, before coming to the end of David's reign and life.

III. Closing Thoughts and Applications

Well brethren, having walked through a brief survey of the text, let us spend the remainder of our time, considering a few closing thoughts and applications:

1) First, let us once again, face the reality of our fading humanity, as we see, a once vibrant, strong and energetic David, now growing faint in the battle. And there are two things that we can note about this:

a- Young people, Isaiah 40:6 teaches us profound and wonderful truths about our humanity; about your humanity, that you would do well to lay hold of:

"All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath of the Lord blows upon it..."

As you look and behold the beautiful blossoms of spring, which will soon again pop up, and then shortly thereafter decay and fade away, see that, as a sobering parable; indeed a picture of your life. You feel energetic and young now; your skin is soft, you are athletic and so full of life and beauty, but, it will not be that long, until, with the rest of us, your body gradually begins to crumble, and parts begin to break down. The sentence of death is in us all, and it is in you. Such is the curse of the fall of mankind.

We see it here with David. We once cheered him on, when he toppled the giant, Goliath, and when he utterly destroyed the Philistines, repeatedly, with an unnatural sense of vigor, even against great odds, because God was with him. But even the great warrior David, now gasps for air as he swings his sword, so much so, that he required the aid of Abishai, to deliver him from Ishbi-Benob. And no longer would they allow him to go out to war, lest he perish because of his weakness. Such is the way of all men, godly and ungodly alike, which is why, we must look beyond this life to the glory to come! The path to the resurrection is covered with many sorrows, but those who find themselves on it with Christ, will have their day of celebration. They will look back upon death, and say, "O Death, where is your sting! O Hades, where is your victory?" "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

And so, as one fading flower to another, let me exhort you to flee to the only safe haven, found in Jesus Christ! You see, in the midst of a world full of fading flowers and dying grass,

there is one thing that is certain and sure and without fail; the Word of God! The Word of God endures forever! And this sure Word will drive you to Christ, for grace, redemption and salvation! Don't put your trust in young, thriving giants, all of which, will only let you down (over and over again), as they compete with the unbeatable glory and Kingdom of Christ! This world is no match for the One, who has been appointed Ruler over all things in heaven and on earth and under the earth, such that every knee will bow to Him, and confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God!

b- And then, as a second subset of this first point, brethren, let us see the urgent need to trim and oil the Lampstand of this church, in part, by preparing the next generation to sustain it. There is much to think about in the present, but we cannot fail to consider the future, as well. Hezekiah was a godly man; one of the few among Judah's godly kings, and yet, when he found out, that his sin of exposing the wealth of the kingdom to the Babylonians, would come back to bite future generations, he was content and happy to know that no such judgment would meet his own generation. One of the great failures of our government and our country, is that we have been so self-indulged in wicked and wasteful spending, that we have neglected to concern ourselves with the curse of a mounting debt, which we have secured for our children and their children. What could be more wicked than to carelessly curse your own heritage? Is it not to be worse than an infidel, than to fail to provide for your own family? And so, let us rear up our Solomons in this church, as the present Davids will eventually grow weary and faint, in the passing of time. And young adults; young adult Christians, do much to cast your zeal and life into this church, now, so that you might be prepared to take the reigns, when the heat of the sun does its damage and smites your elders unto their days of fading.

2) Lastly brethren, once again, behold with eyes of awe and majestic wonder, the faithfulness of your covenant keeping God, who is determined to safely prosper you, unto His glorious heaven, in spite of your failures and your sins.

Like David, we can all look back at our own sins, and wonder if God should ever retain His favor of us, can't we, brethren? We can see enough, without looking too far, to warrant the distaste of God, presuming He might just leave us off, unto the gravity of our own sin, so that our hearts would remain conquered and fixed to this world. But no! He endures with us! His love

remains unchanged! He remembers His covenant, made with us, in Christ! He remembers the rainbow, which He has set above our hearts! And He faithfully prospers and delivers us, to the end! Yes, when our own strength fails; when the sword has grown heavy in our hands, with the aid of our brethren, He leads us to victory, as Philistine giant after Philistine giant, falls before us, even in our old age!

Oh brethren, give glory to God, who is faithful, and who will do all that He has promised, in spite of us! And bless God; and take not for granted, your part in the church, where you can find strength to press on, with the help of an Abishai, a Sibbechai, an Elhanan and a Shimea, whom God has raised up in His church, with a fresh dose of the Spirit of Christ in them. Indeed, in spite of you; in spite of your bouts with the giants of pride, covetousness, lust, idolatry and a host of other sins, He has kept you, and He will bring you safely into the glory of His heaven!

All of this, not merely because God is gracious, but because God is so gracious, that He secured your justification in full, in the satisfaction procured by the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for all of your sins; past, present and future! Yes, in spite of Bathsheba and the terrible murder of Uriah, God prospered David unto His final end, so that He could pen the Psalm of praise, recorded in our very next text, in Chapter 22. Indeed, the life of David, brethren, is in many ways, our lives, in so far as all of them, drum to the same beat of God's grace!

And yet, sadly, there are some, perhaps even here this morning, who are not, or who are barely attached to a local church, as if, remaining among the people of God in Israel, was a light matter for David. I ask you this morning, if you are hardly here, or if you are not a part of a local church, who will come to your aid; what "God sent" will help deliver you, when you remain comfortably outside of such a necessary means of grace? You will find no Abishai outside of the church! Secure yourself in Christ's church, where the Lamb walks, and no obstacle of satan, no matter how large it might be, will cripple you in the battle! [Read Psalm 30]

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25