

**“Facing Your Giants”**  
**1 Samuel 17:32-40**  
**Series: GPS: Passion – People and Causes**  
**Scott Burgess Oct 10, 2021**

There is an old story about a young man in the Middle East who finds himself in a difficult situation. He is in a battle where he is facing a warrior of much greater size. He is armed to the teeth and shows he is proficient in the weapons he is using. Realizing hand to hand combat would be suicide, he resorts to a projectile weapon and defeats his enemy and those around him danced with joy.

Indiana Jones and the swordsman is just one of those stories of a man who faces his giant and defeats him. Of course, in the movies it is good business to show where the underdog comes out on top. But it doesn't just happen in film.

Erin Brokovich, a file clerk at a small law firm, uncovered some medical records and helped fight, and win, a case against California Utility giant Pacific Gas & Electric.

At first glance, the war between the American Colonial Army and the British juggernaut seemed completely one-sided. But after 6 years, in October 1781, the war virtually came to an end when General Cornwallis was surrounded and forced to surrender at Yorktown, Virginia.

And then there was 2004. The Boston Red Sox were down 3 games to none and losing 4-3 in the 9<sup>th</sup> inning. They managed to tie the game, and then defeat the New York Yankees 6-4 in 12 innings. They then proceed to win the next 3 games and then sweep the 4-game series against the St Louis Cardinals to win the World Series.

And still to this day, there is the most famous example of a David vs Goliath conflict of all. Namely, David vs Goliath.

<sup>32</sup> David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.”

<sup>33</sup> Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth.”

<sup>34</sup> But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, <sup>35</sup> I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.

<sup>36</sup> Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God.

<sup>37</sup> The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine. “Saul said to David, “Go, and the Lord be with you.”

<sup>38</sup> Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head.

<sup>39</sup> David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. “I cannot go in these,” he said to Saul, “because I am not used to them.” So he took them off.

<sup>40</sup> Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd’s bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine. 1 Samuel 17:32-40

We know how the story ends. Nobody on the field believed in David. It was obvious Saul didn’t. Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth.” – 1 Samuel 17:33

But David believed in himself, and he was aware of the gifts God had given him. He knew his skill with a sling, so he refused the weapons and armor offered by his king. And the sling was not the child’s toy we think of. It was no Dennis the Menace slingshot.

As journalist Malcolm Gladwell writes,

A sling has a leather pouch with two long cords attached to it, and ... a projectile, either a rock or a lead ball. ... It's not a child's toy.

It's in fact an incredibly devastating weapon. ... If you do the calculations on the ballistics, on the stopping power of the rock fired from David's sling, it's roughly equal to the stopping power of a [.45 caliber] handgun. This is an incredibly devastating weapon. When David lines up ... he has every intention and every expectation of being able to hit Goliath at his most vulnerable spot between his eyes. - Malcolm Gladwell

As Doug shared last week, David knew his gifts – his physical as well as his spiritual. But how did David know where to use those gifts? Each of us has gifts as well. Where does God want you to use your gifts?

We are now in week three of the GPS series. Last week we suggested you answer questions 1 to 77 in the GPS Assessment. The next step in the GPS assessment is a tool to help guide you. It can help you to focus on the where you should put those gifts to use. This would be a good time you want to answer questions 78-159 in that assessment.

Your People Passion – This is the group, or groups, of people you feel drawn to help. Maybe it is children or seniors. Perhaps it is those who are grieving or struggling with some kind of illness. It might be obvious to you already. Or maybe you must look deep inside to find what stirs you.

<sup>16</sup> And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:16

Your Cause/Passion – There are unnumbered opportunities in the world for any of us to address. Hunger, homelessness, poverty, addiction, human trafficking, and loneliness are just a few. What cause is there that really bothers you, stirs your passions? And what can you do about it? Sometimes we look at these causes and feel they are just too big for us. These are our giants we must face. If we think about all the homeless people in our country, we can be overwhelmed. We question how one person make a difference in such a big problem. And then, as the doubt

enters our mind, it is easy to make excuses to not try. The first thing to remember is, you are not alone.

“The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.” - 1 Samuel 17:37

God is with you in the battle. Along with the gifts he has given to you, he can, and will, give you the strength required to do battle. He was with David against Goliath and with Daniel in the lion’s den. Following the crucifixion, the Apostles all fled and went into hiding. And yet, only a short time later, despite threats of jail and punishment, Peter and John wouldn’t stop preaching the gospel. Why?

“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. Acts 4:13”

They had been with Jesus, and the Holy Spirit was there with them.

Yes, it is important to look at the big picture – but to keep from being overwhelmed, start with a simple first step. It is true David slew Goliath with a single throw, but we shouldn’t expect to cure the world’s hunger crisis by delivering meals at Cast Your Cares one Saturday.

But don’t let that way of thinking interfere with service. Our actions, big or little, complicated, or simple, are what God has in mind for us.

Ephesians 4:32 is a good example of starting simply. <sup>32</sup> Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

An action might seem small to you, the person giving, but it might mean the world to the one who is receiving it.

After a 20 year battle with addiction Bob Sofronski found himself incarcerated at Curran Fromhold Correctional Facility (CFCF) in August 1997. In October of the year, in a small prison chapel, Bob found out there was a God in heaven, who loved him. His life changed. He spent the rest of his term there going to services, reading scripture, and growing a relationship with God. When he was released in 1998 he told the leader of the prison ministry he would be back – not as an inmate, but returning as a member of the ministry.

He did return in 1999 and spent the rest of that year as an observer, as a student of the ministry. In February 2000 he was asked to lead one of the services and deliver his first message. In 2004 he started Christian Life Prison Ministry, or CLPM, and took over the Tuesday night service at CFCF. He created a ministry because he wanted to raise money to buy bibles to hand out to inmates.

In 2006 CLPM added Recovery to their ministry and became Christian Life Prison and Recovery Ministries and began to attract some additional volunteers. In 2007 several Woodside members, including Michelle and I, became a part of it. CLPRM incorporated in 2010 and is now a 501c3 charitable organization and leads between 35 and 40 events per month including prison services, recovery meetings, coffee houses, worship services and an annual Music Festival that regularly draws more than 1000 attendees. What started as a means to buy bibles, is now a resource to save lives. All because Bob had a passion he had to address.

Take the Passion you have and find a way to use it. But what if you don't have a People Passion or a Cause Passion that stirs you enough to act? It doesn't necessarily mean there isn't one. Maybe the plan God has for you hasn't come to light yet. Now, you can sit there and wait for it. And 20 years from now you might find yourself saying, "I wish God had shown what he wants for me to do." Or you can go look for it!

During my early days at Woodside, I just kept volunteering. I enjoyed being on the welcome team and greeting people. I helped clean up after events. Not everything I tried worked for me. I participated in a couple of Habitat events. But I'm not really handy, and don't particularly like doing construction. I occasionally volunteer to help with children's events. I usually enjoy it when I do, but I'm not drawn to do it on a regular basis. I even sang with the Boys of Woodside at the Father's Day Service once. They never asked me back.

But there were game changers too. I went on the Dominican Republic trip 4 times. The first time I heard about it I was excited about an opportunity to serve and build in a foreign country – which on the surface seems crazy based upon my previous construction comments. God had other plans for me though. During the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> trips we participated in street corner revival services, or Compagnas. The first time I was in one I shared a brief testimony about my first trip to the DR. At the next two I preached the sermon and invited people to step forward and receive Jesus. I discovered a joy in evangelizing.

<sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

<sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

Many of you know me by my unofficial title at Woodside as Director of Prison & Recovery Ministry. This had not been a burning Passion for me when I started. I did not seek it out. Michelle and I both started out participating in the prison ministry because of a growth group project we joined in on. And while I am still drawn towards prison ministry and still go, or would be if it weren't for Covid restrictions, both of us have found a passion burning inside us for those struggling with addiction. The Recovery Worship Service and Luncheon, held here in the Vineyard, began as a Church Has Left the Building project. It is now a quarterly event in its 10<sup>th</sup> year. The Recovery Café in Frankford began as a monthly event in June of 2016. Last month we were finally able to start again after 17 months of Covid restrictions stopping us.

Woodside has many serving opportunities. In the lobby there is a table with mission and ministry ideas. Look and see what is being offered. Or, come up with your own idea and present it to Doug or a staff member. There isn't a lot of red tape to go through at Woodside when you have a service idea. The two questions usually asked are, Is it about Jesus, and how can Woodside help?

Some people ask, "If grace is a gift freely given, why do I need to serve?" We don't serve to earn salvation. We serve to share what we have been given.

Remember what James wrote: "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." There is plenty of work in the mission field, for all of us. Take the time and find out what God has planned for you.