

Be Prepared: Part I

Scout Sunday

1 Samuel 17:17-40

February 12, 2012

Back in 1976, while I was in Boy Scouts, I went to Camp Philmont with 9 other buddies. We prepared for a 12 day hike by hiking 50 miles around the Park Cities on multiple weekends to not only get our legs in shape, but to break in hiking boots. When we arrived at camp, we went through orientation and had our backpacks stripped of all unnecessary contents to lighten our load.

We set out on our 100 mile trek around Cimmaroncito, NM and were having a great experience. Then one day, while we were still on the trail, out of no where, the weather turns very cold, very quickly and over the mountains comes a hail storm.

In short order, we took cover, pitched our tents, then dried out and recovered.

We were caught off-guard. We didn't see that storm coming. We were not prepared.

There's much to be said in favor of being prepared. We all prepare for some events. For example, if you're going to prepare for a trip, you pack bags, make reservations and then you travel. In preparation for retirement, hopefully you save some money and retire with some financial security.

When moms make preparation for the wedding of their child, moms typically compare their choice of dresses to make sure everyone is blending with the bride & bridesmaids. Many years ago, I officiated a wedding where the mom and the step-mom of the bride, did not confer with each other, and they both wore the exact same dress. That was fun to officiate that wedding!

In many things we anticipate doing, we make preparations.

Well, since today is Scout Sunday, I wanted to use the Scout Motto, which is: Be Prepared, for my theme.

Of course, being prepared means a whole lot more than having the right tools, the correct equipment, or the right attire for an expected event. But how do you prepare for the unexpected? How do you prepare yourself to handle a health crisis? How do you prepare your heart to handle grief? How do you prepare for life? How do you prepare to be courageous? How do you prepare for integrity?

For David, he got up one morning, did his chores and his elderly father gave him an errand. He made it to his destination, and there was the giant, standing between 9 and 11' tall. Today I want us to look at how God prepared David to face the giants in his

life. Some of these things are unique to David, and some of them are principles that apply to everyone of us today. Let's turn our attention to God's word, 1Sa 17, starting with v12. Hear God's word.

12 Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years.* 13 The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. - skip to 19-

19 Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. 20 And David rose early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper and took the provisions and went, as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the encampment as the host was going out to the battle line, shouting the war cry. 21 And Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. 22 And David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage and ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers. 23 As he talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him. - skip to v26 -

26 And David said to the men who stood by him, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" 27 And the people answered him in the same way, "So shall it be done to the man who kills him."

28 Now Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle." 29 And David said, "What have I done now? Was it not but a word?" 30 And he turned away from him toward another, and spoke in the same way, and the people answered him again as before.

31 When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him. 32 And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." 33 And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth." 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, 35 I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. 36 Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

38 Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail, 39 and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them." So David put them off. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine. Thus ends the read

You may know how this particular chapter ends. Goliath taunts David. David **runs** toward Goliath, slings one of those little stones at probably the only place where Goliath was vulnerable, his forehead. Goliath drops to the ground. David dispatches Goliath. The Philistines see their champion is more than dead and they run for their lives with the Israelites in pursuit. David becomes a hero and his popularity goes through the roof.

Where did this guy come from? At the beginning of the day, he was just a Tenderfoot, running an errand, and by the end of the day, he was a national treasure, a hero, a legend.

What prepared David to do what no one else was willing to do? What prepared David to have such confidence? How did David prepare himself to face such problems that seemed to paralyze everyone else around him?

From the text, we have a number of hints, some unique to David's life, and apparently insignificant, while some clues have great spiritual ramifications. Each of these were very formative in David's life, while building David's character and his faith in God, which in turn prepared him for Goliath and life's challenges. Let's look at some of these together.

I The first hint of David's preparation is a little comical as I imagined it. In **v12 we are reminded that David is the youngest of 8 boys**. I don't profess to know much about birth-order psychology, but what I do suspect is that when you're the last of 8 boys, several things happen. Parents are tired and are not near as diligent in their parenting efforts. I imagine that David got all the worn-out hand-me-downs and they were well worn by the time he got them.

Now imagine the world from the youngest of 8 boys. Throughout his childhood, he was the runt, the baby brother. Every one of his brothers, by comparison, has been

like a giant. He was in familiar territory. I imagine it was rare if ever that David won a wrestling match. He was the one who was always pinned to the floor and had to cry uncle and he probably rarely won a foot race against his brothers. The odds were always against him.

Remember what Eliab said after hearing his baby brother's bold proclamations? He rebuked David and ridiculed him. Told him to buzz-off. And David says, "What have I don't now?" David couldn't do anything right in his brother's eyes.

David also probably didn't garner much credit from his father Jesse. In the previous chapter when the prophet Samuel went to anoint one of Jesse's sons, all the sons were paraded before Samuel and Samuel continually shunned each one, knowing that God's choice wasn't present. Then finally, after all seven have passed by, Jesse admitted to having one more son. But he's the youngest, he's of no account. But that was the one God has His eye on.

Somehow, through his low and weak status, God was molding a fearless leader, who could stand against giants.

Many times, God likes to take the lowest, and raise them up. God wants to do that so that He gets the glory, so that there's no mistake about His saving grace.

God can use your birth order or any circumstance to mold us into the disciples he wants us to be. Whether you've had a healthy functioning family or a dysfunctional family, God can use it for great things.

II The 2nd hint of David's preparation comes in v28. **Here we see that David Serves faithfully over the small responsibilities of a few sheep.**

David was learning responsibility and those responsibilities were growing. Back in v12, we're told that his father "was already old and advanced in years" and that the three oldest brothers had followed Saul to war. I imagine the chores were picking up and the responsibilities increased for David

One of the greatest things parents seek to instill in their children *is* responsibility. No parent wants a reckless, irresponsible child. Responsibilities may start with picking up toys, brushing the teeth, handling an allowance, to staying home without a babysitter, to getting the keys to the car and so forth. The responsible parents look to see if their

child is responsible in the little things before they are allowed to handle larger responsibilities. It's a natural progression.

God works in the same manner with His children. Jesus said, "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much." (Lk 16:10)

The story is told of a new minister who hopped on a city bus. After he sat down, he realized he was given too much change. He thought to himself that a quarter would not matter to a big bus company. Plus, he reasoned it was a simple gift from God. He should just accept it.

However, as he began to get off at his bus stop, he paused by the door and returned the quarter to the driver. The driver accepted the quarter and asked, "Aren't you the new minister in town? I just wanted to see if your church was worth attending. I'll see Sunday morning."

As the minister got off the bus, he realized he almost sold himself for a lousy quarter. It was a small thing, but he was about to be entrusted with the care of a congregation.

The little things add up to the big things. David was trusted with a few sheep, and God is about to trust David with a whole nation. That's a dramatic leap. It won't happen overnight, but it begins with the small responsibilities in life.

III The next hint of David's preparation is in vvs 34-35. Here David reveals that the trials of yesterday, prepared him for today. In the past he had killed lions & bears, and the giant was just the same.

I don't know if any of you saw this little story, but just last weekend, a family was walking from a lodge in the Big Bend National Park, when the 6yo son of Mr. & Mrs. Jason Hobbs was attacked by a mountain lion.

The father immediately pulled out his pocket knife and stabbed the lion in the chest and it ran away. The boy was rescued and is now recovering.

Any one of us, without hesitation, would immediately risk danger to save our child from harm. But here David is going after lions and bears to save a lamb. This tells me two things: David will never forget that God is the one who rescued him from such problems. David knows that if God can save him from lions and bears, then David knows that God will also save him from a giant. Remembering God's faithfulness in the past prepares us for the future.

The previous battles with lions and bears, also reveals how David was prepared to be a leader. For if David was willing to risk his life for a lamb multiple times, what would David be willing to do for God's chosen people?

Events now, shape and prepare us for tomorrow. Don't curse or always try to escape them. God uses the trials of yesterday, to prepare us for tomorrow.

IV The fourth little hint comes from v38. Saul tries to give David his armor, but David wisely decides to go with what God has given him.

All along life, the world is going to entice us to do and be something that appears to be superior to what we already have. The armor, which not every soldier had, was an invaluable thing to the king and would have been highly treasured by any soldier, helping them to be a better warrior. However, David knew it didn't fit.

The world will try to clothe us with all that it has to offer, but God prepares us with what He thinks is best.

When Moses went into Pharaoh's court, he took the same staff that he had used for years in the wilderness of Midian. When David was going into the valley with Goliath, God wanted him to take the same sling that he had used in the fields with his flock. So David wisely sticks to what he does best, and that's slinging rocks that swinging a sword.

But here's a little tidbit of information that is often overlooked. In v40, we read that David chose 5 smooth stones on his way to slay Goliath. Do you know why he picked up 5? Was it because he was uncertain of his aim? No! I believe it was for another reason. You see, Goliath had four sons and one of them had 24 fingers and toes. David was arming himself to take on the whole family if necessary.

He was ready. He didn't go into battle, looking for an exit. He went looking to do all that would be necessary to do. He was all in.

V The most lasting and significant hint of David's preparation came well before the face-off with Goliath. In the previous chapter, where David is first introduced, the prophet Samuel is there to anoint David as God's chosen king. In v13 we read:

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward.”

In all the glimpses of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, it's most often vague, mysterious and fleeting. That's how the Holy Spirit operated in those days. However, in this instance, when David is anointed the future king, the Spirit not only rushed upon David, but stayed with David from that day forward. At that time, David was the exception. That's the way it was in the old days.

However, that all changed with Jesus. In Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, we are told:

“It's in Christ that you, once you heard the truth and believed it (this Message of your salvation), found yourselves home free—signed, sealed, and delivered by the Holy Spirit.” (Message)

The same Holy Spirit that rushed upon David and prepared him for all that he faced, has been placed as a deposit in every person who confesses Jesus as their Lord and Savior, as a guarantee for our salvation. The Spirit gave David his boldness, and allowed David to not stand on the sidelines, but instead, run toward a 10' tall, intimidating giant and prevail.

Sir Edmund Hillary, the first person to summit Mount Everest once said, "An expedition starts long before the first stage of the actual journey begins. An extended period of planning and organization is necessary to turn a dream into a reality."

Be Prepared. That's the Scout Motto. David, the shepherd boy was prepared for the unexpected.

As David went about his errands, he never imagined that he would come face to face with a giant problem, especially one with four sons. David wasn't expecting it, but the good news for David was that he was prepared for the giant.

From being the youngest of 8 boys, God used David's family circumstances to build his character and prepare him for future trials and leadership.

David handled responsibilities well, taking care of all the little things, which groomed him to eventually be entrusted with taking care of a nation.

All the trials that David faced yesterday, God was using to prove His faithfulness and to prepare David for the trials of tomorrow.

And when David decided to face his giant, he was all in. While everyone else around him merely sat on the sidelines, staring blankly at the enemy, David stepped up.

But most importantly, David was prepared because David had the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit rushed upon David and stayed with him from that moment on. David had the power of the Holy Spirit to face Goliath. God's Spirit, according to Paul, is the spirit of boldness, not of timidity. God's spirit helps us face our giants. God's Spirit has been given to every person who confesses Jesus as their Lord, to help prepare us to do great things for our great God. The greatest of which is to claim the victory over death on the merits of Jesus, making us prepared not only for this life, but the life to come.

If you are not prepared for life's giants, or prepared for eternity, it's my prayer, that you would be prepared, starting today.