

1 Samuel 17:(1a,4-11,19-23),32-49

Confident in God and ready for anything?

The Israelite army, led by Saul, is challenged by one huge, mighty Philistine warrior. They flee in terror, but a lowly shepherd boy, David, is confident that God will fight with him. Refusing conventional armour, he confronts the giant enemy with five stones and a sling.



Bible notes



The confrontation between David and Goliath was about more than size. Alongside his extraordinary height, Goliath wore thick bronze armour and carried a spear tipped with the latest technology, iron. This import from the Aegean civilisation further west gave him a huge advantage over the Israelites, whose weapons were made of softer bronze. All this weaponry misled Goliath into putting his trust in physical resources, whereas David's trust was in God. The story contrasts Goliath's ferocity with the boy David's inner strength. Unlike the demoralised Israelite army, David was not overwhelmed by Goliath's appearance. David's reply to Saul's rebuke demonstrates his physical courage – he had confronted lions and bears, a comparison that dehumanises Goliath. More importantly, he had learnt that real power flows from dependence on God's strength and power to save. So, Saul, perhaps short on options for countering the fear Goliath was causing in his troops, was persuaded to risk his whole army (v.9) on a single combat between David and Goliath. However, the impractical suggestion that David should borrow his armour (v.38) shows that Saul was still focusing on human resources to overcome the enemy. The combat began with the exchange of taunts. Goliath's threats against David depended on his false gods; in reply, David confidently asserted the power of Israel's God to destroy the enemy. They envisioned very different outcomes. Goliath spoke only of David's death and destruction (v.44). David foretold the loss of the whole Philistine army as a worldwide witness to the power of Israel's God. His attack with the slingshot amplified how God's power works: agile, audacious and precisely focused to achieve God's purposes.

First impressions

- Is your faith something to shout about, or something you'd prefer to hide?
- What can we learn from David's confidence?
- How might you step out in faith, this week?



CREATE

Decorate five stones with paints or markers as a reminder to be confident that God is with you.

ACT

Is there something big – local, national or global – that you'd like to tackle? Think of five small things you could do to make a difference, and choose one to act on.

REFLECT



Watch the trailer for the 2016 Paralympics <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=locLk3aYIk> where a diverse range of people showcase their skills, talents and abilities. When one person is told they can't, their response is to confidently scream 'Yes I can'. Have you been told you can't do something? How did it feel and how did you respond?

A prayer of approach

Lord God, the Philistines gathered their forces, ready for battle. Today, so many people are fighting around the world. There's so much we'd like to do to help if we could. But you call us to serve you right where we are. Like David, equip us with the right skills in the right place at the right time, and strengthen us. Amen.



Download the David vs Goliath app to play at home. <https://www.missionalgen.co.uk/david-vs-goliath-app/>