

## I. Introduction

- A. I want us to look at the mother of all underdog stories in the Bible, the story of David and Goliath.
- B. I hope it's a familiar story to you. If it isn't, it will be soon.
- C. But we need to get some background first, because Goliath was not the first giant in David's life. Not the first hulking force of personal destruction. No.
- D. The first giant in David's life was his own father, Jesse. And since we're looking at underdogs, let's start there in David's story.
- E. This is week three in our series called Underdog; reminding us of what to do when the odds are impossible.
- F. Reminder one: Look to God—from the story of King Jehoshaphat.
- G. Reminder two: Keep the faith—from the story of Mephibosheth.
- H. And today, reminder three: know yourself in God—from the story of David and the giant—Jesse his father—oh, and the other giant Goliath.

II. *1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons." 2 And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. 3 Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you.'" 4 So Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" 5 And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice (1 Samuel 16:1-5, NKJV).*

- A. Samuel is a prophet. He is the spiritual leader of his people. And the current king, Saul, hates him. Because Saul is a horrible person and an evil man, and Samuel has nothing good to say about him.
- B. So God sends Samuel to anoint the next king of the Jews.
- C. Samuel will find this king among the sons of Jesse, in Bethlehem, which would one day be called the city of David.
- D. Oh, and just to pull the Bible stories together even more; do you know who Jesse's grandma was? Ruth. And his grandpa was Boaz, the Bible's poster family for grace.
- E. So God sends Samuel to Bethlehem to officially anoint the next king. God said, "For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."
- F. This was important, because God didn't choose the first king; the people did. The people chose Saul, and he was horrible.
- G. And now, God has chosen a new king, and he will be a great blessing to the people.
- H. You know, you're always better off when you let God do the choosing right.
- I. So there goes Samuel to Bethlehem. And the people meet him with fear. What if he came to curse them? Or he came to preach hellfire and brimstone on them?
- J. They ask, "Do you come peaceably?" And he says, "Yes."
- K. So they have some worship mixed with a barbecue, and it's time to meet the sons of Jesse.

III. *6 So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the LORD'S anointed is before Him." 7 but the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:6, 7, NKJV).*

- A. Here is one of the great secrets of surviving an underdog season. Understand that there is a great difference between what you see and what God sees. Just understanding the difference is all you need.
- B. Our country is going through a great crisis right now: a great financial crisis, an economic crisis, a political crisis, a moral crisis. And it's easy to fear, and give up hope, and to think this is the worst thing that could ever happen to us.
- C. But what if this is what it takes to bring us back to God?
- D. What if this is how God brings us to our knees so that we return our hearts back to Him?
- E. We look at the outward appearance—and it's all we can do.
- F. But God looks at the heart.
- G. Along comes Jesse's first son. He is a soldier, tall and manly and strong—impressive.
- H. Samuel takes one look and says, "This must be the guy."
- I. We do that a lot. We are too easily impressed with celebrity, or power, or office, or wealth, or appearance, or fame.
- J. God doesn't care one bit about any of it.
- K. He does not define you that way. He is not looking at the size of your portfolio; He's looking at the quality of your heart.
- L. Some of you got married because of this. You got married because of a good appearance, and got divorced because of a bad heart.
- M. We all do this.
- N. God's truth goes all the way down to bedrock. He is the opposite of superficial. God goes deep. He always does. He doesn't care about the surface stuff. He is in the business of reality.
- O. And no matter how impressive a man or woman is on the outside; God is looking at the heart.
- P. There is something wrong with Eliab's heart.
- Q. We don't see it yet, but we will. There is something wrong with his heart. He is not fit to be a king.
- R. So that brings us the second son of Jesse.

IV. *8 So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." 9 Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." 10 Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these" (1 Samuel 16:8-10, NKJV).*

- A. Not only is God uninterested in shallow stuff, He's uninterested in numbers too.
- B. He doesn't give up and settle for second best just because it's taking a long time.
- C. God is in no hurry. He is very old. He takes f-o-r-e-v-e-r.
- D. Now Samuel is confused. Every son of Jesse has passed him by, and every son of Jesse has been rejected by God.
- E. What's going on?

V. *11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down [to eat] till he comes here." (1 Samuel 16:11, NKJV).*

- A. What does this say about Jesse's confidence in David? Is this a father who is proud of his son? Is this a father who believes in his son? Is this a nurturing, loving, encouraging dad who fortifies his child's heart with praise and affection and the confidence that you can do anything you set your heart to?
- B. Word comes from God to bring your sons before the prophet and you omit one? Really?
- C. What happens when a father fails to bless a child? This is one of the greatest giants you can ever face.
- D. God designed the family so that a father would fill the emotional fuel tanks of his children. That fuel can last you a lifetime, if it happens right.
- E. Everything runs smoothly: relationships, education, emotional health, satisfaction, marriage, parenting, pursuing a career, ministry—having a nurturing father in the home is one of the greatest predictors of success in anybody's life.
- F. And here is why in two words: **IDENTITY FORMATION**. You need your dad to find yourself.
1. This was one of my great struggles because I knew I was going to be a pastor when I was eight. And all the way through childhood, I wanted my dad to affirm me in spiritual things. But he couldn't. He didn't know the Lord then, and he couldn't speak the language of faith.
  2. I was confused, and didn't know how to please him.
  3. So I tried the sport he loved: baseball. My dad was a triple-A player for the Chicago Cubs. I tried baseball. And I was paralyzed with fear in baseball—I literally couldn't swing the bat because what if my dad saw me swing and miss.
- G. **IDENTITY FORMATION**: You need your dad to find yourself.
- H. But what if your dad treats you like you're invisible? What if your dad introduces his children to a spiritual leader and he conveniently leaves you out? Or what if he abandoned you? Or left your family? Or stayed in the family, but was too busy with work to pay attention to you? Or what if he hurt you or used you?
- I. What if dad didn't help you find yourself?
- J. Then you have a giant in your life. Goliath wasn't the first giant David faced in his life. Jesse was. His own dad was.
- K. So Samuel calls for David and here's what happened:
- VI. *12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes and good-looking. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!" 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramai (1 Samuel 16:12, 13, NKJV).*
- A. Here comes a sun burnt boy, somewhere between 10 and 15 years old.
  - B. And God says, "He's the one!"
  - C. David says nothing and does nothing here. He shows up, and God taps him to be the next king. No reactions are recorded. No comments from dad or brother or anybody.
  - D. Samuel anoints him, and they finish their meal, and the end.
  - E. But it does say the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. And this is all important.
  - F. This is the qualification for ministry. This is the qualification we need to do the work of God—to make a difference.
  - G. We need the Spirit of God, in power.
  - H. We need the Holy Spirit. We need Him to fill us, and anoint us, and empower us.
  - I. *6 So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6, NKJV).*
  - J. Every time I preach, I ask God's Spirit to fill me. I tell God I can't do it, and I don't have the strength to make a difference. I stand over there off stage, and ask God to fill me with His spirit.
  - K. And then I say, "Faith is the victory."
  - L. I ask, I believe, and I walk out here and preach. That's how it goes for me.
  - M. How about for you? Can your business do okay without God's Spirit? Your marriage? Your family? Do you seek Him? It's good to have a business plan—and you should—but it's better to seek the Lord and His power on top of your business plan.
  - N. Your home is your ministry.
  - O. Your work is your ministry.
  - P. Your neighborhood is your ministry.
  - Q. And in each case ministry doesn't happen without the Holy Spirit.
  - R. David discovered that as a kid. Off he goes back to his sheep, and life returns to normal—except that David knows one day he will be king.
  - S. In the next chapter, the Philistines attack and the giant Goliath issues a challenge that none of God's people are willing to take. He challenges the Jews to send out one soldier to fight him. Whoever loses that fight, their whole army surrenders, and their nation become slaves to the other nation.
  - T. Goliath is massive. He could dunk a basketball without jumping; his head would hit the rim.
  - U. Nobody wants to fight him.
  - V. Enter David. His dad sends him to the battle with food for his brothers, and David hears Goliath's challenge. This is what he says.
- VII. *26 Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "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?" (1 Samuel 17:26, NKJV).*
- A. **IDENTITY FORMATION**
  - B. One of the most important questions you can ever ask is, "Who am I? What is my identity in the world?"
  - C. And the world will give you one answer.
  - D. God will give you another.
  - E. One of the secrets of being a successful underdog is that you find yourself in God. Not in your crazy parents. Not in the dysfunctional culture around you.
  - F. But in God you are who He says you are. You draw your identity from Him.
  - G. Who am I?
  - H. David would say: we are the armies of the living God!
  - I. **IDENTITY FORMATION**
  - J. He found himself in God.

- K. Who are you?
- L. And most importantly: who are you when a giant towers over you? Whether that giant is a medical report or a financial report or peer pressure or an academic test or a job interview or a marriage proposal you want to make, but you're freaked out.
- M. Who are you when a giant towers over you—whether that giant is a loss, or a pain, or a grief, or a mistake, or guilt, or a shame?
- N. David the underdog became David the champion because he found himself in God.
- O. Everyone else tried to define him, but he grabbed hold of God's definition, and never let go.
1. Jesse defined him: you're nobody—at best a shepherd and errand boy.
  2. Eliab (his oldest brother) defined him: you're a cocky little brat. *28 Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle" (1 Samuel 17:28, NKJV).*
  3. King Saul defined him: you're just a powerless kid. *33 And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth" (1 Samuel 17:33, NKJV).*
  4. Goliath defined him: you're an insignificant speck. *43 So the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods (1 Samuel 17:43, NKJV).*
- P. What if he had listened to them? What if he had taken it in?
- Q. Every day the world defines you. Father, family, friends, enemies, culture, media, acne treatment commercials, cover girls—you are bombarded with messages every single day. These messages tell you who you are and who you aren't. They tell you your worth. They tell you your value. They tell you where you stand in the pecking order of life.
- R. And every one of them is wrong.
- S. Because no matter what everybody else told David about himself, **GOD TOLD HIM HE WAS A KING.** And that is the identity he embraced. He shed the other identities and embraced God's.
- T. He found himself in God.
- U. David, who are you?
- VIII. *45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD'S, and He will give you into our hands" (1 Samuel 17:45-47, NKJV).*
- A. David, who are you? Royal child of an invincible God—a warrior God who owns the battle and towers over the giants that tower over me—a triumphant God who renders irrelevant the size of the sword or the spear or the pebble or the debt or the tumor or the threat or the womb—because when God is in the house, size doesn't matter.
- B. We've got to get to the point where the voice of the giant sinks like a rock into the ocean of our Heavenly Father's declaration of who we are and what we can be in this world. And hear God's voice above every other voice.
- C. You have to know yourself in God.
- D. How?
- E. Here are four pointers to make this real and practical, and you might want to jot these down.
- IX. Four Pointers
- A. Expect opposition.
1. The story of your life is the story of a brutal assault on your heart by the one who knows what you could be fears it (John Eldredge).
  2. The devil's biggest nightmare is you turning into David. You stepping up against the giant. You rising up to your full potential in Christ. He dreads that day, and hurls his fiery darts against that kind of faith.
  3. Identity formation isn't just emotional and psychological; though that is part of it. It is at root spiritual. That means you discovering your identity is top priority for God and the angels, and the top target of the devil and his demons.
  4. You have an enemy.
  5. His target is your identity.
  6. You need to find yourself in God.
  7. The devil wants you to find yourself anyplace else but in God.
  8. When Jesse and Eliab and Saul and Goliath and everybody else questioned David's ability and worth and identity—did he give up? No. He pressed through and became a hero.
  9. The first discovery is simply this: every time you try to rise up to your true identity in Christ, you will face opposition. It is normal. It goes with the territory. It's the battle we're in. Expect opposition.
- B. Blunder forward.
1. You can't outline a life with God. You can't plan it or predict it.
  2. I had a friend who tried. He wrote out a plan for his life and kept his schedule and started crying because he wasn't yet married the year he planned to get married.
  3. I thought, "Really?"
  4. One of my life verses is this one:
    - a) *Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; but much increase comes by the strength of an ox (Proverbs 14:4, NKJV).*
  5. What does that mean? Nothing good happens in life without a mess. Plans go south. Schedules get thrown out of whack. Money goes away. People argue. Illness happens. Government regulators come knocking at the door.
  6. So what should we do—give up?
  7. Or keep the faith and blunder forward.
  8. We have to be like David; moving forward with faith, and a few last minute pebbles. He had no plan. Planning is good, and important, but we make our plans and God makes His.
  9. No matter what

10. We have to say, I will never surrender the exalted position that is mine by divine inheritance, and sink to the level of self-doubt, criticism, and quitting. I will rise up, stand tall, improvise, and keep moving forward as long as God gives me breath and Jesus gives me strength.
  11. It might not look pretty, but my job is faith and God's job is outcomes.
- C. Esteem Christ above all
1. This is one of the great paradoxes of our faith.
  2. Misplaced pride always backfires. What if you're not as hot as you think you are?
  3. Look at Saul, look at Eliab—huddling in their tents; doing nothing about Goliath.
  4. Along comes David. His courage embarrasses them. Where did it come from?
  5. He sat on the hills, watching sheep, and contemplating God in light of the Word of God (see Psalm 1).
  6. His father never mentored him, but God did. David wrote:
    - a) *You are the helper of the fatherless (Psalm 10:14).*
    - b) *You are a father of the fatherless (Ps 68:5)*
    - c) *And that God will come down to do justice to the fatherless and oppressed (Ps 10:18).*
  7. The more he esteemed God, the more he esteemed himself. Because he knew his identity was wrapped up in God.
  8. And so is yours.
  9. The foundation for all self esteem is that you see yourself united to Jesus Christ, and under the watchful love of God.
  10. God loves you as much as He loves Jesus Christ. If you doubt the love of God, it means you doubt His love for Christ.
  11. Start there, and fix that. Esteem Christ and you'll find yourself in God.
  12. *When a heart is fixated on God through Scripture, that heart will be a trustworthy guide. When a heart is fixated on its own agenda and distorts Scripture to support that agenda, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9).*
  13. Let Scripture build your esteem of yourself by first building a healthy esteem of Christ.
- D. Never be afraid to be yourself in Christ.
1. Your whole self, and nothing but yourself.
  2. Before David went out to fight Goliath, Saul lent him his armor. It was too big. It didn't fit. He couldn't move, and he couldn't fight. He didn't feel comfortable in it.
  3. Logic said he should take it.
  4. But his own heart knew it wasn't for him.
  5. When I say to be yourself, I don't mean your dysfunctional self. I don't mean your dangerous self. I don't mean your destructive or damaging self.
  6. I mean the self according to the call of God.
  7. Does God call you to speak for Jesus? Then say the words.
  8. Does God call you to provide water and medicine overseas? Then go overseas and give that cup of cold water.
  9. Does God call you to be honest on a test? Then be honest on the test and let God handle the outcomes.
  10. Does God call you west while everyone else calls you east?
  11. Follow your heart as your heart follows God.
- E. We look at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.
- F. David messed up royally. He was one of the most contradictory people in the whole Bible. He had huge victories and horrendous falls.
- G. You would never want your children to follow in his steps to the dark side.
- H. But even still, God said David is a man after my own heart.
- I. Even after his failures. Even after his fall. Even after his death.
- J. God said David is a man after my own heart.
- K. He knew a secret every underdog needs to know: victory means finding yourself in God, and letting God take care of the rest.