

FIVE FORKS BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH
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SCRIPTURE: *1 Samuel 17:32-50*

DATE: *August 9th, 2020*

LOCATION: *Auditorium (Bill)*

SERMON: *“Let No One Lose Heart”*

(Acknowledgement to Tim Keller for various sermons on the life of David.)

Good morning, Five Forks Church, glad to be with those of you who have come out this morning, and glad to be joined by those who you who are tuning in to the live stream.

To get started, I'd like to ask you two questions. First question: **Do you know what it is to have a hard conversation in front of you?** Where you're going to have to say something to someone that isn't easy to say. I've had to tell couples who asked me to do their wedding, *“I'm sorry, I can't...it doesn't appear that you're ready.”* Through the years I've had to walk into the office of someone on staff, and enter into a difficult conversation. Many of you can recall difficult conversations you've had at work. I've had to go to people after insisting that I knew what I was talking about and say, *“I'm sorry...I was wrong....you were right.”* Hard conversations.

Second question: **Do you know what it is to find yourself in a hard situation, where you're tempted to compromise or set aside your values?** You're with a group of people...could be family gathering, at the workplace, maybe out socially...and somebody suggests doing something that you know as a follower of Jesus would not be good for you...but everybody else is on board? Maybe you are all by yourself, and the temptation is strong to get away with something that you know isn't right.

Our Sermon Series is called **Make or Break**...taking five weeks to look at a number of things that can either make us or break us as we look to follow Jesus. This week we're going to be talking about **Courage**.

And **one aspect of courage is being able to say and do the right things even if it's hard.** And what we're going to be talking about this morning is so daunting, so overwhelming - because these things happen all the time - that it would be easy to dismiss it before we even get started. So let's do this...let's just take a small bite...think about a hard conversation you needed to have or a difficult spot you've found yourself in recently, where you found yourself lacking the courage to do what was right.

Don't allow this topic to overwhelm you...just invite Jesus to speak to you this morning and teach you whatever He has in mind.

The message is titled **Let No One Lose Heart.** Words spoken by David, and throughout this series we're looking at a number of events that transpire in his life...so go ahead and open up your Bible, get out your device, or follow along on the screen as we head to **I Samuel chapter 17** where David's story continues.

As you find your way there, let me remind you that every week we're going to be asking the same three questions: **What's Happening?...What's Noteworthy?...**and most importantly: **What's Your Next Step?**

First question...

1. WHAT'S HAPPENING?

I Samuel 17 begins with the Israelites and the Philistines preparing for war. They set up their camps on opposite sides of a valley, the Israelites occupying one hill and the Philistines another.

Every morning and evening for what turned out to be forty days, this hulking giant of a man – Goliath – emerges from the Philistine camp and begins to bellow and shout across the valley to the Israelite camp:

I Samuel 17:8b-9 “Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.”

I Samuel 17:11 On hearing the Philistines words, Saul (the current king of Israel) and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

David, who had been tending to the sheep back in Bethlehem, comes to the camp bringing food for his older brothers, and reaches the camp just as the Saul’s army was going out to their daily spot, shouting a war cry as they did. David found and began talking with his brothers, when Goliath..

I Samuel 17:23 ...the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance (*this has been going on for 40 days*), and David heard it. When the Israelites saw the man, they all ran from him in great fear.

40 days of this! At some point this has to be getting old...that war cry that the Israelites were shouting every day when taking their battle position was probably getting less and less enthusiastic with each passing day, don’t you think? By the fortieth day they knew that within a few minutest they’d be running away in fear. Something’s got to give.

And what gives, is that for the first time, David hears Goliath’s challenge.

I Samuel 17:32-37 David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.

And thus begins this back and forth between Saul and David. “*You’re just a boy.*” “*The LORD has delivered me from the lion and the bear and he’ll deliver me from this Philistine.*”

So David gets his staff, his sling and 5 smooth stones, and make his way down into the valley.

Goliath is outraged when he sees David approaching, seemingly unarmed. “*Am I a dog that you come at me with sticks?*”

At this point David begins running to meet him, takes a stone out of his bag, slings it, striking Goliath in the forehead.

I Samuel 17:49b The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.

With nothing more than a sling and a stone, David kills Goliath.

Next week we'll pick up and see the reaction of Saul and his son Jonathon to all of this...but let's stop here and ask our second question:

2. WHAT'S NOTEWORTHY?

What are some of the things that really stand out in this passage? What's interesting is that we have 3 prominent men here, each with something to teach us about courage. Let's first talk about...

A. The Courage of Saul

Which, in reality, is no courage at all. Remember Saul's reaction when Goliath would appear...

I Samuel 17:11b ...Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

While we know that God is going to remove Saul from the throne, it's losing the throne and becoming subject to the Philistines that is perhaps Saul's greatest fear.

What would you say are some of your greatest fears? I think that **one thing that many of us fear is being rejected...laughed at...embarrassed... or even humiliated.** This is one of the worst feelings in the world isn't it?

When I was young, I apparently had a problem with dropping things. Middle school, lots of kids gathering at McDonalds after a basketball game. Carrying a tray from the counter to my table with my Big Mac, fries and Coke, when suddenly the coke slides off my tray and onto the

floor...everybody in the place laughs as one of the cheerleaders walks, saying, “*Smooth move.*”

Senior in High School, over at the Valley Mall walking around with a girl...we each got an ice cream cone at Friendly’s, very generous helping, they piled the ice cream up nice and high...didn’t have it in my hand too long before the ice cream falls off the cone and onto the floor of the mall. She was more gracious than the cheerleader, but still...

There’s that kind of embarrassment., things that just happen in the normal course of life...but there are times when we are so afraid of standing out and being laughed or mocked or scorned that *we lack the courage* to do the right thing....and end up compromising or even setting aside our values.

There’s a pastor over in Hagerstown, his name is Don Stevenson, he writes a weekly column that appears in the paper over there. And in a recent column he wrote these words: “**Fear is a good servant, but a terrible master.**”

There are times when fear can serve us well...keeps us from doing things that we probably shouldn’t do. But sometimes we display the courage of Saul...fear of rejection or embarrassment takes over, and instead of following Jesus....we end up following everybody else.

There’s a second prominent man in this passage, so let’s talk about...

B. The Courage of Goliath

Unlike Saul, Goliath actually has courage. As David makes his way across the valley, Goliath bellows...

I Samuel 17:44 “Come here,’ he said, “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!”

Nothing like this coming from the mouth of Saul, right?

Where does Goliath's courage come from? Well, he's referred to as a "Champion" a number of times in this passage, so this isn't his first rodeo. It would appear that he's got plenty of experience in this area.

Goliath also is surely aware of his imposing stature...he knows he is highly weaponized. David has a sling and some stones...Goliath has layered armor, a javelin, a spear, and even a shield bearer to go before him, warding off any arrows, spears and the like that might come his way. Because of this, he's got tremendous self-confidence.

With all of this going for him, what's Goliath's problem?

He has courage, but **he is trusting in things that can only take him so far.** The things of man, you might say...but in the end, his strength, his armor, his shield-bearer probably had to find another line of work...even his self-confidence can only take him so far.

Last week I talked about how our culture places so much emphasis on outward appearance. Another point of emphasis in our current culture is this concept of "believing in yourself."

I get this, because so many of us just beat ourselves up...and we beat ourselves down. But believing in yourself can only take you so far.

A couple of years ago Forbes magazine published an article called **14 Ways to Conquer Fear**...and most, if not all of them dealt with the power of positive thinking: *Embrace it...Visualize Success...have a positive attitude.*

This is what our culture is telling us these days. You can do it! And we want to believe this. We want to believe in ourselves. And we should...as long as we are fully aware that this can only take us so far.

If we're trusting in ourselves...maybe not our physical stature or weapons, but other skills that we possess...these can only take us so far, and there'll be times – like Goliath - where we fell flat on our face.

Where do we find the kind of courage that will allow us to speak when it's right to do so?

Where do we find the courage to follow Jesus, rather than a friend, the crowd, or the culture?

One more prominent person to look at in this passage...let's talk about...

C. The Courage of David

Talk about what looks to be – for David - a very difficult spot. He's going up against a guy twice his size, equipped with the latest and greatest in weaponry. David's in a tough spot, but he knows that the right thing is for somebody to take a stand against this guy.

The thing is, David doesn't see it as such a tough spot, and why? Because he is fully aware that the Lord is in this with him.

When David brought food to the camp and first heard Goliath's challenge, his first words to Saul were...

I Samuel 17:32a "Let no one lose heart..."

What David is actually saying here is... ***"Let no one's heart fall."***

Yes it looks like we're in a tough spot, but don't let your heart falter, David said to Saul. And he went down into the valley and...

I Samuel 17:45-47 (paraphrase) ...said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty...this day the LORD will hand you over to me...All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's."

David has an understanding of how life works, more importantly, he has an understanding of how God works...he has prior experience with God's provision and protection as well...remember, fighting lions and bears while tending to the flock. David knows he's not walking down into that valley alone...this battle is the Lord's.

Those hard conversations that lie before me, those words that are sometimes hard to say...those difficult spots where I feel this pressure to compromise by beliefs and values...I need to have this understanding of how is God working in my life. He's in this with me, and He is for me...and never will he abandon me.

Now, admittedly, I have a lot of growing to do in this area because I still have no desire to be laughed at, embarrassed or humiliated. None of us do, I'm sure. But I'm looking to become more and more aware of His presence in my life, so that when these hard times come, and I remember that I am not alone...this is when I have found the courage to do the hard thing, the right thing.

So, we've seen the courage of Saul, Goliath and David...in light of whatever God has revealed to you this morning...

3. WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP?

What has He shown you, and what step or steps is He asking you to take?

For some, it's possible that He is leading you to Himself, inviting you to **Make the decision to follow Him.**

I realize that this decision in and of itself takes a certain amount of courage, because when anyone takes this step, they really have no idea what's ahead. Should you be excited, apprehensive, or both? I just want you to know that it will be okay, and I hope you're able to understand and take seriously what Jesus is actually offering you.

As we read about David walking down into this valley, we see he's walking not just for himself but he's walking on behalf of his fellow Israelites...he's not just fighting for himself, he's fighting for every Israelite man, woman and child...and his victory became their victory.

This event points ahead to an even greater event, when Jesus walked into the ultimate valley of death on *your* behalf, and He didn't just *risk* His life, He *gave* His life...and His victory over both sin and death becomes your victory over sin and death.

If you do take this step and accept Jesus' invitation to follow Him, please be kind enough to let me know, so that I can pray with you and for you...and help you in whatever way I can.

Now, for some of you, perhaps your next step is to **Ask yourself, "Where am I looking for courage?"**

I asked you at the beginning to identify at least one occasion recently where you lacked the courage to enter into a conversation or make your way out of difficult spot...there are probably numerous ones to choose from.

Were you aware of Jesus' presence or was He absent from your thinking? Many of you would say you've already taken the step of following Jesus. And that's great, let's all of us make sure that following Jesus is what we're actually doing.

I've made the mistake of going about my day thinking I'm pretty well equipped, with Biblical knowledge in one hand and previous experience in another. Jesus is somewhere, but not where He's looking to be...not where He needs to be.

As we recall these occasions where courage was lacking, understand that Jesus is looking to help each of us work through these. He's not looking to *break* you, but transform you, *making* you into someone that will look to Him to help you find the courage to do the hard thing...the right thing.

So the first step in finding your courage in Jesus is to recognize what went wrong during those times when you haven't.

Which leads to this final suggestion: For many of us, our next step is to this week, **Look to Jesus to help you do what's right, even when it's hard.**

When I say "Look to Jesus"...here's an example of what it might look like. When I know I have a hard conversation in front of me, there's a part of me that wants to just put it off, but you can only do that for so long. The night before I have one of these conversations, I don't sleep well...it's just hanging over my head. And so in the middle of the night, unable to sleep, it's

wrestling through all of this and talking through all of this with Jesus, and then fully aware of His presence with me, I find the fortitude to follow through and say what needs to be said.

If we're going to be a church of Jesus followers, then we need to do it not just when it's easy, but when it's hard. And when those hard things come, here are some signs that would indicate that you are truly following Jesus..

First, when we say or do the right thing, we do it confidently, but humbly. We're not arrogant, we're not smug, we're not condescending. We take a stand for what's right, but we do it graciously. It's one thing to speak and to act, it's another to speak and act as Jesus would.

A second indication that you are following Jesus is that you enter into these hard things fully confident of Jesus' presence with you...but also fully aware that there is no guarantee that it will go the way you want it to.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, three men of faith who found themselves in a tough position...they took courage in the Living God and were committed to Him whether he saved them from the fiery furnace or not. It ended up going their way. Corrie Ten Boom...Nate Saint...many others...they took courage in the Living God and still they lost their lives.

This is the kind of courage I'm looking for...not just aware that Jesus is with me, but with me no matter which way things go. If you possess this kind of courage, it is a sign that He is transforming you, making you more and more like Him...and He will use you to be a difference maker in your home and in this community.

PRAYER

BENEDICTION

In Romans 8 we read these words that speak to the courage we long for:

Romans 8:31, 34,35,37 What then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?...Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

When hardship comes this week – and it will come – may courage also come, fully aware of Jesus' presence and the love He has for you.

