

**THURSDAY, 4/30/20**

**SERIES: Choosing Faith Over Fear**

**Speaker: Nat Crawford (w/Arnie & Cara)**

**Title: Samuel Pt. 1 (of 3)**

September 11<sup>th</sup> is a day that stands out in our memory. September 11<sup>th</sup> was the day 4 terror attacks occurred in the United States. These attacks were unique because they involved airplanes. After those planes crashed into various locations, the airlines knew this would affect their industry. Two airline competitors were both faced with the same giant: unforeseen challenges and changes in their businesses. United Airlines CEO responded to the attacks by sending out a memo to his employees saying, “What happened on September 11<sup>th</sup> was horrible, and it will hurt our industry. I want you to be prepared for job loss, cuts in wages, and problems we are unprepared for. Prepare for the worse.”

Southwest Airlines CEO saw the same giant but sent out a memo to his employees saying, “What happened on September 11<sup>th</sup> was horrible and will hurt our industry. But I want you to know we at Southwest Airlines are committed to you and our customers. We don’t know for sure what will happen in the future, but we will be okay. Let’s do this together.”

And the rest is history. United Airlines has continued to struggle as an organization. Southwest has continued to be the only profitable airline for 46 years straight. Two leaders. Two different responses to a giant. Two very different results.

You see, people will see what you really believe, not in what you say, but rather how you react to the events in your life. How you react reveals what it is you believe about yourself, but also about God.

Today in 1 Samuel 17, we’ll see how two different leaders respond to a literal giant. Their reaction will show what they really believe about themselves and, more importantly, about God.

In Chapter 16, Samuel, the prophet, goes to Bethlehem and anoints the shepherd David as Israel’s next appointed king. We discover it’s not the outward appearance that counts; it’s all about the heart in its posture towards God.

That's an important truth to remember. God doesn't care about what you look like, what you wear, what kind of car you drive, or how much money is in your account. What he cares about is your heart. Jesus said in Luke 6:45, "for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."<sup>1</sup> What you believe will manifest itself in how you react, how you live, how you speak. You can't hide it. Your heart will be revealed. And your heart is what matters to God. That's why God chose David to be the next and future king. It wasn't his stature or good looks. What we learn from 1 Samuel is that King Saul had all that. But that left much to be desired. So God chooses **David because of his heart – his character over the outside.**

### **Discussion:**

N: Now before we even get into the text today, I want to ask you guys about God's viewpoint versus our own. We live in a culture that is very impressed with the exterior, chiseled abs, platinum blonde hair, nicest car, the company you work for, or the title on your business cards. But God really doesn't care about that, does He? Cara, what are your thoughts on this?

C: Well, I'm in complete agreement with God. I know He doesn't care about that stuff. I think, well, I'm a woman, so I think we're living in a culture that expects us to look like a magazine cover 24/7. So women get a lot of pressure there and I think it's best we find a healthy balance between what is healthy. We need to check our motives. So probably working on the inside before we put too much emphasis on the outside, and it goes for men too. Men are constantly sold this idea that that's how women are supposed to look. Men are visual and so, married men in particular, I think you're challenged a lot about whether or not you want to continue to love the old model or trade her in on a new model. But when we've been talking about trials, one thing that I'm confident in, is that my husband and I have been together a long time, and we've weathered trials together, and it's sort of like my relationship with the Lord. We've weathered trials together, and so my love for Jesus grows and grows through those trials. And my love for my husband grows through those trials, because at the end of the day, we get to do the most humiliating thing that human beings get to do, which is to grow old together and start rubbing Preparation H on parts of our body. That probably we never anticipated when we first went into it, you know?

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 6:45). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

N: Very true. And I think you bring on an important point that it's a partnership, with possibly your spouse, but more importantly with God. And this comes back again to choosing faith or fear. Do we trust God or do we not? And when we trust God and what He says, we view things from the right perspective. It's not about the exterior, it's not about people's looks or a title or anything like that, but rather it all comes back to our heart and motive. Arnie, would you agree with that and what are your thoughts?

A: Yeah, I think it's much more an issue in our society with women than men. I've talked to a lot of guys who maybe complain about their wives, and when you really, you take a look at them, and you think, Oh my goodness, you've let yourself go. There is definitely a double standard. And guys tend to think completely different about themselves than what women struggle with. And so maybe women would deal with fear in a different way, and fear of not being attractive to their husbands, where I think a lot of dudes are just like, they have no fear of that, because they think they're pretty good looking and the pressure isn't there. But the fear comes out in other ways with men, and where they may over identify with their careers, with what they're doing. And then you've got all of these issues with COVID, and it's just the same root cause, which causes us to be stuck spiritually. But I think it's manifested quite a bit differently with women, wouldn't you think so, Cara?

C: Well, I just kind of laughed at that, because I've many times have seen the guy driving the pickup truck, with the sticker in the window that says, No Fat Chicks. And then when you drive up next to him and you see what he looks like....woosh!

A: Yup, yup. It's that good old double standard, [Right].

C: Well it just goes to show you we're all under attack.

N: The reality is if we buy into the value system of the world, we're going to be in trouble. And as we're going to see in today's text, these people chose based on the outward appearance, rather than what was inside the heart. And when we buy into that, we're destined to fail. And especially as Christians, we need to live in a way and believe differently than the culture does. I mean, I love what Ephesians 2:10 says, that God makes us a masterpiece. And so for those who are struggling today, buying into the philosophy of the world, the value system of the world that

says, you're not good enough, you're not smart enough, you're not pretty enough, or X, Y, Z, God says, stick that information in the trash, because **you are a masterpiece**. I care about the heart and not about the outward appearance.

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Just before we pick it up in Chapter 17, David becomes anointed, and we're told that God's Spirit leaves King Saul. It leaves Saul and moves to David. Saul becomes tormented by an evil spirit, and David soothes the king's spirit by playing his harp. David would become King Saul's armor-bearer. And that's where we pick it up 1 Samuel 17.

Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh which belongs to Judah, and they camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. <sup>2</sup> Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array to encounter the Philistines. <sup>3</sup> The Philistines stood on the mountain on one side while Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them. <sup>4</sup> Then a champion came out from the armies of the Philistines named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six <sup>[a]</sup>cubits and a span. ...<sup>8</sup> He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, "Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. <sup>9</sup> If he is able to fight with me and <sup>[d]</sup>kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and <sup>[e]</sup>kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us." <sup>10</sup> Again the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together." <sup>11</sup> When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. (ESV, 1 Sam 17:1-11)

The Israelite army is camped out and ready for battle. We don't know how many Israelite soldiers were present. We don't know how many Philistine soldiers were there. But what we do know is that there was one soldier who stood out from the rest: Goliath, the giant. He was a giant of a man standing 9 feet tall and was decked out in head to toe armor. He was big, and he looked undefeatable. He was a giant of a problem.

Two things stick out in this passage is first the challenge the Philistines suggest: one-on-one combat. This wasn't unheard of in the ancient Near East, but it was uncommon. It is likely that this was a common method by the Philistines, especially with a warrior like Goliath.

The second thing that sticks out is the Israelite army's response to Goliath. It says they were greatly afraid. They were terrified. They were stopped dead in their tracks, and they were paralyzed with fear.

It's easy for us to read this and say, It's just one man. You have God on your side. What's your problem? But then, if we're honest, would we react any differently? Do we react any differently today?

**We all have giants in our lives.** Probably not the literal giant. If you do have a literal giant problem, e-mail me. I want to see it! But for the rest of us, we all are facing a giant. Of this, I'm sure.

What do I mean by a giant? A challenge that humanly speaking looks like it will defeat you. When you think of it, when you see it, you're paralyzed with fear.

What is your giant? Is it the addiction you have to pornography or alcohol? Is it the layoff notice you received last week, and you're only 5 years away from retirement? Is the giant you're facing an estranged spouse or child? Is it the house payment when you're bank account shows \$2? Is it your health with COVID-19? Is it now you're a single parent working full-time, but now trying to be a homeschooler as well. What is your giant?

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N: So I'm just curious. In light of COVID-19 Arnie, what giants are you facing as an individual, but also in the ministry?

A: Yeah, these are really times filled with tremendous opportunity here at Back to the Bible. It just so happened, it's really God's timing. It's certainly not that we're so smart, but we've been working for about a year and a half on a new platform that allows you to disciple groups of people. And this COVID-19 came out, and it just so happened that our new discipleship app came out, really at the same time. And it's a part of our discipleship methodology, where you can disciple the individual, or you can disciple groups, and it kind of puts it all together for the pastors. So at Back to the Bible, it's been a tremendous challenge for us. We're launching this, we don't charge for it. We feel called to do this, to help the church, especially the smaller church, to be able to meet people beyond the constraints of their building.

So that's been a tremendous challenge. We've had lots of churches turn to us for help and so

we're working through that. Also during a time of recession, giving's always a worry, but the Lord continues to provide. So on a ministry standpoint, I feel we're stronger than ever.

And then on a personal side, you know, this isolation thing is an interesting thing. You can get, fall much deeper into your work, and into your calling, and that can be a good thing or a bad thing. Here again, it's opportunity. And so overall, both as a ministry, I think we're doing very strongly in this time, and personally as well. I don't tend to be fear-based, and then certainly, you don't want to be stupid either. So it's definitely a challenging time. Cara, how about you?

C: What are the giants I'm facing? [Yes.] [Yeah.] Well, I always find the biggest giant is myself, with self-doubt and confidence and those things. You just want to make sure, I'm honoring God through everything. I found that a few weeks ago, my attitude was really stinky, and so I really had to dig out of a pit, and I'm not sure why that is. So I've been talking to God about that and reflecting on it. I love people. If I didn't love people so much, I wouldn't want them saved so badly. But I found myself not wanting to go out, because I was just so annoyed with how people were reacting to fear, not even making eye contact with you when you would go to the grocery store, and just acting like you had cooties. It was like I went back to the first grade. So I was just really struggling with people, and I didn't like that, because I do want people saved and I do love them. So I would say the biggest giant is usually myself and my own attitude, and the sin I'm sitting in that I've got to dig out of, and only God can do that for me. So that's where I really love goTandem, because I can reprogram it to go after, help me go after, the giant that I'm facing within myself.

N: Yeah. I think that's such a good point that no two days are exactly the same, and the challenges that I may have been battling yesterday, the giants I was struggling with yesterday or last week, could be very different than they are today. And that's why goTandem is such a powerful tool to get God's Word in our hands when we need it, for the things that we're struggling with today. That's awesome. Well, we're going to talk more about David's battle with the literal giant in the days ahead, but we are all in the midst of a battle and we all are facing giants and I think you're exactly right. One of our biggest giants, it's ourselves, but we're all facing giants and we're in a battle. So what would you tell our listeners who just need enough strength for today? They can't even think about tomorrow, they can't even think about 30 days ahead. How would you encourage them for today?

C: Well, I think they already have a leg up because they're in the Word of God. They're listening to good Bible teaching - Thank you, Nat. And they believe, if they have faith that God tells the truth, that He's present. If you weren't doing that, if you're not in His Word and you don't have God, you're still going to have your giant. Your problem will still be there, but you're not going to have God. So you're going to be okay. You just need to stand firm in what you believe to be true about God.

A: Yeah. And I think especially being engaged in Scripture, it reminds you you've already won the battle. I mean that is what is so exciting about being a Christ follower is there's already victory.

N: Yeah, I think in times like this, it's easy to get focused on the people around us and their reactions to the situation, but we really need to not worry about other people in regards to their reaction, because the reality is for those without hope, they don't know what to do. They don't know where to turn. They're listening to different sources for information, and so they're going off of what they know to be true and what they're focusing on. So our responsibility in the midst of a battle is to focus on what we're focusing on, particularly God and His Word and our reaction to it. And based on our reaction, we can have a huge impact on those around us, especially those who are far from God. Cara, you're a mom of a teen and preteen. I know what it's like trying to parent three young boys ages 12 and under. And it seems like I've got a lot of giants right now. My wife is really struggling, because there's so much going on. So what are the giants that you guys are facing as a family?

C: Well, do you, I'm sure everybody has felt this, but especially when it comes to your kids, and each kid is so unique. I guess I just want to know if I'm doing the right things. You know, I want them to love Jesus. This age, especially this teen/preteen, I want them to make their faith their own. I know they're looking at me. They see us watching TV or looking at a news story and they always look at my face to see how I'm reacting to things. And I'm thinking they're processing at this time in their life, what do they believe, versus what they've been told? So I just want to know, and Arnie probably more than any of us, because he's got all the research at the CBE and everything, I just want to know that I'm doing the right things to help my kids make their faith their own; to grow in their faith, and just have the tools and the skills to live in a world that is absolutely the opposite of everything I'm telling them, how they should live their life.

N: Yeah, I think we're all struggling with that as parents, for sure. People are, and just in general, I think, people are watching to see how we react. I mean one of the realities I've really come to acknowledge is people, they care what you say. They are interested to how you behave. But I tell you, if you want to display what you really believe, it's how you react. And people are watching. And so that's true for our kids. It's true for coworkers. It's true for the people at the grocery store. You see that last roll of toilet paper, and do you run as fast as possible and grab that, and do a little dance while the person there is standing crying? Or do you auction it off for a profit? I mean, how we react to the situations of our life really indicate what we believe. And these are opportunities for us to demonstrate to those around us, whether we're going to choose fear or faith.

So Arnie, with the CBE, we're getting data every day about where people are at. I'm just curious, this might be beneficial for our listeners who are struggling today, what are some of the most common struggles for people today, in light of the current situation we're in?

A: Yeah, we get, we watch it everyday, where people are struggling, what the heavy hitters are. Spiritually stuck, is always up there. Anger is another big one. Destructive thoughts. It was interesting, over Christmas time, which was before COVID became such a big deal in the U S, we saw that self destructive behavior was really high. And then right after Christmas, we saw that anger set in. So maybe it went from suicide to homicide, but you see these big swings in emotions. So during this time of struggle, we see a lot of fear and anxiety dominating people's thoughts, and really dominating their spiritual life, to the point that it actually takes them out spiritually. They're just so fear-based. And so this is where we really can help you to gain victory over some of these tremendous challenges that you're faced with.

N: That's just another good reason to download goTandem today. I know I was a user before I came on staff at Back to the Bible, and it helped me battle those giants daily, as I know it's helped you and probably other listeners today, but we encourage you, download that free app, goTandem and begin battling those giants with confidence.