

FRIDAY, 5/1/20

SERIES: Choosing Faith Over Fear

Speaker: Nat Crawford (w/Arnie & Cara)

Title: Samuel Pt. 2 (of 3)

¹²Now 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. ¹³The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. ¹⁴David was the youngest. The three eldest followed Saul, ¹⁵but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. ¹⁶For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening. ¹

What the writer here records is common. A son would have been responsible for caring for his brothers who were at war. What is worth noting is that the three sons named here are the same sons who were named in Chapter 16, where they are passed over for David to be the anointed king. So there's a reminder and a preview of God's intent for David.

But what about Saul? What will King Saul choose to do with this giant? Well according to Verse 16, he does nothing. In fact, he does nothing for 40 days. He comes out of his tent, hears the giant's roar and goes back in for 40 days. His true belief was displayed in how he reacted. He saw what man can do, not what God can do.

We all have giants in our lives. Therefore, we must choose what to do with our giants.

You know you should meet up with your estranged spouse and seek reconciliation, but you feel your sins are too great. Is that what God is telling you or Satan telling you? What will you do?

You're working from home. You don't seem to have a balance between work and personal time. The demands are too much. But one thing you do enjoy is online shopping. You can do that like a boss. Sure, you should work on your projects and save your money for a rainy day. What will you do? Will you choose to be faithful to your boss, or your own desires?

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Sa 17:12–16). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

You know that your mortgage is due in 2 days, but you don't have enough money. You remember winning that \$1000 bucks at the casino, the same one that you lost \$3000 to last month. What will you do?

You are locked up in your house due to COVID-19. You're lonely, so you feel tempted to look at pornography one more time to calm the stress. What will you do?

Is your problem too big for God? Look at how you react to it, and you'll find your answer.

Discussion

N: I want to pause here and talk to Arnie and Cara about this. If you don't mind being honest about your reactions, how do you react to giants in your life? Do you retreat like King Saul? Do you try to control? Do you just vent and lash out? I mean, what's your norm to the trials of life?

C: I, like, I'm a fixer. I try to help God out. I mean, isn't that arrogant? If I'm in a situation, especially ones that require me to wait or be patient, I try to get things moving, and even though I'm aware of what I'm doing, I'm literally shaking, like I've got to do something. So just to be still and let God be God, that's what I'm learning.

N: How about you Arnie?

A: I think for me, the giants in the past that have been in my life aren't such as big a deal anymore. My giants now, and I don't know how to say this properly, are maybe more the small things, and because you see one of the giants in your past, and once you learn how to deal with it, it's like been there, done that, move on. And I think that comes with experience and judgment as you mature as a Christ follower. It's those little things that really are the giants in my life today. And of course, you know, it's the little things that drive other people crazy, and how do you control that and how do you face it head on? And those are the things that I work on a lot. The giants: I love a challenge, I don't retreat. I'm not a fixer. I just go for it. And it's those little things that can become a giant; those are a challenge, whether it's temper, sarcasm, there's lots of things that we just kind of get out of our frame of reference, that if you're not careful, they become a giant in your life, if that makes sense.

N: Totally makes sense. I'm just curious, when you do though, try to act too fast, maybe you're not a fixer, like Cara and I are, but when you're taking action too quick, and you are taking control, when God's saying trust me, how has that worked out for you guys in the past?

C: Well, it usually works out better than what I try to orchestrate and I'm learning that. So what I think is the appropriate outcome or the outcome that I want, if I just let God be God, the outcome is going to be far better than anything I was trying to accomplish in my own power. So I'm just trying to learn to be still. But I'm with Arnie. I like the battle. I mean I'm built for battle. So I would say I just need to be still and let God be God.

A: Yeah, I would agree 100%. I remember as new believers, Char, my wife, had this little picture, and the Scripture was, Be still and know that I am God. And that's really a tough, tough one for those of us that tend to like the fight and like the giants in life. And oftentimes if we're not still, we totally miss what God has for us.

N: Amazing how God would put three drivers together on the same program. We could get a lot done together. [Or not. I don't know.] Yeah, [I know]. And I tend to be a lot like you Cara. I am a fixer. And so my default reaction to giants is to control the situation. And that's just me. And what happens is that when life seems to be out of control, I try to fix it. I try to control it. And trying to be proactive is not bad by any means. But I've noticed a lot of times, God's not asking me to fix the problem. He's asking me to be faithful and to trust Him through it. But that's not easy. So Cara, people today are reacting to giants in their lives as an excuse to sin. I mean, we see looting on the rise. Alcohol sales have over doubled. And Arnie this week shared that 44% of people in Nebraska are drinking while on the clock now, as they're working from home. So people are reacting, I would say, negatively to the situation, and they're using it as a excuse to sin. So James said, when we're tempted to sin, we can't blame God. And Paul was very clear that we are no longer a slave to sin. So we can't use God's grace as an excuse to sin in response to the stress, to the fear, the anxiety or anything else. And yet we know if truly saved, we will stumble and fall. So what word of encouragement would you give to those who are struggling right now? They do have a heart for God, just like David, but they're struggling.

Cara: Well, I would say any of those things, you're living your life in disagreement with God. I've lived my life in disagreement with God more than I've lived in agreement with Him. And so, I try not to revert back to my old self. If I'm not in His Word, I will revert back to my old self. So you've got to get into the Word. And Satan will come and he will occasionally try to remind me about what a loser I am in the things I've done in my past. But grace covers all that. So I would rather disappoint the enemy, and stay in God's Word. And at the end of the day, if you have a

bad attitude or you're thinking about reverting back, or you feel yourself reverting back, phone a Christian friend and tell them, because I guarantee you, they're probably struggling with something, and you're going to have like the greatest powwow on the phone, and you're going to get off and be absolutely spiritually charged up. [Bear one another's burdens, right?] Sure. Yes.

N: Yep. Arnie, you've mentioned this to me in the past, how reading our Bible actually impacts our behavior, and there's some numbers attached to that. Do you mind sharing, just for a moment, what the data is between it being God's Word and our behavior?

A: Yeah. What we have found is that people that engage the Bible, and when we talk about engaging God's Word, we mean read, reflect and respond in it; if you will read the Scripture, reflect on it, and then respond it into your life, four more days a week, your life will radically change. And what we're talking about is, those monsters in your life become less monsters. And we've seen it over and over, whether it's pornography or anxiety or worry, what - you pick your poison - whatever takes you out spiritually, if you can get in the Word, the Holy Spirit, I guarantee it, the Holy spirit will start working in your life. And it takes time. But each and every day, if you have a goal of moving closer to Jesus today than you were yesterday, and just being open to His Word and what He has to say, your life will look radically different. I guarantee it.

Saul had a giant, and he chose to let his giant paralyze him. But according to the story, the newly anointed David arrives on the battlefield. He is not there to fight, but instead to check on his brothers and provide some resources.

But look at what happens while David is there, beginning in Verse 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. ²

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Sa 17:20–23). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

So David goes again to supply his family, but while he's there, David hears the taunts of the giant. He knows something must be done. So David takes his supplies and bags and throws them in a pile with the baggage keeper.

Now at a casual glance, that may sound silly to mention. It sounds like a filler. There is no filler in the Bible, not even the book of Numbers. It's all God-breathed. What does the author intend for us to remember or compare? It's what Saul did when he was called before the people of Israel. 1 Samuel 10 says this: "and Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot. But when they sought him, he could not be found. ²² So they inquired again of the LORD, "Is there a man still to come?" and the LORD said, "Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage." ²

So King Saul is going to be presented before Israel to be proclaimed as king, and he's terrified. Maybe he was afraid of public speaking. But he's afraid, and he goes and hides in the baggage.

Compare that to David. David is just a small shepherd boy. He's the youngest son who's just bringing supplies to his brother. He sees the soldiers ready for battle. He hears the giant's taunts. He throws down his supplies to the baggage keeper and runs to the battlefield.

This is here to compare these two leaders anointed by God. One sees the giant. One sees God.

What do you see today in your own life? The giant or God?

You'd think after 40 days of this taunting, and paralyzing fear, the Israelites would be ready for a champion. You'd think David's brothers would be ready for confidence.

Let's see beginning in Verse 26 what the response is to some spiritual confidence.

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.³

David has heard Goliath mocking God. He's likely heard this off and on for 40 days and he can't take it anymore. God's not to be mocked, so he speaks up. What you may not realize is that this is the first time that David's words are recorded. That shouldn't be missed. His words are of both disdain for the lack of faith in God, by the part of Israel's army and its leader, and His own confidence of God.

When teaching on Saul and David, I often comment that David had a heart for God. Saul had no heart for God. We can see their heart in their first recorded words. So David's first words were of love and confidence in God. Saul's, according to 1 Samuel 9:5, was a lack of confidence. He said while looking for lost donkeys, "This is isn't working. Let's go." Saul lacked understanding of God, His power, and His grace.

But that's not David. That's why we meet him with great courage and confidence in God.

But, any great leader asks great questions. So David's passionate questions would upset his brothers. In fact, the text says that Eliab's anger was kindled against David. A better translation was furious. He was so angry; he was spitting and red in the face. He was like the Incredible Hulk. Why was he so mad?

Well, think about it. Eliab and his brothers were passed over by God for their younger brother. They were warriors. David was a shepherd. You might be a little bit upset too. Plus, David had a job to do: tend the sheep and bring his brothers provisions. And by showing up and giving a lecture in leadership, he's abandoning his post. So I think these may be some of the reasons.

But let's be honest, who likes to be called out for their lack of faith? How do you respond in a crisis when someone says, "you just don't have enough faith." I'll tell you a humbling secret. When someone tells me that when I'm faced with a giant, my first response is "stick a cork in it! I know that! Don't throw more guilt on me! I know I'm struggling."

His brothers, the Israelite army, and even their warrior king were terrified. They didn't have faith. They knew it. They were called out for it. And they hated it!

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Sa 17:26–30). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

David was no doubt frustrated by his brother's response. He just moves on and keeps asking the same questions. Those questions grant him an audience with King Saul. And that's where we'll pick it up Monday.

N: Cara, you and I have talked about Tactics before. Tactics is a book by apologist Greg Koukl. I've taught Tactics more times than I can remember, and the short version of that book is if you want to advance the message of Christ, begin to use questions. Jesus, he was a master in using questions to advance His message. David used questions here to do the same. How have you used Tactics, the art of question asking, to advance the message of Christ?

C: Well, I'd say Christ had a leg up because He already knew everything about the person. [That's right.] So He got to cut a lot of time out of it. I use questions mostly to get to know a person. Tactics brings up the "Colombo" tactic, and you might go right to a faith conversation, and you can ask people questions about how they grew up, where they stand, their opinions of things, and you can very gently and kindly weave your way in leading them to Jesus. But I've got to say Nat, questions, just asking someone about themselves, and starting a relationship with them, is the key to all good evangelism. Because if you're building a rapport with somebody, it trims a lot of any weird, you know, people have a hard time, just telling people about Jesus. But if you get to know a person, and it becomes a normal part of conversation, like, Hey, how'd you grow up? Where'd you grow up? Tell me about yourself. Tell me about your tattoos. What do they mean? Tell me Nat about your big beard. Why do you, does that itch? What's going on there? But it's a good way to break down barriers and fronts with people, and to have a genuine concern for that person, or really want to know who that person is.

A: I'd like to add to what Cara is saying. I think one of the big problems is when you don't ask, and you tell, that's when it's not a relationship. You're not helping the other person. And we have really looked at asking people where they are spiritually, and you know what? They'll tell you, they'd love to tell you, because they're concerned not only about their physical wellbeing, but their spiritual wellbeing as well. But you have to take the time to listen to someone, and to find out where they're coming from. And Cara's right. Jesus knew where people were coming from. He didn't need to ask, because He already knew. But as disciplers, we need to ask some critical questions, and then listen to what people have to say, and get their perspective.

N: Yeah, you both nailed it perfectly right there. We ask questions to build relationship with people, but then because we sincerely care about the person, we listen, we pause, and we listen. And that's it exactly. Honestly, even though, yeah, Jesus did know things that we wouldn't because He was God in the flesh, but He took time with these people. I mean, what was His reputation? He was a *friend* of sinners and tax collectors. He could have been known as an *evangelist* to the tax collectors and sinners. He could have been known as an *acquaintance*, but what was his title? Friend. When you're a friend, you are involved with someone's life. You care about people, you're asking questions, you're getting to know them intimately and you're listening. Man. Perfect.

C: Well, you look at just his interaction with the Woman at the Well, and you know she was married several times, but He didn't go right for the throat on that. He already knew that. He went for the lost soul. He went for the person. And I think as Christians, we see sin first and we don't see the person. We just have got to see the person as a lost soul, and the goal is always lost to saved. And so you don't see the sin. It's just lost to saved. And if you can start living your way and viewing people like that, that's how Jesus viewed them. They're just lost to saved. So I would encourage people to just kind of tweak that if you're seeing a sin first, to see the person first.

N: Yeah. And one of the things I have to constantly do is when I get into those tendencies where I do see sin first, I actually have to pause and remind myself, Hey, do you remember what you did yesterday? Do you know what you did five minutes ago? Do you know what Jesus saved you from? And that helps put me in my place. And again, just see them as a person who is in need of a Savior.

A: Well, and I think it's interesting that when we first started doing this research, one of the questions that we used to ask, which we don't ask anymore, because the answer was almost a hundred percent, was when was the last time somebody asked you how you're doing spiritually? And it didn't matter who it was: somebody, pastors, people that attend church every Sunday, by and large, I think it was something like 95% said, nobody ever asked how I'm doing spiritually, which is a huge, huge thing, because how you're doing spiritually really affects everything you do. It's a critical thing to listen and find out how people are doing spiritually. If you just ask that, they'll know you care, because no one, most likely, has ever asked them that question in their entire life.

N: Arnie, why do you think people aren't asking that question?

A: You know, I've never asked why you don't ask. I think it's probably because people don't care enough, would be my guess. But that's a great question. We should research that Nat.

N: Okay. Give me the credit for asking that question. I wonder though if it's not because it's so intimate; it's like asking somebody about money. How are you doing financially? No one wants to answer that question, and no one's going to answer it honestly. You know, as for a married couple, you know, how are things going in your relationship, physically, how are they going? Well, no one's going to talk about that because it's so intimate. And so I found that at times, even a challenge with my own marriage, with my own spouse asking the question of, Hey, how are you doing spiritually? Because it is so intimate. It is so deeply personal, that I think some people are hesitant to ask, because it is intimate, but also what if they ask you back? And based on the data we found, right Arnie, people aren't perfect in their spiritual walk and they do have struggles?

A: Yeah. I, I think that's right. It is intimate, maybe. However, I think in this day and age, especially if you don't hang around Christ followers, if you ask them how they're doing spiritually, they don't necessarily see that as so intimate. I think this is a new age. It's opening up a conversation, that I have never found somebody say, none of your business. So it just depends how you word it. And people are more than glad to tell you, if you word it properly. So yeah, you're right. You need to have some tact. I don't think it, people are only as intimate as they're comfortable with. So, and that's on any kind of question you ever ask, so I think you'd be surprised.

C: Well I think it goes back to just starting that relationship. [Yeah.]And you know, we're creatures of habit. I mean very rarely, I don't know that there's even a human that doesn't. You kind of go to the same restaurants. You might branch out every once in awhile. But you know, my husband and I were pretty much creatures of habit. So if it wasn't for COVID-19, I was actually starting to build a relationship with a waitress at a restaurant that we would go to once a week. And I'd asked her her name. It starts with that, Hey, where are you from? And you just keep building on a relationship, until you get to the point where you can ask them a question like, where are you at spiritually? And it might not sound like that, but it would be similar to that, you know, and make sure you're tipping well when you do bring up the fact you're a Christian, because there's a reputation not for that, but it's all relational.

N: Yeah, I think we've really over-complicated outreach today. It really should just be every day natural and organic, meeting people where they're at, having an honest, casual conversation and

being deeply interested and listening. And when we do those things, their hearts become open to who you are and what you have to say, and what your story is. And then the doors just open wide. So I think we'd all encourage you in times like this, when there is a battle and when there are giants in the land, that's no time to retreat. As Paul said in Philippians One, because of my imprisonment, people are more bold with the Gospel. And I know that's true for those of us in this room recording today, and we pray it's true for you out there, that you would use the opportunity that God has put you in, to engage with people who are far from God, in everyday natural ways, and leave the consequences to Him.