

The Gospel Lesson for Pentecost 6 is from Mark 5 – the raising of Jairus’ daughter. Reference is made to that “giant” conquered by Jesus in the sermon.

You know the story about the boy and the giant – not David, but Jack.

- Jack climbs the magic beanstalk and finds a giant castle with lots of gold and a giant guarding it all.
- He takes the gold, and then the goose that lays the golden eggs, but when he tries to take the gold harp, the giant wakes up: “Fe, Fi, Fo, Fum. I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he live or be he dead, I will eat him on my bread!”
- And what does Jack do? He RUNS! He RUNS FAST! He RUNS AWAY! Away.

It’s the same thing you and I do – run away.

- Perhaps it’s a situation that we just don’t want any part of.
- Perhaps it’s into an addiction we think will help us escape.
- Perhaps it’s a temptation we run into, and as we do, we run away from God.
 - o And when we run in the wrong spiritual direction, we will have problems, even eternal problems because the difference is life and death, and heaven and hell.

That’s why this Biblical even of the boy named David and the giant Goliath is so special, incredible really, for it teaches us to run in the opposite direction – it teaches us to run toward the giants.

You know the story well and I’ll assume you will review the whole account later today or in the middle of the week to reinforce the message this morning. It’s recorded in 1 Samuel 17. But for now let me remind you of a few points of detail between David and the giant that simply defy logic.

- 1st – David is the wrong guy. He’s a boy, not a soldier. (He looks nothing like the David in the picture. 12-13 year old boys aren’t cut and ripped like that.) The only reason David is there is because he was bringing lunch to his brothers, trying to find some news to take back to his father about his sons who are in the army. His brothers are trained for battle – not he. King Saul is the military leader – not he. Yet he is the one running toward the giant, not them.
- 2nd – David has the wrong weapons. He has a staff in one hand and a sling in the other. Goliath mocked David as he approached, “Am I a dog that you come at me with sticks?” Sticks and stones don’t break giant’s bones, but that’s how David faced the giant.
- 3rd – The saying is, “You need to pick your battles,” In other words, pick the battle you know you have a good chance to win... and this isn’t one of them. There is a reason King Saul sits on the sidelines. There is a reason why David’s brothers, along with the entire army of Israel, are hiding behind the ridge at the top of the valley. Yet David runs towards the giant.

And then when he does run – he runs in the wrong direction. Not AWAY but TOWARDS the giant.

Again, what giants are you running away from? What is God calling you to face, to stand toe to toe with? Well the answer is here – but it’s NOT ABOUT DAVID. So many commentaries and so many Sunday School lessons get this wrong. You and I can’t be like David. Later when David faces another giant temptation of adultery and cover up, he falls flat on his face. No the key is not to be “courageous” like David but to listen to the WORDS of DAVID: “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.” (1 Samuel 17:45)

The key to facing your giants is knowing the name of the LORD Almighty, literally in the Hebrew language, it's "The LORD of hosts" or the LORD of the armies.'

David knows where his strength is going to come from. Not King Saul, but the real commander and Lord, God himself. He is the one who grants victory. The Lord of the armies of Israel.

But this name is used in the Bible to describe more than God being a commander of the Israelites. A few weeks ago I preached on Isaiah 6 (I'm sure you remember that sermon!?) when Isaiah saw a vision of the angels praising God. They were singing, "Holy, holy, holy, LORD Almighty, heaven and earth are full of your glory." They used the same name David used here. The LORD is the LORD of the hosts and armies of angels. He is the one who commands the angels to guard you in every way.

Even beyond that though, this name is used to describe how the LORD rules everything in everyway for our good. In the second chapter of the Bible, when Moses is describing how God created all things, he says, "This is the account of the hosts of the heavens and the earth." In other words, God commands the starry hosts (Psalm 33:6) and hosts of the mountains and seas. Earlier we sang in our Psalm for today (46), "The LORD Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our fortress." The mountains may quake, the seas may roar, the earth might melt, but God is the LORD of it all and will command it to do his bidding.

It's a name that allows us to face your giants, especially when you know the One that name points to. It's the name the angel announced to the shepherds on Christmas night, when he said, "Today in the town of David, a Savior has been borne to you. He is Christ the Lord." And then you remember what happened. "Suddenly there was with the angel a company of the heavenly ???? – yes host – not a choir, not meek and mild angels but an army of angels to praise God and sing – "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men on whom his favor rests."

Christ the Lord would stand up in a boat and command the winds and the waves to do his every bidding. He would conquer the giant of death for a man named Jairus when he raised his daughter.

He would be the one who would tell Peter to put his sword away in the Garden of Gethsemane saying, "don't you know I could call down a legion of angels" – an army of angels – if he so chose. But he didn't choose. Instead he chose to run into battle and the cross. There he gave up his breath. But don't ever think that he is not in control, for on the third day he rose from the dead in victory. The giant of death was defeated. The giant of Satan was crushed and heaven is ours. For the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

A giant name Goliath is nothing. A giant called death holding a 12 year old girl captive is nothing. And that means you can be sure that any giant you face, any sin you've given into, any situation or challenge you face, is nothing to the LORD of hosts and you too can say, "I come against you in the name of the LORD of hosts."

It's a neat name – this Lord of hosts. It comes up 328 times in the Old Testament and assures us that God will take care of the giants you face in your life. You know what yours are. Some might seem big to all of us, but even the small ones are big to you. But know too, you can face them in the name of the LORD.

In fact, the very first time this name for God is used in the Old Testament was not by a warrior or a soldier or someone facing a huge enemy. It was from a young woman who was facing loneliness in her life and doubt about herself. So this young woman Hannah prayed, "O LORD Almighty, *O LORD of hosts*, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life." (1 Samuel 1:11)

The LORD of hosts heard her cry and you can be sure he will hear yours too – for he is the God who faces your giants. Amen.

VVV – Phillip D. Sievert