

A Type of Two Great Struggles.

Text: 1 Sam 17:42-51

Suggested Hymns:

208, 158, 207, 195, 200

1) The struggle the Saviour had for us

2) The struggle we have as we follow Jesus

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is 1 Samuel 17:42-51, ⁴² *And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was only a youth, ruddy and good-looking.* 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.* ⁴⁴ *And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"*

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."*

⁴⁸ *So it was, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hastened and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.* ⁴⁹ *Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth.*

⁵⁰ *So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But there was no sword in the hand of David.* ⁵¹ *Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The solemn Lenten season is fast approaching. Only ten more days, and Lent will be here. We shall not only contemplate the fierce struggle that our Saviour had to undergo in order to gain our freedom from sin and its dread consequences, but we shall also learn to realise, perhaps more than we have in the past, that we, too, must fight if we want to win and wear the victor's crown.

We must suffer with the Saviour here on earth if we want to be glorified with Him in heaven. We read in Romans 8:16-17, ***“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.***

On His way to Jerusalem Jesus Himself significantly said to His disciples, ***“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem,”*** not I alone, but we, you and I together. The disciples, sensing that nothing pleasant was awaiting them there ***“were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid.”***¹

In our text we have ***A Type of Two Great Struggles.*** Today let us consider the two struggles. The struggle the Saviour had for us, and the other we have as we follow Him. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. The Struggle The Saviour Had For Us

We know the story well. We read in 1 Samuel 17:4-7, ***4 And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. 5 He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of [scales], and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. 6 And he had bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. 7 Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him. ...41 So the Philistine came, and began drawing near to David, and the man who bore the shield went before him.***

Goliath was over 9 feet tall (2.75m), his armour nearly weighed nearly 150 pounds (68 kg). He had a shield so large that it took a strong man to carry it.

More intimidating than Goliath's appearance were the threats and taunts that came from his mouth. Twice a day Goliath would head out across the valley, calling on Israel to send someone, *anyone*, to do battle with him. Along with the challenge came biting words of sarcasm for Israel's troops and blasphemous words of scorn for Israel's God.

The giant in armour is ready for battle. Our text begins, ⁴² ***And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he despised him; for he was only a youth.*** David was a contemptible little antagonist in the sight of the giant, an easy mark - so to speak, not used to battle and therefore not to be feared at all. The giant looked upon David with disdain. The giant began to curse and revile David and sought to intimidate him with loud-mouthed boasting. ***"Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.*** ⁴⁴ ***And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"***

David realised full well that in himself he was no match for the giant, because he was very weak and unskilled in the art of warfare, all out of proportion to the giant. But he did not trust in himself, as the loud-mouthed boaster did. David trusted in the Lord of hosts. And this his trust in God made him very bold.

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."***

Marvellous words are these, a song of victory, a song of triumph, sung before the battle had even begun.

Nor was it idle boasting as was that of the giant, for *when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hastened and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.* What sublime courage! What holy zeal! David “hastened,” “ran” toward him. ⁴⁹ *Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth.* ⁵⁰ *So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him.*

David defeated the giant with the Goliath’s own weapon, *But there was no sword in the hand of David.* ⁵¹ *Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it.* Yes, a great deliverance was wrought in Israel that day, and *“Then all [the] assembly [knew] that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD’s.”*

This type is an example of Christ

In like manner Jesus, the great Son of David, slew the hellish Goliath and wrought great deliverance for us all.

Satan is the mighty warrior of old. He delights in murder and bloodshed. And he is heavily armed. We read in Ephesians 6:11-12, ¹¹ *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* ¹² *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

And in John 8:44 Jesus tells us that *the devil ... was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

Luther wrote,²

The old evil foe
Now means deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight;

On earth is not his equal.

Like David, Jesus seemed weak by comparison. When Satan met Him in the wilderness, He had fasted forty days and forty nights, and physically He was very weak indeed.

And when the two clashed in Gethsemane, the Saviour was lying prostrate, *“a worm and no man.”*³ Jesus was *sorrowful and deeply distressed.*⁴ *Exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.* Jesus is writhing in agony, praying, *“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”*⁵

And Satan, seeing this, no doubt treated Jesus with supreme contempt. With utter disdain, Satan greeted Jesus with loud-mouthed boasting and cursing. We read in Psalm 22:7-8, 13, ⁷ *All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,* ⁸ *“He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!”* ... ¹³ *They gape at Me with their mouths, Like a raging and roaring lion.*

But Jesus prayed. He trusted in God.⁶ He sought and received strength from on high. ⁴³ *Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.*⁷ Hear the loud cry He uttered in His dying moments. Hear Jesus triumphantly exclaiming *“It is finished!”* The great work of redemption is finished. ⁴⁶ *And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’”*⁸

Yes, the Serpent had bruised His heel, but He had crushed the old Serpent’s head. Not by might nor by power of an army; *the LORD does not save with sword and spear*, but by the blood and death of the Son of God.

And Yes, what a deliverance Jesus has wrought! We need no longer fear the gates of hell; for all our sins are atoned for, they are all forgiven. God’s wrath has been fully appeased, and He is all grace toward us.

Death has been utterly abolished, and life and immortality have been won for us. Satan is conquered, utterly defeated. Yes, the risen Saviour descended into hell and spread consternation among the Serpent’s brood, triumphing over all our infernal foes. The gates of hell are closed, and the gates of heaven are opened wide.

Now let Israel shout in appreciation of this deliverance; let them obtain and enjoy it through sincere repentance and faith in the Saviour, as the *men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted, and pursued the Philistines.*

We have in this text a type of another struggle, the one we have as we follow Jesus.

2. The Struggle We Have as We Follow Jesus.

Having failed in his struggle with Christ, Satan now takes issue with Christ's followers. He strives with might and main to keep the redeemed from reaping the fruits of their redemption.

And here, too, he is a wily, crafty foe, one who delights in murder and bloodshed, and with a powerful antagonist. As said before, *we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

And in 1 Peter 5:8, ⁸ *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

In this battle the devil often applies the same tactics he used in his struggle with Christ. He bullies the Christians. He does a lot of loud-mouthed boasting and scoffing. Think of the boasting of his followers, the self-styled scientists, who have long since decried the Bible as a book of fables and trumped up "the assured results of scientific research."

Think of the false religions and false doctrines with which he has swamped the Church, Catholicism, New Age movement, Unitarianism, Mormonism, Christian Science, lodges, and cults of various sorts.

We read in Revelation 20:7-9 that *Satan ... will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, ... to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.* ⁹ *They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city.*

Think of the blight of the Ecumenical Movement and the isolating of those who cling to the truth, by combining their opponents into a vast army of Philistines.

The devil, too, takes the same delight in murder and bloodshed of Christians today that he did in days of old. The persecutions of the ancient Church have been matched by the persecutions under the Papacy. Today Christians are persecuted in many countries. Go to the “opendoors” website to see the 50 most dangerous countries to follow Jesus. North Korea tops the list.

And how weak we Christians are in ourselves! ***“The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”***⁹ Peter and his two companions slept instead of watching and praying. Peter denied, and all the disciples forsook the Master and fled; they were offended because of Jesus.

We often fail to watch and pray, neglect the Word of God, forget to watch our step, and walk right into temptation, and then lack the power to overcome it.

Yes, we, too, are offended in Jesus because He does not always answer our prayers at once and in the manner in which we want them answered. Yes, Satan has a powerful ally in our own flesh and blood.

However, thank God, that we may say, ***“Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”*** Yes, steadfast in the faith. Do not trust in your own self, but do trust in the Lord of hosts. Trust in His promises, of which the Bible is full.

Obey His precepts and His promptings. And fight under His command. We read in Ephesians 6:11, 13-17, ***“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ...¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”***

Say to Satan, ***“It is written.”*** Do not argue with the devil, but smite him with the Word of God.

The hymnist writes,¹⁰

As God is God, and true His Word,

Though earth and hell and all their horde,
Though Satan's might, assail us,
Beneath our feet will they be trod;
God is with us, and we with God:
His power will never fail us.

Yes, the Bible says in James 4:7, *Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

Let us close with Luther's victory hymn,

A mighty fortress is our God,
A trusty shield and weapon,
Our faithful helper in all need,
Our stay, whate'er may happen. Amen

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Mark 10:32

² Hymn 195

³ Psalm 22:6

⁴ Matthew 26:37

⁵ Matthew 26:39

⁶ See Psa 69 and 22

⁷ Luke 22:43

⁸ Luke 23:46

⁹ Matthew 26:41

¹⁰ Hymn 200 verse 3