Five Smooth Stones - Part 2

# Faithful in the Small Things

## (1 Samuel 17:14-24)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. Last week, we started a brand-new sermon series called five smooth stones, looking at the story of David and Goliath. If you were with us, you know that we only cracked the lid on the story, and so as we continue today, we’re going to go a little deeper. In fact, my prayer is that each week we’re going to go a little bit deeper until we come to a complete understanding. “My purpose, as the apostle Paul said,

“Is that (you) may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that (you) may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that (you) may know the mystery of God, (which is) Christ” (Colossians 2:2).

And so, as we come to the story of this young man, this boy named David, I am reminded of the importance of not wasting our youth. Honestly, one of the things that has grieved me most over the past 20 plus years walking with Jesus is how much of my youth I wasted. For decades I wasted my strength and energy, just living for myself and doing my own thing.

Unfortunately, I know that I’m not alone, because certainly now many years later I find myself living in a culture, if it were possible, that is even more confused. You and I are living in a society that is all about “me”, social media itself is a breeding ground for narcissism, with page after page of selfies, hundreds and thousands of pictures of me, because it is all about me. It’s my page, my account, and it’s all about my feelings, what I like, what I don’t like, or who didn’t treat me right, because everything is about me. And the problem with the “me” syndrome is that people rarely ever grow into becoming who they should be, because they never get beyond living for themselves. And so, we can’t get along with anybody, because the moment I get my feelings hurt, I’m going to cut them off, I’m going to block them, I’m going to give up on my calling, or my assignment because it’s all about me.

As a society, I don’t believe that we’ve ever seen anything quite like this before, but we’ve got to get rid of this “me” syndrome because it’s killing us, this sense of entitlement is destroying us, because this generation think is all about me. We think that life is all about me, what’s in it for me, but the truth is we are living for an audience of one. We have been redeemed, we have been purchased, bought out of slavery, having died to self so that we might live for God. Jesus said it this way,

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money” (Matthew 6:24).

In other words, you can’t be a Christian and be stuck on serving yourself, worried about what’s in it for me, but you’ve got to grow and understand that life is all about sacrifice, it’s about giving yourself away, as Paul said, “I have been crucified with Christ.” And so, the kingdom of God is about service, it’s about pouring out, living for Christ, it’s about living for a purpose bigger than yourself.

And as we come to our text today in first Samuel chapter 17, it’s another generation, and we find David at the point in his life where he’s not yet a king, but he’s just a guy working a job, faithfully doing what he’s been called to do in that season. And last week we saw Samuel anoint David to become the next king of Israel, he was King but not yet, because Saul was still ruling, and David was still very young. Verse 14 says that,

“David was the youngest. The three oldest (brothers) followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem” (1 Samuel 17:14-15).

And so, we understand that David was the little brother, all of his brothers were bigger, and he was just going back and forth from serving Saul to attending his father’s sheep, but the Bible tells us that his three oldest brothers followed Saul. In other words, they were looked up to because they had uniforms, armor, and weapons. They were in the army of Israel, but David was left at home to take care the animals because he was the baby brother. He was just a young teenager, he was Jesse’s baby boy, he was the little one, but he was faithful in the small things.

I want to talk to you about the importance of being faithful in the small things. In fact, I want you to imagine for a moment that you are David, because for this text to become meaningful to us, we’ve got to put ourselves in his place. And so, you’ve got to realize that you do not know how this day is going to end. You see, we know the story, we know how it ends, but I want you to put yourself in David’s sandals.

As we come to verse 17, imagine that you are David, and your father was giving you these instructions:

“Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp” (1 Samuel 17:17).

And so, there you are, the youngest son, the little brother, given this little assignment. His father, Jesse says, “Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them” (1 Samuel 17:18).

In other words, David is the pizza delivery boy, just running an errand for his father, taking some bread and cheese to his brothers who are “with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah fighting against the Philistines” (1 Samuel 17:19).

And so, this was just a little thing that he set out to do, he had no idea what he was walking into, not a clue what would happen by the end of the day.

But “early in the morning,” verse 20 tells us, “David left the flock with a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry. Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other” (1 Samuel 17:20-21).

Last week, we talked about the process of Providence, and so we recognize that it was the providence of God that brought David to this place. And in the same way, we need to recognize that in all of our lives, it is the little, small, mundane tasks of each day where we live most of the time. It’s really not what we see on Facebook, the perfectly prepared dinner, the vacation, the new car, but we live in between those mountaintop experiences. And so, we must recognize this was just another day for David, just another morning, just another chore as he took that ephah of grain, the ten loaves of bread, along with those ten cheeses to the front lines of the battle with the Philistines.

David got up early that morning, he woke with purpose, loaded up and set out, determined to go down to that particular place as his father had directed. It was just a little assignment, but he was faithful in the small things, and we need to understand that the little things matter. In fact, until we understand that the little things matter, we will never be able to fulfill our destiny. You see, in spite of the fact that he is too young to go to battle, and that it was just a small thing he was directed to do, he did what his father had told him to do and found himself right on the front lines.

Now, so far there is nothing about this story that betrays the significance of this day. The Bible says, “For 40 days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand (1 Samuel 17:16). And so, this was just another day, there were no warning signs, no indication that this little assignment was going to be the catalyst through which David’s destiny was released. But what we do know is that God had been grooming David for greatness, because when Samuel anointed David in the presence of his brothers, the Bible says,

“From that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power” (1 Samuel 16:13).

And so, greatness is nurtured not in your highlights, but in the mediocrity of servitude, in the daily routine, and the responsibility of each ordinary day. It was just a little thing, just a little chore to do, and there was no prophecy, no revelation of God, no flashes of fire and lightning on the mountain.

Of course, David thinks he’s just a delivery boy, he doesn’t understand the magnitude of this moment, but if you can’t manage the little things in life, you will never be able to manage the big things. And so, David doesn’t know who he is yet, he doesn’t realize what he’s about to become, but in spite of how little it looks right now, it is so much bigger than he thinks. He’s going down there to bring lunch to his brothers, but he doesn’t recognize the greatness of this moment, the mighty power of God within his grasp, or that he is about to be in the fight of his life.

In fact, if we had known, if we were in his shoes, we would have prepared differently, but David only came down to the valley of Elah to do a little thing. He was just delivering an ephah of roasted grain, ten loaves of bread to his brothers, and ten cheeses to the commander of their unit (1 Samuel 17:17-18). In other words, he didn’t know he was walking into a battle, at this point he didn’t even know who Goliath was, and so he had not even prepared himself for this day, but God had prepared him. His past and the providence of God had been getting him ready as he would so confidently declare,

“When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it" (1 Samuel 17:34-35).

And there may be some of you today who are walking into a battle, you didn’t know it, you haven’t even met your Goliath yet, but I want you to know that God has been getting you ready. You see, it was those little things, that small task, the lion and the bear that were getting you ready. You didn’t see it coming, because they didn’t make an announcement, but they were getting you ready as the Bible says,

“Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all…” (2 Corinthians 4:17).

The apostle Paul says, you were in boot camp, you didn’t know it, but you were getting ready for the fight of your life. And you are going to be ready, because God was getting you ready. In fact, Paul said, you can rejoice in your sufferings, rejoice when you’re under attack, because suffering produces perseverance (Romans 5:3). In other words, you’re in boot camp, and because of what you’ve been through you will be able to fight this fight with confidence and strength.

David had been in training, he was much bigger than anyone thought because of what he had learned about facing the enemy, dealing with pressure, and managing responsibility. You could say that God had built up his tolerance for trouble, he had recalibrated the way he thought saying,

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways” (Isaiah 55:8).

God had changed David’s perspective and so when he saddled up and headed down to the Valley of Elah with that grain, the bread, and the cheese it was just another day at the office. But it was bigger than what he thought, because God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us (Ephesians 3:20). And so, even though David was the smallest, and his brothers were taller, bigger, and stronger by human standards, but just because it starts out small doesn’t mean that it ends up small. That’s why the Lord said,

“Do not despise these small beginnings” (Zechariah 4:10, NLT).

Because whenever God is getting ready to do something big in your life, he will test you in the little things. And until he can trust you with delivering lunch, he won’t trust you with handling a giant, but when you’ve been faithful with a few things he will trust you with many things (Matthew 25:21). In other words, how you handle the little things determines what is coming next in your life. And so, when you get your perspective right, recognizing the opportunity in the next little thing, you will discover that the next big thing is just a little thing.

David seized his opportunity, he left early in the morning, loaded up and set out just as his father had directed, because he recognized the importance of being on time. The Bible says,

“He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry” (1 Samuel 17:20).

David showed up just as the troops God into battle positions and he was exactly where he was supposed to be when he was supposed to be. This was the providence of God, this was planned and prepared ahead of time, because God had been setting things up.

I wonder if there are some of you who are about to walk into something that God has been setting up for a long time. The Bible says, David walked on the scene at just the right time, exactly when he was supposed to be there. Watch this timing in verse 22,

“David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and greeted his brothers. As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it” (1 Samuel 17:22-23).

As David was talking with his brothers, Goliath came out challenging the army of Israel and David heard it. In other words, it wasn’t what he saw, it wasn’t what he planned, it wasn’t what he had in mind, but the Bible says,

“David heard it” (1 Samuel 17:23).

And it wasn’t just that David heard Goliath, it’s how he heard Goliath, it’s what he heard Goliath say. You see, he heard him insulting his God, making a mockery of his God, he heard it as a personal challenge, and how you hear things determines how you respond.

In other words, some people can hear it and run, some people can hear it and ignore it, other people hear it and are horrified, and the Bible says in verse 24,

“When the Israelites saw the man, they all ran from him in great fear” (1 Samuel 17:24).

The Israelites saw Goliath and ran, but David heard Goliath and he took offense at that giant Philistine. You see, it is how you react to what you hear that is an indication of what you have been empowered to do. In other words, you will not change what you are not insulted by, it will not move you until you hear it as a challenge, until you hear it is a battle cry. Faith comes by hearing and the Bible says,

“Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it” (1 Samuel 17:23).

Out of all the people there in that valley, many of them saw him, but the right one heard him. David heard him and said,

“Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (1 Samuel 17:26).

Only David had the courage to face Goliath. As the Israelites ran from him in fear, this little boy delivering lunch steps up and said,

“Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him” (1 Samuel 17:32).

What’s interesting is that nobody talks about the ephah of roasted grain and the ten loaves of bread. Nobody says anything about those ten cheeses, almost like it’s too little to mention. They don’t preach about getting up early in the morning to bring lunch, but I hope that this will speak to someone, that this will encourage some of you to be faithful in the small things, those little things, so that you take one small step of faith.

You see, that is so important, because you’ve got to start somewhere, and the Bible says,

“The Lord rejoices to see the work begin” (Zechariah 4:10, NLT).

In other words, the Lord rejoices to see you faithful in the small things. You don’t need to wait until you’re good enough, big enough, or strong enough, but you can start right now to do what God has called you to do. In fact, that’s exactly what he wants us to do, because the apostle Paul exhorts us to,

“Live by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

And so, don’t consider your stature, your strength, your ability to speak, or the little bit of grain, the bread, and the cheese, because it seems so small. It seems like a little thing, but I want to challenge you to get as focused as you can and take one small step. Just be faithful in that one thing, because it’s not going to be because you are so big and strong, the Lord said it this way to Samuel.

“The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

He said it’s not your strength, your skill, your size, or any of that kind of stuff. It’s not by might nor by power, but God said,

"By my Spirit” (Zechariah 4:6).

In other words, it’s by God’s spirit that you will be empowered, it’s by God strength you’re going to get started, and it’s by God strength that you are going to finish it, but you are going to need to be faithful in the small things, you’re going to have to take a step of faith. That’s why the Bible says,

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might…” (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

And so, whatever that one small thing, that little thing you’ve been putting off, that thing you know God wants you to do, today I want to encourage you to get started.

You see, when you are faithful in the small things, when you pray and seek God, you are going to discover that when you hear God’s whisper, that you are going to have confidence. Suddenly you will find yourself making a little extra effort, you going to have some momentum, because you’ve been faithful in the little things and you’re making a difference. That is so important, because God loves it when you are faithful in the little things. In fact, he said it this way,

“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!” (Matthew 25:21).

And I believe that God would say this to all of us today, start where you are, start with the little things, start with what you have and start now. Just take that first step of faith, because faith is like a staircase in a dark house, you may not be able to see it but you know it’s there. And so, you don’t need to be afraid, it’s just one small step, like David be faithful in the small things. As it has been said,

"You don't have to see the whole staircase now. Just take that first step in faith."

And allow yourself to be led by the Holy Spirit. Start with what you have, and commit to finishing what you started, because God will trust you with many things when you are faithful with a few things.

Pastor John Talcott

Christ’s Community Church

303 West Lincoln Avenue

Emmitsburg, MD 21727

July 17, 2022

(301) 447-4224

[www.cccaog.org](http://www.cccaog.org)

*Graphics, notes, and commentary from LifeChurch, Ministry Pass, PC Study Bible, Preaching Library, and Sermon Central. Scripture from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.*