

Courage From The Life Of David: Taking Initiative

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Study of 1 Samuel 17th chapter: Record of David's encounter with Goliath.

Roots of David's courage were in his intimacy with God and in his knowledge of God. Daniel 11:32 says, "The people who know their God will stand firm and take action." David's life illustrates the truth of this scripture. Courage to stand firm and take action comes not from the absence of fear or frightening circumstances, but courage in our lives to stand firm and take action comes from our knowledge and intimacy with God.

God's initiative: David's encounter with Goliath made him known publicly and led him in progression for the future kingship. There is an initiative from the side of God in choosing David while he was tending his sheep, searching for a man whom He could use. When Samuel confronted Saul with his apostasy, he said, "The Lord has sort out a man after His own heart." Psalms 78: 70, 71, 72 reflects on David's life –"he chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheep pens. From following the ewes great with young he brought to feed Jacob his people and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands." 2 chronicles 16:9 says, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through out the whole earth to show His might on behalf of him whose heart is blameless towards Him." He takes the initiative first in choosing the people. Men are looking for better methods but God is looking for better men.

Ruth and Hannah: These two women with their courage and faith in God were able to change the history of the nation Israel; take it from a state of decline as we see in Judges to a state of ascent which happened after the birth of great prophet Samuel and King David. David is the great grandson of Ruth and Samuel is the son of Hannah. Every initiative of faith to extend the kingdom of God requires a man or woman of faith at the heart of it.

I. We can learn four things from the life of David in this passage.

A. David's courage was an expression of his zeal for God: From V23-27, we see David's encounter with the frightening soldiers. In v26 David said, "What shall be given to the man that 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?" David found it disgusting that people should need financial or other rewards or privileges to act for the glory of God. There is a huge difference between other soldiers and David; zeal for God lies behind David's courage where as other soldiers were concentrating on the gifts and money that king announced as reward for the one that kills Goliath.

Where is our passion for the honor of God and the purposes of God? All around us in the world there are huge needs and incredible sufferings and whole sections of humanities are waiting for the gospel. Millions of believers are untaught and undisciplined. If we stop risking and do something like David, we can hear the devil laughing at us and taunting the church like Goliath. We need to be David in our own way and our own environment to take initiative with faith and courage and step out for God's glory.

B. David's courage was not undermined by his brother's skepticism: from V28-30, we see David's encounter with his indignant brother Eliab. Faith looks like presumption to the unbeliever. We should not let fear of what people think or false modesty stop us from taking courageous acts

for the Lord. When William Carey thought of the idea to go to India on a mission, the people said, "God can save the heathen without you young man." They thought his faith was presumptuous. William Carey's motto was 'Expect great things from God and Attempt great things for God.' Faith is based on the revealed will of God.

David was confident that God could use him. Many things in our life have not been attempted because of our lack of confidence in God; not the self confidence of the great and gifted; or the deluded presumption of those who think they are; but we need to have a deep confidence in the strength of the Living God. Hebrews 10:35 says, "So, do not throw away your confidence, for it will be richly rewarded."

C. David's courage was rooted in his experience of God's faithfulness: V31-39- David's encounter with the doubtful king - King Saul. When what David said about Goliath was reported to King Saul, the King got him dressed up in the armor of a soldier and David said that he cannot work out the battle with the armor as he was not used to it.

The key principle here is 'you cannot do in public in a crisis what you are not used to doing private day by day.' Courage to act for God should be characterized in every day of our lives. Our courage has to be rooted in our experiences of God's faithfulness in our day to day lives to act in courage in the big moments like David. David's confidence and courage came from his experience of his walking with God unseen by others in the midst of his responsibility as a shepherd. David was faithful to God in seemingly little things in taking care of his flock and protecting them from lions and bears as a shepherd. When God saw him, he thought that a guy like this would take good care of his people. This is what God said about David; "I found in David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart who will do my will" Acts 13:22.

What does God see when He looks into your lives; in the secret times?

D. David's courage was shaped by his understanding of God's way of working: V40-50: David's encounter with the scornful enemy, Goliath. Without a sword in his hand, David struck down the Philistine by hitting him on his fore head with his sling and smooth stone. David knew that God uses the surrendered human weakness as a channel of His power. The first key principle is that 'Lord is not dependent on swords and spears.' He has chosen the weak to shame the strong. He is not dependent on the force of arms, numbers, equipments, techniques, strength, experience or another human means. 'Most of the worth while things that get done in this world are done by weak people when they are tired and don't feel well.' Paul articulates this principle in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 that 'God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.' God chose the lowly things and the despised things of this world to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast before Him. This truth not only puts an end to boasting and to depend on one's self but also puts an end to excuses on the basis of our perceived weakness or inability.

Second key principle is although God does not depend on human beings but He delights in using them. David took five stones and he understood that God can direct his stones to the right place. Human plans, preparations and endeavors ended in a spirit of faith and dependence on God become the means to God to achieve His purposes. God loves His people trying something, but to try it with a confidence and faith in Him.

II. God's eyes always run to and fro through out the earth in search of a man or a woman whom He could use and who can accomplish His mission; May He find us to be the men and women of courage: courage that knows and understands that God has chosen to use weak and imperfect people to accomplish eternal purposes that we cannot even begin to guess out!