

## "David, Shepherd in the Field"

1 Samuel 17:33-50

19 December Anno Domini 2001

Advent Midweek III

Wednesday Evening Service of the Word

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Emmett, Idaho

Pastor Michael L. McCoy

Grace, mercy and peace to you in the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

Dear Baptized,

With haste did the messenger come to the eighth son of Jesse, the young shepherd keeping watch over the flocks in the field. For it was at the home of the father, that the older sons had passed before the prophet. Samuel, contrary even to his personal opinion, let them pass by. Though each of the seven may have looked like one who could be the LORD's anointed king, Samuel's ear had hearkened to God's Word, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

The young man, whom the holy writer describes as ruddy and handsome with beautiful eyes, as well as being a skillful musician, prudent speaker and valiant warrior, had been called. Those in Bethlehem awaited the advent of the shepherd who was out in the field watching over the flock of Jesse. Then, when that one son entered the place where his father and the prophet and his brothers had congregated, "Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers" (1 Samuel 16:13).

Then the feasting and banqueting could begin ... now the celebration of the sacrifice could commence, for it had been decreed by Samuel, the last of the judges, that they would not sit until the one entered that sanctuary, that is, the one who was going to be anointed by the prophet. Following the feast that one returned to his vocation as shepherd of the flock on the hills outside the little town of Bethlehem. That one would continue to do tend the sheep under his care until the times came when he would be summoned for the tasks ahead. That one was ...

.... David, Shepherd in the Field

And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth." But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and smote him and delivered it out of his mouth; and if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him and killed him. Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and

the LORD be with you!" Then Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a helmet of bronze on his head, and clothed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword over his armor, and he tried in vain to go, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these; for I am not used to them." And David put them off. Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in his shepherd's bag or wallet; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.

Thus far the text.

Do you not behold once again that appearances can be deceiving? A young Jewish man versus a seasoned Gentile giant. A shepherd's sling in the hand of one versus a soldier's spear in the other's bloody hand. A stone versus a shield. A shepherd's bag versus a gigantic javelin. David's Lord versus Goliath's gods. The Name of the LORD, the God of Israel versus the curses of the false gods of the Philistines. Behold David, the shepherd in the field, commissioned by the king and blessed with the words, "The LORD be with you." Behold Goliath, champion of those who hate the Israel of God, that is, those who hate the Church.

If you didn't know the outcome, you would think that this was ridiculous to the point of being absurd. Still, there are other times in history when one is hopelessly outnumbered and yet succeeds. We recall Samson's battle where he slew a thousand men. There's Sergeant York in his personal assault on the heavily-fortified machine-gun nests in World War I. On our television screens we saw a single, unarmed man stop a tank in Tiananmen Square.

Oh, and remember that time when the Son of David advanced on the hill of Calvary. With nothing except a seamless robe, Jesus is force-marched up to the Place of the Skull, as so many had before Him. This Man of the Cloth is accompanied by heavy-metaled soldiers and ecclesiastical-mocking men. But Jesus, the Son of God, does not come to wage war against either these soldiers or those men. He comes to win them by atoning for all their sins - that is, for all those who have done deeds contrary to the will of God, for those who have transgressed the Law, for those who have taken the LORD's Name in vain. The Son of Man will, on this bloody battlefield, fight the good fight against the old evil foe ... against Satan, the giant of all earthly Goliaths.

Do you not see your Savior and the armament He takes with Him as the forces of hell unleash their ungodly barrage against Him? Look even His robe is removed from Him and becomes a prize for those who roll the dice and love the lottery. What does He have to use on our behalf, this Son of David? Only what He was born with ... His Body and His Blood. This is His Body that He gives for the life of the world and this is His Blood that He sheds once for all.

Actually, we could go back further to a time before the crucifixion of the Christ. Do you remember that other time when the Son of God went into the desert ... armed with nothing but the clothes on His back and the Word from His mouth? Behold, the great Shepherd of the sheep goes into the wilderness to do battle with the Goliath of hell and thus Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. For forty days and forty nights Jesus fasted. He was hungry. Here is where the battle was waged and we are lost if Jesus falls. We are like the brothers of David and the people of Israel who must stand behind the trenches. For we have nothing to contribute to this campaign.

"With might of ours can naught be done,

Soon were our loss effected;  
But for us fights the Valiant One,  
Whom God Himself elected.  
Ask ye, Who is this?  
Jesus Christ it is,  
Of Sabaoth Lord,  
And there's none other God;  
He hold the field forever."  
(TLH # 262, stanza 2)

And the Tempter came on and drew near to the Son of David. Bearing bread and toting temptations, the hun of hell advances on the position of hungry Shepherd Whose only weapon is the Word of God.

verses 41-50 -- And the Philistine came on and drew near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. And when the Philistine looked, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, ruddy and comely in appearance. And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field." Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and 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. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down, and cut off your head; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORDS and he will give you into our hand." When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine, and killed him; there was no sword in the hand of David.

Thus far the text.

Because of the promised Word of the LORD, the outcome was determined before the son of Jesse descended to the plain. The king said to David, the favored one of God, "Go, and the LORD be with you!" The battle was won before this anointed one stepped onto the field and slung the stone. Goliath didn't know it, but when Israel's champion entered the arena, that Philistine hero was a dead man. The elect stone, slung from David, the Shepherd in the Field, sunk into his foe's forehead and crushed his head.

So also with David's Lord and David's Son - the outcome was determined from before the foundation of the world and before Jesus ever took either a staggering step on His way to the cross in the Promised Land, or even a toddling step in the land of Egypt. The Word of this Promised Seed of the woman, first given in the third chapter of Genesis, was that the Savior would crush the head of Satan. Lucifer didn't know it, but when the Son of God was Incarnate by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Jewish virgin, the Devil of death was defeated. The angel said to Mary, "Greetings, O favored one, the LORD is with you" (Luke 1:28).

Now these words are written and these sayings are said "that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's." This Jesus is He Who is God Incarnate, Who is Emmanuel (that is, "God with us"), Who saved us not by sword or spear, nor gold or silver, but with His holy, precious Blood and with His innocent suffering and death, ... that you may be His own, and live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

Dear baptized, behold Jesus ... this is the Son of God the Father in Heaven and the Son of David, the Shepherd in the Field. Therefore, "Go, and the LORD be with you," for you are forgiven in the Name of the Father and the (+) Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.