

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## STAND UP, MAN UP

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22ND JULY 2020

Have you ever heard the phrase "Stand Up and Be Counted"...? What about the phrase "Man Up!"? Ever wondered where they came from or what the true meaning of them is? If we take a look at Collins their definition of Stand Up and be Counted is this...

***If you say that someone should stand up and be counted, you mean that they should say publicly what they think, and not hide it or be ashamed of it.***

What about Man Up? ***If you man up, you start to be more brave in the way that you deal with a situation.***

Quite strong and bold statements. But could we use these in Church life? Should we Stand Up and Be Counted? Should we Man Up? (or woman up)... Let's take a quick journey at one of the Bible's Heroes to see whether there are things we can learn.

We all face obstacles in life. Part of what makes life fantastic, exciting, worthwhile, and energising is having a goal or a purpose or a call that is so worthwhile that we will fight through any obstacle, overcome any difficulty, literally "move any mountain" to overcome it.

And I am not just talking about lofty, world-changing things that we see about and hear about and admire, I'm talking about the kinds of things that each of us face. Like caring for those we love, whether they are growing older or experiencing illness or going through challenging emotional situations. Like raising our children in the Lord. Like living with integrity in the middle of a world of short-cuts, compromise of principle, and where the only thing that seems to matter is maximising profit, using a camera filter to apparently make us look more

appealing. How do we face these kinds of obstacles, and what does our faith provide for our day to day life? Today I want to take us to the story of David and Goliath, and see what we can learn together from that story.

Ok first off - I want to dispel something we have been taught since the dawn of time. In Sunday school, in main church, even in School ....

### **David did not kill Goliath**

The story is in 1 Sam 17 and I'm stating here today to declare that we now know conclusively that David did not kill Goliath. You heard me correctly – David did not kill Goliath. Is there some new archeological evidence to support this crazy claim? Some weird linguistic nuance in the original Hebrew that scholars are just now figuring out? Some new ancient manuscript recently discovered in Israel that proves my point? Nope; it is actually in the Biblical story itself. Let's take a look together and find out...

So the book starts out with the Philistines and the Israelites. The Philistines were not the best of people. In terms of Israel they were the Bad Guys. And the Israelites - God's chosen people. They all meet on the battle field, well actually two hills with a valley between. The Philistines bring their champion fighter, to taunt the Israelites. This guy, Goliath, is ridiculously big. He's 9 foot tall, has a coat of mail (basically metal rings) that weighs nearly 60kg (the weight of three holiday suitcases packed full) and a spear so big the tip weighs as much as 7 bags of sugar. This man and his spear were not to be messed with. Especially when he is standing there shouting " Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough"..

Now Goliath does this twice a day for forty days And nothing changes. It doesn't go away. This is an important factor when we face an obstacle: they don't move themselves. Goliath doesn't get bored and move on to another army. And God doesn't strike him dead while he sleeps and solve the problem for the Israelites. The army of Israel does nothing, probably because of their fear, so nothing changes. He just stands there and taunts them.

David comes along to bring his brothers, who are in the army, some food. Now while he was talking to his brothers, Goliath does his thing, and David starts questioning why no-one has defeated him and David's oldest brother Eliab gets a little angry , and asks him to leave.

It is an interesting little sidebar... there is obviously some sibling tension here. It probably helps here if I we look at what happened in the previous chapter, 1 Sam

16, which was probably about 5 years earlier, the priest Samuel had already anointed David as the next king of Israel. His brothers knew, they were there and had been rejected as the next king in favour of their little brother, and that is no doubt behind some of this tension and conflict. And there is another reality about obstacles here, which is an unfortunate one: sometimes the people we expect to stand with us and help are also overwhelmed with the obstacle and react negatively towards us. The stress and tension of the overall situation sometimes leak out, and instead of standing together and being supportive of one another we sometimes lash out. Let's work hard to not be the ones to do that to others, and be patient and forgiving when others do it to us.

So King Saul eventually hears what David is asking and calls for him, and David says to the King "Don't worry about this Philistine, I'll fight him". Ok, another bit of context. David is likely around 15 years old, a sheep-herding and food delivery boy, and he tells the king, "Don't worry about this Philistine...".

When Saul replies "Don't be Ridiculous" you can kind of understand what the King is thinking. From a human perspective, sending a small 15 year old up against a 9 foot giant is ridiculous. Sometimes, that is how God's way looks to us.

David's reply shows a willingness to present his credentials and win his first battle – this one with the king rather than Goliath. And that is how obstacles often are in our lives – not just one big battle, but a series of smaller ones, smaller decisions, leading up to the larger confrontation.

Saul finally consented. "All right, go ahead," he said. "And may the Lord be with you!"

Saul then gives this young lad his own armour... Do you see the comedy in this? I see a king trying desperately to help God, but seeing it only through human eyes, reveals how silly this actually is. "I can't go in these," he protested to Saul. "I'm not used to them." So David took them off again. He picked up five smooth stones from a stream and put them into his shepherd's bag. Then, armed only with his shepherd's staff and sling, he started across the valley to fight the Philistines.

So let's read direct from scripture for this last bit...

***41 Goliath walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him, 42 sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy. 43 "Am I a dog," he roared at David, "that you come at me with a stick?" And he cursed David by the names of his***

*gods. 44 "Come over here, and I'll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!" Goliath yelled. 45 David replied to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 Today the Lord will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! 47 And everyone assembled here will know that the Lord rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!"*

There it is. Did you catch it? Who killed Goliath? It isn't David. "Today, the Lord will conquer you... This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!"

This is not a facetious playing with words here. This, I think, is the most important fact of all when we face obstacles in life that seek to prevent us from all that God has for us to do and experience. The point is this: "This is the Lord's battle...".

David doesn't kill Goliath, God does. Now yes, He uses David to do it, just like He used Moses to lead the people out of Egypt, but make no mistake: God is the one who does it. This is critical for each of us as well, when it comes to facing our obstacles. It isn't all on our shoulders. It isn't up to us. We don't need to get dressed up in the fancy armour that doesn't fit because it was made for the king, and we are putting it on because we think we need to pretend to be something else as we solve the problem/overcome the obstacle ourselves. No. "This is the Lord's battle", and the Lord will be victorious. Our job is to be obedient. To not run away, to not cower in fear, to not hide in our tents. Our job is to know what is right, and step up to do what is right. To face the obstacle, no matter how scary or intimidating, and then do what is right and trust God for the rest.

1 Corinthians 16 v 13 + 14

13 Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous.[c] Be strong. 14 And do everything with love. Lets Man Up and Stand up be counted.



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**JAMIE BAKER**



*Coach House Church*

leadership@coachhousechurch.org

// 0161 432 5604

the coach house church, 222 wellington road north, stockport sk4 2qn