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The battle belongs to the Lord

You know the story. You may have heard it before you were old enough to go to school. *David and Goliath*.

The account is in 1 Samuel 17. Saul is king of Israel, but has been rejected by God for his rebellion, insubordination, disobedience and rejection of God's word (15:22-29).

David was a young man, out in the fields caring for his family sheep when God told the prophet Samuel to anoint him to replace Saul. Later Saul chose David to be his attendant and armor bearer.



The Philistines collected their forces to go to war against Israel. The two sides lined up against each other. Goliath, the Philistines' champion, gave Israel the challenge—one warrior from Israel would go toe to toe with him, each representing his nation. Winner takes all, with the losing side becoming the servant of the winner. There were no takers from Israel, not even king Saul himself who "was taller than any of the people" (8:2).

When David arrived at the scene of the standoff he asked "who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he has dared to defy the armies of the living God?" (17:26). Those who heard him were angry and rebuked him. When David volunteered he said Goliath would be like a lion or bear he killed when protecting his father's sheep "since he has defied the armies of the living God" and that God would save him from Goliath. When David came face to face with Goliath he told him,

"You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a saber, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of armies, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I will strike you and remove your head from you" (17:45-46).

We know what happened. I pause the account here and will briefly sketch three important truths and their impact for us.

1. David took Goliath's taunts seriously because he was defying not just Israel, but also God Almighty. David, I am sure, took Goliath's taunt personally, but he responded because the

attack was against his God, against God who had chosen Israel as His people and David to be the next king.

2. David did not rely on his own strength or skill, but on God. He came in the name of God, in the power of God. Yes, he used his sling with skill, but it was God that guided that stone.
3. David's victory over Goliath was not his but God's. "The battle is the LORD'S, and He will hand you over to us" (17:47). David did not congratulate himself. He did not tell those who were angry with him for volunteering "I told you so! I told you I could do it!"

These truths apply to us in our daily spiritual battles against Satan, his forces, evil.

1. We are to respond not because the enemies defy, attack us, but because when they attack God's people because of their faith they are attacking God. Attacks on God and his truth trouble us. Personal attacks hurt. It can be tempting to retaliate, or at least focus on defending ourselves. Our response should be like David's—stand for God and His truth, His honor. While there is a place for defending ourselves from false attacks (see for example David in the Psalms), our prime focus is to be to stand for and defend God's truth.
2. When we take our stand and engage the spiritual battles we are to put on full armor of God and be strong in the Lord and in the strength of *His* might (see Ephesians 6:10-13). Yes, we use the skills and resources we have as David did, but we are to rely on God and His power. Just as God fought for David, for Israel under Joshua when they took the land, it is God and His power that gains the victory for us.
3. All the spiritual victories we win are from God, they are His victories in and through us. Proverbs 21:31 tells us the same thing David did, "The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the LORD."

You and I face spiritual conflict and battles every day. Some are *up front and personal*, temptations from within and attacks from without. Others are what we see in the world around us. Each day, in every battle remember *the battle belongs to the Lord*.

Pastor Lyle