

## **Boldness**

1 Sam 17:1-10

Everyone here understands what it's like to face difficult circumstances.

And the most natural response is fear or anxiety.

1 Sam 17:11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

It's normal to be afraid, to give up, to want to throw the towel in.

What I want to talk about today is the other response, the abnormal one.

Because if you want to achieve anything in this life of importance, you have to be different from the rest – make different choices, have a different attitude.

So today I want to talk about boldness.

On a day when an entire nation was paralysed with fear, one young man – a youth – did something extraordinary.

And he gave us a powerful example of what boldness can achieve.

David was a very bold young man.

Here are some of the things he's taught us.

### **1. Boldness is never limited by natural circumstances**

Eight kids, and David is the youngest. (vs 14)

You know what that means? He's the bottom of the pecking order.

But David wasn't focused on his natural circumstances.

His focus was elsewhere.

ILLUS – Fifteen years ago, I found myself out of work, I thought I don't want to be in a position where I'm depending on an employer. I decided to start a business. I applied for a government grant. You have to fill out a zillion forms explaining how you're going to get it off the ground and keep it going. Their assessment? You can't sustain a music tuition business in this area, because there are already too many businesses of that nature.

The natural circumstances said it was not possible.

But we did it anyway.

History is full of people who wouldn't let their potential be stifled by lack of money or resources, family circumstances, education, age, inexperience.

### **2. Boldness maintains itself by keeping its eye on the prize**

The king promised that whoever killed Goliath, wouldn't have to pay taxes, and also got to marry his daughter.

That got David's interest – he was so interested, he checked it out with some of the guys – twice.

What interested him was the prize.

Aren't you like that too? Don't you go to work because you want to get paid?

Didn't Jesus stay motivated by keeping His eye on the prize too?

Heb 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Sometimes we get so focused on the crumbs that life dishes out, we forget to keep our eyes on the real prize.

### **3. Boldness will always bring about opposition**

But a bold person doesn't let opposition stop them.

1 Sam 17:28 Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle."

His own brother opposed him!

Why do Christians get so surprised when they experience opposition?

Opposition is normal.

And if you set out to do anything worthwhile in life, sometimes the greatest opposition comes from within your own family.

ILLUS – When I met my wife, I thought, "She's beautiful, talented, smart. This is the girl for me. I'm gonna marry her." The biggest step of my life. Guess where the opposition came from? Family. (They probably thought, "She's beautiful, talented, smart. Why would she want to marry him?")

But opposition comes from other places too.

When David stood before King Saul, Saul had plenty of ideas why David wouldn't be able to do much for God.

It's very easy for us to assess David with the benefit of hindsight.

But Saul didn't have hindsight – actually, he didn't have much insight or foresight either.

When he heard what David had been saying, he must have said, "At last! We've finally found our champion. I, King Saul, wish to meet this mighty warrior. Bring him to me."

But when David came before him, he looked at him and said, "But you're a kid! You're just a child! You can't fight this giant; he's been a warrior from his youth." (1 Sam 17:33)

The thing about David is, he wasn't going to let negative talk, ridicule, or opposition stop him from achieving something great for God.

Don't let other people's negativity stop you from achieving great things – be bold.

ILLUS – I have a question and it's very deep: Turn to the person next to you and ask, "Are you a lion or a snail's eyeball?" Let me explain. When you're a kid, you can't help yourself. You pick up a snail, and notice some things: slime, shell, and those pokey-out things and all you want to do is touch them. What happens when you touch a snail's eye? It shrivels.

But what happens when you confront a lion? A lion isn't like that – a lion is bold.

... the righteous are as bold as a lion. Prov 28:1

### **4. Boldness draws strength from past victories that God has given**

There's a saying: The man with the experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument.

Do you believe in healing? I hope you do.

But I hope that you believe in healing, not just because you can prove it from the Bible – and there’s nothing wrong with that.

I hope you believe in healing because you have also experienced God’s healing touch in your life.

Because once you’ve experienced something, you can draw on that memory to give you boldness when you need it next time.

David could have talked to any number of people who could have told him why he was about to fail.

You’re a kid, you’re too young, you’re too small, you don’t have the experience, you don’t have the armour ... and you’re going out there with a slingshot? Are you nuts?

ILLUS – All the people who I taught guitar or piano to over the years, I must have heard all the excuses. I’m too old, I’m too young, my fingers are too short, my fingers are too long, my fingers are too fat, my fingers are too thin, I don’t have any fingers – okay, that might work.

Talk about opposition!

Sometimes the greatest opposition we can get is from ourselves – the endless negative chatter that runs through our own minds.

Yakkety-yakkety-yak – you can’t do that, you’re not smart enough, good enough, strong enough, talented enough ...

But instead of listening to all that, David cast his mind back and remembered what God had done for him in times past.

1 Sam 17:34-36 But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, (35) I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. (36) Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.”

Wow! What confidence! What boldness! How did he get that?

By thinking back to the things that God had already done for him.

## **5. Boldness doesn’t shackle itself with someone else’s baggage**

1 Sam 17:38-39 So Saul clothed David with his armour, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail. (39) David fastened his sword to his armour and tried to walk, for he had not tested them. And David said to Saul, “I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested them.” So David took them off.

Someone else will always try to fit you into their mould.

Pastors get this all the time: This is what a pastor should be like, or what they should do, how they should conduct themselves.

But not just pastors – everybody experiences it.

Parents are often very good at supplying a mould for their children.

They’ve got it all worked out.

ILLUS – One young man, all he ever wanted to be was a pilot. But his parents had decided that he would be a doctor. I guess it would be nice to be able to say, “My son the doctor.” So he became a doctor – and he committed suicide.

That doesn’t mean you don’t listen to input from family and others.

But if you want to boldly fulfil the plan and purpose of God for your life, the best mould for you, is the one God made.

It's the perfect plan.

David wasn't about to let Saul saddle him with his own hang-ups.

Even with the king, he was bold.

Not rude, but bold.

I'm not talking about the anger, aggression or arrogance that often gets passed off as assertiveness these days.

He wasn't any of those, but he was firm.

David didn't want the king's baggage: He had his own calling from God.

## **6. Boldness sees with the eyes of faith**

2 Cor 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Goliath was a giant of a man – he was about 9' 4" tall.

And not only was he tall, he was very strong.

His coat of mail weighed 57 kilos.<sup>1</sup>

His spearhead weighed almost 7 kilos – you get hit by 7 kilos flying through the air, it doesn't matter where it hits you, it's going to do some damage.

ILLUS – But David was 17, and you know what that means. He'd just seen Rambo on TV the night before. And he thought, "I can take him."

And he looked beyond the fight with Goliath, and thought, "There's more of them there critters out there. I better get me some more ammo."

1 Sam 17:40 Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine.

Five smooth stones? He only needed one for Goliath.

What did he want those other stones for?

He didn't just have his eyes on Goliath – he saw with eyes of faith.

As big as Goliath was, God had even bigger and better things for David.

So when he'd finished with Goliath, he was going for the rest of the Philistines too.

## **7. Boldness draws upon God's strength**

The great thing about boldness is that in one respect it's like fear.

When Saul was shaking in his boots, so was Abner the commander of his army, and so were his officers, and so were all the soldiers.

Fear is contagious.

ILLUS – I remember lying in bed one night, and we heard a noise. My nose and eyes peered over the blankets. My wife said, "What was that?" Being the hero that I am, I was all for pretending I hadn't heard anything, so I said, "What was what?" "That noise." "What noise?" We heard it again. "That noise."

What I want to know is how come we men get all the dangerous jobs like checking out intruders. While our wives get all the easy jobs like having babies and stuff?

I'm just kidding, but fear is contagious, isn't it?

But listen, boldness is contagious too.

ILLUS – There are the times when you might be in a discussion and you're thinking, "This isn't right." But nobody says a thing. And finally you pluck up the courage to say something, and all of a sudden you find a whole bunch of others who agree with you. They just needed a leader.

How did David manage to lead the way, and be so bold in the face of incredible odds?

He didn't rely on his own strength, he put his trust – his confidence – in God.

This is what he said to Saul: "The LORD ... will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." (1 Sam 17:37)

It's the Holy Spirit who supplies the strength.

ILLUS – Think about what happened with the disciples. A bunch of chicken-hearts. Then they get filled with the Holy Spirit and they're as bold as.

We have been anointed by the Holy Spirit to do the works of Jesus.

Why shouldn't we be bold?

## **8. Boldness takes risks**

Did you know that you don't need boldness unless there's a risk?

ILLUS – Picture this: The Philistine army on one side, Israel's army on the other side. King Saul has heard about David's bravery with the lion and the bear. So he calls for him. "Son, we've got ourselves a situation. We need a champion to fight for us. And I think you're the man for the job." He takes him to a spot overlooking the valley. "See our problem?" And there's a 6-year-old girl standing in the valley.

You don't need boldness to fight a 6-year-old girl.

You need boldness when there's a real risk.

David went out on a limb – he risked his life.

He risked his reputation.

ILLUS – Imagine if he'd failed and lived to tell the tale. He'd be the skeleton in the closet of that family. "Hey, Daddy. Tell us what happened to Uncle David." "You keep your mouth shut boy. We don't mention that name in this family."

David could have been the crazy kid who went out to fight the giant.

ILLUS – Here's an example. If someone came in here right now and said, "We're looking for someone to go 15 rounds with Mike Tyson next week." Imagine if I said, "Pick me." You'd say, "Are you nuts?" So I fight Tyson, get half-murdered, and you say, "Tell me you're not surprised."

That's what you would expect; that's what happens when you fight against the odds – it's a risk.

What is it that we are risking when we preach the gospel?

It's only our reputation, isn't it?

"But people will think poorly of me. They'll reject me. They might laugh at me."

Isn't that just pride, when we're more concerned with what people think than with what God thinks?

But boldness looks at the risks and does it anyway.

Because when you're doing what Jesus wants, you're fighting from a position of strength and superiority.

It takes boldness to invite someone to church, it takes boldness to share your faith, it takes boldness for gifts of the Spirit, it takes boldness to achieve great things in the secular community, it takes boldness to make a commitment to follow Jesus because it's not the sort of thing you can keep secret.

---

<sup>1</sup> Baldwin, Joyce Tyndale *Old Testament Commentaries: 1 & 2 Samuel* p 125