

Facing the Giants

(Trusting God in tough times)

1 Samuel 17:32-37

Happy New Year! Shnorhavor Nor Daree!
And also Merry Christmas! Yev sourp dznount

Finally, we put behind the year 2022. We are done.

How do we enter the new year 2023?

Is it going to be challenging like the other years?

Most likely, yes.

How do you see this new year? A year of possibilities, a year of growth, or year of big giants facing you and not allowing you to move forward...

Sometimes 2023 looks like a “giant” and we, small individuals, are facing a “giant” over which we have no control.

King Solomon, the wise man, said in the Book of Proverbs,

“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1).

Every day we hear about something crazy, either financially, or medically, or politically.

Beside this economic crisis, we also hear about the sudden deaths of beloved ones. We hear about health problems affecting a loved one or us. We see the escalation of the war in Armenia and Ukraine. In the Middle East because of economic poverty, there are serious issues, some are even hungry.

In the book called “Trusting God Even When Life Hurts” by Jerry Bridges. We read:

“The moral will of God given to us in the Bible is **rational and reasonable. The **circumstances** in which must **trust God** often **appear irrational and inexplicable**. The law of God is readily recognized to be good for us, even when we don’t want to obey it. Yet the circumstances of our lives frequently appear to be dreadful and grim or even tragic”** (page 16).

In his book, Bridges argues that it is easier for Christians to obey God than to trust God.

We obey laws, we obey Christ's teachings, (sometimes we don't). But concerning trusting Him, we hesitate, or our faith is weakened.

Here is a Biblical passage where David, a little young boy is facing a giant. Let us study the passage.

King Saul was confused. Although he believed in God, YHWH, but he trusted in his own wisdom more. He thought he took good decisions without asking God. He was in front of a tough situation; he was facing a well-equipped army, the Philistines. Yet instead of fighting as an army, the Philistines sent a giant man (Goliath) to fight with one of the Israelites.

The challenge for the Israelites was, "Who would be the one facing this giant?"

We read,

"When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid" (17:11 ESV).

King Saul went to the field to fight. He had an army but not a plan about how to win this challenge. In this situation, the **little boy David** enters the picture. He is bringing food for his brothers who were in the Saul's army.

(Remember Joseph bringing food to his brothers in the book of Genesis.)

He heard the challenge of this "giant". He was **the only one who trusted** that the **God of Israel could help him face this man.**

Let me repeat: He is the only one... who trusted God

So what does trusting God mean?

1. Trusting God despite upcoming obstacles:

David and Goliath, a young boy and a 9-foot man fully armed with almost 250 extra pounds of armor. **The picture represents impossibility.** Here comes the issue of TRUSTING GOD when it does not make sense. Everyone was afraid, including the king. Everyone saw an "impossible situation." David was not afraid to try, because he trusted God.

2. Trusting God means declaring (revealing) that you Trust God

Goliath was verbally threatening the Israelites and their God. Everyone was scared and was trying to escape. When he heard the threat, David verbally announced that he would challenge this man with the HELP of God.

“Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (1 Samuel 17:26b ESV)

Please notice how David proclaims about Yahweh.

He is the LIVING GOD.

I am thinking about myself. Do I declare like that about my God?

Or I stay silent, and say in my heart, “Let me see what God will do?”

Saul was not sure about this kid. David challenges Saul too saying:

“The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine”. (1 Samuel 17:37 ESV)

Another testimony.

If God rescued me before, He will rescue me again.

It is trust...David is saying I trust God....

“You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied”. (1 Samuel 17:45 ESV)

One more time we see how David describes who Yahweh is.

Yahweh does not need earthly vessels to protect me.

-In the New Testament we read about a woman who was suffering from bleeding for twelve years. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought touching Jesus’ clothes with faith would heal her. She was healed immediately. Now Jesus stopped and asked, **“Who touched my clothes?”** (Mark 5:21-31)

Why did Jesus want the woman to talk?

Jesus wanted the woman to reveal her faith;

She was hiding, and her faith was enough to heal her, yet she wanted to touch Jesus in the crowd so no one would notice it.

Jesus wanted to reveal her faith. Jesus wanted her to **affirm her faith publicly.**

There is healing in declaring your trust in God.

Illustration: After my surgery, I was in bed recovering. There were nurses who came and took care of me. God bless them. Every hour they checked, my blood pressure, my heart, my oxygen level and so on...

I was somehow dizzy and very uncomfortable.

I started thinking about this night shift nurse. Her job is to take care of the patient. What a noble job.

In her one of visits I said, like (2:00 AM) “I am thankful from God that you are here serving me... I am a pastor, and I want to thank you by praying with you. Would you allow me to pray?” She stopped and looked at me. She said, “Please, I need prayer. I held her hand and I prayed.”

She came every hour to take care of me. In the following hour she said, thanks for the prayer. “Can you pray for my daughter. She is going through a tough time?”

David declared who God is. David declared that he trusted God.

I am not good in this. I want guaranteed results then I will declare...

Can you declare that you trust God despite the circumstances?

David did that.

3. Trusting God does not mean being passive.

In the Bay Area I had chance to meet Bruce Waltke, an Old Testament professor. In one of his lectures, he tells how he loves playing with his grandchild. One of their favorite games is **David and Goliath**. Of course, he will be Goliath and his grandson will be David. They use ping pong balls as the stones that David used. Waltke taught his grandson that he should throw the ping pong saying, **“The battle is the Lord’s; by the help of God, I will throw this ping pong”** and he (Bruce) would fall down.

Once the grandson threw the ping pong, and the grandfather did not fall down.

Then he remembered he should have said, “by the help of God.”

Another time the grandson said, “By the help of God fall down” but did not throw the ping pong. Obviously, the grandfather did not fall.

You see the professor was teaching his grandson that David trusted in God’s help and did not stand and watch.

David first convinced the king that he was a brave shepherd, and he knew how to protect his flock from wild animals.

Then he was armed like a warrior. That was not his style. He took off all the heavy accessories

and he **fought like shepherd.**

He used his brains to find the **weakest point of this giant**, and then you know the story.

Trusting God means also being ready to put all your abilities in God's hand so God can work through us.

4. Trusting God means not to give up despite what others do and say.

Jesse's sons were in the army. They did not like to see that their brother David in the camp. David's oldest brother Eliab was not happy at all, and he rebuked David for leaving the flock and coming to watch the war.

Now Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle." And David said, "What have I done now? (1 Samuel 17:28-29a)

Strange, you expect your "household" to be with you...right?

Not necessarily. Often your family does not understand your vision.

I look to these verses and worries me that instead of supporting each other, we rebuke each other in the "house".

-What happened next?

David was angry, but that did not stop him from telling the king he could challenge this GIANT. **David trusted God.**

-The woman who touched Jesus was considered unclean. She was not supposed to touch anything; she could not sit on a chair. She did not pay attention to her religious regulations. She risked it all and touched Jesus. **She trusted Jesus.**

Do you have people who mock your faith in God?

Do you have people who discourage you from trusting God?

5. Trusting God means to know him at ALL TIMES.

Not just when there is a crisis. Not just when things are good and trusting makes sense.

David was a man of God all his life, in all situations.

It is not wise to turn to God only when one is facing a crisis.

Let me ask you these tough questions so you can examine yourself:

-Did we trust God when everything was plenty?

-Did we ask God's will when we were doing financially well?

-Does our trust in God depend on circumstances?

In order to trust God, we must know Him in an intimate, personal way.

Listen to what King David said about trust in Psalm 9:10

“Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.” (Psalm 9:10 ESV)

It is not just knowing facts about God. The Word of God is not just any documentary book. It is a book of life. It is seeking God when you are in pain or in joy. It is to know Him by name. It is seeking God when it makes sense or when it does not make sense. No wonder I push you as your pastor to be part of a Bible Study group. You cannot know God in dreams. You cannot know God by just listening to sermons. You need to know God personally, through Jesus our Savior who helps you know God in an intimate way.

Have I not commanded you?

Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9 ESV)

-God is calling you learn to trust in Him.

Let us pray

God, I know that You are faithful and good.

You have given me new life and love me as Your child.

You are with me on my best days, and carry me through the worst.

You protect me and guide me.

Please continue to show me how You are working in my life and in the lives of those around me.

Help me to focus on my future with You, and to be a witness to Your work. In Jesus' name, Amen.