

## FACING YOUR GIANTS

Walt Disney World in Florida opened in the fall of 1971. A few months ago I was watching a movie about Walt Disney. He was a man of vision. He died a few years before Walt Disney World opened. It is said that on the opening day Mrs. Disney was sitting beside Walter Cronkite. During the opening ceremonies he leaned over to her and said, "Wouldn't it be great if Walt were here to see this today." Mrs. Disney wisely replied, "Walt did see it. If he had not first seen this you would not be seeing it today." Vision was important for the building of the Magic Kingdom, but it is also true of the building of God's Kingdom. We long to see God's kingdom come, his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Today we are concluding our series called transformed. It is based on the this passage;

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

We have looked at many different areas in our lives where God wants to see transformation. Today I want to bring it all together. What is your God given life dream? Remember that song Happy Talk from the movie South Pacific? It said "You got to have a dream, if you don't have a dream, how you gonna have a dream come true?" If you don't have a dream for your life you're literally just drifting. You're letting life happen to you. As I said before, when you're coasting you're always going downhill. So, you need a God given dream for your life.

Nothing happens without a dream. Everything you see around you – every piece of art, every business, every architecture, every product, everything happens because somebody thought it up first. This building that you are sitting in today was once just a dream. Everything begins as a dream.

Napoleon said, "Imagination rules the world." Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." It's that ability to dream that makes us creators, it reflects the image of God in us.

Through my years in ministry I have seen and helped many people pursue their dream. What I have seen is that for every person who figures that out and heads after their dream there are many others who are afraid to get started or get sidetracked along the way. Many people never embrace their God given dream because they run into dream busters along the way. They hit some kind of problem or obstacle along the way that just seems too big to overcome. They faced a giant. Because of this they go no further and they live out the rest of their days in mediocrity.

These problems can be financial or emotional or relational. They can be problems with your health. What do you do when you face these giants in life? Fortunately, we have a wonderful story in the Bible that shows us how to deal with the giants in our life. It is the story of David and Goliath.

1 Samuel 17:2-4 Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. 3 The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them. 4 A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall.

Goliath was a giant, but that was not the only giant that David had to face that day. There were many other giants in his life trying to hold him back from being who God wanted him to be;

a. Delay

The first giant in facing your dream that David had to face was delay. No dream is fulfilled instantly. God usually does not give you the dream on one day and fulfill it the next day. No, usually it takes years to see the fulfillment of your life dream. There is always a waiting period.

We see in the chapter before that David had been anointed as king over Israel. God had rejected Saul as king and instructs Samuel to go to the home of Jesse and appoint the next king, the person God had chosen.

1 Samuel 16:11-13 So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." 12 So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one." 13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.

Even though David was anointed as the future king of Israel, he did not become the king that day. In fact, he would have to wait very many years for it to take place. He would continue as shepherd until his encounter with the giant. Then he would serve as an armour bearer and a harp player. This was a lowly job. It was the job of a servant.

God has a plan for your life. But usually that means starting at the bottom and not the top.

b. Discouragement

The second giant that David was facing was the giant of discouragement. That is when you share your dream and people do not think you can do it. No one believes that you are able to make it. Everyone is trying to convince you that your dream is impossible.

1 Samuel 17:28-33 When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle." 29 Now what have I done? said David. "Can't I even speak?" 30 He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before. 31 What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him. 32 David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." 33 Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth."

David's brothers believed that there was no way their weak skinny younger kid brother could beat Goliath. They accuse him of being negligent because he left the sheep in the desert. They accuse him of being conceited and wicked in thinking that he was better than everyone else. How often the greatest dream killers can be people from our own family or even the church.

Let me tell you something. Conventional wisdom is often wrong. All the soldiers that were there that day were wrong. They all believed that defeating Goliath was impossible. Sometimes accomplishing our God given dream means that we have to think outside the box.

We need a fresh set of eyes. Just because everyone thinks you cannot do it does not mean that they are right. Often the crowd is wrong.

The problem was that the soldiers were listening to Goliath and not listening to God. All they heard for 40 days was the giant taunting them. They were afraid and fear turned them into negative people. There are a lot of negative people in the world today. The problem with negativity is that it is contagious. Fear and discouragement spreads quickly.

Let me give you some advice. Don't hang out with negative people. Don't hang out with fearful and discouraged people. If you do eventually you will become like them. If you hang out with negative people you become negative.

One author wrote: Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly. Hold fast to dreams, for when dreams go life is a barren field frozen with snow.

The first barrier to your dream is delay. The second barrier to your dream is discouragement.

c. Disapproval

The third barrier to your dream is disapproval. David had to handle this one. He had to be willing to face the disapproval of people around him in order to go after his dream. And you will too.

Many people don't go after their dream because they are afraid of disapproval. They are afraid of rejection. Society tells us not to rock the boat. Don't question the status quo. Don't make waves. There are established ways of doing things so get back in line and do what everyone else is doing.

1 Samuel 17:38-39 Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. 39 David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off.

God made us unique. There is no one else in the world like you. God has given you unique gifts and abilities. When God gives you a dream it may be one that others are afraid to attempt or afraid to accomplish or afraid to even step out and try. If you take that dream and you go for it, you will be misjudged, maligned, misinterpreted and misunderstood. That is the giant of disapproval. You have to decide what matters more to you – the approval of other people or the approval of God.

By the way, did you know what Saul had declared what the reward for killing Goliath would be? It says in verse 25 that the king would give you three things. The first was great wealth. The second was that you got to marry the king's daughter. The third was that you were exempt from taxes the rest of your life. Hello! I would have gone after Goliath for just that one. No taxes for the rest of my life. Now that is a reward! Delay, discouragement and disapproval.

d. Doubt

There will always be people around us that will doubt our ability to accomplish our dream. Saul had much more experience than David in battle and he doubted that David would be able to defeat Goliath.

1 Samuel 17:32-33 David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." 33 Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth."

Goliath was an expert in combat and he doubted that David would be able to defeat him.

1 Samuel 17:41-44 Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. 42 He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. 43 He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 Come here, he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"

When the experts, the people you trust, the people with lots of experience start saying that you can not make it, that is often enough to make you start doubting yourself. However, like I said before, with the experts it is all about conventional wisdom. The experts are often wrong.

When Rick Warren first wrote Purpose Driven Life, he got a letter from his publisher which he framed and hung on his office wall. It said "This book will never work. Nobody's going to read forty chapters." The experts are often very wrong. Very wrong.

Many years ago there was a young man who worked as a cobbler who had a dream of telling the story of Jesus everywhere in the world. When he shared his dream an older man said, "Sit down, young man. If God wants to save the heathen, he will do it without your help or mine." That young man's name was William Carey. He could have listened to the advice of the older man, but he did not. He followed his dream. He once preached a sermon, "Attempt Great Things for God; Expect Great Things from God." He left his own country, England, and went to India where he spent the rest of his life teaching and preaching about Jesus. It was years before even one person accepted this message. But eventually one, then another, and then many believed. How many lives were touched by the dream of that one young man?

Delay, discouragement, disapproval and doubt will try to keep you from following God's plan for your life. So how do you defeat the giants in your life?

1. Examine the Past – how God has helped you before

Remember how God has helped you in the past. When you do so it gives you confidence for the future. Remember that time when I thought I wouldn't make it? But I did. Remember the time I thought that this was the end, but it wasn't. Remember that time I thought I was at rock bottom and I would never be able to climb out? But I did. Remember when I thought I was all alone? But I wasn't.

1 Samuel 17:34-36 But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God.

Remembering how God has helped you in the past reminds you of how God is going to help you in the future. Why? Because God never changes. If he's helped you in the past in little ways, he will willingly help you in the future in big ways. You remember how God has helped you in the past.

## 2. Embrace your Gifts – use what you have

Don't wait for something you don't have. I don't have enough money. I don't have enough education. I don't have enough connections. I don't have enough opportunities. I don't have this or I don't have that. No. You use the tools you have right now.

Some people are just waiting for something to happen. You don't wait for your ship to come in. You swim out to get it. If you wait for it to come into the harbor, you're going to wait a long, long time. You use the tools God has given you now.

Saul wanted to dress David in his own armour, but David was not Saul. Saul was a tall grown man; David was still just a boy. Saul had experience with a sword and shield. David used a sling.

1 Samuel 17:40 Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

Don't let other people judge you based on their own gifting or experience. Use what you have. God made you to be you. And God's going to use you to fulfill the dream that he has for you your way not the way somebody else did it. If you try to do it the way somebody else, did it you are bound to fail.

Examine your past and embrace your gifts.

## 3. Encourage Yourself – ignore the skeptics

David agreed to stand up to Goliath even though no one was encouraging him to do so. His brothers were not, the soldiers were not. He received no encouragement. But he did it anyways. There was another time in his life where David faced discouragement.

1 Samuel 30:6 David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

Do you encourage yourself in the Lord? This is so important. If you're going to go after your dream, you're going to have to learn how to encourage yourself because sometimes nobody else is going to encourage you. And you're going to have to encourage yourself *in the Lord*.

This is very different than simply having a positive mental attitude. No, this is far deeper. When you encourage yourself in the Lord there is a bedrock trust in God's faith, grace, provision, kindness and power.

To trust in God, you have to first know confidently that the dream you have is from Him. It is not just something that you dreamed up on your own. It's not just a positive mental attitude. You have to encourage yourself in the Lord. Because nobody else can give you that encouragement.

## 4. Expect God's Support – for His glory

Ultimately your dream must rest in God's strength and result in God's glory. If it is just about you then your dream needs to be changed. In what ways will accomplishing your dream lead to God being glorified? Is it about your plans and kingdom or is it all about how God's kingdom will be advanced?

1 Samuel 17:45-48 David said to the Philistine, "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. 46 This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands." 48 As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.

David ran towards Goliath because he knew that God was going to give him the victory, and that in doing so the Philistine army would see that God was alive and real and with the nation of Israel.

I don't have to be the smartest person in life. I don't have to be the best-looking person in life. I don't have to be the wealthiest person in life. I have the choice to trust God and you do too. He says I expect God to help me for his glory.

The richest spot on the face of the earth cannot be found in the diamond mines of South Africa. It is not in the oil fields of Saudi Arabia. No, the richest plot of land on this planet is in your very own neighbourhood... It's the cemetery. The graveyard is the wealthiest place in all of creation. Beneath those rectangular pieces of sod lie countless unsung melodies and unwritten poems. The grassy plots overflow with brilliant ideas that could have transformed entire communities, rehabilitated the lost and brought hope to the weary. Our burial grounds reek with unattained successes and unrealized dreams.  
-- Wayne Cordeiro

Live your dream. Follow your calling. Dream big. Billy Graham, in his book "Nearing Home: Life, Faith, and Finishing Well" wrote that when he was young he loved baseball and dreamed of playing professional baseball. He dreamed of standing on home plate with a bat in his hands before thousands of people. But baseball was not God's plan for him. When he started preaching, it was always in churches. He travelled across America with YFC preaching in churches. In 1945 his team went to Shreveport, Louisiana. The organizers of the event could not find a church large enough to hold the expected crowds, so they asked if they could hold the event outside in a local baseball stadium. This was before the days of huge crusades and everyone was nervous about the idea of holding an evangelistic rally in a large arena but then Billy Graham remembered his boyhood dreams. Instead of bat in hand at home plate, he had a much greater privilege: to stand behind a pulpit, with Bible in hand, immersed in the power of the Holy Spirit. I was not performing before fan-filled bleachers but pronouncing the Word of God to sin-filled hearts searching for truth. Life, indeed, is full of surprises.