

King Saul's Jealousy

Jealousy is a sin. It is a feeling we get inside when we want something that belongs to someone else. Jealousy can make us feel very angry, too. But the real problem with jealousy is that it can lead to even more evil things. The chief priests of Israel were very jealous of Jesus. He was very popular with the people. They tried to find a way to put Him to death, even though Jesus had done nothing to them.

This week's story tells of King Saul's jealousy of David and the terrible results. The second part of this story will be continued next week.

Part One

"David, where are you?" called Jesse.

"Here, Father," David answered.

David was Jesse's youngest son. He tended sheep for his father, but he was also King Saul's armor-bearer. The king had chosen David for this special job because David had played beautiful music on the harp for him whenever Saul had been ill.

"David," Jesse said, "I am worried about your brothers. They volunteered to be in King Saul's army. For 40 days now, I haven't heard anything from them about the war with the Philistines."

"Don't worry, Father," David replied. "Perhaps the war will be over soon."

"The Philistines are reported to have a special weapon they are using in the war against our people," said Jesse. "I would like for you to take some food to your brothers tomorrow and see how they are doing. Bring back word to me as soon as possible."

"I will, Father," David promised.

The next morning, David left for King Saul's camp. When he arrived, he could hardly believe his eyes. There on the mountain stood the biggest man he had ever seen in his whole life. The man's armor-bearer, who stood next to him, only came up to his waist. David learned from some of King Saul's soldiers that the giant's name was Goliath, and that he was nearly nine feet tall! Only a

valley separated King Saul's army from the giant and the Philistine army.

David watched as Goliath came forward. He was wearing an enormous bronze helmet, and his armor even covered his legs. Goliath carried a huge iron spear that he waved in the air as he yelled now at King Saul's army.

"Who will meet the challenge of the Philistines? Are you all cowards?" Goliath roared. "Choose a man to fight me in battle. If he can kill me, the Philistines will become your slaves. But if I win, you will be our servants."

The men in King Saul's army were very afraid. They knew that they were no match for the mighty strength of Goliath. Suddenly, David said something that surprised everyone.

"Goliath may have the force of 10 people, but the people of Israel have God on their side," said David. "I will fight this giant, and I know that God will give us the victory."

Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking to the other soldiers and scolded him.

"David, why are you not off tending Father's sheep?" said Eliab. "How dare you make such a foolish claim! Your bragging will surely get you into trouble. If you lose against Goliath, it will be the downfall of all the people of Israel."

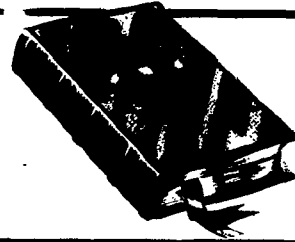
David answered, "It will not be me, but God who will defeat Goliath."

When King Saul heard what had happened, he asked for David to be brought to him.

"David," Saul said, "you are just a boy, and no match for this giant. Goliath has been a warrior since his youth. How can you ever hope to defeat him?"

David replied, "I have taken care of my father's sheep for a long time. One day a lion came and tried to steal a sheep from the flock. I used my slingshot and a stone to kill the lion. I trusted God to save me and the sheep, and He did."

"Go then, David, and may God be with you," said Saul at last. "I want you to wear my own armor in the battle."



The Bible Corner

Cindy Cottone

Saul gave David his helmet, a breastplate, a sword and a shield. But when David tried to walk, the armor was much too large and heavy for him to move quickly. So he took them off. Instead, David gathered some large, smooth stones, and with his slingshot, he went to meet Goliath.

Goliath stood at the top of the mountain. When he saw David coming, he laughed and said, "Am I a dog for you to come at with sticks? Come over here, boy, and I will give your body to the birds of the air to eat!"

Goliath took out his huge sword and waited for David. David was very afraid, but he continued toward Goliath and said, "Today you will be delivered over to King Saul by my hand. You may have powerful strength, but the people of Israel have an even greater power. We have God on our side."

"We'll see about that!" Goliath thundered, and ran toward David.

David quickly took a stone, and with his slingshot, he flung it at Goliath. The stone hit him in the middle of the forehead, and with an earth-shattering crash, Goliath fell dead to the ground.

When the Philistine soldiers saw that their champion had been defeated, they ran away in fear. The armies of King Saul followed them and defeated them.

King Saul made David a captain in the army, after the battle with Goliath. David went to live in Saul's house. Jonathan, Saul's son, loved David like his own brother. He gave David his armor and sword to use in battle.

One day, King Saul and David were returning home in victory from a war. The people from all of the towns came to meet them. They were so happy that their enemies were being defeated. They danced and they sang this song for Saul and David: "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands!"

When Saul heard this song, he became very jealous of David. He forgot that it was God who had given the victory to them both. He wanted the glory and praise all for himself. Saul's jealousy was so strong that other evil feelings stirred in his heart. From that day on, he vowed to kill David.

"If David is killed in battle, then the people of Israel will have only me to praise," Saul said.

Jonathan had become David's best friend. He knew that it was wrong of his father to be jealous of David. Jonathan planned to protect David from Saul's evil schemes.

For discussion:

1) What special weapon did the Philistines have? Did the people of Israel have a special force? Which was more powerful?

2) Why was Eliab, David's oldest brother, angry with him? Besides the reason Eliab gave in his speech to David, what could another reason be?

3) What important lesson did David learn as a boy when he tended his father's sheep?

4) Why was King Saul jealous of David? What other evil could this lead to?

For Lent:

Spend some time this week thinking about your own life. Is there someone you are jealous of? Why is this wrong?

For Further Reading

1. The story of David's defeat of Goliath is found in the Old Testament in 1 Samuel, Chapter 17.

2. The Ten Commandments are found in the Old Testament in Exodus, Chapter 20. Which commandment forbids jealousy?

3. Read in the New Testament Luke Chapter 22. It tells about the jealousy of the Jewish chief priests.

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