



## **Risk-Takers: The Adventure of Walking by Faith**

**Sermon Title:** Overcoming Adversity by Faith

**To be used with Session 4:** David: A Faith That Meets Adversity Head-on

**Date of First Use:** June 22, 2025

**Text:** 1 Samuel 17:3-8, 32-37, 45-47; 19:19–22:23; 2 Sam. 11:1–12:13; 12:10-23; 13:32, 14:21-18:33

**Connection with the Study:** From our early years in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, we have learned the story of David and Goliath. Even secular culture often refers to uneven competitions as “David versus Goliath” contests. This week’s Bible study examines the story with a particular focus on how David’s faith helped him confront adversity “head-on.” This sermon treats that narrative as one of several critical moments in David’s life. In each part of the story, David overcame adversity by faith. Even in situations fraught by sin and apparent defeat, David eventually came through as the man after God’s own heart. By observing how David persevered, we can find biblical principles to help us also overcome adversity by faith.

### **Introduction:**

“It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.” That line from Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities* could describe much of David’s life. We often associate David with his defeat of the giant Goliath, as does this week’s Bible study. Yet, David faced other giants – not like Goliath, but just as dangerous. From his flight from Saul to his sin with Bathsheba to the deaths of three sons, David overcame adversity by faith.

David followed a pattern of faith in his battle with Goliath that helped him persevere when he faced these other giants. From David’s experience, we can glean principles of faith to apply in our lives. We may not fight the same battles that David did, but our struggles are just as real. Through faith, we also can overcome adversity and experience God’s victory.

### **1. Giant # 1: Goliath (1 Sam. 17:3-8, 32-37, 45-47)**

- a) **David was more concerned with God’s reputation than his personal danger.** When David heard what was happening on the battlefield, the young shepherd’s first reaction was to ask why the army of Israel was allowing this Philistine to defame the name of God. His offer to accept the challenge expressed none of the fear that filled the hearts of Saul’s soldiers. He never considered that Goliath might kill him. David’s faith was driven by his desire to uphold God’s reputation in the eyes of the nations. When we face giants, our primary concern must be for God’s name. How we respond to adversity reflects on His reputation.

- b) **David was more committed to God's purpose than to his own ego.** Although David's brothers thought he was full of pride, David remembered how the Lord enabled him to kill lions and bears that threatened his father's sheep. David knew God could destroy this adversary as well. If we are committed to God's purpose rather than our own agenda, we have the blessing of seeing Him work wonders with the giants in our lives.
- c) **David was more confident of God's power than his adversary's strength.** David was not impressed by Goliath's size or his weapons. When offered the king's personal armor, David rejected it, preferring to trust God. Taking a sling and rocks to a sword fight seemed ridiculous, but another man's armor is never a good fit for our fight of faith. If we focus on our adversary's size or strength, we can be overwhelmed. However, if we are confident in God's power, we can overcome.
- d) **David was more convinced of God's victory than his companion's fearful taunts.** When David walked out to meet the giant, he scorned his opponent's heckling. He declared the victory and then, by faith, won the victory. Don't be afraid when the enemy mocks, laughs, and derides. God is greater than any adversary.

Like David, we can overcome adversity by faith. Our giants may not be physical foes, but they are just as real and just as dangerous. We may not be a match for them in our own strength, but by faith we can be more than conquerors through Christ (Rom. 8:31-39). We can apply David's principles in these battles.

## 2. Giant #2: Saul and life-threatening danger. (1 Sam. 19:19–22:23)

- a) **Victories can seem short-lived when followed so closely by more adversity.** By defeating Goliath, David won Saul's gratitude and a place at the king's side. As David continued defeating Israel's foes, he won the hearts of the people and the jealous hatred of Saul. Repeatedly, Saul tried to kill David. David had to flee, hide, and even take refuge among the Philistines he previously defeated.
- b) **Through each episode of life-threatening danger, David kept going by faith.** Twice he had the opportunity to take matters into his own hands and kill Saul. Instead, he spared Saul's life because he believed God would sustain him. When tempted to handle threats with our own strength and skill, we may fail. Stay on the course of faith. Trust and follow the Lord.
- c) **Eventually, Saul died because he failed to obey God.** His lack of faith led to judgment. In contrast, David's constant application of faith to each decision led to God's elevating him to the throne.
- d) **If we determine to approach every situation by faith, we can overcome adversity.** We may not face life-threatening danger in battle, but many people experience life-threatening illness, accidents, or other potentially deadly situations. In all things we can overcome through faith in Christ. As I write these words, a close friend is battling cancer.

Although she has undergone chemotherapy and major surgery, she has maintained her faith, trusting God to see her through one way or another.

### 3. Giant #3: Bathsheba and lust. (2 Sam. 11:1–12:13)

- a) **Sometimes the most fearsome giant rises from our own hearts.** David was king. He defeated his enemies on every side. He controlled power and wealth, but he could not control his own lust. He committed adultery with his neighbor's wife and conspired to murder her husband to cover up his sin. The infamous Watergate scandal was not so much about a "third-rate burglary" as it was about the cover-up conspiracy that cost the resignation of the President.
- b) **Without maintaining lives of faith, even otherwise godly people can fall prey to the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life** (1 John 2:16). We need to guard our hearts by humbly seeking God's presence daily (Prov. 4:20-23).
- c) **Spiritual defeat can be overcome through faith that leads to repentance, confession, forgiveness, and restoration.** In Psalms 51 and 32, David chronicled his failed attempt at covering up his sin. Denying his failure only made it worse. He finally received victory when he finally sought God's forgiveness. When we deny our sin, we experience defeat. If by faith we repent and confess our sin, we can overcome the adversity of sin. Through Christ's atoning death and resurrection, we can be forgiven. Our sins can be cleansed, and we can walk with God as the people of God. (1 John 1:8-9).

### 4. Giant #4: Loss and the deaths of three sons (2 Sam. 12:10-23; 13:32, 14:21-18:33)

- a) **Loss of a child can be a crippling adversity.** After David's sin with Bathsheba, the prophet Nathan pronounced God's judgment. Although David repented and was forgiven, he would suffer the consequences of his sin. Nathan declared first that the child born from David's illicit affair would die (2 Sam. 12:23). Many people are broken by the loss of a child. Only through faith in God's promises and comfort can we overcome such an adversity.
- b) **Loss by family schism can be an ongoing adversity.** Nathan also foretold, "Now therefore, the sword will never leave your house because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hethite to be your own wife. This is what the Lord says, 'I am going to bring disaster on you from your own family: I will take your wives and give them to another before your very eyes, and he will sleep with them in broad daylight.'" (2 Sam. 12:10-11a).

The first blow fell when another of David's sons, Ammon, raped his half-sister and was later killed by her brother Absalom (2 Samuel 13:28-33). Absalom was first exiled, then brought back to Jerusalem where he conspired a revolt against David. Instead of fighting Absalom, David fled. Later, Absalom pursued David, only to be killed by Joab, David's general.

- c) **By faith, David found comfort from the Lord and overcame the adversity of loss.** In each situation, David faced indescribable grief. Would his grief consume him? We can conquer the giant of loss by trusting in the Lord to send His Holy Comforter and give us peace (John 14:26; 2 Cor. 1:3-4).

**Conclusion:**

We all face giants at various times in life. Jesus told His disciples they would have tribulation in this world, but they could be encouraged because He had overcome the world (John 16:32-33). Instead of becoming depressed about these challenges, we can trust Jesus to help us. By faith, we can meet adversity head-on and overcome it through Christ.

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