

How Goliath Actually Saved the Day
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I am more than big for my age of twelve and a half. I'm huge. I am in fact from a family which a friend's mother calls "overgrown." We have what is called "Giantism." And it's not just my family. I live in a town of giants. As long as I can remember, my family and all of the people in my town of Gath, who all happen to be giants, all made their livings being scary. If someone wanted a big person to lead a war against someone they didn't like, they'd call us.

Since our job was to be scary, once our job was over, nobody much wanted to spend time with us. So us giants kept to ourselves. We built big houses, and we drove big chariots. And we used our money to buy bigger weapons and stronger armor so we could be scarier and scarier. My uncle said that people would stay scared of us if they knew we had all those weapons.

Frankly, I was the one who was scared. But I guess the big weapons worked, because no one ever attacked us. In fact no one even came to see us, which was boring and lonely. I wanted some friends who could talk about things other than whom they could scare.

The other thing that upset me was that even though we managed to help the people who hired us win their wars, it's not that we didn't get hurt. People still shot arrows at us that did stick in us, and they threw big rocks at us that hit us in our heads. Even though we acted like it didn't matter, these things hurt. And some of my uncles and cousins never came back from their wars.

So I was not happy being a giant in Gath. I was lonely, and I wanted to figure out something else for giants to do than to just help regular sized people win wars.

And so it was that one day we saw a bunch of ugly angry men (it was always men) coming across the desert to our little town of Gath. The men said they were Philistines going to fight the Israelite army of King Saul, and they wanted us to lead their little war.

And I could see it starting all over again, lots of my brothers sisters and cousins going off to fight, hurting some other people real bad, and coming home banged up, cut up, and a little meaner than they were before, or maybe not coming home at all. All for some money.

I wanted to change that. I stood up and told them I had a plan. Rather than have a whole bunch of giants go stomp the helmets of a lot of regular people, what if I took our best set of armor and called out to the other guys, King Saul's army, and told them to send out their one best fighter. We'd go at it, mano a mano. I was thinking I could scare off their best fighter, or convince him this wasn't worth it. Worst case only one of their fighters gets beaten up. Best case I might even convince their

guy to give up fighting. But I didn't tell the Philistines this last part. I just bellowed, like I had heard that other giants did, "Fee, Fi, Fo Fum," and stuff like that, showing them how scary I could be. They didn't know I was only 12½. We giants can grow beards when we're nine.

The Philistines asked, "Who is this crazy guy?" I said, "**Goliath, want to make something of it?**" Real big and scary-like. They still weren't sure, but when I told them they only had to pay for one giant if they took me, they couldn't pull out their wallets fast enough.

I went to the barn, took out the biggest, meanest looking armor I could find. It was made of chain mail, interlocked ringlets of bronze. It was so heavy I couldn't really fight with it, but I didn't want to fight. I just wanted to scare one of Saul's men to give up and go away without anybody getting hurt. I showed my mother how there wasn't a place on my body where anybody could hurt me. The only skin that showed was one inch of forehead, and regular people couldn't even reach that high.

She didn't like it, but I had made up my mind. I wanted to make peace and bless something rather than make it worse.

So I marched off with the crazy Philistines to the Valley of Elah. There we were on one mountain, and on the other side, across the valley, were the Israelites. The Philistines waiting there were impressed with my size, but they wanted to know where the rest of the giants were. I told them my plan and they were thrilled. Nothing like getting all set for a war but not having to actually fight anyone.

So out I went into the valley with my armor spear and shield. They told me on the way out to skip the Fe, Fi, Fo, Fum stuff. It didn't scare anyone. Instead I thundered, "You send out your best man to fight me, and if he beats me you win. But if I beat him, then we win. War over!"

Every one of Saul's soldiers looked behind him until there was nobody else back there to look at, and no one raised his hand.

So I went back to camp, took off the armor, ate a whole barbecued goat for dinner, and got a good night's sleep. I did the same the next day, and the next day, and the next. Nothing changed. I didn't mind. I was getting paid by the day, but I was getting homesick, and the Philistines looked like they might run out of goats soon.

One evening, after another day of shouting, I saw a young boy arrive at the Israelite camp. He had a guitar, and at night I could hear him sing and play. One song was about the Lord as his shepherd. Another was about lifting his eyes to the hills and how God protects all of us in our going out and our coming in. Every night I listened to his songs as evening quieted around our camp fires. I could hear his kindness in the way he talked to his brothers, who called him David. I felt like David could be my brother. In fact I wished he was my brother.

Imagine my surprise when one day, as I issued my challenge, David walked out to fight me. He had no armor, no shield, not even a club. I thought maybe he wanted to be my friend too, so I put down my shield and was just about ready to put out my hand to him, when he

pulled a stone from his pocket, put it in a leather pouch and began spinning it round and round his head. I liked the way it whirred, and I was going to ask him how he did that when he let it go.

The next thing I knew something hit me on that one inch of exposed forehead, really hard, and I was falling. It's right what they say, you know, the bigger they are, the harder they fall, and I was falling hard. I hit the ground so hard, I lost my breath. And then I guess I blacked out.

I don't know really what happened next. But when I woke up, everybody was gone. The Philistines had left me. The Israelites were marching across the valley, shouting "We won! We're number one. It's great... to be... an Israelite fighter; yes it's great... to be..."

I just hurt bad. And what hurt the most was that my whole idea didn't work. Well, actually maybe it did. I didn't hurt David, and I wasn't dead. Maybe we figured out a way not to have wars.

But I didn't know if anyone would believe me.

I found no matter how hard I tried, with all that armor, I couldn't get up. And in the middle of the Valley of Elah, which is basically nowhere, that's a bad thing.

Just when I was getting really scared, I saw David take one last glance at me from the end of the line of departing Israelites. He looked sort of sad. I managed to raise one hand and wave.

I heard him tell the other soldiers to go ahead. Something about how he forgot his guitar. When the army of Saul had all gone over to the other side of the mountain, David came over to me, a little scared.

I told him not to be afraid. I couldn't move. I asked if he would just help me take off my armor. I promised I wouldn't hurt him. I would go home.

He said, "I'm sorry I hurt you sir. I didn't want my friends and family to have to get hurt, so I volunteered to fight you."

I told him not to call me sir, that I was only 12 ½ years old and that I felt exactly the same way he did.

He said he couldn't believe it. He was 12 ½ also. I told him all about Giantism and growing a beard at nine and stuff.

He helped me out of my armor. He poured some cool water from a leather pouch on the giant sized bump on my forehead. And he had this wonderful soothing oil he rubbed on the place I skinned my elbow when I fell.

I asked if he'd play me a song on his guitar. He looked around began singing,

"Behold how good and pleasant it is,
For people to live together as one,
Behold how good and how pleasant it is,
For people to dwell together as one."

I told him my name was Goliath and that I loved his songs. I asked him if we could be friends. He said he'd like that, but he'd have to go home and still claim he had beaten me so the war wouldn't have to start over.

I said I'd go back and say I didn't really die, like everyone thought, so the Philistines could think they had won and they wouldn't have to plan a rematch.

I promised no giant from my town would ever fight his people. He said neither he nor any of his people would ever hit me or any of my family with a rock again. We both said that one day when we ran the world we would find common threads between people, even people as different as me the big clumsy giant Goliath and him the smart, musical David. We would bless the ways we connected rather than fight the ways we were different, and we would stop all fighting.

David then cut a strip of leather from the sling that he used to fling his stone at me. I unhooked about a foot long length of bronze chain mail from my armor. We wove his leather with my chain of armor mail and made two wrist bands for each of us to remember that we were linked by common threads to one another. We both, in that moment, felt the same God who loves us all and weaves us all together in love, looking over us.

We shook hands. O heck we gave each other a big hug

He sang one more song,

“Weave, Weave, weave us together

Weave us together in unity and love,

Weave, weave, weave us together

Weave us together, together in love.”

The hope of this song, of this Goliath and this David exists in every new generation, that by weaving our lives together, we may overcome the ways we hurt one another. We hope again for gentle giants who seek peace. We think again of the descendant of David who was known as the prince of peace, and who calls us now and always to be woven together in love. Look now at how our lives do weave together.