

Five Little Boys (The Story Of Goliath And His Relatives)

As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly towards the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground. I Samuel 17:48-49

The Basic Bible Truth

The story of David and Goliath continues to be one of the most familiar passages in the Bible. It makes a wonderful children's story to be sure. But when it is told to children, it is often edited down to a level of simplicity. As those young people get older, often they leave the story behind in that kindergarten room and never seriously look at the story from a deeper perspective. This is a lighthearted look into one of the most overlooked facets of the story. The account in I Samuel tells how David volunteered to meet the Philistine Goliath face to face with just a sling and some stones. Notice in the Biblical account one small but significant detail. David picked up five stones. The Bible is very specific about that fact. Why five, if he was such a crack shot with a sling? II Samuel 21 tells of a later moment in David's life when he met the rest of Goliath's family. Including Goliath, there were five of those Philistines, all related, and all very, very tall and strong. David picked up five stones because he was ready to face down the whole family line.

The Object

Following is the story of Goliath. I have changed the names to make it a little more interesting.

1. Grandpa O.G.=King Og from the Old Testament
2. Grape Squisher City=a rough definition of the name Gath
3. Dusty Rollers=a rough definition of the name Philistines
4. Mr. Fish=Dagon, the fish God of the Philistines
5. Ishbi, Saph, Golyat, Golyat's brother, and 6-Toe=names straight out of 2 Samuel 21:15-22
6. Golyat=the technical correct spelling of Goliath
7. Really Likeable Dude=David
8. Strugglers=a rough definition of the name Israel

Five Little Boys

Once upon a time... no, wait a minute! Although it was many years ago, and so many of the less significant details have long been forgotten, we do know when this story takes place. Well, almost. So let's start over.

Nearly 3,000 years ago, in a land far, far away, five little bouncing baby boys came into this world. No one knows for sure if they were all born at the same time or separately. In fact, we're not entirely sure that they were all brothers. They were related though, brothers or cousins, or such – and that's the important point for our story.

I'm sure that their mother (or mothers) thought that they were the most adorable darlings ever! Imagine those little boys growing up in their city together: five times the playing, five times the climbing, five times all those important things with which young boys keep themselves busy.

Perhaps this would be a good time to introduce to you their Great, great, great, great... I'm not really sure how many greats there should be here... great Grandpa O.G.. Grandpa O.G. had lived and died many years earlier. He was an impressive man who left a mark in history still remembered to this day! A king, he was! An impressive king! But he is not remembered for his decisions, or leadership abilities. No,

his place in history is anchored by something unique. You see, Grandpa O.G. was a tall man; very tall indeed. No one recalls just how tall, though. In his day, I guess it just didn't seem that important to know exactly how tall he stood. Suffice it to say that everyone looked up to Grandpa O.G. – everyone! If there had been NBA scouts, I'm sure he would have been on everybody's lists in his younger days.

One more thing that Grandpa O.G. was remembered for – a peculiar piece of furniture – a one-of-a-kind, obviously custom-made iron bed that he slept on. It measured 6 feet in width and was 13 feet long. Now, that is a bed by anybody's definition!

His noticeable, awe-inspiring stature must have been genetic because Grandpa O.G.'s family tree is filled with very tall men. So it was not surprising that everyone wondered about the five little boys. Would they be tall like their daddy and his daddy before him? Only time would tell.

Those five boys didn't waste a single day. You see, Grape-Squisher City was an exciting place to be! It was a capitol city of the people. And farmers, fisherman, and merchants came from miles around to conduct their business in the Grape-Squisher City markets! The people of this region had a rather strange name. They were called the Dusty Rollers! There are various theories about why they would be called by such a strange name, but the most plausible explanation would seem to be that in earlier days, before the Grape-Squisher City was founded, they moved around the countryside from one location to another, kicking up rolling clouds of dust, or maybe it was that they seemed to settle anywhere and everywhere – just like dust. Regardless, the Dusty Rollers became a large group of people, a nation.

And Grape-Squisher City was as good a place as there could be for those 5 little boys, except for one problem. The Dusty Rollers did not worship the Lord God. Rather, they believed in Mr. Fish! They worshipped Mr. Fish. They built special houses for Mr. Fish. They even made their religious leaders wear very strange Mr. Fish hats! Grape-Squisher City became the center and focal point of everything Mr. Fish! Sadly, as those five boys began to grow, they too were caught up with the rest of the Dusty Rollers in Grape-Squisher City. They worshipped and revered the great Mr. Fish.

Perhaps now is a good time to introduce the five boys to you. The list from the historical record reads as follows: Ishbi, Saph, Golyat, Golyat's little brother, and 6-Toe. Well, we'll call him 6-Toe because he had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot! Quite a family they were!

Time marched on in Grape Squisher City, and the Dusty Rollers became even more numerous and powerful. And, yes, as you might expect, those five little bouncing baby boys began to grow. They grew, and they grew, and they grew... until they became impressive, strong, and very, very tall Dusty Rollers!

We soon find ourselves at a very interesting crossroads. The Dusty Rollers had begun to assert themselves upon their neighbors. One of those neighbors didn't fold up and give in. They fought back. Not so ironically, they were known as the Strugglers! Inevitably, these two peoples faced off – a stand that history will never forget!

The Dusty Rollers massed on one side of the valley. The Strugglers were on the other. A stand off, no one on either side prepared to make a move. There was a tremendous amount at stake here. This was a battle of more than brute strength. It was a battle of wits, emotions, and morale, in a winner-take-all situation. The deadlock went on for days, and then weeks.

Enter, the five little boys... as rough, gruff men. They are fully grown now, and Golyat was the roughest, toughest, gruffest, of them all! At over nine feet tall, he is indeed quite an imposing figure to behold! In an attempt to demoralize the opposition, each morning, bright and early, Golyat would confidently stroll out into the open "no-man's-land" between the two armies and call out something like "You poor pathetic people. You will all die at the hands of the Dusty Rollers! We have Mr. Fish from Grape-Squisher City on our side! Send one of yours to fight me. One-on-one we will fight. And the winner will take all! Great is Mr. Fish!" No surprise, there was no one brave enough to accept his challenge!

No one that is, until now! I have someone you need to meet. His name? Really Likeable Dude. Really Likeable Dude is the youngest of a large family of brothers. He grew up in Bread City, and being the youngest, his chores around the house weren't actually around the house. There were out in the field. Yup, he had to babysit the sheep. All day, everyday! The nice thing about this situation is that it gave him

plenty of time to think, practice his music, and became very proficient with his trusty slingshot he kept in his back pocket.

On one particular day, Really Likeable Dude's daddy called him in from the pasture and gave him an exciting project. He was to go and say "howdy" to his big brothers and see how they were getting along. Really Likeable Dude's brothers were with the other Strugglers in their face-off with the Dusty Rollers from Grape-Squisher City. So he gathered the stuff he needed, and was off from Bread City in no time at all.

Really Likeable Dude arrived uneventfully on the scene, found his brothers, said "howdy," and began to look around in wide-eyed amazement. This was a sight to behold, indeed, but he could tell something wasn't right here. He just couldn't quite put his finger on it. Evening came. A good night's sleep, and then... the shock of his very young life!!!

As he had done for weeks now, Golyat, that filthy Dusty Roller, that pathetic excuse of a human being from Grape Squisher City, that horrible Mr. Fish lover... oops.. uh, sorry, I got carried away there... Golyat came out, said his usual piece, and cursed by Mr. Fish, and waited for a challenger to step forward. And as usual no one did. Really Likeable Dude was appalled! Really Likeable Dude was flabbergasted! Really Likeable Dude was bumfuzzled! Really Likeable Dude was incredulous! Really Likeable Dude was... well, you get the idea!

"What's going on here?" he asked. In disgust he yelled, "Isn't there anyone here that will take on this filthy Dusty Roller?" No one spoke up. No one volunteered. He thought for a while. He remembered his days babysitting those simple sheep. In his heart, God was moving, urging him to trust Him ...and obey! He decided then and there – *I have a purpose here! God has called me to do this! I'll take the challenge of Golyat!* And so it was decided. Really Likeable Dude would meet nine-foot tall Golyat...today!

Let's step forward in time to that moment. Golyat stands before everyone – all nine feet of him – dressed to kill – literally. Really Likeable Dude wastes no time. He is a boy with a purpose! He knew that full well. Confidently and boldly he steps out. Golyat eyes him contemptuously and begins to curse and swear. "You send a little puppy out here to try to bite me?" he asks. The profanity coming from his lips is hideous. Those Mr. Fish folks are that way, though, you know. Really Likeable Dude bends down and picks up five, count 'em, five smooth stones, and is so convinced of his mission, his purpose, that he immediately begins running full throttle at the giant. Is he crazy? Has he not thought this completely through? And he hasn't even loaded his slingshot yet! I know! Isn't it exciting?

Purpose and boldness go running hand in hand with Really Likeable Dude. Reaching down into his bag, he pulls out one, and only one, stone. Loading it into his slingshot on the run, he finds himself shouting at Golyat that "Jehovah is God, not Mr. Fish!" He lets a stone fly. Perfect aim, good distance, adequate penetration into the forehead, and nine foot of Dusty Roller is face down rolling in the dust! Really Likeable Dude does something that is hard for us to watch in our day, but he takes Golyat's sword and hacks off his head! The big guy is definitely taking a dirt nap now! He's assuming room temperature. He got scared half to death...twice. He is gonna be pushing up daisies. He's going six feet under. He's headed for the big worm buffet in the ground.....Well, you get the idea. The Strugglers rush the Dusty Rollers and win the battle! It's over!!

I've often asked myself, why did Really Likeable Dude take five stones with him? Did he think he would miss and need another shot or two? No, I believe he was a boy with purpose, confident of a one-shot victory... and if needed, one shot for each of the other four family members who watched their beloved brother fall.

Purpose! Wow, what an example!

The Lesson

After reading the story, I take time to go back through the story, explaining all of the names of the characters. We find in the Old Testament a descendant of Rapha, Og. His noted characteristic in the text was his 13 foot long bed. The Bible doesn't give us his actual height, but the implication is that he may have been quite tall. It was a genetic trait that passed down through the generations to Goliath. He wasn't the only family member who was exceedingly tall.

Goliath was from Gath. In Hebrew, that word means wine press. Do you remember the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed? That name might just as well be spelled Gath-semane. It references a wine press that would have been located in the middle of the garden. Note that when Jesus was praying there just prior to the crucifixion, he prayed and pleaded so emotionally that the Bible says his sweat was like drops of blood on his forehead. When grapes were typically processed in a wine press in those days, the grapes were wrapped in a burlap type material, placed under the press, and as pressure was applied, the droplets of juice appeared on the surface of the material and ran off the bag into a collecting basin. What a beautiful picture God paints for us of the anguish of Christ in the name of the Garden of Gethsemane.

The Philistines were a heartache and headache for Israel for many years. Their name literally refers to dust rolling across the landscape, maybe from a time when the Philistines moved across the country stirring up dust. Their God was Dagon, a fish like creature. Their country bordered the Mediterranean Sea, and much of their livelihood came from the water. The priests of Dagon wore a ceremonial hat shaped somewhat like a fish head pointed upward with its mouth partially open.

When Jacob wrestled or struggled with a stranger in Genesis 32, God gave him a new name, Israel. And Bread City is of course Bethlehem—"House of Bread".

The boy, David, dispatched the giant Goliath that day. And if necessary, he was ready to face the rest of his family as well. David met those four Philistine men late in his life. He did not personally put the other four men to death. In his old age, he no longer was able to wield a sword like he once did. Others finished the job he had started many years earlier.

Here's a simple outline I often use when talking about this story. I Samuel 17

1. Know that it is all about God—verse 26
2. Expect opposition in life—verses 28-30
3. Know who you are in Christ—verses 33-37
4. Use the right tools—verses 38-39
5. Know what God can do—verses 45-47
6. Just do it—verse 48

To understand the heart of David is difficult from our vantage point. We see a boy with his sheep, a young man challenging giants, and a man with huge mistakes as well as huge successes in his life. Remember it was David who brought the nation together, who planned and financed Solomon's temple, and who wrote many of the Psalms that today still touch many hearts. One psalm, written by David, places our attention appropriately upon the secret of his success as a man of God. It is a song he wrote as he neared the end of his life and is now recorded in II Samuel 22. Verse 36 places everything into perfect perspective. *Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness has made me great.* Our relationship with our Lord is based upon his gift of salvation. It is the foundation block that everything else stands upon. David also understood that nothing in his own self was of any lasting value. The gentleness of God, His bending down towards man in love, His tender care for us, His compassion delicately touching our lives— that is what makes anyone great. The understanding of that truth may allow any of us to develop into men and women after God's own heart. Men and women willing to slay giants.

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