

## I. Intro

A. I was sent a *Harvard Business Review* article a while ago. It was about managing in a crisis. The writer opened by saying that just before giving a talk on crisis leadership to a number of CEOs in the financial sector, he had asked for a show of hands of those who had lead in a crisis. And not a single hand went up.

B. He then went on to share a half dozen of the things you need to do if you are in charge and everything is spinning out of control: be decisive, be nimble, lead with confidence, communicate to inspire, rest the troops. Those kinds of things.

1. Honestly, it was a lot of clichés – which, in fairness, often become clichés because they are true. But it was not that different from any of the other three dozen articles I had seen on this. And not what I was looking for

2. Which is what lead into this series.

II. We had several goals when we were remaking the summer schedule. We had plans in place before, but everything got jumped with COVID and so we were looking at where to head. A few things had already fallen into place.

A. Next week we start Reset, which is based on the Book of Joshua. As you may know, Joshua opens with Moses's death and Joshua taking over, and immediately needing to rally the people, cross the Jordan and move into the Promised Land. In other words, do what the Jews had failed to do under Moses 40 years earlier. Much of that book is about starting over. I am going to look at four lessons from Joshua.

B. And then in September we'll look at Revelation 1-3. These are letters written by Christ to various churches, offering both affirmation and criticism. As we try to look at what it means to be a church, this is a great place to be.

C. All of that to say, we needed something for a month. I wanted something that dealt with managing a crisis. This kind of moment is one in which we are often open to insight. Viktor E. Frankl, the late psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, noted: "In times of crisis, people reach for meaning. Meaning is strength. Our survival may depend on our seeking and finding it."

D. I wanted something that looked at ways to do that. And we landed on insights from a handful of biblical characters. So far: Esther, Nehemiah and Jehoida. Today, David.

E. There are forty others we might look at. But I was looking for an example of someone whose life illustrated some of the themes found in the Book of Proverbs.

F. As you may know, we have this book in the middle of the Bible that considers how we should live when normal rules do not seem to readily apply.

1. We have guidelines that are clear. And we should follow them. But sometimes things are not as clear as we would like. And we need wisdom. We need some ability to know to apply truth to our situation.

2. The Book of Proverbs is written to that end. It's actually quite different from other books of proverbs. And there is a sense in which we might say, it is talking about, pointing to Christ. It also clearly has a long view in mind.

3. I was looking for that because, honestly, the advice I have not yet found in the articles about managing a crisis is, you should have prepared beforehand.

G. It's clear why that advice is not in articles during a crisis. But, at some point it needs to be said. I have a friend who wrote a book called, "Now is Too Late." It was based on his experience in a particular disaster in which he was brought in to help manage it. And one of the things he ended up saying was, "yes, that would work if that was in place. But it's not. Now is too late."

H. So, part of what I was looking for in this crisis was a call to start now to prepare for the next one.

1. Wow, Woodruff, we are fighting a battle on four fronts: global pandemic, economic upheaval, civil unrest around issues of race and racism and a contentious national election. And you are saying: time to look ahead.

2. Well, yeah. Perhaps not today. But I'm still waiting for the kind of downtime that will allow me to catch up. It seems like this moment – as crazy as it is - is actually providing more time to think, pray and reflect than before. And my contention is, it's what we do in the uninspired moments that matter most. It is what we do during the down times, the quiet moments, the periods when no one is watching, that matter.

III. And to make this point I want to look at an event in the life of David that may not have jumped out at you, but which I think is very important.

A. As you may know, there are many David stories. His life is examined almost from birth to death. Even his state of mind is revealed in the Psalms. We know that:

1. He was born in Bethlehem around 1035 BC;

2. when he is young – around 10 years old – he is picked by Samuel as the next King.

3. While he is still young he is recognized for his musical capacity;

4. and while he is about 15 or 16 he gains national prominence by defeating Goliath.

5. One of the next times we see him, Saul is banishing David from his court,

6. but then Saul makes David a commander of a thousand and a few years later he gives him his daughter Michal as a wife.

B. David then enters this stretch during which Saul is trying to kill him, and David is fleeing and has lots of adventures.

1. There are times he is a vigilante – and almost loses control of the rebels he is leading. That gives us one of my favorite verses – I Samuel 30:6: But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

2. There is the time when Saul goes into the cave to go to the bathroom, and David and some other men are in there hiding. And he could easily kill him but does not.

C. That phase eventually ends with Saul's death. And David takes over as king. And in short order he: unites Israel, defeats her enemies, expands her borders and fills the treasury.

D. We then get the whole Bathsheba / Uriah / Nathan event – which leads to Psalm 51 (his powerful confession). And which is followed by a general decline from that point on. He is forgiven, but he reaps what he sows and his life becomes a mess.

IV. There is a lot about David in the Old Testament that we could study, and that is before we add in what he wrote in the Psalms or what is said about him in the New Testament. There is a lot about David. And in large part that is because he is pretty amazing:

- A. If we were asked to compile a list of people who excelled as: kings, warriors, statesman, theologians, poets, and musicians, David would be on it. And, honestly, I am not sure I can come up with anyone else.
- B. If your list required that a candidate be all seven, he might be its only entry.
- C. And in most of these roles he managed crises. So I think we can learn from him.
- D. And if you have been at Christ Church for a while, you have heard me cite him many times. But today we look at something about him that you might not have thought about before. It is found in I Samuel 17:34

V. It is part of the story of David versus Goliath.

- A. Now I am guessing that you know something about this story – either because it's a famous Bible story or because Malcomb Gladwell published a book about it a few years ago.
- B. It's a business book in which he argues that disadvantages may actually be an advantage.

VI. The biblical account is something different. It's found in I Samuel 17.

A. The Israelites had recently defeated the Philistines, one of their perennial adversaries, in a battle. But rather than retreating the Philistines had regrouped for round two. They set up a camp inside the Promised Land about 15 miles from Bethlehem. And from that outpost they have been marching – every morning – to the Valley of Ellah where they line up across from the Jewish troops. And, every morning for about an hour and a half, they have held a pep rally.

1. Almost like a football game

B. There is lots of adrenalin and lots of war cries and everybody gets ready for the call to charge, when all of the sudden one of the Philistines marches out into the middle. And he says – verse 8

1. **"Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." 10 Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other."**

C. Everyday the Philistine would make this challenge. It wasn't that uncommon in its day

1. The Jews didn't use these kind of representative battles but there are historical records of other nations doing so.

2. Although it seldom worked. Usually there would be a fight and one person would win. But the side who lost wouldn't give up and so everyone would go to war anyway.

- D. But this was not an uncommon tactic. And so everyday this Philistine would come out and challenge the Jews to send one representative. And everyday the Jews would fail to respond.
- E. The reason was that the Philistine – whose name was Goliath – was huge. The text says he was 6 cubits and a span tall
1. Now if your Jewish measurements are a bit rusty: A cubit is the distance between your elbow and little finger; and a span is the distance between your little finger and thumb with your fingers spread.
  2. This is not the most precise measurement – b/c distances vary. But the average distance between the elbows and little finger during that time was 17 ½ “
  3. 17.5” x 6 = 105, plus 9” = 114. Divide 114 by 12 and you get 9’ 6.” That’s a big boy.
  4. According to the *Guinness Book of World Records* the tallest confirmed person was Robert Waldo at 8’ 11”, when he died at the age of 22. There is an unverified account of a man who was 10’ 1”.
- F. Whether Goliath was 9’ 6” or not, it’s safe to say he was huge. The rest of the text says that his armor alone weighed 150 lbs and that the head of his spear weighed as much as a bowling ball.
- G. The problem the Jews had – more specifically, the problem Saul, the King of the Jews had – was that no one wanted to fight Goliath.
1. Saul had offered his daughter’s hand in marriage, tax free living for life and huge amounts of cash. No takers.
- H. And so, every morning Goliath taunted them. Mocked them. Mocked their God. And filled them with fear. This went on for forty days. Until... David shows up
1. He is on a UPS run. He was a young shepherd who had been sent by his father to deliver a care package to two of his older brothers, and to get news of the battle.
- I. He has not been to the battle before. He’s not really been mentioned before. This is his entrance into the story.
- J. Well, one morning David shows up just as the two sides are going through their pre-battle ritual.
1. They are yelling and screaming at each other: “We’ve got spirit yes we do....”
  2. And David shows up as they begin to get line up for battle. And then, just like always, just before they actually charge each other, here comes Goliath.
- K. I Samuel 17:8 – 10: **Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me.**
1. BTW - To say that the Jews were “servants of Saul” was a slam. They were servants of the living God.

**L. Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.**

M. So no one steps forward. The Jews lose face yet again. Only this time David is there. And he sees this and he asks, "What's happening? Why aren't you fighting?"

1. And the text says – vs 25 – "The Israelites" obviously more than one soldier – so a number of soldiers explain things to him. "See the man coming out. He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage & will exempt his father's family from taxes in Israel."
2. In other words: He's a meal ticket to a life of luxury.
3. But he's 9' 6." He can dunk a basketball without jumping. And his spear is so big that the point weighs as much as a bowling ball.
4. And he wants to fight one of us. But there are no takers. This has been going on for over a month.

N. In verse 26 David repeats a couple questions: 1) What will be done for the man who kills him? And 2) exactly who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" In other words, I do not understand why you are allowing him to get away with trash talking God.

**O. Vs 28: When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him. "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert?"**

1. A little sibling rivalry here.
2. Be sure not to miss the put down. "Who have you left those "few sheep with?"

**P. 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.**

Q. So – day 40 of the taunting. Day one for David. He starts asking questions. Showing a bit of spine. Saul hears about it. He finally has a soldier who might take one for the team. And so he sends for him.

R. When David is taken to Saul he says – in effect – "My King, your troubles are over. Because I will defeat this pagan troublemaker."

S. Saul's response is, "You're a kid. You are going to go and fight someone whose been a warrior since he was a kid?"

T. And David says – pay attention here, b/c we will come back to this.

U. V. 34: But David said to Saul, **"Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came & carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it & rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it & killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion & the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion & the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."** Saul said to David, **"Go, & the LORD be with you."**

1. It is unclear whether Saul thought God was behind this. The suggestion is that he was simply desperate enough to send a kid into battle – almost certainly to his death

V. And so, starting in vs 38 we have a somewhat comical section in which: 1) David tries to fit into Saul's armor – which is too big; and then 2) after he walks out there, Goliath taunts him, asking, "Am I a dog that you come at me with sticks?"

W. And then we get Vs. 48: **As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward 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. So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; w/o a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him. David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.**

1. They'd not been preparing for this.

X. Then the men of Israel & Judah surged forward w/ a shout & pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath & to the gates of Ekron. Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath & Ekron. When the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp. David took the Philistine's head & brought it to Jerusalem, & he put the Philistine's weapons in his own tent.

1. Some souvenirs

Y. **As Saul watched David going out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner, commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is that young man?" Abner replied, "As surely as you live, O king, I don't know."**

Z. But they soon will!

VII. And we do.

A. You've heard that story before. The whole world has. So let me make sure you see a couple key things. First, David's victory is not described as a supernatural event. His defeat of Goliath is not attributed to God's intervention. There is no miracle here. Rather, it is described as the result of practical preparation on his part.

B. The clear message is that David was ready for this crisis. And secondly, that he was ready because he had been faithful in the little things back when no one was paying any attention. Let me reread I Samuel 17:34 again. This happens after Saul has said, "You? You are the one willing to fight the giant? You. You are just a kid."

1. David's reply is: Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came & carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it & rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it & killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion & the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, b/c he has defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion & the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

C. Do you see what is going on here? David had been faithful when his assignment was to guard the sheep

1. The dumb, helpless, boring sheep. Being a shepherd was not an exciting post. But, he did the job. He proved himself faithful. He defended the sheep. He fought the lion and the bear. And so, when he was called to step into a bigger role, he was ready.

2. He had forged his character and developed himself for the next step.

D. I would submit to you that God does this with great frequency

1. Moses spent 40 years in the courts of Pharaoh and then 40 years as a shepherd in the desert in order to be uniquely equipped to lead the Jewish people through the desert.

2. Joshua spent 40 years at Moses's side;

3. Joseph spent time as a servant in Potiphar's house - where he was faithful - before he was elevated over the land

4. Samuel spent more time than he cared to taking care of temple furniture before he was called by God to serve as the prophet

E. It is common for God to mold people in small, quiet, backroom ways before he ever trusts them with greater responsibility.

F. Or, maybe we state this differently, the people who God turns to for greater responsibility have generally proven faithful in ways no one but God has seen.

VIII. Let me be clear about the two big take-aways for you today.

A. There will be more giants – more unsettled moments, unemployment, pandemics, civil disruption. You are going to face more trials. Everything about life and much in the Bible all make this point. We should not be surprised by hardship.

B. And, the giants will fall. God will win. God will accomplish his purposes. The end of the story is not up for debate. The question is not, will God prevail? Will Christ set up his kingdom. That is all for certain. The question is, whether or not we get to participate.

IX. And the point to learn today is, it is generally during the uninspired moments that the answer is settled. How are you using the uninspired moments right now? What are you doing to be shaped by Christ? What are you doing to become more like Christ.

X. And please understand, at first glance, the path forward may seem quite boring. It was for David. He was tending sheep. But God was shaping him, preparing him during that time to be ready to manage the next crisis he faced.

XI. Men and women, our abilities are occasionally tested in public settings, but our character is generally formed during the uninspired moments alone. Are you being a good steward of this moment? Are you preparing for the next crisis during this one?