

THE BULLY BREAKER

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 17:1-54

Key Thought: God's Power can Defeat the Bullies

One of the unfortunate realities of living in this world is the existence of bullies. There are some people, and we all know who they are in our lives, who enjoy pushing others around. Bullying is not a new phenomenon. Bullies have existed in our world since Cain killed Abel at the dawn of the human race. While bullying isn't a new phenomenon, it is a major problem. Children deal with bullies every day at school. Some then come home to a bully in the home. People work with bullies on their jobs. There are bullies among our neighbors. There are bullies in the church. There are bullies out in public. Bullies are everywhere and inhabit every sphere of our lives.

Bullying is defined as, "the use of threats of coercion to intimidate others. It is the activity of repeated aggressive behavior intended to hurt another person, either physically or emotionally." Bullying can include verbal harassment and threats, physical assaults, or coercion. Coercion is "the use of intimidation or force to force someone into doing your will." So, bullying is characterized by someone who behaves in certain ways to gain power over others.

The word "bully" first appears in 1530. At that time, it meant "sweetheart." It comes from an old Dutch word that meant "lover, or brother," depending on how the word was used. The meaning degenerated over time to mean "a fine fellow," "a loud, swaggering person," and eventually, it was used to refer to "a protector of prostitutes, a pimp." It has become a word used to describe "one who uses physical, emotional, or verbal intimidation to gain power over others."

A bully is someone who uses "physical, emotional, or verbal intimidation to control others."

Here are some of the defining characteristics of a bully:

- Lacks empathy for others. - Needs to control others.
- Gets angry quickly. - Constantly reminds others of their weaknesses.
- Picks on those who don't comply to their expectations.
- Makes others afraid through threats.
- Uses physical aggression to intimidate and control.
- Defies any who would share or correct his power.

Do you know any bullies? Are there any bullies here right now?

Bullies come in all shapes, sizes, colors, ages, and they wear all types of external packages.

I have seen children who were bullies. I have seen husbands and wives who were bullies. I have seen elderly people who bullied others. I have seen rich people, poor people, wise people, and foolish people who were bullies. Teenagers can be bullies. They are everywhere, and they are all the same. They are small-minded, evil-hearted people who want the power to control those who live around them.

Sometimes, bullies are not even people. Satan is a bully! His demons are bullies! Sin and evil are bullies. Temptation is a bully. The burdens we carry around, and the problems we face in life are bullies who seek to intimidate and control our lives. Bullies are everywhere. I ran into one or two this very week. I'm sure you probably did too.

If you had asked Israel about Goliath, they would have said, "This is a hopeless situation." If you had asked King Saul, he would have said, "This is hopeless!" BUT if you had asked David, he would have said, "Goliath is a bully, but God is about to deal with him!"

I want to walk through these precious verses today and show you once again that there is hope for even the bullies. Let's consider the facts of this hopeless case, namely Goliath, and consider The Bully Breaker.

I. HOW THIS BULLY IS DESCRIBED

- a) **His Source** - Our text says that Goliath was a "Philistine." The Philistines were one of the Canaanite tribes left over from Israel's conquest of the Promised Land. They were a powerful, warlike people known for their expert skill in metallurgy, meaning, they crafted superior armor and weapons of war. They were also pagan idolaters, who worshipped the fish god Dagon. The Philistines occupied a region that extended from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the foot of the mountains of Judah in the east. Goliath was a pagan, Gentile, idol worshipper. He was the enemy of Israel, and he was the enemy of God.

- b) **His Size** - According to the first four verses of our text, the Philistines and the Israelites have met on the field of battle. They are preparing to fight a battle for control of the nation, or for a portion of it. Before the battle can begin, the Philistines challenge the Israelites to settle the battle using an ancient form of warfare. What they propose is for each side to send out their best warrior. These two warriors will meet between the opposing armies, and they will fight to the death. The army that loses this battle will become the servants of the victors. Although it seems pretty foolish to us, it was not an uncommon thing for armies to settle their differences in this manner.

The issue here was the warrior the Philistines chose to fight for them. His name is Goliath, which means “splendor,” and he was a splendid physical specimen. Goliath was from the city of Gath. Gath was one of the five major cities of Philistia, and it was located just west of the mountains of Judah in southern Israel. It was a very strategic military city on the Philistine/Israelite border. The people of Gath are referred to in the Bible as “Gittites.”

Goliath was not an ordinary soldier.

- . He stood “six cubits and a span.” This means that he was “9’ 9” tall,”
- . He wore copper armor that covered his body from head to toe,
- . He wore copper body armor constructed from overlapping copper plates that resembled the scales of a fish. The piece of armor weighed “5,000 shekels,” or about “200 pounds.”
- . He wore “greaves,” or wrappings of copper, which protected his legs,
- . The “target” of copper that hung between his shoulders on the back was a round piece of copper that protected his upper back and held his spear.
- . His spear is compared to a “weaver’s beam,” which means it was several feet long and very thick. The head of his spear weighed “600 shekels of iron,” which is about “25 pounds.”

I want you to understand that the bullies we meet in life do not have to be tolerated. They must not be allowed to have their way. Most bullies are cowards! Despite their threats, bullies can be overcome by people who are willing to stand up for what is right. Anyone who has faith in Almighty God, and a little courage in their heart, can see the bullies in their lives put in their place.

This passage is about a bully who was put in his place by a very unlikely young man. In the ancient, familiar story of David and Goliath, we see how all the bullies in our lives can be handled and we too can become Bully Breakers.

- c) **His Statements** - Goliath comes out from the Philistine lines and challenges the Israelites to a fight. He mocks them and calls them cowards; He demands that they send out a soldier to fight him. Goliath does this twice every day for forty days. Goliath is a persistent bully who will not give up. He is determined to get what he wants from the Israelites.

- d) **His Success** – says when Israel heard the taunts of Goliath, they were “dismayed, and greatly afraid.” The word “dismayed” means “to break down from fear.” The phrase “greatly afraid” suggests they overcome with an “exceeding great terror.” The army of Israel was horror-struck, petrified, panic-stricken, and alarmed! The presence, appearance, and threats of the giant Goliath literally left the soldiers and king of Israel paralyzed with fear.

Goliath possessed all the trademark characteristics of a true bully.

He was big. He was intimidating. He was bold. He was persistent. He was out for blood. He wanted to take the away the power from God’s people and wanted total control over them. Goliath achieved his primary goal. He left the people of God intimidated and broken. He held absolute power over Israel and her king!

Let me ask you this morning, are you facing any bullies? Got anything, or anyone, in your life that resembles Goliath?

What I’m asking is this: are there events, circumstances, or people in your life that leave you paralyzed with fear?

I think we all face such things from time to time. There are problems that arise in life that assume power over us. There are people who appear large in our minds, to the point where we actually fear them and what they might do to us. There are circumstances and situations that overwhelm us with their intensity. Sometimes the bullies we face leave us not knowing what to do or where to turn. If we are not careful, we will allow those bullies to intimidate us to the point where we become too afraid to do or say anything, lest the bully attack us and makes us hurt worse.

If that describes your life right now, then your bully has you right where he wants you. Your bully is cruising to an easy victory. So, how can we become bully breakers?

II. HOW THIS BULLY IS DEFEATED

David is determined to defend Israel and to deliver them from the insults and attacks of the bully Goliath. The remainder of this chapter teaches us how David defeated this bully. The methods he used to defeat that bully will work with any bully you face in your life. Notice how David defeated Goliath.

- a) **He Is Defeated By Courage** - David says that he will fight the giant. When he does, he is brought before the king. Saul doesn't think David could do it, and he says so. But, then again, neither did anyone else. After all, what does a young man who has never been proven on the field of battle know about whipping bullies?

David quickly lets Saul and the rest of the men know that he has faced a bully or two in his time. He tells them about two times when bullies attacked his sheep. He tells them about how he killed a lion and bear that were threatening his sheep. David tells Saul that he sees no difference between those animals and Goliath.

To David, they were all bullies who needed someone to stand up to them, and he was just the man to do it. David states his absolute confidence that just as God gave him victory over the lion and the bear, God would give him victory of the giant. In David's mind, this is a fixed fight!

These verses teach us many truths, but what I want you to see today is this: David succeeded because he was not afraid to face the bullies in his life. That is not to say that David didn't dread what was coming. I am sure there were some pretty large butterflies in his stomach. I am sure there were times when he faced the lion, the bear, and the giant that his heart nearly hammered out of his chest. ***It's not that David didn't have fear; what matters is that he did not allow his fears to stop him.*** David had the courage to stand for what was right, and against what was wrong. David triumphed because he was a man of courage.

If you are going to be a bully breaker of your your bullies, you are going to need courage as well. I know how fearful it is to confront painful issues, and problem people. I know about the fear that rests in the pit of the stomach; the gnawing ache that warns you that things are about to get bad. I know about that, but I also know that when the moment to face the bully comes, the Lord will give you the courage you need to stand for Him against that bully. It won't be easy to face the bullies in your life but remember this:

The Lord has promised to be with you.

“I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

Hebrews 13:5

The Lord has promised to see you through to the other side.

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you.”

Isaiah 43:2

The Lord has promised to protect you.

“No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment, you shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, says the LORD”

Isaiah 54:17

The Lord has promised to enable you.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

Philippians 4:13

The Lord has promised to give you victory!

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

Romans 8:37

b) **He Is Defeated By Conviction** - David receives Saul's blessing, and he prepares to go face the bully. Saul tries to put his armor on David, but David quickly realizes that this armor was not made for him, they were made for Saul. There was no way his armor would fit David. David also knew that Saul had possessed this armor the whole time, and he still didn't have the courage to face the bully. David knew the secret to success wasn't in the armor of men.

David was a shepherd, and so, he picked the tools of the shepherd; his shepherd's bag and his sling, and he went out to meet Goliath. On the way, he stopped by a brook and chose five small stones. He planned to use those stones as ammunition for his sling. Freshly armed, David goes to battle.

David has the conviction that bullies aren't defeated by weapons or by the tactics of men. David knew that Goliath would only be defeated by the same power that had enabled him to defeat the lion and the bear. In both those cases, David identified "the Lord" as the source of his victory, David's conviction was that victory was in the hand of the Lord and nowhere else.

That's the same conviction we need if we would see our bullies defeated. We can't defeat them in our own power. Our weapons are ineffective against the bullies in our lives. But, against God's power, they are helpless! I pray the Lord will give each of us the conviction that we need, being the Lord and ***HIS power*** if we are to defeat the bullies we face.

Where we are weak, He is strong. So, we need to forget about what we have done, or what we think we can do, and we need to place our faith in the God Who can!

"Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us."

Ephesians 3:20

May God give us the conviction to know that He "is able," even when we cannot see what He is doing, how He will do it, or when it will be done!

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”
Hebrews 11:1

Faith in God is never misplaced, but it allows us to hold the victory over our bullies in our hands before we face them on the field of battle. David was convinced that he would be victorious because David knew that God never fails!

- c) **He Is Defeated By Confidence** - David walked out to face Goliath that day with absolute faith that he would walk back with the victory. David knows what is about to happen. He has his faith in the Lord, and the Lord doesn't lose! David has such faith in God that he is running to meet the bully. As he runs, David reaches into his shepherd's bag and takes out a single stone. He places that stone in his sling, he winds up, and he slings that stone at Goliath. The stone hits him directly between the eyes, sinks into his head, and the bully is dead before he ever hits the ground. To be sure, David runs to the fallen body of that bully, draws Goliath's own sword and cuts off the bully's head! The Israelite soldiers, inspired by David's faith and courage, join the battle and rout the enemy, David walks off the battlefield with a bully's sword in one hand and a bully's head in the other!
What a victory!

What made this victory possible? It wasn't David's ability with a sling! It wasn't David's power, or his skill as a warrior! ***The secret to David's success and Goliath's death all came down to one word: faith.*** David believed God, and God handed David the victory.

That's how it works. You will never defeat your bullies in your own power. You need not even try. ***But you can and will defeat them through His power.*** Put your bullies in the hand of God and trust Him to give you the victory over them all. Faith in God is the key to victories in all the battles we face with life's bullies.

“Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

Mark 11:23–24

How do I know that it is God's will for bullies to be defeated? The Word of God says,

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”
John 8:36

The Lord did not save us for us to be defeated and held in bondage by the bullies we face in life. The Lord saved us to set us free to live a new life of victory for the glory of God. It worked for David! It will work for you too!

In closing, let me ask, how about you? Are you facing any bullies today? I would say we all are. What are you going to do about them?

Are you going to hide in your tent and let those bullies hold you in bondage?

Are you going to let them defeat you and stand between you and the wonderful things God has for you?

Or are you going to stand up to them like David did?

Are you going to stand up to them, with your faith in the power of God, and trust Him to give you the victory? Whatever, or whoever, the bullies may be in your life, today is the day when they need to be faced. Today is the day when you can be set free from their power in your life. If your bully is sin and it has you held in cruel bondage, come to Jesus, and let Him save your soul. He can deliver you from that bully today. If you are saved, and your bully is a person, or a problem, sin, or anything else you want to name, bring that bully to Him and let Him give you the courage you need to face it and deal with it.

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30am

Date: February 19, 2023

After Service Song: Confidence