

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Dearly Beloved,

That's an important thing ,you know – the name of Jesus.

So important that the Lord would protect it among us with the 2nd Commandment:.

You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.

And He backs that up with the consequence:

For the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. ^(Exodus20:7)

Why do you suppose that the Lord puts so much importance on His name,

and not just the name of Jesus but on all the names of God? Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

...

David and Goliath is not a story about small people doing big things.

It's not an underdog story or a story to embolden you to do things outside your comfort zone

David and Goliath is actually a 2nd Commandment story.

| or vocation.

When David heard Goliath defy Israel and thus the Lord, he asked,

"who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

In that question, we see what it was that moved David to volunteer to defy Goliath.

And you see the same spirit throughout today's text for meditation...

... We read as follows in Jesus' name:

And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine. ...for he has defied the armies of the living God.... The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you!"

... the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field." Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. ...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand." ...

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David. ^(ESV)

*This is Your Word, heavenly Father; **sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth.** Amen* ^(John 17:17)

This contest was really never between David and Goliath.

It was between the Lord and Goliath; the Lord and the idolatrous Philistines.

It was between the Lord and the devil and his spiritual forces, present then just as they are today.

David was not trying to make a name for himself,

he just did not want the Lord's name to be dishonored,

not by Goliath, not among the Philistines, not even among the Israelites cowering in fear.

But for 40 days, Israel had let that very thing happen.

For 40 days Goliath had **defied the ranks of Israel** each morning and evening.

For 40 days, the ranks of Israel trembled in greater and greater fear.

Think of that, the ranks of those named after Israel, the man who wrestled with God and won... a new name for himself. They forgot their own name, their own identity. For them, the almighty Lord wasn't real enough to stand against a 9-foot, heavily-armed man. For them, the Lord wasn't present enough to help them in their needs.

But we shouldn't be surprised by this.

They, as a whole, weren't present either, attending to the Divine Services held at the Tabernacle. In fact, the Ark of the Covenant, the visible embodiment of the Lord's presence, wasn't even in the same city as the Tabernacle where the sacrifices were to be made before God. How could this be, except that this demonstrates the state of spiritual life in the ranks of Israel?

How could they, who were not present to see the sacrifices of the Lord, who were not present to have the name of the Lord put upon them regularly, who were not present to be instructed about and by the Lord, know the Triune God's gracious and merciful nature, know His power over all creation, both visible and invisible, and His promises of salvation, or know where the Lord was to be found?

It should not be any surprise to us, then, that these men were afraid.

What did they trust in, if not the Lord? Their own strength? Their own armor? Their own tactics? No wonder, then, they would be afraid of a mere man; 9-ft tall and heavily-armed though he be. Where was the Lord? These men didn't know. They weren't with Him. He wasn't with them.

But for David, it was a different matter.

Not long before, David had been anointed by Samuel to be king after Saul.

From that day on we're told, the **Spirit of the Lord was upon him.** ^{1Samuel16:13}

This was even noted in last week's lesson when Saul was in search of a musician.

A young man reported seeing this "**son of Jesse**"; in addition to him **being skillful in playing**, he added, **and the LORD is with him.**

This was David's strength and trust—the Lord was with him.

Obviously, he had already had success in killing lions and bears to protect his father's sheep, but his trust wasn't in his skill—in fact, he picked up 5 stones, right.

He had the opportunity to use the king's armor and weaponry, but he didn't trust it.

He didn't even put faith in numbers, having Israel's army behind him for support.

Instead, as he would later write in Psalm 23[:4],

**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for You are with me.**

His trust was in the Lord's presence with him.

His trust was that the same Lord who had been with Noah and Moses and Joshua and Gideon was also with him and would defend His own holy name and reputation, even if the only one willing to be used was a mere youth.

We heard the outcome of the story. Well, part of it anyway.

David defeated Goliath without armor or sword. Only a sling and rod in his hand.

He then cut off his head with Goliath's own sword, his own weapon.
But there was a greater victory that day: all the assembly knew it was the Lord who had saved.
The Philistines, of course, realized the worthlessness of their gods, but a little late.
And the Israelites got a glimpse of the blessings of having the Lord's presence.
They were reminded of their identity as the Children of Israel, God's chosen people.

Of course, the results of that victory are still happening today,
as God's people, those who have been called by and baptized into His name,
learn more about your powerful, merciful, and present Lord.
Do you look at that contest and wonder how David could have such faith?
Do you wonder how you can come to trust in the Lord and His salvation like David?

As our world and our community is riddled with fears of viruses and death,
of thugs and looters in riots ... and general societal instability,
of financial uncertainty at home, in the state, in our nation, and across the world,
how can we, of the ranks of the baptized, stand firm and steadfast in the Lord without fear?

We can try to don the armor of this world.
We can keep ourselves completely isolated and sanitized.
We can arm ourselves with all manner of personal protective equipment,
from masks and gloves to batons and guns.
We can scavenge (not loot) and hoard what we think we will need for the impending future.
But it is not these that will save you, just like Goliath's size and armor did not save him.

David later wrote in Ps. 31:14-15 – and we are wise to ponder on this thought--
... I trust in You, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." My times are in Your hand....
The reality is, as David also said, **The battle is the Lord's.** It's not yours.
Just as the world is the Lord's, not yours, nor anyone else's.
Just as your body and soul, reason and all your senses are not yours, but the Lord's.
Just as your bank account, investments, home, vehicle, *goods, fame, child, and wife* (ELH #250:4)
are not yours, but the Lord's.
Your very life is not yours, but the Lord's, *For He has redeemed it,*
not with gold or silver, but with Jesus' holy precious blood & innocent suffering & death. (Expl. 2nd Art.)

It's very easy for us to stand on the front line in battle formation and look at the large foe before us.
To hear his taunts and intimidations. To listen to him defy the ranks of the Church of God,
and to forget our identity as those baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
As long as your focus is on the adversary before you, then it is not on the God of your salvation.
Then you begin to believe that it is only by human **sword and science** that you can be saved,
a thought as foolish and phony as the idols the Philistines believed in.

...

We normally spend 6 days a week in the presence of such fear-mongering adversaries,
and that can be daunting enough, but now it has been the last 3 months.
If you are feeling spiritually weak and vulnerable, don't be surprised.
Even with the blessing of live-streamed services, the reality of God's presence can seem distant.
We long to be physically gathered with the Christian Church

and celebrate the Holy Communion with our ever-present Triune God,
and hopefully we will be able to do so in two weeks on the 21st.

As we come together, as we continue to watch the live-stream, realize what is happening here.

The Divine Service is our regular reminder and impartor of God's name and presence.

Here we invoke or call upon the name of our powerful, merciful, and present Triune God.

Here you are delivered of your guilt and sins in the Holy Absolution, in the name of the Lord.

Here you have the Lord's presence given you as the Pastor proclaims, "*The Lord be with you.*"

Here you confess His triune nature and 3-fold work of creation, redemption and sanctification.

Here you are taught, reproofed, corrected, and trained in righteousness by God's Word.

Here Jesus is shown to be the Lord's David, the Lord's Beloved.

Here He is preached as the Lord's Champion, against the devil and all his forces,
against sin and its guilt, against death and its threats.

Here He is the One who announces to you, "**Let no man's heart fail because of these,**
for I, **the Lord's servant have fought against** these foes. The battle was mine. **It is finished!**"

Here you receive the visible embodiment of God's presence, partaking of the Holy Communion;

Communion with the same body and blood of God that was crucified and yet rose from death,
and is seated at the *right hand of the God the Father almighty, with all authority given to Him.*

Here, God's presence is as real to you as it was to David.

Here you have His name put on you in the Benediction as you depart into the world once again,
and God's name is as powerful to save you as it was for David against Goliath.

To not only stand before but even to pursue the evil ranks of the devil,
your eyes must ever be on great David's greater Son, Jesus.

He has cut off the head and power of the enemy with his own weapon of death
and has put his forces to flight.

For the Lord saves, not with sword and spear, but with His holy name through Jesus Christ.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria