

Upbringings to Uprisings

Adam Griffin – April 26, 2015

Hey guys, how are you doing? For any of you guys who walked in late and are wondering why we were singing a song about what time of day we will praise the Lord, this weekend is Family Worship Weekend for us. That's a time we set aside a couple of times a year where we say, "Hey, let's shut down Kids' Village, let's shut down student ministry. Let's have all of these families come in and join us with their kids." So we kind of put a special focus on just how important it is that we are investing in the next generation.

Today I want to share some of those things with you. First of all, I want you to know I have a passion, a heart, an obsession with us being tremendously godly fathers and mothers. I mean, an obsession to the point where... I know you're in here and most of you guys or a lot of you guys are single, and you're going, "Family Worship Weekend is weird. What are we going to preach about?" Listen to me. I'm already thinking about what my 3-year-old son is going to be as a dad.

I want you thinking about, "What does that look like? As I'm a single person, as we're talking about investing, what am I doing now to be godly for my future spouse, for the sake of my kids? How am I investing in the next generation?" In the Griffin family, we do family discipleship times. We do them a lot of times during the week.

One of the things we do is every night, when we're putting our kids to bed, it's a family discipleship time for us. When they were infants, that looked like us praying over them, blessing them. Now that my oldest son is 3, it looks like us gathering around reading the Word together before I pray for them, bless them, and put them to bed.

Oftentimes when we're reading the Scripture together, the Scripture we read comes from *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. Nine times out of ten, my oldest son Oscar asks for one of three stories. He'll ask for Noah's ark, because it involves a lot of animals and the destruction of the whole world. He also asks

for Daniel and the lions' den, because it involves lions. Then the third one he asks for all the time is David and Goliath, because it involves a giant.

Tonight I want to kick our sermon off by inviting my good friend Jahmaol Clark to come up, and he's going to read for us the story of David and Goliath from *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. You guys welcome Jahmaol up to the stage, please.

"God's people had some scary enemies, but the Philistines were the scariest of them all. And now the Philistines had come to fight them. The Philistines had a secret weapon called 'Goliath.' Goliath was a terrifying soldier and, worst of all, a giant. A giant so strong and so tall and so scary that no one had ever been able to fight him and live to tell the tale.

So there they were: the Philistines standing on top of one hill, and God's people standing on top of the other. Every day, Goliath came out and shouted, 'Send your best soldier to fight me. If he wins, we will be your slaves, but if I win, you will be our slaves.' No one spoke. No one moved. 'Chickens!' Goliath bellowed. 'Your God can't save you! I'll rip your heads off and have you on toast!'

His beady, greedy eyes glowered at them hungrily from under his horrible helmet as if any minute he really might just gobble them all up. And he laughed his terrible laugh. 'Ha-ha-ha-ha!' it boomed, echoing horribly around and around the dry, dry valley. Well, Goliath might just as well have been a green, slimy monster with three heads, because God's people froze with fear. Their eyes glazed over, and they turned deathly pale. They knew if someone didn't do something quick, if someone didn't save them... But God would do something. He would send someone to save them.

Now you remember that David was the youngest son of Jesse. Well, his brothers were soldiers in the army. One day, when David brought his brothers their lunches, he saw Goliath, and he saw how scared everyone was. 'Don't be afraid,' David said. 'I'll fight for you.' 'You're only a little shepherd boy,' the king said, 'and Goliath is a great soldier. How will you fight him?' 'God will help me,' David said.

So the king gave David his royal armor to wear, but it was too heavy and too big, and David couldn't even walk. 'I won't need this,' David said. Instead, David picked out five smooth stones from the stream...one, two, three, four, five...took his slingshot, and walked towards Goliath. Step, step, step. Goliath walked towards David. Thud, thud, thud. 'You?' Goliath peered down at the small boy. 'I'm little,' David shouted up to him. 'But God is great!'

Goliath laughed an even terrible laugh than usual. 'Ha-ha-ha-ha!' it went. With just one swing of his giant sword, Goliath could finish the boy off. But David kept going. 'It isn't how strong you are or how many swords and spears you have that will save you. It is God who saves you. This is God's battle, and God always wins his battles.'

David put a stone in his sling, swung it around, and let it go. The little stone flew...*whizz*...like a bullet through the air and struck Goliath...*thud*...right between the eyes. Goliath stopped laughing. He stumbled and staggered and...*crash*...fell dead. When the Philistines saw Goliath was dead, they ran away. When God's people saw them running away, they cheered. God had saved his people. David was a hero. Many years later, God would send his people another young Hero to fight for them and to save them, but this Hero would fight the greatest battle the world has ever seen."

I love it when Jahmaol tells a story. Thank you, Jahmaol. So gifted. I mean, I could do that, but it's so much better coming from you, man. Hey, so I bet if I had asked any one of you before we got in here tonight, "Do you know the story of David and Goliath?" I bet 100 percent of us in here would say, "Yeah, I know it." Even if this is the first time you've ever been to church, I bet you have some familiarity with David and Goliath. Our culture knows the story of David and Goliath.

But here's what I hope is not true. I hope it's not the only part of that entire book that you know. David and Goliath happens in chapter 17 of the book of 1 Samuel. That means before that happens in that book, 16 chapters of something has happened. What I don't want for us is for our church to be a church that has a child's education of the Scripture that goes, "First Samuel. Oh, I know David and Goliath is in there." Great. But do you have any idea what led up to David and Goliath?

It's not just a story about a smaller guy against a bigger guy who uses a slingshot and God wins. It's part of a theme the Lord has put together in 1 Samuel and in his Scriptures for your edification. So what I want to do tonight is take a step back. I want to put David and Goliath in context in 1 Samuel, and I want to do this because I want to whet our appetites for the Scriptures.

After the sermon, I want us to walk out and go, "I need to read that. I need to be in the Word. I need to study. I need to hear from the Lord. I'm hungry to know more about the Lord, what he says in his Word." I don't want us to walk out and go, "I kind of knew that. I kind of heard that before. That's an interesting take on David and Goliath." I want us to walk out and go, "Yes, I need to be investing my life into the Word of God."

I want us to walk out and go, "I don't want to just read it. I don't want it to just terminate on me what the Lord reveals to me. I want to share it with somebody else." I want for those of us who are parents going, "I want to think more about how my time with the Lord affects my time with my kids." I want us thinking about how our time with the Lord affects our time with our roommates, our coworkers.

One of the things I'm doing to disciple my family as I read through the Word is that for each one of my sons I bought a journal Bible. I take that ESV Journaling Bible, and for my oldest son Oscar, his is done. I've read it. I started at the front cover, I went to the back cover, and throughout it I took notes. I wrote prayers in there. I wrote promises in there.

I pointed out to him things in the Scripture I want him to know, so that one day I can present him with this Bible and go, "Here, Oscar. This is a labor of love for you, some way I've been planning for a long time to disciple you, to tell you why I love you, to tell you how the Lord loves you. Here you go." This is my middle son Gus' Bible. I'm in the Old Testament.

As I read through this, I'm not skipping to David and Goliath and going, "Here's the story that's important." I'm walking through 1 Samuel, the first 16 chapters before that, building as God builds his story, so that my son, as he reads the Word, can see, "This is what the Lord has for me. My dad cared enough about this to spend time in the Word, to prepare this for me, to point these things out to me, to pray for me and listen to me."

I've been doing that with journal Bibles before I met my wife, before I had kids. If you're in here and you're single and you're going, "That's sweet. That's great. Maybe I'll do that one day," listen to me. There is a Word the Lord has spoken to us, has afforded us the opportunity here to have it. There's a Bible under the seat in front of you. If you don't have a Bible, you can literally take it with you and go, "There is the Word of God."

What he has spoken to me is not just to me. What he has taught to me is not to terminate on me. It's to invest in other people. Over and over again tonight I'll talk about ways we disciple our families, ways we disciple within our families, and yet the things I'm talking about are ways that we invest in other people. They're not just for parents. They are for every believer in Jesus Christ.

At the beginning of 1 Samuel, I want to start there, and I want to give you the swath of the first 16 chapters so we can put David and Goliath in a beautiful context of God's story, and I want to stop down every once in a while to talk about what to take from this. What do we learn from this? Where do we relate to this?

I want to start in 1 Samuel, chapter 1. The first thing we see is a woman named Hannah. Her name means favored. It means fortunate, favorite, provided for. She's the second wife of a man named Elkanah. Elkanah's first wife Peninnah has had all of these kids, and Hannah has had none. It says in the Scripture that year after year after year Hannah prayed for kids. She fasted. She would not eat, and she would spend all day in prayer, and yet the Scripture says the Lord closed her womb.

Year after year, Peninnah would poke at her and prod her and mock her for not having kids. Until one day we see Hannah in the tabernacle, worshiping God, praying so passionately that God would give her a child that Eli, the priest, looks at her and thinks, "She must be drunk." He says to her, "Why are you drinking wine and coming out in public like this? Quit this behavior." She says to Eli the priest in chapter 1, verse 15, "I'm not drunk. I am a woman troubled in spirit, pouring my soul out before the Lord."

Eli sees the genuineness of her faith and her prayer, and he prays for her. Basically he says, "May the Lord have favor on your request. May he grant you this child you've been praying for." She goes home. She conceives. She gives birth to a son, and she names that son Samuel, which means God hears. It means, "I prayed for this, God heard, and he gave me Samuel after years."

Now Hannah's prayer was not a prayer that said, "God, give me a kid. It would sure comfort me to have somebody who woke up and in the morning would say 'Mommy' and 'I love you.'" Hannah's prayer for a child was, "God, give me a child, and I will give him to you. He will be yours. Give me a child who serves you, who wants you. God, don't give me a child for me. Give me a child for you." For years, that was her prayer. Then finally God gave her Samuel. We could spend all day on that.

Women in the room, how many of us have gone, "God, you say that a godly spouse is a good thing, and yet I've prayed year after year for a godly spouse, and here I am still single"? Or how many of us have prayed, "God, please, you say a child is a blessing, and I pray year after year for a child, praying desperately, 'God, please, give me what you say is a good gift.' You say you're a good Father who gives good gifts. Please give me a child," and yet have been disappointed and, even in the midst of

that, look around and see those who haven't prayed for these things receiving them? How hard is that for us? We might say we are troubled in spirit about these things.

It is so difficult to look into my friends' lives who have gone through miscarriage after miscarriage, failed adoptions, finding out they're infertile, and seeing, "God, why? Why does this girl who doesn't want any kids get kids and these men and women who are godly, why wouldn't you give *them* kids?" There are four things I want to take away from Hannah.

First, I would pray that the women in our church, not just the women but absolutely the women, would be relentless in prayer, that we would be women of prayer, that there would be a spirit where they go to The Village Church and they say, "Tell me about The Village." "Oh, they are a people of prayer. They are relentless. Even if year after year they haven't seen come to fruition what they're hoping for, you'd better believe they are praying and asking for it."

I pray that those of you in this room who are troubled in spirit would find in the house of the Lord, in this place and in this people, a comfort and a solace, a place where you can come and say, "I'm troubled in spirit," and this would be a people who say, "Yes, we're in it with you." I pray that even if year after year we see good gifts go to those who haven't asked for them, those of us who have hoped for them and haven't received them would still not relent in asking.

Lastly, I pray for those of you who have kids, who have a godly spouse, who have these things that God calls good gifts. I pray that we wouldn't take those things for granted, that our hearts would be full of gratitude with them, that we would invest the way the Lord has asked us to invest, that we would instruct in discipline the way he has asked us to. I pray that would be the spirit of this church.

As we move from Hannah, she gives birth to Samuel. She weans Samuel. He grows up, and as a young man she brings him to Eli the priest and says, "Here's Samuel. I'm the woman who prayed for this child. You prayed for me to have this child. We had this child, and now I'm giving him to the Lord." She brings him to the tabernacle, and there is where he grows up.

We see Eli the priest, who is a faithful man. He's the leader of Israel. He's the judge over Israel. He rules Israel, and yet Eli, who is a godly man... Scripture tells us about his sons. The Word of God says about his sons, "These are worthless men who did not know the Lord." His sons Hophni and Phinehas... These are men he had employed as priests. These are men who oversaw the sacrifices.

They would take from the sacrifices people had brought to the Lord. They would take a portion that was not theirs. They would take what was the Lord's and give it to themselves so they might be fat and satisfied. As married men, they would sleep with women who came to work in the tabernacle. They would have affairs with those who were there to do the Lord's work, and they were notorious for it.

They had a reputation to the point where the people cried out to Eli, "Your sons are wayward." The Bible says Eli did not restrain his sons from evil. It says that eventually a man of God was sent to Eli, and he said to Eli, "It will be a sign to you. The wickedness you have done in not restraining your sons and the wickedness your sons have done... It'll be a sign to you. Both your sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will die in the same day." He said in chapter 2, verse 29, "They will die because you honored your sons above God, because you made your sons more important than God."

I could spend all day there. Here's our tendency: to look at relationships or people we care about and make them more important than the God who gave them to us. As a father, I love to delight my kids, but listen to me. The intention of my kids' hearts is wicked. If I just give in to whatever my kids want so they think I'm a great dad, that is not leading them down the path of godliness. I am to restrain them from evil. I am to discipline and disciple them, not have kids to make much of me.

Listen to me. God did not give us children so we might have someone to wrap our lives around or someone whose life is wrapped around us. God gives us children, as a church, that we might wrap their lives around God, who is their only hope and only deliverance. My kids can grow up thinking I'm a great dad, and that could mean nothing. If they grow up knowing their heavenly Father, that means everything.

We see in Eli the importance of family discipleship, the importance of having a plan, the importance of discipline, the importance of being intentional and telling our kids, the next generation, those we invest in, what is right, what is wrong, who God is, God's character, and godly characteristics. That's why when we talk about family discipleship we talk about family discipleship times. We talk about being intentional. We talk about building something in the rhythm of your life where you are going to talk about the gospel.

That might mean at family dinner. That might mean on the way to day care or the way to school. That might mean on the way to church or after church. That might mean as we put kids to bed or

wake them up in the morning or it might mean all of those things, that we are being intentional at when and how we invest in the next generation.

We also talk about family discipleship moments. Both of these things, time and moments, are good and right ways to organize however we invest in other people. Time means building in something intentional, setting up, "Hey, 9 p.m., we're doing this." When I was single and met with my roommates, we said, "Hey, Thursday night at this time we're going to confess sin to one another. We're going to share the gospel with one another. We're going to press into the Lord."

Family discipleship moments means whatever comes my way, I'm going to try to leverage that opportunity to share the gospel of God. Whether it's what's happening on the news or what's happening in my neighborhood or what's happening around me, I want to turn that into an opportunity to share the truth of God's love for us. I want to be intentional about how I disciple.

Now we can be intentional all day, but here's an important other lesson from 1 Samuel. As we read, at the same time that Hophni and Phinehas are called worthless men, it tells us that Samuel, who was growing up under Eli's leadership in the tabernacle, was growing in favor with God, growing in favor with men. He was growing in stature. He was growing in godliness, but listen to this. When Samuel grew old and had his own sons, his sons were rebellious. His sons did not know the Lord.

We don't get in Samuel this explanation like we do with Eli. Eli is called a man who did not restrain his sons, a man who chose his kids before God and so let them do whatever they wanted. But with Samuel we see a man who is godly, and yet his sons run from the Lord. Here's the lesson: you don't save. You don't deliver. God delivers.

It's not an instruction to go, "So don't worry about it. Don't have that conversation. Don't press in. It's up to God." It's all the more important that we are diligent in the way we invest in other people. God saves. I can't save, so I am going to press in even more to the Lord and be relentless in asking him to save. I'm going to be diligent, which means I'm going to be patient, but I am not going to give up.

How many of us could testify to having the heart of Eli that goes, "When things were difficult, I didn't do what I should have done. When it wasn't going to please the people I loved, I didn't do it, even though I know it would have pleased the Lord"? Samuel, who was godly, can't save his kids. Eli can't save his kids, but you'd better believe the call on us in Scripture is to discipline, to instruct, to

press in, and to be relentless in our prayers to the Lord to save, whether that's our sibling, our parent, or our coworker, that we would beg the Lord to save.

Then we come to the people of Israel. The people of Israel in chapter 4 are gathered together at a battlefield called Mizpah. At Mizpah, Israel has gathered to fight the Philistines. You know the Philistines because you know David and Goliath. Well, the Philistines have gathered to fight Israel, and in chapter 4 it says they go to battle, and at the end of the battle 4,000 Israelite men die. Israel regroups after the battle, and literally they say, "Why has the Lord defeated us?"

Then somebody in Israel has a bright idea. "What if we get the ark of the covenant and bring it into our camp and we let it lead us into battle? Then the Lord will give us victory." What they say in chapter 4, verse 3... They don't say, "Let God go before us." They don't say, "Let's pray to the Lord." They say, "Let's get *it*, the ark of the covenant, and *it* will save us." Not him.

They're asking that the gifts God has given them will redeem them, which as good as gifts from the Lord are, a godly spouse, children, the promises of the Lord in things like the ark of the covenant, those things, those people, don't deliver you; God delivers you. But they say *it*. "Let's bring *it*, and *it* will lead us into battle."

So Hophni and Phinehas, these priests, bring the ark of the covenant. They come back into the camp with the ark of the covenant, and Israel's battle camp cheers so loud and so long the Philistines on the other side of Mizpah, the battlefield, are cowering, trembling, because they're going, "God has entered the camp." So the Philistines come back to the battle trembling and afraid of the God of Israel, and Israel comes in confident.

They come in not shaking, because now the ark of the covenant is with them. They go into battle, and it says 30,000 Israelite men died, and the ark of the covenant was captured. A runner comes back to Eli and says, "We've lost the battle. Thirty thousand died. Not only have all those men died, but your two sons who carried the ark have died, both in the same day. Not only did they die, but the ark of the covenant was taken by our enemies, the Philistines."

It says Eli fell over backwards in his chair and died. Phinehas' wife gave birth that day, and she named their son Ichabod, which means the glory has left Israel. Not a great name. Probably not on the cover of the baby book. "Ichabod: the glory is gone." No, you don't meet a lot of Ichabods. So the Philistines take the ark of the covenant and put it in the temple of their god, Dagon.

They put it in their temple, this victorious thing. "Our god is greater than Israel's God." They put the ark of the covenant in their temple of Dagon. Dagon was like half man and half fish. It was a merman father standing in the temple, and they had the ark of the covenant before him. After the first night, they got up, and Dagon, their god, had fallen on his face in front of the ark of the covenant.

So the Philistines come in, and they have to pick up Dagon and put him back in his place. Let me tell you, if you have to pick up and put your god back where he goes, you probably have a god problem. Then the next night they get up, they go in there, and Dagon has not only fallen over, but his head popped off. He has fallen over in front of the ark of the covenant. His head fell off. His hands fell off. So now the Philistines have to walk in there. They have to set their god back up. They have to get the Crazy Glue and put their god back together.

The ark of the covenant is there, and they're saying, "Hey, maybe there's something to Israel's God. Maybe there's something to this, that our god keeps falling on his face in front of the ark of the covenant." What happens is people in the city around this temple start to get sick. They start to get tumors, and they go, "All this started when we brought Israel's ark into our temple. Let's move it to another city."

So they move it to another Philistine city, and all of *those* people in *that* city start to get tumors and start to get sick. They say, "Let's move it to another city." They move it to another city, and all of the people in *that* city start to get tumors and start to get sick. The Philistine kings get together and say, "What are we going to do about this? Israel's God's hand is against us."

They say, "Let's do this. Let's put the ark of the covenant on a cart, and let's hook that cart up to two cows, but not cows that are used to pulling carts. We'll hook it up to two milk cows, cows that have never pulled a cart before. If the cows wander around, like milk cows do, then we'll know this is just coincidence, but if those cows walk the ark back to Israel, we'll know the God of Israel is real and his hand has been against us."

So they hook up the cart to these milk cows, and it says in the Scripture the milk cows turned neither to the right nor to the left. They walked straight back to Israel. The ark comes back to Israel, and Israel celebrates. They're ecstatic. The covenant that symbolizes the promise between God and his people, the mercy seat of God, where the presence of God was in the tabernacle, has returned to Israel.

Israel comes to Samuel and says, "Every time we gather to Mizpah, we are defeated by the Philistines. Why?" Samuel, who has now grown into the judge, the priest, says, "I'll tell you why. It's because you say you worship God, but you also have other gods." He says, "You say God masters you, but so do the Baals. So does Asherah. So do these other gods."

To us it would be like saying, "You say you're a Christian, but you also have these other things that are lords over your life. The Bible would say you cannot serve two masters. You can't both do whatever you want and say God is your Lord." So he gathers the people of Israel, all of them this time, men, women, and children again at Mizpah, the same place where thousands of them have died.

They pray to the Lord. They destroy their idols, and they say, "No more. Now we will wholly worship the Lord. He is our only God, our only Deliverer." The Philistines hear that they've gathered at Mizpah, and they gather an army and go to attack the Israelites, men, women, and children. Israel is terrified. They hear the Philistines coming, and they tremble.

The Philistines gathered in confidence, and as they came to attack Israel, the Bible tells us God sent a loud thunder and earthquake that shook the Philistines, terrified them, and they began to run away, and Israel mowed them down. In other words, when Israel tried to fight the battle for themselves over and over again, when they tried to win the battle by relying on the things God had given instead of relying on God himself, they were defeated, but when Israel said, "God, you are our only God," they didn't even have to fight. God won the battle for them.

Samuel took a big rock and put it in the middle of Mizpah, and he said, "This rock we will name Ebenezer, which means God helps, and we'll remember always that it is God who delivers, God who helps, God who wins the battle. We'll put it on a rock, because rocks don't move, don't change, so we will never forget it is God who delivers Israel."

Years go by, and the people of Israel come to Samuel and say, "Samuel, we want to have a king like other nations have a king." They say in chapter 8, verse 20, "We want a king who will go before us and fight our battles for us." It's like Samuel set up a rock and said, "Let's never forget God wins our battles." They said, "That's great. We want a king who will fight our battles for us." Samuel is devastated. He tells them how wicked, how evil this is, how they are rejecting God for a king.

God grants their request and gives them a man named Saul. Samuel gathers the people together again at Mizpah where the battles have raged, where God showed that he delivers, where there is a rock they've set up to say, "Let's never forget." That's where Samuel gathers the people together and says, "You have asked for a king to fight your battles." It's like he can look at the rock and go, "Remember, God won the battle for you, and yet you have asked me for a king who will fight the battle for you."

Samuel says, "There is a storm coming that will demonstrate how wicked this request is." A storm comes on the people of Israel there, and they pray, "Samuel, don't let us die under this storm." He says to them in chapter 12, verse 20 and following, this beautiful thing Samuel says to the people... He says, "Don't be afraid. You have done all this evil, yet don't turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart."

In verse 21 he says, "Do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty." I'll say it again. This is so good. If you want a theme verse for 1 Samuel... "Do not turn aside after empty things that do not profit or deliver, for they are empty." Don't chase the things of the world. Don't chase false idols. Don't chase even the gifts God has given you, because it's not them that deliver you. Your hope should be placed in one place, that is, *the* Deliverer, God, who has made a way to deliver you through his Son Jesus Christ.

He says, "Moreover, as for me, Samuel, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you." So God chooses Saul to be their king. Saul, the Scriptures tell us, is a head taller than everybody in Israel. It says he is the handsomest guy in all of Israel. He chooses Saul, the tallest guy, the handsomest guy, and he says, "This will be your king, the finest Israel has to offer. He'll be the king."

Saul does win many battles for them. Saul does lead them in many battles. Eventually, Saul becomes bigger in his mind than the God who made him king. Chapter 15, verse 12, tells us that Saul set up a monument to himself. Saul put up a monument and said, "Let's never forget how awesome I am." A couple of verses later in verse 23, Samuel tells Saul, "Because you have rejected God, God has rejected you as king."

So we get to chapter 16, where Saul meets with Jesse and his sons and sees in Jesse's sons great men he can see becoming the next king, yet God says, "It's none of those guys. It's the little one, the

youngest one who's out in the field, who's shepherding his sheep. That's going to be my next king." He anoints David to be the next king of Israel.

Then we get to chapter 17, David and Goliath. Goliath comes out and says, "Hey, we've been warring for years, right?" The Philistines and Israel have been warring for years. But they don't want a battle. What does he want? "Give me one soldier who will come and fight me. If he wins, we'll be your slaves. If I win, you'll be our slaves. It'll be over." All of us who have read 1 Samuel should scream out, "Saul!" He's the tallest one in Israel. He's literally one of two people in all of Israel who has a sword. He's the one the people said, "Give us somebody who will fight our battles for us."

Chapter 17 should read that Saul walks out on the field and says, "I will fight Goliath, because this is why the people wanted me to be king." Instead, what do we see? We see Saul in his palace going, "Who's going to fight? Who's going to win? Who can we find who will fight this battle for me?" Israel, who had put their hope in a man, is sorely disappointed.

So David shows up on the scene and says, "I'll fight, but it's not because I am powerful. It's because God who delivers me will deliver us from Goliath who has found God contemptible, who has spoken against him." David takes his sling out into the field, throws the rock at Goliath, and the Scripture says Goliath fell, and it's very specific about how Goliath fell. It says Goliath fell on his face before the people of Israel, before David, and it says David came, took his sword, and beheaded Goliath.

It's like this picture, as you're reading through Samuel, going, "Look, the ark of the covenant, the glory of God. This false god falls on his face before our God, and his head comes off. Goliath, who would hold contempt against us, the strongest man you could imagine, this person, he is not more powerful than your God. He will fall on his face before your God. His head will be removed before your God, because no person can deliver you. No thing can deliver you. No gift of God can deliver you. Only God can deliver you." Over and over again.

Why over and over again? Because our tendency is to forget that. We set up a rock and say, "Let's never forget God has delivered us," and not soon after we'll say, "But wouldn't it be great if we had a person we could see, about whom we could say, 'This is a great man,' and we could follow him?" God would say, "Don't forget, I am your Deliverer. Don't put your trust in anything else, even those things that are good. They are gifts from me to tell you about me." Not that you might wrap your lives around *them*, but rather that you might point their lives around *him*. God is your Deliverer.

What ends up happening to Saul? It tells us that in a battle with the Philistines later in his life, Saul, rather than being captured, would kill himself and that the Philistines would take his body, cut off his head, and hang it in the temple of Dagon. There's no Scripture after that that says, "And then the next morning, Dagon fell over in front of Saul." There's no Scripture that says, "Dagon could not stand in front of Saul's presence." No, because a false god faced with a false god are both false gods.

Your trust in a man, your trust in an idol, your trust in a thing... None of these things can deliver you. Saul, no matter how godly a leader, could not save. A father or a mother, no matter how godly, cannot save. All of our hope is in one place, and that is in God, who has made a way through his Son Jesus Christ. That's our only deliverance.

So we talked about family discipleship time and moments. We also talk a lot about family discipleship milestones, those things we would point back and say, "This is what the Lord has done; let's never forget it," that we'd put up a rock and go, "Let's not forget this." In just a minute when we take Communion, what do we say every week?

We say we do this in remembrance of him, that we would never forget, that we would remind each other every week our deliverance is in one place, and that's in Jesus Christ's shed blood and broken body; that in his resurrection he conquered sin and death, and us who are so quick to forget would not forget he is our one Deliverer; that we would all say to one another 1 Samuel 12:21: "Do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty." Do not look to empty things to profit you or deliver you, for they are empty.

Let's remember, in remembrance of Jesus Christ, his shed blood, his broken body. So as you're planning family discipleship milestones or celebrating these things... These things might be a rite of passage you create. It might be graduation from something. It might also be the salvation at work in the heart of a man or woman.

We celebrate that in Communion tonight. We also will celebrate that in baptism. We'll have a baptism up here in a minute. In baptism we are saying, "The Lord has done something significant. Let's put a marker in the ground and say, 'Let's not forget this. The Lord can save.'" His hand is not too short to save, so we are relentless in asking him for it.

Here's the reminder as we close: nothing else is god. That's Samuel over and over again. Nothing else is god. Nothing else can save you: no object, no blessing, no leader, no created thing. Nothing

else is god. Where we have sought the gifts of God instead of God, we must repent. Where we have honored our families, our jobs, our own lives instead of God or treated the things of God with contempt, we must repent. Where we have said we follow God but had other things that mastered our lives, we must repent. There is only one God, and he alone is worthy of our worship. Pray with me.

Heavenly Father, thank you that in your mercy you would see fit to save me. I pray the same thing for my sons. I pray that you would spark faith in their lives. I pray that we would be diligent and relentless to see them come to know you. God, I pray for your mercy over those things. I pray for those of us in this room who now can think of dozens of people who we'd love to see know you, and we know your hand is not too short to save.

We pray we would sing your praises as you save our friends and coworkers and children. I pray that for those of us in this room who have prayed for good gifts from you, a good Father, prayed for a godly spouse, prayed for children, that, God, you would be kind, merciful, and gracious to give those good gifts. I pray these things not to make much of people, not to make much of us, but to give glory to your name. It's in your name I pray these things. In Jesus Christ's name, amen.