

✠ 1 Samuel 17:20-47 ✠

IN NOMINE IESU

God provides. God did not leave the Israelites defenseless. He gave them a savior. One who would slay the enemy and deliver them from the hands of those who hated them. This savior was not what one would expect. He was a shepherd. He had no fighting experience. He had no armor of his own. He did not even have a sword or shield. He was, for all intents and purposes, defenseless. He was as one being led to the slaughter.

But we know the story. David defeated Goliath with his five, or actually, one, measly stone slung from his boyhood sling. Goliath fell with one strike right between the eyes. The underdog won, the weak beat the strong, mark one down for the little guy. It is easy to see David as a hero. Against all odds and in the face of ridicule and doubt, he stood before the giant and defied him and defeated him.

It is easy to hold David up as a great hero of faith. No, he was not manlier than the others, but he did believe God. His faith made him great. He is a character we want to emulate, and we should, David was a man after God's own heart. David was God's anointed king. God did choose David to sire the line from whence the Christ was born. The kingdom of David lives on in his son, Jesus.

But if you look at the story, God did not deliver the Israelites by the hand of David. The Philistines lost, yes, but the victory was hollow and short lived. Ultimately the Israelites would be enslaved by the Babylonians and later by the Medes and Persians. And finally the Romans, who would destroy the temple and single-handedly stop the religion of the Jews. Israel, the flesh and blood descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not remain long in the Promise Land. David did not win.

But then, the battle is not with flesh and blood, it never has been, and David is not *the* savior. The Old Testament is not the New Testament. The enemy is not Goliath of Gath. It is not our medical bills and debt. The enemy is not our personality faults and shortcomings. The enemy is the father of lies. And the enemy is us.

We stand before the armies of the living God and defy Him. We tell Him that His Word is useless in the real world. Yes, it sounds good and we all like it, but when the rubber meets the road, we think His Word is left wanting. Thus we despise preaching, we neglect the Church, we warp the Scriptures, and we condone public sin by not condemning it.

We tell Him His Sacraments mean nothing in the face of family violence and bloodshed. Or worse, they mean nothing in the face of reason. For reason says water is water and bread and wine are bread and wine. We tell Him that we appreciate the Sacraments, but they cannot effect salvation, only our hearts can do that. We tell Him His preaching is nice but it cannot change a man's heart, it must be the man who decides to change.

We stand before the Lord and defy Him. We sin and do not repent. We lie and do not amend. We cheat and do not repay. We do harm to our neighbor and do not seek forgiveness. We are sinful beings from whom no good work comes.

But God provides. God gives to us a Savior. One who slays the enemy and delivers us from the hands of those who hated us. This Savior is not what one would expect. He is not the great King David and his armies, conquering the lands of men. He is not the battle-hardened general of the armies. He is the Shepherd. He does not fight with weapons of man, but with the weapon of God, the cross. He has no armor but rather is naked and exposed as He saves us. In the eyes of the world and the enemy, He is defenseless and weak; dying to save those who hate Him; forgiving their sins against Him and taking their punishment for them.

We know the story. Jesus hung upon the cursed tree and became the curse for us. He defeated sin, death, and the devil. With common water He drowns the enemy. For the enemy is no match for His weapon, His Word. With mere bread and wine poured from a common cup He poisons the enemy, killing him where he kneels.

But He does not only defeat the enemy. He does not only drown you in the waters of the Church. He also raises you from that water. He breathes life, His Spirit, into you and you become a living being. The poison that kills the old Adam, His flesh and blood, is also the healing medicine that makes you whole and restores your soul. By it you grow into His likeness.

Saul killed his hundreds, and David his ten-thousand, but the battle belongs to the Lord who delivers you from the hand of the enemy and saves you from your sins.

All glory be to God.

In the name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT.

✠ AMEN ✠