

The God of Surprises

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning to you all at St. Mark's. It's wonderful to be able to share with you again, even though, of course, it's by video this time. But I hope you're all doing well, and I hope you're safe and in lockdown due to the pandemic, of course, and we need to continue to pray for our country and we need to pray for St. Mark's Church.

Thanks for the opportunity. Thanks to Dylan for putting the video together. Now, the reading is from 1 Samuel chapter 17. It's the story of David and Goliath. It is a well-known story, I know, but it's always relevant.

So when I chatted to Dylan about what I was going to preach about, I just said I felt this would be a good idea. So what I would like you to do now is before you continue to listen to and watch this video, what you need to do is, first of all, just go to the Bible and read the story carefully, because at the end of the day, as we know, a good sermon should always be based on the Bible.

And that's what I'm going to be doing. I'm going to be following the Bible text. And I encourage you to stop the video and read that now. Once you've done that, well, let's have a look at the text.

And I thought of a title, and I came up with the God of Surprises. The God of Surprises. So we're going to run with that title. And like all the stories in the Bible and all the narrative accounts, narrative stories in the Old Testament, what we have is a setting.

[1 : 29] We then have an escalation of events. So the setting is laid out. Then you have an escalation of events. You have a climax. And then after the climax, you have some kind of solution.

And of course, as I've said to you folk before when I visited, we're dealing with God's eye view of history. As we look at the tumultuous events around us at the moment in our country, we do ask the question, what is God doing?

And where is God doing what he's doing? And we don't always see that. But the Old Testament tells us, and the New Testament, of course, that God is always active, but he's not always active in the people and in the events that we might expect him to be involved in.

And so the story starts, we're about 1000 BC. So, you know, that's about 3000 years ago. And we're in the Valley of Elah. So if you look at the first four verses of chapter 17, that's your setting. So we're about 12 to 14 miles west of Jerusalem. And we're in this valley. And what has happened is the enemies of Israel have taken initiative.

[2 : 38] These are the worst enemies that Israel faced in the Old Testament, the Philistines. And they've taken the initiative and they've invaded Israel's territory. Now, we need to stop for a moment and realize, as astute readers of the Bible, that the Philistines are not just political enemies.

There's something spiritual going on here because the Philistines represented all the forces of darkness opposing Israel and the purposes of God in the world, purposes of the gospel.

The Philistines were Israel's eternal enemies. Most of the time, they were better equipped than Israel and better armed. But as we consider the spirituality of what is happening here, we need to remember that God had said to Israel that you will move into the promised land.

You will take over the promised land. And you will eject all the tribes living there if you obey me.

Those are the promises that God has been giving to Israel since the time of Exodus.

And the book of Joshua, they go into the land. Then you have the rather difficult time of the book of Judges. And then you have the rise of the kings in 1 and 2 Samuel.

[3 : 54] Now, at this stage, Israel hasn't got a very, very good king. We know that Saul was less than perfect. But God warned Israel. And God said to Israel, When you forget my covenant, when you forget me, I will raise up your enemies against you.

So in other words, the real enemy that Israel is facing here is not just the Philistines, but God himself. They are God's instruments. In fact, every time you read about enemies facing Israel in the

Old Testament, you need to understand that they are God's instruments.

God is in control of everything. Sometimes we don't always see that. The Word of God reminds us that sometimes what we do see around us and what we do hear from other people is not always what is true.

The true perspective on the meaning of life and history is only really found from God's eye view, which, of course, we find in the Word. So the Philistines have entered into the situation, but they're not just political enemies.

They are God's instruments that have been raised up to teach Israel a lesson. And you've got these two armies that have been gathered up on two hills facing each other.

[5 : 17] You've got no man's land in the middle. And the scene he said. Now, what is our writer going to do? Now, some of you might have heard me say this to you in the past, but reading the stories in the Bible, all the New Testament, but we're talking about the Old Testament today, so let's talk about the Old Testament.

Reading the stories in the Bible, they're often like watching a movie. If you watch a movie carefully, like a movie buff, you will know that a movie is a very particular interpretation of a set of events as understood by the director.

Last night I watched another classical movie directed by Oliver Stone. I don't agree with everything he does and says, but he's a very, very, he's a very brilliant director.

And with any good director, you will see that the director will show you a certain set of events or you will hear somebody say something or do something and then the camera will move to somebody else because the director wants you to see how the first set of events affects the second set of events and so on.

So in other words, the camera shifts deliberately and in so doing, as the viewer of the movie sees the camera moving around, sees the camera panning, the viewer gets the opportunity to figure out the plot of the story, the events.

[6 : 56] And the director's worldview. And we've got a movie here and we've got a priceless movie because what we've got, we've got God's movie.

We've got God's perspective on a particular set of events that took place 3,000 years ago that are eternally relevant to all of us. Especially today in our difficult and changing times.

So the scene is set. What is the divine director going to do? He's behind his camera. Where is he going to focus first? And as I love to say to the folk I preach to and my students, I'm always saying this to the students, every word, every noun, every doing word, verb in the story, every phrase, is given to us by God for good reason.

The writer is inspired. So where is the director going to pan first with his camera? Well, Goliath appears first in the story.

Not David. Not Saul. From verse 4 to verse 7. That's a lot of verses. What have you got? You've got this incredible impression that is being made by this individual.

[8 : 18] This man. And he's intended to do so. So the story, the director, puts Goliath up front and center first.

We are led through an entire rundown of how formidable and how evil and how capable he is.

All based on what we can see and hear. We get the summary of his armor and basically what we're seeing is that he has the latest technology.

And remember, if you know anything about warfare, you will know that technology wins wars. Think about how the allied nations destroyed the eight largest army in the world, that of Saddam Hussein, in just a few weeks in the 1990s.

Operation Desert Storm. And one of the reasons why they did that was because of the superior technology that the Westerners had. Americans had superior technology. Technology wins wars.

[9 : 27] And this figure appears and he is formidable. and as a reader, you're supposed to take this in and you're supposed to put yourself in the situation of the poor Israelites.

He has formidable protective armor and offensive weaponry. You run through the statistics. He's over nine feet, six inches high.

So what's that? I mean, it's pretty close to three meters. It's around about three meters tall. You can't miss him. That's the point.

He's this massive obstacle of evil that just appears. He has 126 pounds of armor.

His spearhead alone weighs 15 to 16 pounds. And by the way, notice that the writer records all this information. Three thousand years later, we can read about this seemingly trivial information, but it's not trivial, you see, because it was so scary.

[10:33] It was so formidable that they wrote it down in the national records. That's how significant this event was.

They were legendary at the time. And just to get an idea of just how horrifying it is, you have the assessment of King Saul and the rest of the army in 1 Samuel 17 verse 11.

Just have a look in your Bible text and notice what it says. On hearing the Philistines' words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

Now, you need to appreciate that in the original language, dismayed and terrified of very, very powerful Hebrew words. Now, don't pass that off too quickly.

You see, we are quick to criticize Saul. That is true. We are quick to criticize him. And Saul was rejected by God as God's king.

[11:36] That is true. But Saul was a great man. We need to remember that Saul, when he was originally identified as king in the beginning of the story, remember that Saul was a head taller than anybody else in Israel?

Saul was a good guy. Saul was a big guy. Saul was a great warrior all of his life. Saul's no pushover. Saul is a military hero.

Saul knows everything about warfare. Saul knows all about war. When a guy like Saul gives up, when a guy like Saul is dismayed and terrified, well then you know that we have got a situation here that is unlike any other situation.

There is something deeply demonic, unusual, terrifying about the situation that Israel is facing.

There is something more horrifying here than anything that they have ever faced. That's what the movie director, the Oliver Stone, the divine Oliver Stone wants us to see.

[12:46] The divine Martin Scorsese. I don't know who your great movie director is. There are so many great ones out there. The divine Ridley Scott. What does he do with his camera? He puts the camera straight onto an insurmountable obstacle.

Now, I want to introduce you to a word or an idea in the story because when you study these wonderful stories in the Old Testament, it's such a blessing when you appreciate that these stories are inspired by the Holy Spirit.

It's wonderful to dig down into the words and the ideas and as I've said before on many occasions, in the Old Testament, they didn't have highlight pens. You know when I study, even today, I use these little pink and yellow highlight pens so I can remember certain key words or ideas or underline.

Now, in the Old Testament, they didn't have highlight pens and they never underlined. So, how does the Old Testament writer catch our attention? Well, as many of you know, what they do is they repeat an idea or a phrase.

That's how they want to catch your attention. That's how the divine movie director wants to catch your attention. Now, in this particular account, one phrase or idea or word appears many, many times, it's the word to insult or to deride.

[14:10] The root of the verb in some form, harap, occurs, believe it or not, six times. It means to reproach or to defy or to mock or, as I've said, to deride.

And it appears six times and this word is directed at David. It's like a hammer that is trying to hammer down David.

In other words, Goliath is evil. that's what we need to understand. Goliath is pure evil. There's a definite spiritual undertone to the story because he's expressing contempt.

And he's expressing contempt not just for Israel and for David, but here comes the key. He's expressing contempt for Israel's God.

Mustn't miss that. This is not just a political story. It's a spiritual or what we theologians will call it's a theological story.

[15:27] There's an undertone here. Verse 8 and verse 10. Have a look. You've got three verses of his brags and his insults.

Will anyone come out? Will anyone fight with me? me? But I really want you to take note of verse 43 because it says there that he cursed David.

Now we are supposed to read the Old Testament as a single book. And we mustn't read the latter books of the Old Testament and forget what took place in the earlier books.

of the Old Testament. So the latter parts of the Old Testament are written on the foundation of the earlier parts. Now in Genesis, do you remember when Genesis, in the story of Genesis, remember when God called Abraham, remember?

Genesis chapter 12. And God said to Abraham, I'm going to bless you and your descendants. And he who curses you will be cursed.

[16:43] blessed. And he who blesses you and your descendants will be blessed. So you'll observe what Goliath's doing. He's like a Herod character.

Herod and Pharaoh. Herod in the New Testament trying to kill the Hebrew boys, trying to destroy the purposes of God in the world. Pharaoh in the book of Exodus trying to destroy Israel, enslave the people of God, but I'm trying to curse Israel.

Goliath and his voice reflects the mind of a deeper evil. It's the devil.

I mean, what we have here is the Antichrist, the spirit of the Antichrist. We have the powers of darkness that have manifested themselves in human form in the Antichrist.

nothing less. Now, the other thing I want to point out is you look at your story very carefully. And remember, we're looking at a movie, but we're looking at a movie that has been put together by a genius.

[17:54] Every word, every idea is worthy of contemplation. I want you to appreciate the power of outer appearance from around about verse 16.

I wish I had more time. The whole of 1 and 2 Samuel have a great deal to say about the deceptive power of outer appearance.

No one had any trouble seeing Goliath. He was big, he was loud, no one had any trouble hearing him. But as I've said before, and as Nick points out in his own preaching, and Dylan I'm sure as well, the Bible is often very subtle.

The mind of our divine director is very subtle indeed, because what happened in the previous chapter, sometimes when we read the Bible and we have a sermon in church, we necessarily get a sermon on a little chunk of the Bible.

But we always need to read the Bible in context. Now what happened in the previous chapter, chapter 16, do you remember that God called the prophet Samuel, who was a great man, wise man, to go and find a new king for Israel?

[19:21] God had rejected Saul, and God said to Samuel, go to the home of a man called Jesse, who's got seven sons, little seven sons, and he's going to have a barbecue, he's going to have a briar place for you, and amongst his sons, you're going to find the new king, and Samuel is so excited, remember the story, remember how it goes, Samuel gets on his donkey, and he goes off to Jesse's house, and it's obviously a big occasion because Jesse brings out all of his sons, and they have this fantastic feast, and all the sons come and stand up before Samuel, and I remember Samuel is a great man, I mean, Samuel is a very wise man, Samuel is one of the greats, and the oldest son, I want you to remember his name, his name is

Eliab, Eliab appears before Samuel, and Eliab is this great strapping young man, just like David's son, Absalom, and Samuel takes one look, look at the outer appearance of Eliab and says, surely the king stands before me, surely the anointed of the Lord stands before me, and God answers Samuel in a way that I think sets the scene of a lot of what goes on in 1-2 Samuel, God answers and says, don't go with appearance, I've rejected him, the Lord looks at the heart, mankind looks at appearance, I remember I was preaching on that passage during the Monica Lewinsky Bill Clinton fiasco in the United States many years ago, when was that?

I can't remember now, like 20 years ago? Do you remember, those of us who are still around in those days, us oldies, do you remember that Clinton had this affair with an intern in the White House, and he managed to escape being impeached, and one day the great American reporter is no longer with us, Larry King, Larry King Live.

Larry King who had interviewed many, many, many politicians over many years in the United States, I remember somebody asking Larry King and saying, you know, how was it that Bill Clinton managed to hang on to his presidency after the fiasco with Monica Lewinsky and Larry King with great astuteness, spent his life following American politics, answered and said he looks good on television.

Eliab, and might I say Goliath, look good on television. But the Lord rejects the outer appearance. So I thought the outer appearance is bad, so if you're good looking like I am, that's not necessarily a bad thing, but it's not everything.

[22 : 28] The Lord looks at the heart. 1 Samuel 16 verse 7, Do not consider his appearance or his height, the Lord says to Samuel, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things that man looks at.

Man looks at the outer appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. And yet as soon as Goliath arrives in the next chapter, it's all about appearance.

The director knowing how we think puts the appearance out there. I love it. I mean, it's pure genius, isn't it? The Old Testament.

The narratives of the Old Testament are so exciting because you're dealing with a genius. They just take one look at Goliath, they don't even think about God, and they don't even think about good theology.

Okay? They just take one look at this guy, and they run like crazy. How easily we forget what God teaches us. And the world is like today, isn't it?

[23 : 30] And now David comes into the story from verse 12. Now, David hasn't really had much of an exposure yet in the story.

We know about him. We know that he's the next king. We know that from the previous chapter. But what is interesting about the way the director produces and brings David into the story is this incredibly low key appearance compared to the way Goliath is brought into the story.

David is a nothing. David is this teenager. He's introduced into the story. He's just this teenager who's bringing food to his brothers on the battlefield.

and the movie camera details about the giant are interspersed or interchanged with details about David.

In fact, you almost as a reader of the story, I want to say to the writer, don't tell us about this teenager. We want to see the bad guy. That's where you're going to get the ratings for your movie. We want to know about Goliath.

[24 : 46] We want to know about this loser, this kid. And yet the camera pans from Goliath to David, to Goliath to David. And David comes into the camp. He's a teenager. And then the story, you know, the divine director introduces David to us.

You know, he's the son of a certain so-and-so just in case we've forgotten. And he's from Bethlehem in Judah, which of course is great significance for us as New Testament readers, as Christians. Have a look at verse 12.

You know, I'm reminded of how Luke's gospel as an illustration introduces the birth of Jesus Christ. Luke says, in the days of Caesar Augustus.

So you think, whoa, you know, Caesar Augustus is a big shot. He's the emperor. Caesar Augustus, Octavian, was one of the greatest Roman emperors and wanted to be worshipped.

And of course, the king, the so-called king of the Jews at the time would have been, shortly would have been Herod. And then, having introduced the big people, the camera of Luke's gospel, it's also a divine camera, it's the same divine Ridley Scott, the same divine Martin Scorsese, the same divine director, takes the camera and moves it down to this little half a horse nameless little town in Bethlehem and says, you know, there's this couple, this Jewish peasant couple, they both come from the line of David, but, you know, what's so big about that?

[26 : 30] And she's pregnant and they've got no place to stay for the night. You think to yourself, but why do we have to know about this? how many Jewish women were pregnant during the time of Jesus' birth?

Hundreds? Thousands? But yet, if you don't follow God's camera, you won't know how he's going to save the world. You know, it's the Caesar Augustuses of the world and it's the Herods and the big shots that we look to as the movers and the shakers in history.

We always look for the big people. We believe that it is the big people and the rich people and the people with the budget and the people with the power, whether it's economic power or political power, these are the people who change the world.

These are the people who make history, not the little people. And yet, if you don't want to look at the world the way the Lord looks at the world through the gospel, if you're not going to look over there and not over there, but over there with that couple, with that Mary and Joseph, you're going to miss

it.

You're going to miss how God's going to change the world. Isn't that remarkable? So David is introduced into the story just the way Luke introduces Jesus' birth. He's an insignificant person. [27 : 54] He's the son of a certain individual. He arrives with food for his brothers from his father Jesse, on verse 17. If only Jesse had known how much was hanging on the future of Israel that day when he sent the lunch to his sons.

It's all so casual, isn't it, when you read about how David is introduced into the story. And yet there's a providential link with what's going on all the time.

Casual? Yes. Very sort of natural? Yes. But don't underestimate the providence of God through everyday affairs. We must never forget that.

So I present this video to you and I'm recording this video on Wednesday. And at the moment South Africa we are of course reading about these riots and we're in the middle of COVID.

So it's wonderful for us again to remind ourselves that we must never underestimate the providence of God working through everyday affairs. things. Now verse 26.

[28 : 59] Hope you've got your Bible in front of you and I hope you slow wake. Verse 26. Now why is verse 26 so important? Because it's the first recorded words of David in the Bible.

And remember David is very important. He's the most important person next to Moses probably in the whole of the Old Testament. Why you ask? Because we're going to learn later on in 1 Samuel 7 from around about verse 12 we're going to learn that David is going to have a descendant on the throne.

But after David has died there's going to be a descendant on David's throne who will rule over the people of God forever. In other words David's descendants are Abraham's descendants. And we know from Paul in the letter to the Philippians in the third chapter, the letter to the Galatians, the third chapter, that those who believe in Jesus are the sons and the daughters of Abraham.

David is the father of Jesus Christ. So David is from the lineage of the Lord Jesus himself. That's why David is so important.

You can't separate David from the New Testament gospel. Now what are David's recorded words, first recorded words in the Bible? There you will find them in verse 26.

[30 : 14] Just by chance, now you know that's not true. Nothing happens by chance, but the way the writer expresses it is so beautiful. David is delivering the snacks and the chips and the hamburgers and the cheese and whatever it is, the bultong to his brothers, and it just so happens by chance that the giant starts his usual insults.

And David heard it. Love the way the writer expresses it so powerfully and so concretely. David heard it. And then he speaks.

And we need to listen very carefully because here we have God's chosen king. In other words, the voice of the director himself is speaking through his servant, the king, the Messiah.

Remember the word Messiah is the word Christ, which is the word anointed. So all the kings of the Old Testament in a sense are all messiahs. Jesus is our true Messiah.

So the words of Jesus before the time echo through the words of David, God's chosen king. This is what he says, and I quote, What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel?

[31 : 37] You can't believe it. It's absolutely astonishing. Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?

That he should defy the armies, not Saul or Israel or Moses, but the living God in verse 26. So what makes David different to everybody else?

Why is David the king? Is it because he's better looking or taller than Goliath? No. It's the outlook on life. It's the mindset that makes a Christian a Christian.

It's not necessarily their money or the technology or their fine clothes. What makes a Christian a Christian is their outlook on life.

And so the first sign of David being different to everybody else is his perspective on life. He looks at his life from God's perspective and not ours. And something else.

[32 : 37] Notice the quote. he's not interested in money. It's not about fame. It's about the honor of God. It's about the honor of the gospel and the name and the glory of God.

That is what it is for David. So now for the first time the silence of God's king is broken and he's concerned about the living God.

Doesn't God make a difference in all of this? What are the rest of the Israelites doing? What was Saul doing? All they can see are the visible things.

All they can see is the size of Goliath. The terrifying set of circumstances and the situation. But you see they're seeing the wrong things and because they're seeing the wrong things they're asking the wrong questions.

That's why as Christians we always need to in life take the right starting point and ask the right questions. Now next point.

[33 : 46] You're going to be surprised at this one because there are actually three Goliaths in the story. They're not one. I was shocked when I saw this for the first time.

Let me explain to you what I mean. David actually encounters not just one opponent in the account but he encounters three.

Only one of them is Goliath and all of these three enemies are going to mock him. They're going to deride him for his weakness and his inadequacy.

Let's have a look at these three enemies very quickly because time is always of the essence.

Number one, Eliab. believe it or not, David's own brother, the same guy who the great prophet Samuel was so impressed with.

Remember in chapter 16 when Samuel went to go find the king and he saw Eliab and he said, look at Eliab, he's the new king, he's the new Christ, he's the new Messiah. Notice how Eliab responds when David arrives with the food in 1 Samuel 17 verse 28 and I quote, when Eliab, David's brother, oldest brother, notice, the oldest brother is always the most important, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger.

[35 : 06] It's a little bit extreme, isn't it? He burned with anger and asked, why have you come down here and with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is.

You came down only to watch the battle. isn't that interesting and disturbing at the same time? You see how the words that Eliab uses are so horrible.

Deceitful and wicked you are as my brother. David has just said the most wonderful theological truth is about the honor of God God. And Eliab who is the strapping tall young man I know how wicked you are.

So in other words Eliab looks at David with contempt just like Goliath. He sees David as nothing more than a pathetic figure.

the same man that Samuel was so impressed with this tall handsome man this fine specimen even Samuel was fooled.

[36 : 23] Eliab is tall and strong but David isn't. See the similarity between Goliath and Eliab.

But how about Saul? Is Saul much better than Eliab? Verse 32 to verse 37. Okay fair enough.

When Saul interviews David it's true that Saul's a little bit more polite but how does the great king Saul the pastor of God's people view David?

not that differently. He also regards David as being weak and ineffectual. And you know if I was there I want to confess to you guys that I would probably take the side of Saul.

You would never ever appreciate who David was without the benefit of hindsight. You just wouldn't appreciate unless you read the rest of the story who David was.

Without the Holy Spirit without the perspective of the Holy Spirit you just don't really get it in life. You see? So Saul is much better.

[37 : 51] No he's not ready. He reluctantly allows David to do it. I suppose to save face. but both Eliab, Saul and the giant make the mistake of perceiving the situation from the eyes of unbelief.

And that is something that we also struggle from even as Christians from time to time. And the theology or the philosophy of unbelief always says only the strong and the experienced win.

Only the people with the money. Only the people with the budget. These are the only people who win. You know it's true isn't it that a lot of the time the church always seems to be on the back foot. You notice that? That the church always seems to lack the budget and the money and the finances to do the job that she's called to do.

It always seems, and I've made this point before, but it always seems as if the world out there has the money and the budget and the power. But the church doesn't.

[39 : 05] But at the end of the day we mustn't see the spiritual battle through the eyes of the world. Now we come to the contest itself from verse 41 to verse 49.

And in the end as you know David can't face Goliath with Saul's armour because it's too heavy for him. And so he approaches the giant with just the weapons of the shepherd. And he faces the giant. And when you read the contest itself, five times the writer mentions the Philistine from verse 41 to verse 49.

Very, very, very powerful. Remember, repetition is important. Five times. The Philistine this and the Philistine that and the Philistine this and the Philistine that.

You'll notice that Goliath is not even mentioned. He is a person. He becomes an entity symbolic of the dark spirituality of the Philistines.

[40 : 05] The Philistine went and the Philistine looked and he said and he cursed and he said again. And so it goes on. It's almost like the very text trembles under Goliath's heavy, fearsome tread.

And yet when you come to the combat itself, it's this massive anticlimax. Bang, it's over. Just like it. Verse 48 to verse 49.

And he takes up two verses and it's over. Most of the section here, 41 to verse 49, actually deals with words. Mostly. You've got, first of all, again, you've got the Philistine mocking David and mocking David's God.

And then David just giving us a bit of a theological summary of why he's going to do what he's going to do and what the theological significance is and what he's about to do. And David's speech takes 63 words.

The combat, the end, the climax and the end takes 36. You know, normally in a movie, the final battle goes on for 25 minutes. But here, the final battle, it's nothing.

[41 : 14] It's 36 words. David explains the meaning of the victory in verse 47. So the world might know that there's a God in Israel. That's, it's not about Israel, it's not about rescuing Saul, it's not even about David, it's about God.

God will give victory, but he gives victory deliberately through the vessel that is perceived by others as being weak, so he gets all the glory. So despite the formidable power of the Philistine, despite the budget, despite the armor, the technology, he's actually a nothing.

Just like all those forces in the world that oppose the gospel, they're all a nothing at the end of the day. It doesn't seem to be the case, but at the end of the day, Goliath and his power is puny.

That's why we must never ever judge the church, or an individual Christian man or woman, by their money, or whether they're good looking or not, or whether they have a nice house or not.

You never judge a man or a woman or the church by its money or its power, or the size of its budget. You always judge the church by the size of its God, and that's where the world always makes a mistake.

[42 : 35] The world made the mistake, most of all, with Jesus Christ. Nobody saw Jesus Christ coming. I don't think the devil did. The devil knew that something was going on, but I don't think the devil really fully appreciated what Jesus was going to do, because only those with the money and the power win.

Nobody saw Jesus coming. Just when you think you've got God taped, he's got you taped. So, whose side are you on? You see?

That's what the movie director wants us to ask. Whose side are you on? Do you run your life on the basis of what you read in the news?

Simply on the basis of what you see? Or do you take a gospel-eye view of the events of the world around you? That's the question. I need to close because of time, and as I close, I want to make a couple of comments.

I just want to speak a little bit about our lives and try and make some applications. The first thing I want to say is that the words of Goliath and the voice of Goliath reappear all the time in the Bible and in life.

[43 : 50] The voice of Goliath is always there. The voice of the devil, the ideology of the devil, the philosophy of the devil, the politics of the devil is always this. Trusting in God won't help you.

At the end of the day, you've got to trust in yourself. If you want to get anywhere in life, you've got to trust in money, you've got to trust in the budget, you've got to trust in the power of the world. I remember facing that with my church council in financial crisis in our local church, wondering whether I was going to pay salaries that month, and really struggling with trusting in the Lord, sitting with my church council and saying, are we going to be able to pay medical aids?

We had three or four people on staff. trust in the devil remains the same throughout the centuries. Trusting in God is never going to get you through. You've got to trust in yourself. You've got to trust in the Goliaths.

You've got to trust in the big corporations. You've got to trust in political ideology. And of course, that's the voice of the serpent in the garden of Gethsemane and in the garden of Eden.

It's the voice of the serpent who took Jesus to the top of the temple and said, hey, if you want to be the Messiah, I'll help you out. I'll give you everything you want. I'll give you the budget. I'll give you the nations. I'll give you the money. I'll give you the political power.

[45 : 08] I'll give you all the nations of the world that you just worship. That's why political ambition is always a very dangerous thing. It can be a very dangerous thing. The taunts of Goliath remain the same down the centuries.

Victory and success is only possible for through the display of outward power and strength. Come on, make these stones bread. Throw yourself off the temple.

Come down off the cross, Jesus. Stop being such a pathetic loser. Come down off the cross.

Mustard together an army. Take out the Roman government. Stop being a loser.

Come down off the cross. Then we're going to believe you. But this is pathetic. So Jesus is like David. Superficially weak. Unable to really change history.

But of course that's not true at all. And we also learn something about God. It's always good to be reminded of something about God. That Eliab, his older brother, says to David, well, you know, you're a pain.

[46 : 15] Saul says, you're green. Goliath sneers, you're puny. Saul, again, you don't have the right equipment. But David says, Yahweh, the gospel brings deliverance without the need for man's symbols of strength.

So once again, what matters is not the caliber of your bullets, but the realness of your God. Yes, it's true that Satan can put into the battle a great enemy, an awesome looking enemy to oppose the church and to oppose the Christian, whether in the church environment, whether in the home, in the environment, out in the workplace, and throughout history, the enemies always seem to have the money.

The enemy of the church always seems to have the budget and the money and the power. They always seem to have the power of the media, the backing of the government on occasion, but we must remember that Satan is, at the end of the day, a fallen, pathetic figure, whereas God is the one with all the power, even if he doesn't show his power in a demonic manner the way Goliath does.

So, we read in Judges 5 and verse 31, So may all your enemies perish, O Lord, but may they who love you be like the sun when it arises in its strength.

And my final observation, I've probably already gone over time, but my final observation is this, it's an observation for those of us here who are listening to this video, critics Christianity.

[47 : 48] You a critic? Maybe somebody had some of church giving you this video to watch, you watch this video, maybe you're a critic, you're a critic of Christianity. Well, the lesson to you is clear, all of God's enemies at the end of the day will perish.

And that's why it's very, very important for those of us who are critical of this God, to carefully think about the way we think, and whether we really know the truth of what is happening in the world around us, and how easy it is to live your life based on a lie, based simply on what you see and what you hear.

So I want to end it there. Let's continue to pray, and let's continue to ask God to help us not to live by simply just what we see and hear, but by the gospel.

Amen.