Famous story for many reasons

Themes:
Sling and stone vs sword and spear
Military aggression vs fearless faith
Right vs might
Short vs tall
Youth vs maturity

Many of us have heard sermons on this passage before, I've preached 2 times, and I feel its one of the great misunderstood passages of the Bible, we think we are familiar with it. We learn it as kids and don't feel the need to revisit it as adults. I made two mistakes the previous times that I've taught it, 1) attempted to teach all 58 verses in one sermon (won't make that mistake again) and 2) I made David the hero, instead of showing the great and mighty plan of God through this story and every story.

Also themes of God's elevation of David as the new king and showing Saul to be incompetent and ill equipped for the task.

Setting 1-3
They are in Israel territory, the Philistines are making an encursion, trying to seize this strategic land, which is an important thoroughfare. The valley of Elah is an important route that would give them greater and greater access into the very heartland of Israel. Its important that the Israelites defend it There was a fresh invasion of Philistines into Israelite territory, and Saul and his army have come to meet them. Both armies are on different hills overlooking a valley.
Both armies are reluctant to March into the valley of Elah, because that will give their enemies an advantage over them. They would be sifting ducks in the valley, and if they were to ascend the hill they would face a tremendous disadvantage, it would literally be an “uphill battle.” so there is a long stand-off.

Goliath- 4-11

His impressive stature and strength is described in great detail (from head to foot) before he opens his mouth to speak. (imagine the cinematography).

Instead of moving right into the battle itself, the narration “lingers in detail on the intimidating appearance of the challenger.”

He’s tall - based on the length of the cubit he is 6’9 or 9’6
The tallest living man is Sultan Kósen from Ankara Turkey , he just turned 31 on December 10th and he stands 8 ‘3, the tallest undisputed verified man who ever lived was Robert Wadlow, he died in 1940 and was 8’11 (tallest man in Ireland is Shaun Aisbitt, 8:3)
Goliath / Gath Joshua 11:22 speaks of unusually sized men called the anakin that were there 400 years earlier
Not only is he tall, he’s strong, he is wearing so much armour he would need considerable strength just to hold it. 150-200 lbs

He is imposing to be sure. But the content of his speech is just as frightening. “Are you not Servants of Saul?“ - Goliath calls the army the servants (slaves) of Saul, and that perhaps was their problems, *they looked at themselves* at working for a human kingdom only, if we think of our tasks as small then we will take small risks.

Rock quarriers, I’m earning 100 euro, I’m feeding my family, I’m building a cathedral.

The third guy recognises that he is part of something far greater than himself.

He offers to stand in **representative combat** for his whole nation. He will fight for all of his people against the mightiest man that the Israelites can offer. This is representative combat, it allows a decisive victory and spares the cumulative bloodshed of a long drawn out battle.

**WW1 anniversary this year- so much loss of life.**

**Champion:** middle man, someone who fought between two armies. We see this throughout ancient history.

The third of this has the Israelites (and their tall king) quivering with fear. Its noteworthy that not even Saul, whose height has been emphasised earlier in the story (9:2, 10:23) had the courage the accept the challenge; he too was dismayed and terrified (v11).

Saul displayed a lack of leadership and it is evident that Israel needs a new warrior king to lead them into battle.

**David at home 12-18**

He is re-introduced into the story. We know that he is not the eldest son of Jesse (the usual place of prominence) he is not thought of as a warrior like his three older brothers, but spent most of his time as a shepherd looking after his father’s sheep. Not all of his time was spent in the pastures though, because occasionally he would visit the palace to play music on the lyre for Saul. 16:23 says whenever the evil spirit was upon Saul, David played the lyre and refreshed Saul. So from time to time he would make the ___ journey from the pasture to the palace. But now he is back in his usual location, looking after his father’s sheep. In the midst of this scene, v 16 reminds us of the continual menace, taking place just 12 miles away from Bethlehem in the valley of Elah.

His dad sends him on a mission to bring his 3 older brothers some food (a care package) from back home (this is something that any international student, missionary, immigrant or soldier hopes to get in the post, food that mom makes!) ( parched grain = roasted beans - coffee?)
David at Elah 19-30

The soldiers are “fighting” in the valley, but there is no actual battle. I imagine lots of shouting and posturing (v20), but then fearful slinking away on behalf of the Israelites.

When David leaves he entrusts the care of his father’s sheep to someone else and goes on the task given to him by his father. We see some of his character, he makes sure there is covering and protection given to the sheep. This is a good sign for the future king of Israel. When God looks for a king over His people He is looking for a good shepherd.

While he is making the drop and talking with his brothers, Goliath comes and repeats his challenge, perhaps for the 81st time. The Israelites had heard them many times before, but “David heard him” for the first time. And it would be the last time that Goliath ever spoke those words.

The Israelites are thinking about national and personal terms, David is thinking about the honour of God.

David is portrayed here as a speaking independently thinking young man. In the previous chapters he is silent and does what he is told, now we see his character shine through his actions and words.

As he talks about it he provokes the ire of Eliab. He presumes to know what is inside of David’s heart but he is very wrong. This is a theme of the book, and this chapter. We think we can look at outward appearances and know the whole story, but we don’t. (either on the battlefield or in private conversation) God looks at the heart.

, David’s motives were not his own wealth and honour, but the wish to honour God and to remove disgrace from Israel.

David and Saul 31-40

He gets an audience with the king. No one else is willing to fight Goliath so word is quickly passed up the ranks. Does Saul recognise him? They have spent time together before, but it is usually when Saul is in the grips of emotional and spiritual turmoil, so its possible that he doesn’t make the connection.

Saul gives David’s inexperience and age as a reason why he couldn’t fight Goliath, David points out that he is experienced in going up against insurmountable odds and winning.

Saul is shown to put his faith in military experience and in strong armour, so that his attitude is really not that different than that of Goliath.

David looks back at the past and has confidence for the future, and 37 shows that this is not just youthful self confidence, this is is God confidence.
The God who has done this in the past will surely help me in the future. These are great things to consider in the month of January. God has done great things in 2013 and we can hope for more of the same in the coming year.

He is saving people in this city, and He is using our church to do it.
He is maturing Christians in this city and He is using our church to do it.
I believe 2013 was the most fruitful year that I have ever been a part of and I have anticipation for the coming year!

Stop in 37
Representative combat is not only some obscure battle technique of ancient philistines and greco-roman world. This is also the way that God thinks. He has organised the world in such a way that there is headship and leadership and solidarity between leaders and their followers. Adam is created and is made the head of the human race. We are all represented in him (biologically) and by him (spiritually). He went head to head with a scaly serpent and he lost. And his loss applied to all of his descendents, we have been serving the serpent ever since.

Sin and death have reigned over us.

What we see here in this chapter is a foreshadow of another battle. A foreign and unwelcome incursion has taken place. The people of God are cowering and fearful. We are taunted and mocked, the threat of death and shame and disgrace hang over us. But someone volunteers to come and do battle with our great foe for us.

The army watched as David stepped into the valley of the shadow of death. They knew that if he defeated goliath, they all had victory, if he lost, they all lost. We live in the good news of Jesus’ triumph, although we didn’t do anything to contribute towards it ourselves.
The incarnation is good news that its not about what you have to do its about what Jesus has done for you. He fought Satan sin and death for us. We are victorious because of Him. We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.” (Hebrews 2:14–15, ESV)