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HOME GROUP & DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL “Plant & Grow” – Ilse Werle & Hloni Lepele – 20.6.2021

Sermon link: #Soundcloud <https://soundcloud.com/gracepointsa/plant-grow-by-hloni-lepele>

Scripture

1 Samuel 17:19-25 and 32-46

Mark 4:35-42

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God’s word to you.

Observation

1 Samuel 17:19-25, 32-46

It was accepted practice that opposing armies would choose a champion to fight on their behalf to settle a conflict. People believed that such individuals represented their gods who actually fought the battle, so only one champion was necessary. David and Goliath called on their own gods. The power and invincibility of God Himself is emphasised by the fact that David was an immature, inexperienced boy, whilst Goliath

was an experienced warrior who trusted his own strength and skill. David, in spite of his apparent weakness, called on God Almighty and trusted in His strength rather than his own.

David had left his home unaware of what lay ahead. He was merely fulfilling his father’s request so he carried no weapon of war. He only had his sling and his faith. His brothers were scornful of his ability to do anything, but he was not deterred and he left them to speak to others. As he spoke to Saul the men began to gather around him, hoping that here, at last, was someone who could solve their problem. God had opened the door for David to go to Saul, not as a young shepherd but as a bold warrior, wearing the armour of God. The soldiers and Saul had forgotten they served Almighty God. But David had not. He told his story to Saul. He reminded them that Goliath was an uncircumcised Philistine (v36) whilst they were God’s chosen people. Goliath had challenged the living God to the fight! Now David had no doubt that God Himself would fight this battle to defend



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His name. David assured Saul and those around him that his own experience as a shepherd gave him confidence that God was faithful.

His speech inspired everyone. Saul was eager to help but David refused his offer of the king's own armour. David wanted to use the equipment that he had been trained to use. So he took his staff and his sling and five smooth stones into battle with him. The sling would have been well worn as David had used it often to protect his flock. No matter what Goliath flung at him in the way of insults, David knew the battle belonged to God and he came against the giant in the name of the Lord God Almighty, certain that the victory was His. And so it proved.

Mark 4:35-42

The Sea of Galilee is susceptible to sudden storms as a result of the cool air from the Mediterranean being drawn through the mountain passes and colliding with the warm, humid air over the lake.

This storm was strong. Even the disciples, experienced fishermen though they were, were afraid. Fear, panic and anger are natural reactions to the storms people face in life. They look for someone to blame, and in this case it was Jesus, who was sleeping in the bottom of the boat.

Jesus spoke to the storm as He would to an irritating person. 'Be quiet! Be still!' Just as Jesus had told the demon to leave the possessed man in Mark 1:25, and the demon had obeyed instantly, so the storm obeyed Jesus' command. This was not a single event but one that would be repeated down the ages. Jesus' lesson was clear. The disciples' fear had obscured their faith. Even though the danger was real, the disciples and those who follow Jesus can be at peace when He is with them in the storms of life. Whatever those storms are, the peace of Jesus is available to all who call on His name.

Icebreaker:

Briefly share a time when you have seen a young person show courage and offer hope beyond their years. (This may be an historical event or one you have witnessed personally).

What happened as a result?

Application

- At this point in time would you describe yourself as fearful or hopeful? What influences this description?
- What do you fear most?
- What do you hope for most?
- How has your experience in life built or shattered your hope? Do you think you were more hope-filled in your younger years than you are now? Why?
- Look back over the last year. Has the level of your courage weakened or strengthened during this time? Why do you say this?
- How has the strength (or weakness) of your courage affected the strength of your hope?
- What role does your faith in God play in your responses to the previous questions?

•David had five smooth stones and his sling in his hand to defeat Goliath in God's name. What do you have in your hand that you use every day? (A pen, a spatula, a golf club, chalk, a stethoscope etc.) How can you use this to serve God?

•How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Lord God, whatever our age, in this time of pandemic and fear, grant us your audacious hope that enables us to face and defeat our giants. Show us how we can use what we have in our hands to serve you and offer hope to others.

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

Service

Consider what you have in your hand. Ask God to show you how you can use it with audacious courage to serve Him this week. Be prepared to share your story with others as a testimony of God's faithfulness in the coming days.

Bibliography

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