

Series: Great Questions – week 6

CDOBC – beginning on 10/18/09

Title: “Should We Defend God”

1 Samuel 17:26 ~ November 22, 2009

OBJECTIVE: To encourage believers to defend God – His name – His reputation – when He is attacked or ridiculed.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Christmas Decorations – see insert – registered at WalMart & Target under Sheryl Beyer’s name
- Advent Readers needed – first advent reading is Sunday, November 29th
- Thanksgiving Eve Service – 6:30 p.m. – pie fellowship after service
- Lou and Linda Kellers last day with us – moving to Eugene, Oregon

Opening Prayer

How do you react when someone says something that discredits God – that criticizes or misrepresents God – His nature or His work throughout history? In your soul – in your gut – do you start getting angry and feel like defending God?

Since God is sovereign, omnipotent (all-powerful), the Creator of all things, when He is attacked or ridiculed, does He need us to defend Him? Does God need us to stand up and defend His name and His honor? Should we defend God? Or, given the polarity of our society – should we avoid any and all conflict and argumentation in the public square? **Answer: Yes & No.**

No: He can take care of Himself, the attacks of human skeptics do not harm Him - immobilize Him – or limit His providence in any way.

Yes: We are called to stand up and defend His name. We see this all throughout Scripture – in our passage today, we’ll see David stand up and defend the name of God against Goliath and the Philistine army. Jesus is also a great example of this as He corrected the false religious views of the day in His Sermon on the Mount.

To give a defense for God / Christian faith is called Apologetics – from “*apologia*” in the GK – meaning to make a defense of – to give a speech in defense

We are commanded in Scripture to “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” **1 Peter 3:15**

Paul said of himself that, “...I am put here for the defense of the gospel.” **Philippians 1:16**

St. Augustine wrote “City of God” to defend Christians – and ultimately to defend God against the accusations of the pagans that blamed the Christian’s God for the fall of Rome in 410 A.D. Throughout history, many of the Church councils were necessary to defend the truth of God’s Word from attack.

Countless books today are in the bookstores – both Christian and secular – that defend God and a belief in the Christian faith.

David, in 1 Samuel 17, asks two questions that refer to defending God’s name and His reputation.

Today, I want us to consider this topic – Should we defend God – Does God call us to defend Him / His truth – and I want us to look at the most well-known event in David’s life as our text today.

Turn to 1 Samuel 17

Context: Once again, the Philistines have invaded Israel and a war has begun.

Saul is King of Israel – the nation made him king primarily

because they wanted someone to lead them in battle (1 Sam. 8:20)

Goliath – the Philistine champion – over nine feet tall – about 400 pound – has the best weaponry of the day – is challenging Israel.

The world attacks and ridicules God. vs. 1-11

Read vs. 8-11; 21-24

Goliath had ridiculed and insulted Israel and their God for 40 days and 40 nights (vs. 16).

In similar ways, God is ridiculed in our world today, and there are numerous “fronts” or numerous battle lines where the fight is taking place.

Intellectual assaults: Recent books promoting atheism by Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris

(**Recommended books:** Signature in the Cell, by Stephen C. Meyer; The Language of God, by Francis S. Collins; Evidence That Demands A Verdict, by Josh McDowell; A Case For Faith & A Case for Christ, by Lee Strobel; When Critics Ask, When Skeptics Ask, by Norm Geisler)

Theological assaults: Many of these have come from within the church – or from those who claim to be a part of the church. Assaults on the person, character, and nature of God are rampant and thriving not only in the culture at large, but in certain religious traditions.

Physical assaults: Thousands of Christians are killed year around the world – simply because of their faith in Christ.

(See Voice of the Martyrs – persecution.com / persecution.org)

Family assaults: Satan is attacking by trying to degrade, redefine, and destroy the family. God created the family to be the foundation of society – the primary place where His truth is taught and love is shared. Fifty years ago, nobody would have believed that a growing segment of popular culture would believe that fathers are unimportant or unnecessary. This is a direct attack on God’s design – and on God Himself!

Back to our passage – 1 Sam. 17 – David’s father, Jesse, sends him on the 15 mile journey to visit his brothers in the army in the Valley of Elah – and to bring them a care package from home – and David arrives at the moment the armies are lining up on opposite sides of the valley.

See life from a divine perspective. vs. 26

Read vs. 26

It's so easy to get caught up in what we can see – in the physical realities of our life – that we can easily forget the spiritual realities that are at work also.

The rest of the army viewed the situation exclusively as a military dilemma. They looked with human eyes and human wisdom thinking only of their human strength and human rewards that the king would offer to the one who would kill Goliath. They repeated among themselves the physical rewards that would be given to the man who would kill Goliath. But David saw Goliath with different eyes. David understood that this was a spiritual battle – a battle for the name of God – more than it was a physical battle. He wasn't ignorant of the physical realities – he even asked “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel?” But David didn't stop there. When David referred to Goliath as “...this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” he is putting the battle in a spiritual context. For David, the big issue was God – His name and His reputation before the nations! David realized that Goliath was trashing Israel – and Israel's God – and David would not allow that to continue (vs. 45).

Are you aware of what is happening in our world? Do you realize how God is being marginalized and distorted?

Caution!!! We must be careful how we respond in the public square – we must not respond out of anger, but respond with the truth – knowing that most will scoff at the truth – but God's truth will penetrate the heart and mind of some who hear it.

Will you stand up and defend God? vs. 27-32

Read vs. 27-32

David begins to ask questions that it seems nobody else had been asking. Instead of cowering in fear and trembling, David seems to be upset and angered by what Goliath has said! I'm not sure what angered David more...Goliath's words – or the Israelite soldier's reaction to them! Word gets back to Saul of David's words, and he summons David to his tent.

Summarize vs. 32-41

Know that when you stand up and defend God, you will be opposed. Sadly, much of the opposition you may face will not be from the “enemy” – but from those closest to you. David was opposed by his brothers – and then by his own king! This shouldn't surprise us – after all, the Apostle Paul tells us that the message of Christ crucified is “...a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles” (1 Cor. 1:23)

Application

Trust God, not *technology*.

The Philistines had the most advanced technology of the day – iron. They had a military superiority, and Israel was outmatched humanly speaking. But David didn't let that stop him – he understood the weaponry that Goliath had – the armor Goliath had – and David knew that he was using old technology. David didn't say, “*Well, since I don't have the latest and greatest weapons, I better not get involved.*” He forged ahead – using what he had to the best of his ability – and reminded himself that it was God who would give the victory – it was God who would get the glory.

God uses the weak – so He gets the glory!

Joshua 4:24

“He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God.”

Humanly speaking, the odds were stacked against Israel – now way could they defeat Jericho and the fortifications of that great city. But God was on Israel’s side – and no fortifications can keep God from victory!

2 Kings 19:19 – When Hezekiah faced impossible odds as he faced the Assyrian army:

“Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O LORD, are God.”

Be willing to stand...alone if necessary.

David stood alone that day. Nobody walked out onto the battlefield with him. But, David knew that God was with Him – and for David, that was enough.

Close in prayer