

12<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary **1 Sam 17:1a, 4-11, 19-23, 32-49** 2 Cor 6:1-13 Mk 4:35-41 **Scott MALCOLM**

What is the Goliath in your life? The giant blocking your path? What intimidates you? Immobilizes you? Makes your mouth run dry or your blood go cold? What dismay's and frightens you?

In one of the greatest television stories of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a young woman stands at the epee centre of the survival of her people. Winter has come and the dead are on the move. A final battle is to be waged at a place called Winterfell, the Night King and his millions of raised dead are primed to overrun the Kingdoms of men and woman.

The only hope for these Kingdoms is the skill, bravery and sheer belief of a young woman, Arya Stark, whose job it is to kill the Night King. The story rolls on, people fall, heroes die, and the Night King keeps coming. Finally in the sacred ground of the Weirwood Tree, evil comes for human memory.

Suddenly and without warning a young woman is in the air, knife at the ready ... the Night King catches her by the throat and her knife hand ... time stands briefly still ... the knife drops from one hand to be caught by the other, Arya strikes, and the Night King and all his soldier's shatter.

The Kingdoms are saved.

Goliath, the Night King. What is it that frightens and dismay's us? Makes our blood run cold and mouth go dry. What immobilises us? Intimidates us? What are the giants blocking our path?

The story of David is a literally masterpiece, no matter from when it is observed. It has everything that makes for spectacular entertainment, just like Arya Stark and Game of Thrones. But the story of David is embedded with another dimension, another plot line, in fact another major character altogether. God.

As similar as the stories of Arya Stark and David are, marvellous stories of rescue and deliverance, ... in one ... salvation only ever rests in one place. In the story of David, it is always and only God, who is front and centre.

This story is only about God. It's not really about David, and certainly not about Goliath. If anything, he is the underdog. Who in their right mind goes out to fight with God?

Goliath is a huge man, empowered by the armour he wears, he intimidates, immobilises, terrifies and dismays Israel. He bullies them so badly; they forget who they are. More importantly they forget whose they are.

In the face of this bully, Israel have allowed God to become irrelevant.

That is, until the eighth son of a backwoods farmer, a young, redheaded pretty boy, whose only wartime job to date has been that of uber driver, delivering food to his brothers at the front. David unlike his brothers, all of the thousands of Israel's soldiers and even Israel's King Saul, has not forgotten whose he is. He belongs to the "living God."

When he hears Goliath's boasting, he speaks out of that belonging. Enough he says. His brothers say no. The King says no. But David is convinced that the God whose name is Yahweh, the God whom David belongs too, is not having any of it.

Yahweh has delivered me before David says, Yahweh will deliver me again.

Out come the weapons of war; the helmet, the breastplate, the huge sword, until David looks like a smaller version of Goliath, but it's not armour, shields or swords that win Yahweh's battles, so David leaves the metal behind ... off he goes, simply in himself, simply in God, with a small stick, 5 smooth stones, and his sling shot ....

As we pause to think about this, we should spare a thought for Goliath, he doesn't have a hope. It is Yahweh, the living God, he faces.

Listen to the text, "Goliath started walking towards David again, and David, ran quickly towards the Philistine battle line to fight him. He put his hand into his bag and took out a stone, which he slung at Goliath. It hit him on the forehead, and broke his skull, Goliath fell face downwards on the ground. David ran to him, stood over him, took Goliath's sword out of his sheath, and cut off his head and killed him!" ...

Goliath, the Night King. What is it that frightens and dismay's us? Makes our blood run cold and mouth go dry. What immobilises us? Intimidates us? What are the giants blocking our path?

Whatever they may be, however big they seem, however big they are ... let's not allow them to make God irrelevant. Let's remember that our stories are infused with another dimension, shot through with another plot line, embedded with another character altogether. God ... in Jesus the Christ.

Let's not be bullied into forgetting who we are, whose we are ... and may we constantly remember, ... that, God, ... is always present.

Amen.