

The Eye Of The Beholder

On Sunday we continued our sermon series called, “If We Knew Now What They Knew Then – 7 Steps To Spiritual Power.” Our key learning point this week was drawn from the words of Jesus and the example of David in his battle with Goliath.

1. Warm up question: Based on past experience doing battle with lions and bears, David had enormous confidence in his ability (with God’s help) to do battle with the giant Goliath. Tell us something in your life that you’re confident you can do really well, with God’s help.
2. Jeff began with a story about an old man who was asked to describe his town by two different people who were thinking of moving there. Each time, the old man asked the newcomer first to describe the town from which he/she was moving. One of the newcomers described his town as a terrible place; the other described her town as a great place. The old man told each newcomer that they would find his town to be exactly like their old town – because, the old man said, “No matter where you move, you take your attitude with you and that’s what makes a place wonderful or terrible. Joy ain’t something you find; it’s something you make.”

Do you agree or disagree with what the old man said? Do you think it also applies to our workplace? Our relationships? Our extended families?

3. Read Matthew 6:22-23. Jeff paraphrased this enigmatic statement of Jesus as follows: “If the eyes of your soul tend to look at circumstances and see hope and possibilities, your life will be full of light. But if the eyes of your soul tend to look at circumstances and see gloom and doom, your life will be full of thick darkness.”
 - a. When/where in your life have you experienced this principle at work, i.e., a time with someone’s perspective and attitude made all the difference in how he/she experienced something (for better or worse)?
 - b. What’s your natural tendency? Would those who know you best say that you tend to see situations from a perspective of light, or gloom, or a mixture of the two?
 - c. Jonas Salk attempted 200 unsuccessful vaccines for polio before he came up with the one that worked. Someone once asked, “How did it feel to fail 200 times?” Salk replied, “I never failed at anything. . . . I simply discovered 200 ways not to make a vaccine for polio.” This is what some people call “failing forward.” Tell us about a “failure” in your life where you “failed forward” because of what you gained or learned from a failure.
4. The words and ideas we choose to frame and interpret a situation are critical to shaping how we experience the situation and the possibilities (good or bad) that arise out of that situation. This is our key learning point this week. **Simply put: Attitude**

often determines outcome. The story of David and Goliath provides a great example of this principle at work.

- a. Read I Samuel 17:1-11. Imagine yourself as an Israelite soldier, standing there seeing and hearing Goliath issue his challenge. What thoughts and emotions might have run through you in that moment?
 - b. Now read verses 12-37. What thoughts and emotions seemed to have run through David when he reached the front lines and saw what was happening with Goliath?
 - c. David's confidence seemed to come from his past experience with God giving him the strength to defeat lions and bears against all odds. Tell us about an experience in your life that really grew your faith and confidence in the presence of God in your life.
 - d. When Saul said to David, "Go, and may the Lord be with you," what do you think Saul was thinking?
 - e. Read verses 38-40. What practical lesson can we learn from these verses?
 - f. Read verses 41-51. In what ways do you think David's "mental framing" of this situation affected the outcome?
5. Jeff suggested four steps for seeing a situation through the eyes of faith.
- **Step 1: Dare to question.** Don't just accept conventional perceptions of a situation. Question what it might look like to see it through eyes of faith.
 - **Step 2: Consult with God.** Through prayer, test your questions and perceptions about how God might want you to see the situation.
 - **Step 3: Do your part to partner with God; ask boldly, act boldly.**
 - **Step 4: Be open to failure and to seeing failure itself as an opportunity.**

Which of these steps comes easiest for you? Which do you find most difficult?

6. What situation in your life right now most needs to be "reframed" through the eyes of faith? What questions might you dare to ask to start the reframing process? What bold actions might God be calling you to take?

Prayer Reminder: Last week we sent out mailers to homes in the neighborhoods around the church telling people about our church and inviting those who feel like we might be a good fit for them. Please pray that those who need us will find us!