

Day 2: Monday

Taking On the Giants

1 Samuel 17:1-50; Romans 15:1-6

 *Key Verse:* For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. Romans 15:4

In the inspiring story of David and Goliath (see 1 Samuel 17:1-50), the little guy wins. He beats the giant. How about us?

I took on a giant. The giant's name was cancer, and it came to stay with me.

The surgery was supposed to have been routine. Afterward, the doctor came in muttering something about "quite a malignancy." At that moment, the giant came and sat down next to me. And my life changed.

At any waking moment, I watched the giant. It seemed to turn my future in its fingers and pick at every thread of joy or hope, every dream, everything I cherished. And there was nothing I could do or say, nothing I could invent or imagine to take all of that back again.

In my dark dreams I shouted at the giant, "Get away from me! Go sit with someone else. Breathe your deadly breath on some other person more deserving of your visit. How can you be here? Who let you in here? Who sent you? Did God send you? Did God send you to bring me down?"

And even in my dreams, the giant sat silently and smiled at me.

The pit of my pain and self-pity grew deeper and darker. I could no longer climb the sides of the pit and see the future. The shackles of my own fear and anger froze me. Buried in that pit, I wept for myself and for my dreams and for what might have been.

And still the giant sat silently and smiled at me.

But there in the deepest place in the pit—there, somehow from the echoes of my memory, these words came to me: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

And I had hope again.

I live outside the pit now, but not far outside. I'm always on the edge, wondering and waiting. But there's a difference. Now God has placed the cross of Jesus Christ between me and the giant.

And in that promise of the cross, from the edge of the pit of my own despair, I stare back at the giant and smile.

Questions to Ponder

- When have you been visited by a giant? What was the giant's name?
- How do God's Word and the Spirit's power give you hope in the face of giants?

Prayer

Lord, give us not only courage to face the future, but the strength and faith to stand firmly in your promises and to live in and share real hope. Amen.