Dear Open Door Family,

The burglary of our building last Sunday took me completely by surprise. I was very troubled as I pulled up to church and saw a small group waiting outside for the Police to clear the building. I became even MORE troubled as I walked with the Police officers into every room trying to see what had been stolen or damaged. We had planned a very unique service for that day - special baptism, ordination service, Mexico team testimonies and yet this had changed everything. OR had it? The question was did it catch God by surprise? The answer of course is NO. So as I sat there Sunday morning and we were getting ready to start the service... I was trying desperately to stop asking questions and simply WORSHIP God. After all NOTHING had changed. God was STILL God - God would still KEEP His Promises. As I have been privileged to be at the Moody Bible Instituted Pastors Conference this week I have had the chance to Re-Focus. Yes, I have been on the phone with Janet at the office and the insurance company - but my heart, and soul, and mind have been challenged to FOCUS on God who is never caught by Surprise. Here are some thoughts that may encourage you as they did me in light of last Sunday's events.

1 Samuel 17:8, 10-11 *(NLT) Goliath stood and shouted a TAUNT across to the Israelites. ...I DEFY the armies of Israel today! Send me a man who will fight me!" When Saul and the Israelites heard this,* ***they were TERRIFIED and deeply shaken****.*

Goliath, an enemy of YAHWEH the promise making and promise keeping God of Israel, was taunting the Israelites. Challenging them to fight and disrespecting their God. The response of King Saul and Israelites - of course they focused on God and sought His strength and help. WRONG - they were terrified and did NOTHING. For forty days the taunting and disrespecting of God and Israel went on and neither the king nor any of his men CALLED out to God.

David arrives with a NEW perspective - he was NOT seeing the giant he was seeing the POWER of Yahweh. God had protected him in the past and David expected God to protect him in the FUTURE.

1 Samuel 17:37 *(NLT) The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear* ***WILL RESCUE ME from this Philistine!...***

David heads out to FACE Goliath TRUSTING in God's Power...

1 Samuel 17:41-47 *(NLT) Goliath walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him, sneering in contempt... Am I a dog, he roared at David, that you come at me with a stick? And he cursed David by the names of his gods. ...David replied to the Philistine, You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of Heaven's Armies - the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.* ***Today the LORD will conquer you...*** *and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and* ***the whole world WILL KNOW that there is a God in Israel****! And everyone assembled here WILL KNOW that* ***the LORD rescues his people*****, but not with sword and spear**. This is the LORD's battle, and He will give you to us!"

Goliath with all his power, strength, and sneering contempt was no match for David, a stone, and the God of Israel. Saul and his soldiers saw a GIANT - David saw GOD. Saul and the armies of Israel had been paralyzed by FEAR of men - David was full of the FEAR of the Lord and as such could go and face Goliath and be victorious. WHY? The battle was the Lord's - He was in control of every part of it including the trajectory of one stone slung by a shepherd. What an amazing awe-inspiring God we have. He is Worthy of ALL of our worship, adoration, praise and thanksgiving. Even in midst of troubled times - Our God is KING - He is Sovereign over all things and we can REST completely and totally in HIS promises.

PRAYER: Lord God, thank You that NOTHING - is beyond Your comprehension - nothing is beyond Your control. Thank You that not one thing, not one word, not a single action or attitude ever catches you by surprise. Lord, I want to submit to You - Your plan and I long to see things around me always with Your Promises in view.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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