

President Gordon B. Hinckley

To the boys: story of David

I appreciate the large number of boys who make so great an effort to come to these meetings. It is not easy for many of them. We are grateful to you. I should like to say some things particularly to you, and I do so by recounting a portion of a story with which you are already familiar. It is the story of David, the son of Jesse.

As you will recall, the army of Israel under the leadership of King Saul was engaged in a deadly war with the army of the Philistines. One army was poised on one hill, the other on an opposite hill, with a valley in between. Now, the Philistines had among their men a great giant of a man named Goliath of Gath. His height was six cubits and a span. If I have figured correctly, that would put him somewhere in the neighborhood of nine feet tall. What a basketball center he might have made!

Clad in his armor, he came down to the valley and called out to the army of Israel:

"Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

"If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. . . .

"I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together" (1 Samuel 17:8-10).

When Saul and the army of Israel looked at this giant and heard his chilling challenge, they were frightened because they had no one of their own of such stature.

Now, while all of this was going on, Jesse, David's father, asked his young son to take some food to his three brothers in the army. When he arrived at the battleground, Goliath came out again, issuing the same challenge, which David heard. There was fear throughout the army of Israel.

David, who was no more than a boy, said to the king, (and I paraphrase his language): "King, why are you so afraid of this giant? I will go and fight him."

Saul replied, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he [is] a man of war [trained] from his youth" (1 Samuel 17:33).

David armed with faith

David then persuaded Saul to let him try. He told the king of how he had fought with a lion and a bear to save his father's sheep and concluded by saying that the Lord would deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine. Saul, possibly thinking that one more life lost would not be serious among the great losses they had already sustained, said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with thee" (1 Samuel 17:37).

Saul then placed armor on David until the boy could scarcely walk. David said unto the king, "I cannot wear this," and he took the armor off.

He then "took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had . . . and his sling was in his hand" (1 Samuel 17:40).

This stripling of a boy, with only a slingshot and five stones and without any armor other than the armor of faith, went down into the valley to face Goliath.

Goliath armed with sword, spear, shield

"And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

"And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?"

And Goliath swore at David, saying, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field."

Then David spoke these great words:

"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

"This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" (adapted from 1 Samuel 17:42-46).

That was brave talk for a boy who stood against a nine-foot giant.

In anger Goliath came at him. Then David, running toward the giant, "put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth" (1 Samuel 17:49).

Evil giants to overpower in our lives

You know the rest of that story. I would like to bring it down into your own lives. There are Goliaths all around you, hulking giants with evil intent to destroy you. These are not nine-foot-tall men, but they are men and institutions that control attractive but evil things that may challenge and weaken and destroy you. Included in these are beer and other liquors and tobacco. Those who market these products would like to enslave you into their use. There are drugs of various kinds which, I am told, are relatively easy to obtain in many high schools. For those who peddle them, this is a multimillion-dollar industry, a giant web of evil. There is pornography, seductive and interesting and inviting. It

has become a giant industry, producing magazines, films, and other materials designed to take your money and lead you toward activities that would destroy you.

The giants who are behind these efforts are formidable and skillful. They have gained vast experience in the war they are carrying on. They would like to ensnare you.

It is almost impossible to entirely avoid exposure to their products. You see these materials on all sides. But you need not fear if you have the slingshot of truth in your hands. You have been counseled and taught and advised. You have the stones of virtue and honor and integrity to use against these enemies who would like to conquer you. Insofar as you are concerned, you can hit them "between the eyes," to use a figurative expression. You can triumph over them by disciplining yourselves to avoid them. You can say to the whole lot of them as David said to Goliath, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied."

Name temptation Goliath and do as David did

Victory will be yours. There is not a boy within the sound of my voice who needs to succumb to any of these forces. You hold the priesthood of God. You are a son of God. You have His power within you to sustain you. You have the right to ministering angels about you to protect you. Do not let Goliath frighten you. Stand your ground and hold your place, and you will be triumphant. As the years pass, you will look back with satisfaction upon the battles you have won in your individual lives.

When temptation comes your way, name that boastful, deceitful giant "Goliath!" and do with him as David did to the Philistine of Gath. God bless each of you, I humbly pray.

To older brethren: tales of unhappy people

Now for a few minutes I would like to go to another subject, speaking particularly to you older brethren.

I have a friend who built a beautiful home and furnished it with the very best of carpets, furniture, appliances, and all that money can buy. Within its walls he kept his fine automobiles and his expensive jewelry. Then, fearful of intruders who might enter and rob him, he had installed expensive dead-bolt locks so that he had to use a key to get out as well as to get in. He put bars on the windows and doors, and was like a prisoner looking out of his own home, as one might do out of a jail. He installed costly electronic surveillance devices to turn on lights and set off sirens should any unwelcome individual enter. He landscaped largely without trees or shrubbery so there would be no place for a thief to hide. And he smugly said to himself, "Now I am secure."

But what he did not realize is that neither bars nor dead-bolts, neither lights nor sirens nor anything of the kind would have the slightest effect on intruders of another variety who could destroy the lives of his children, despoil the marriage which had been the source of his happiness over many years, bind him with cords of meanness and bitterness and hate toward those he had once loved, and lock him in a dungeon cell of despair and misery.

Brethren, I spend much time listening to the tales of unhappy people. As a percentage of the entire membership of the Church, they constitute a relatively small number. But there are too many, and every case is a tragedy. With few exceptions, it would appear that the husband and the father is the chief offender, on whom the intruders of sin and selfishness take their greatest toll.

Guard homes against insidious intruders

Brethren, I know it is an old subject, and one that has been dealt with much. But I repeat it again: *Guard your homes*. How foolish it seems to install bars and bolts and electronic devices against thieves and molesters while more insidious intruders come in as invited guests.

I say to you what I said to the boys—avoid pornography as you would a plague. I recall an assignment some years back to restore the blessings of a man who had been excommunicated from the Church because of his sin. He came to my office with his wife. I spoke with them individually. I asked him how it all began. He held a responsible position in the Church. He was likewise a professional man with high responsibility in the community.

His trouble began, he said, when he picked up a pornographic magazine to read on a plane. It intrigued him. It appealed to him. He found himself buying more of these things. Then he sought out movies which titillated him and excited him. Knowing that his wife would be a party to none of this, he went alone. He found occasion to leave town and go to other cities where he could more easily indulge his desires. He then found excuses to stay late at his office and asked his secretary to stay with him. One thing led to another until he succumbed.

With tears rolling down his cheeks, he sat across the desk from me and cursed the day he had read that first magazine. He spoke of his love for the wife who had forgiven him and remained true to him. He spoke of his love for his children, who had been shamed and embarrassed by his actions. He told of the hell through which he had walked for some four years from the time of his excommunication. He spoke of his love for the Church and of his desire to again enjoy its full blessings.

In the presence of his wife, I placed my hands upon his head and in

the authority of the holy priesthood restored his priesthood, his temple endowment, his temple sealing, and all other blessings which he had formerly held. This great, strong man sobbed like a baby under my hands while his wife, holding her hand in his, wept like a child.

At the conclusion of that blessing, they embraced one another and he asked her to forgive him. She said she had forgiven him, and that she loved him and always would.

They were happy when they left, happier than they had been in years. And I was happy, too. But I thought of the terrible price he had paid and of the price he had exacted of his family through his foolishness and transgression.

Guard against unhappy ending

Unfortunately, there is not always that kind of happy ending. In many cases there is divorce with bitterness and rancor. What was once love has turned to hate. Children's lives are blighted. Hopes become as ashes. So

often there is only misery and loneliness and regret.

Brethren, keep your affections within your homes. Regard as your most precious possession in time or eternity she with whom you joined hands over the altar in the House of the Lord and to whom you pledged your love and loyalty and affection for time and all eternity. Your companion, your children, and you yourself will then know and feel a security far greater than any that can be bought with hardware and gadgetry.

God bless you, my brethren, young and old, that the watch-care of the Lord may be over you, that you may stay close to Him and be deserving of His preserving hand, I humbly ask, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Jesus, My Savior True."

Elder Ronald E. Poelman gave the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the general conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 3, 1983. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley directing and John Longhurst at the organ.

Prior to the opening of the session, the Choir sang "Arise, O Glorious Zion" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We greet you this Easter morning as we with the Christian world at large celebrate the resurrection of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer. How appropriate that we of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are convened in our great annual world conference on this sacred Sabbath. This is the fourth session of the 153rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are present this morning in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square.

We also acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television and those who are seated in the