

September 2026 Bulletin

IPC HEBRON LOS ANGELES

Exists to Exalt, Edify, and Evangelize

Five Smooth Stones

By Pr. Baiju Mathew

The theme refers primarily to the biblical account in 1 Samuel 17, where the young shepherd boy David selects the 5 smooth stones from the stream before facing the giant Goliath.

1 Samuel 17:40: "Then David took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and with his sling in his hand approached Goliath."

What a difference perspective can make. Most of the onlookers saw only a giant. David, however, saw a mortal man defying the Almighty God. David knew he would not be alone when he faced Goliath. God would fight with him. David looked at his situation from God's point of view. Viewing impossible situations from God's point of view helps us put giant problems in perspective. Once we see clearly, we can fight more effectively.

For David, the challenge we can see here is not Goliath, criticism, and negative comments. But these could not stop him. He knew the importance of taking action. People may try to discourage you with negative thoughts and criticize you, but continue to do what you know is right. By doing what is right, you will be pleasing God.

We all know how the story ends. The young shepherd boy David defeats the seasoned warrior Goliath with a single strike and a stone. It is one of the most famous victories in history. We can learn a few massive lessons from this story: how ordinary people can defeat overwhelming obstacles.

Why 5 stones? Only 1 stone was needed to kill Goliath. David's choice reveals that we can face the overwhelming challenges, anxieties, and giants in our modern lives with practical preparations.

David rejects King Saul's heavy bronze armor because it does not fit him. True victory comes from your unique God-given gifts and not copying someone else's methods. David relied on his past experiences. When you feel overwhelmed by a new problem, take a second to look backward. Remember the last time you thought you would not survive a tough week, a bad breakup, or a stressful exam? God carried you through that. If God did it then, HE will do it now.

David trusted God for victory, but he still chose to select 5 smooth stones. David didn't just wait for a miracle; he prepared his sling. Having faith does not mean you sit on the couch and wait for God to do your homework, fix your relationships, or cure your anxiety. Faith works hand-in-hand with preparation. Read your Bible, seek godly advice, take care of your mental health, and practice your skills. God honors your preparation.

Spiritual faith does not eliminate the need for practical and thoughtful preparations. God uses your active participation and right choices.

Do not fight a giant on its own complex terms; rather, change the nature of the battle using simplicity. Stop trying to defeat the world using the world's messy tactics. If people are gossiping, you don't gossip louder. Fight back with truth, kindness, and quiet prayer.
In theological teaching, the 5 stones are frequently used as an allegory for specific spiritual virtues needed to conquer personal giants like fear, addiction, or doubt.
What are they? Faith, Trust, Courage, Obedience, and Glory.

Conclusion:
David did not fight Goliath to become famous. He did it so that the whole world would know there is a God. His purpose was not for his self-glory but for the Glory of God and the safety of his community. Carry the stone of Purpose: serving others, loving your neighbour, and honoring God.

Reflection:
The next time you feel small, ill-equipped, defeated, or terrified of the future, stop rushing, take a deep breath, gather your stones. God does not need you to be a giant to defeat a giant. HE just needs you to pick up your sling and trust HIM with the shot.

Five Smooth Stones

By John Cherian

Five Smooth Stones

The passage associated with this theme is pretty familiar. The five smooth stones David picks up can be used to show the five parts of the story found in 1 Samuel 17. These five parts can help us understand how God uses ordinary people like us to do the extraordinary.

1. God sent David

Jesse, the father of David, told him to take food to his brothers and bring back news of how the battle was going (1 Samuel 17:17-18). God used Jesse to send David to where David was supposed to be so that he could be used by God. Why did God choose David? David was anointed to be king over Israel. 1 Samuel 16:7 says, "... For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."God chose David because of his heart.

2. God showed David

Goliath came out and challenged Israel twice a day. What were the chances that David came at the right moment and heard Goliath? This was God's doing. God showed David what He was going to use him to do. Immediately, David started saying that he would go up and fight Goliath. Word of this came to Saul, and since David was the only person who was brave enough and he had killed a bear and a lion, Saul chose him to fight.

3. David prepared to be used by God

Saul tried to prepare David with armor, but David couldn't walk in it and took it off. David instead took his staff and five smooth stones from a stream nearby. David was preparing himself to be used by God. This may look like he was naive, but God can do a lot with a little. David was a teenager going with a staff, a sling, five stones, and no armor. Goliath, about 9 feet 9 inches tall, had a bronze helmet, a coat of mail weighing about 125 pounds, bronze armor on his legs, a bronze javelin, and a spear (the spearhead alone weighing about 13-17 pounds). Goliath had the greater worldly advantage, but God is greater than the world.

4. David showed his faith in God

David had faith that God would keep his covenant with the Israelites. Goliath cursed David and was offended because of David's appearance. He was young, had no armor, etc., but remember, God didn't anoint David because of his appearance. He anointed him because He knew that David would allow himself to be used by God, because of his faith in God,

and because he gave God the glory. 1 Samuel 17:45-47 says, "45 Then David said to the Philistine, 'You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands.'"

5. God used David

Goliath started coming toward David, so David started running toward Goliath. He slung a stone, and it hit Goliath's forehead. Goliath fell, and David took Goliath's sword and killed him. One smooth stone from a river probably shouldn't have been enough to kill or make the giant unconscious, but God works in unimaginable ways.

These five parts of the passage are also how God uses us. He sends you to the place He wants you at the time He wants you there. Then, He shows you His will and what He wants to use you for. You need to prepare yourself to be used by God through prayer and meditation, and maybe you need to get something like David got the five smooth stones. You also need to profess your faith in the One and only Living God. Then, God will use you. No matter what faults you have, God's strength is perfect in weakness. David was a humble and lowly shepherd, the youngest among his brothers, but look how God used him. When God gives you an opportunity to be used by Him, always take it.

Take the Theme Home

Week 1: Trusting God Before the Battle

Scripture Reading: Psalm 27

David expresses confidence in God even while facing fear, danger, and opposition. His courage does not come from pretending that trouble is absent, but from trusting that God is his light, salvation, and stronghold. Before David faced Goliath, he had already learned to depend on God in difficult circumstances.

Reflect:
- What fears or challenges are you bringing before God right now?
- How does trusting God change the way you respond to uncertainty?
- When have you experienced God's faithfulness in a difficult situation?
- What can you do this week to seek God before responding to a challenge?

Week 2: Seeing the Giant from God's Perspective

Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 17

David saw Goliath as a challenge to God, not an unbeatable enemy. When we view problems from God's perspective, we remember that He is greater.

Reflect:
- What "giants" are you facing?
- How does God's perspective change how you see them?
- What can you learn from David's response?
- How can you remember that God is greater this week?

Week 3: Faith That's Prepares And Acts

Scripture Reading: James 2

James teaches that genuine faith is shown through action. David trusted God, but he also prepared by choosing five stones and using his sling.

Reflect:
- How is trusting God different from waiting passively?
- Where do you need to act on what you know is right?
- What gifts or opportunities can you use for God?
- How do prayer and preparation work together?
- What action can demonstrate your faith this week?

Week 4: Living for God's Glory

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 10

David fought so that others would know the God of Israel. Likewise, our lives should point others to God rather than bring attention to ourselves.

Reflect:
- What does it mean to live for God's glory?
- Where are you seeking recognition instead of honoring God?
- How can your daily actions point others to Christ?
- How can serving others glorify God?
- What opportunity can you use to serve God this week?

Stay Connected!

WEEKLY MEETINGS

DAY	TIME	LOCATION
Tues	7:00 - 8:00 PM	@ Zoom
Fri	10:00 - 11:00 AM	@ Zoom
Sat	7:00 - 8:30 PM	@ Church

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
SS Field Trip	September 19	Noah/s Ark
Drive-Thru Prayer	September 26	Church
Worship Night	September 26	TBD
Cottage Meeting	October 3	Bro. Yohannan George's House

PRAY FOR NATIONS

COUNTRY	CAPITAL	EST. POPULATION
Botswana	Gaborone	2,471,000
Brazil	Brasilia	222,968,000
Brunei	Bandar Seri Begawan	465,600
Bulgaria	Sofia	6,425,000
Burkina Faso	Ouagadougou	24,737,000