

“Resolute” Sermon for June 24, 2018
1 Samuel 17:4-11, 32-37, Mark 4:35-41

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The 464th song in the United Methodist Hymnal is an old Black African American Spiritual:

*I will trust in the Lord, I will trust in the Lord
I will trust in the Lord, till I die;
I will trust in the Lord, I will trust in the Lord,
I will trust in the Lord, till I die.*

The victims of American colonization and slavery used this code song to encourage each other as a way of facing the daily trauma that was their lives- and too a great extent continues for their descendants. They were resolute in their faith that there would be another day, another place, another opportunity for freedom from the savagery that was American slavery. They were resolute in faith.

To be resolute is to be determined, resolved, single-minded, firm, unswerving, unwavering, steadfast, unfaltering, unhesitating, persistent, indefatigable,

Unshakable and courageous. Ironically it literally means to unfasten, to untie, to loosen up. So, if we are resolute we are having a faith experience, a spiritual connection to God that frees up to live. We cease to be petulant, complaining and uptight about life, overwhelmed and hopeless, angry and afraid. David was resolute as the anointed boy-king of Israel. It was not his time, but because his faith in the Lord was certain, he could function as if he were king of Israel in place of Saul. King Saul had faltered in the face of Goliath's threats, but David had remained resolute. His brothers had bristled at his seeming arrogance, his persistent resolve. One would think that he as a prepubescent teen, would have been embarrassed. But the name, the honor of Israel and of God had been challenged, and his faith, not his size, not his ability, not his personal resources, was more than enough to face the challenge. How humiliated an average petulant and

adventuresome youth might have been, when King Saul's armor was too heavy for him, but this did not deter him. He removed the oversized armor. It was not his armor. Perhaps the apostle was reflecting on this when he wrote in Ephesians 6:11-13:

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

By rejecting Saul's armor, David demonstrated that he was resolute. We know the impetuous nature of youth, especially that of young men. St. Peter was well into his adult years before he spiritually grew to the place where he could abandon his narcissism and appreciate that it was not about his him, his eagerness, his ability, his size or his leadership

ability, that would be the determining factor in his life, but the full armor of God.

As the ancient Hebrew people who came to call themselves Israel were an amalgam of the cultural, religious and political realities of the North Afro-Asiatic Eastern Shores of the Mediterranean, needed spiritual power to forge their new reality, we, the church of Jesus Christ, need resolve if we would experience the necessary God's grace to achieve the heavenly reality in our word and in our lives. We must put on God's armor. We must equip with other than material and physical signs of might because what we face in life, and what we face as those who would dare declare God's kingdom come and will be done on earth as it is in heaven, is an unseen, supernatural entity, that not only possesses those who oppose us, but can even invade and sidetrack us as a church from the mission God has given us.

David, came as he was, trusting in God's power, God's spiritual strength, and God's presence and victory in the contest between himself and the strident forces so chaos, confusion, challenge and unbelief, and so will we. But we must be a people of the harp as David was. We must listen for the steady rhythms and resonance of the Spirit that lives in us and can empower us for the journey towards full human community. This is our resolve, because God is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.