

Sermon Worksheet: "Victory through Apparent Defeat" (1 Sam. 5:1–12)

July 9, 2023 (Evening)

Big Idea: The Lord gains victory through apparent defeat.

1. Head-to-Head Battle (1 Sam. 5:1–5)

2. Heavy-Handed Judgment (1 Sam. 5:6–12)

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the narrator fill out the fullness of Israel's apparent defeat in their battle against the Philistines in 1 Samuel 4? How does the narrator fill out the fullness of Yahweh's apparent defeat in his battle against Dagon in 1 Samuel 5:1–2? What happens to demonstrate the utter powerlessness of Dagon compared with the almighty power of Yahweh in 1 Samuel 5:3–5? What does that tell us about the true nature of victory and defeat?
2. How does YHWH turn his victory against Dagon into a rout against the Philistines? How far does the rout travel within Philistia? How many times do we read that the "hand" of YHWH is heavy against the Philistines (1 Sam. 5:6, 7, 9, 11)? How does the heaviness of YHWH's hand compare with the broken hands of Dagon? Why do you think YHWH inflicts such misery on the Philistines in this story?
3. In how many ways does this story foreshadow the battle between David and Goliath? Why is that connection between this story and the story of David and Goliath important? What does it teach us about the relationship between YHWH's victory and the victory of his people? What does it teach us about how YHWH secures victory for his people through apparent defeat?
4. Where do you feel defeated today? Where do your hands feel powerless? How does this story encourage you about the Lord's work in your life? What does the story of Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection encourage you about the Lord's power over sin, death, and the devil? How have you wrongly looked at your suffering? How have you wrongly looked at the Lord's power? What specifically does this story confront and correct?