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First Presbyterian Church  
July 31, 2016**

**Old Testament Lesson: 1 Samuel 17:31-37  
New Testament Lesson: Hebrews 11:29-34**

Several young families (and some of us who are just young-at-heart) gathered at Westminster Hall last evening for Movie Night. We watched *The LEGO Movie*, Warner Bro.'s animated film about an ordinary LEGO minifigure named Emmet who saves the world from a sticky situation.

And when I say a sticky situation, I mean all the LEGO pieces that make up this live-action world actually being glued together, so nothing ever moves or changes again.

That's what happens when Krazy Glue meets LEGO pieces – your LEGO world is just no fun anymore. That's the threat being faced in the movie. Turns out (spoiler alert) that the come-to-life LEGO world we enter into is really the son of a businessman playing with his dad's prized LEGO collection – it's a full-fledged city, complete with skyscrapers, construction workers, vehicles of all types, and people going about their LEGO lives in a LEGO city, all of it in the real-life basement of the real-life home of a real-life boy and his real-life father (played by real-life actors, they're the only ones not animated).

The real-life problem is the father doesn't let his son, named Finn, touch his LEGO world, or his life for that matter – the father doesn't let his son into his life. So it is like Finn's world is stuck, no movement, no fun, at least where his dad's concerned.

What's a boy to do? Finn breaks the rules and plays his dad's collection, making up a LEGO world in which the evil “Lord Business” threatens to unleash the terrible Kragle weapon (which we learn is actually a tube of Krazy Glue.)

What does all this have to do with the story of David and Goliath? Plenty. Just like David was overlooked by his father, Jesse, as well as King Saul when it comes to battling Goliath, so the real-life boy named Finn is overlooked by his businessman father.

And just like David proves himself capable of miraculous feats, so Finn's make-believe LEGO minifigure named Emmet ends up defeating the evil Lord Business and disarming the terrible Kragle weapon. (He puts the cap on the Krazy Glue), which is not as easy as it sounds when you're an ordinary LEGO minifigure trying to save the world from the “forces of evil.”

It really is a great movie, with a great lesson. It's an important lesson, given the state of our world today. Some might say that evil forces are at work among us, too. The Bible does say that.

The Good News is there is a way to overcome evil in this world. We see that in The LEGO Movie AND we see it in how the LEGO Movie parallels the lessons of “David vs. Goliath.”

The LEGO Movie opens with a blind, old wizard talking about a prophecy to save the world. When Lord Business threatens to unleash The Kragle weapon, the wise wizard says, “Wait. There is a prophecy.” “One day a talented lass or fellow, a Special one with face of yellow, will make the Piece of Resistance the cap for the glue found from its hiding refuge underground. And with a noble army at the helm, this Master Builder will thwart the Kragle and save the realm, and be the greatest, most interesting, most important person of all times. All this is true, because it rhymes.” That’s not me, folks, that’s The LEGO Movie; Morgan Freeman, to be exact.

But compare that with what 1 Samuel says in chapter 16, just one chapter before our reading from today. The Lord gives this prophecy to Samuel, saying, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.”

And sure enough, everything the Lord declares comes true. Samuel goes to Jesses and after considering his three eldest sons, he says, “Are all your sons here?” And (Jesse says), ‘There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.’ And Samuel (says) to Jesse, ‘Send and bring him....’ So Jesses brings David.

The LORD says to Samuel, “‘Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.’ Then Samuel (takes) the horn of oil, and (anoints David) in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD (comes) mightily upon David from that day forward.” The youngest becomes the mightiest.

The point is we cannot predict who God will use and how God will use him or her in advance God’s to advance plans and purpose. Everyone has a role in God’s great plan, and that includes you, and you, and you, and each and everyone of us. As the wise wizard says in the movie, Don’t worry about what the others are doing. You must embrace what is special about You.”

In God’s eyes, anyone who does the will of God has a role in the fulfillment of God’s plans and purpose. We should be looking for that – look for how God has equipped others, as well as yourself. Look for how God would use us and others, and then celebrate that, align yourself behind that!

It’s not the easiest thing to do, I know. It’s not easy to see how we have been equipped to succeed in this world, either as individuals or as a society. So the danger is, we throw up our hands, we resign ourselves to defeat.

The world is spinning out of control and there’s nothing we can do about it. Our finances are so out of whack we’ll never get ahead. Our aches and pains are so unrelenting we’ll never feel better, never get stronger, never move with more

easy and comfort. Or maybe it's family. The family is so messed up there's no hope of peace and tranquility.

Well, that's true, if you say it's true. But the bigger truth is there's always something that can be done to improve your lot in life. We just have to step up and become the person God has equipped us to be.

That's what David did, after all. He looked at how God had equipped him for success and stepped forward in faith. He had faith that God would use his gifts and talents to carry him through the next challenge. For instance, when Saul questions David's ability to defeat Goliath, David says, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; (David's talking about himself here); and whenever a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it. Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God."

Going from keeping sheep to slaying Goliath may seem like a stretch to us, but to God, it's all part of the bigger plan. It's all part of being a true faith warrior on behalf of God. We are each called to be a faith warrior – and even more so in this day and age, with truth being anything someone cares to say is true, regardless of the facts; with the state of our laws and public policies on gun violence, immigration, and LGBTs, and closer to home for the church, with the societal shift away from worship attendance and religious affiliation.

God needs faith warriors, which is to say, God needs people like you. God needs people who will search their hearts; listen to others, really listen; and then engage with society on God's behalf, wherever you find yourself; whatever you're faced with.

And the neat thing about it is God's message and leadership and guidance is there for us – there for those who have eyes to see, ears to listen and hearts to follow the living God.

I mean look at The LEGO Movie, for God's sake – literally, for God's sake. Here we have an animated movie that so closely parallels the lessons of David and Goliath, the rise of David in response to a terrible threat. God's encouragement can come from anyplace—even an animated family movie.

Just like Goliath is threatening all that is good and holy for our spiritual ancestor Israel, so the movie's Lord Business character threatens the peace and prosperity of the LEGO world, at least in the mind of the boy behind the scenes trying to reach his busy father.

And just like David in the Old Testament responded to this threat, saying, "The LORD, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine," so we are called to likewise step out in the name of the Lord with confidence and courage, equipped and inspired by God to overcome whatever we're up against.

God has equipped you to take the next right step – in your relationships, in your job, career or daily tasks, in your faith life, in your physical comfort and wellbeing. We all have something that we're up against, something that we need to push through. And we all have God to turn to in helping us do just that.

My prayer for you, for our church, and for our society is that each of us, when faced with a challenge or difficulty, each of us will step back and look to God. For some of us, this may mean prayer, or reading scripture, or talking to a trusted friend, counselor or pastor. Whatever you need to do or whomever you need to reach out to, my prayer is that each of us taps into how God has equipped you, me and us for success.

I guarantee you he has, God has a way forward for you, for us, if we would but look and follow. Sometime this week, stop to look at what's challenging for you right now, and then look for how God has equipped you to take the next right step, and then do it; step forward with faith and courage. Amen.

### **Pastoral Prayer**

God of great love, give you thanks for our family and our friends, and for friends who are family.

We are thankful for our church family gathered here.

We pray for the safekeeping of all whom we love and we pray for your healing presence for all those who are ill.

We pray for Merry Havenhill, for Connie Barker, for Dick Falk, for Jessie Sutton, for Alan and Bonnie Walker and for all who we know and in this moment of silence name in our hearts.

We pray for our nation and its leaders. May we who elect them and empower them seek your wisdom and guidance, and may they lead us in the ways that make for peace.

God of us all, let us answer words of anger with patience and let us respond to disagreements with compromise.

Above all, let us speak the language of faith, especially when we travel paths of uncertainty and fear.

We offer our praise and our prayers to the One whose footsteps we strive to follow, Jesus the Christ, who taught us to say when we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name;  
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our debts as we  
forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil,  
For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever. Amen.**