

MEPHIBOSHETH: NO MORE SHAME

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2 Sam. 9:1-13: ¹David asked, “Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?”

²Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?” “Your servant,” he replied.

³The king asked, “Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show **God's kindness?**” Ziba answered the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet.” ⁴“Where is he?” the king asked. Ziba answered, “He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.”

⁵So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel. ⁶When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, “Mephibosheth!” “Your servant,” he replied. ⁷“Don't be afraid,” David said to him, “for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.”

⁸Mephibosheth bowed down and said, “**What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?**” ⁹Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, “I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. ¹⁰You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table.” (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.) ¹¹Then Ziba said to the king, “Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do.” So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.

¹²Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica, and all the members of Ziba's household were servants of Mephibosheth. ¹³And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king's table, and **he was crippled in both feet.**

I. BACKGROUND

- A. King Saul & Jonathan had been killed in battle with the Philistines (1 Sam. 31)

- B. David & Jonathan had made a covenant in which David promised kindness to Jonathan & his descendants

1 Sam. 20:14-16, 42: ¹⁴[Jonathan:] “*But show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed,*” ¹⁵*and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David’s enemies from the face of the earth.*” ¹⁶*So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the LORD call David’s enemies to account...”* ⁴²Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘The LORD is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’”

- C. A number of years later, David is king over all Israel—he has conquered Jerusalem & brought back the Ark

II. COVENANT LOVE

2 Sam. 9:1: *David asked, “Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”*

- A. Normally, a king would have been inquiring, “Is there anyone left of Saul that we haven’t exterminated yet? Kill them all!”
- B. But David remembers his covenant with Jonathan
1. Sadly today, words, promises, agreements, contracts, and even *covenants* like marriage mean very little
 2. David had covenanted to show Jonathan & his descendants “unfailing kindness [Heb. *chesed* = “loving-kindness, mercy”] **like that of the LORD**”
 3. All that David is about to do is “**for Jonathan’s sake**” – these are covenant words (we will see later that EVERYTHING God does through the New Covenant is “**for Christ’s sake!**”)
 4. In this story, David is going to demonstrate “God’s kindness” (v.3) for us

III. ENTER MEPHIBOSHETH

- A. **2 Sam. 9:3-6:** ³*The king asked, “Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God’s kindness?”* Ziba answered the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan; he is **crippled in both feet.**” ⁴*“Where is he?” the king asked. Ziba*

answered, “He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar...” ⁵So King David had him brought...

⁶...**Mephibosheth** son of Jonathan...

- B. Background: Saul’s one surviving son, Ish-Bosheth, reigned as king over part of Israel for 2 years after Saul’s death until he was assassinated. The next in the royal line was Prince Jonathan’s only son, Mephibosheth, mentioned only parenthetically because he was a cripple:
- C. **2 Sam. 4:4:** *(Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was **lame in both feet**. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became crippled. His name was Mephibosheth.)*
- D. Every time Mephibosheth is mentioned, attention is called to his disability!
- E. Mephibosheth’s condition was no fault of his own
 - 1. His nurse had good intentions—she knew he would be executed had she not fled to spare his life
 - 2. Sometimes we have scars, limitations, disabilities from childhood that we had no control over—we ALL inherited the crippling disease of SIN from Adam (Rom. 5)!
 - 3. The name “Mephibosheth” has the same root as Saul’s son, Ish-Bosheth [Heb. *bosheth* = shame, thus “man of shame”]; “Mephibosheth” means “removal or dispelling of shame”
- F. **2 Sam. 9:6-8:** *⁶When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he **bowed down** to pay him honor. David said, “Mephibosheth!” “**Your servant**,” he replied. ⁷“**Don’t be afraid**,” David said to him, “for I will surely show you kindness **for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.**” ⁸Mephibosheth bowed down and said, “What is your servant, that you should notice a **dead dog like me?**”*
 - 1. Mephibosheth had every reason to be afraid—under normal circumstances, he would have been a dead dog!
 - 2. Because of inherited sin, we were all dead in trespasses and sins, enemies of the King, deserving nothing but execution and judgment

3. David was demonstrating “God’s loving-kindness”

Rom. 5:5-10: ⁵*And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.* ⁶*You see, at just the right time, when **we were still powerless** [“helpless, impotent, without strength”], Christ died for the ungodly.* ⁷*Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.* ⁸***But God demonstrates His own love** for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* ⁹*Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!* ¹⁰*For if, **when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him** through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!*

4. For Jonathan’s sake (covenant)

- a) **EVERYTHING** God does through the New Covenant is **“for Christ’s sake!”**
- b) **Eph. 4:32 (KJV):** *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God **for Christ's sake** hath forgiven you.*
- c) **1 John 2:12 (KJV):** *I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you **for His name's sake.***
- d) So it isn’t a matter of whether God’s likes you or feels like being nice to you—the Father made a covenant based on His Son’s sacrifice and He will honor it for “Christ’s sake!”

G. **2 Sam. 9:9-11:** ⁹*Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, “I have given your master's grandson **everything that belonged to Saul and his family.*** ¹⁰*You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be **provided for.** And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table...”* ¹¹*Then Ziba said to the king, “Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do.” So **Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.***

- 1. There was a restoration of **property** and **relationship**
- 2. Mephibosheth was now just like one of the king’s sons!

IV. SLANDERED & DEFRAUDED: GRACE TESTED

- A. Later, when David's son Absalom rose up to usurp his throne, David had to flee from Jerusalem. On his way, he met Ziba (Mephibosheth's servant) who slandered Mephibosheth

2 Sam. 16:1-4: *¹When David had gone a short distance beyond the summit, there was Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, waiting to meet him. He had a string of donkeys saddled and loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred cakes of raisins, a hundred cakes of figs and a skin of wine. ²The king asked Ziba, "Why have you brought these?" Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and fruit are for the men to eat, and the wine is to refresh those who become exhausted in the desert." ³The king then asked, "**Where is your master's grandson?**" Ziba said to him, "He is staying in Jerusalem, because he thinks, 'Today the house of Israel will give me back my grandfather's kingdom.'" ⁴Then the king said to Ziba, "All that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours." "I humbly bow," Ziba said. "May I find favor in your eyes, my lord the king."*

1. What a creep Ziba is—selfishly taking advantage of Mephibosheth's disability for his own gain!
2. Mephibosheth again gets a raw deal for no fault of his own
3. David didn't trust anyone—he was being betrayed by his own son, so he assumed the worst about Mephibosheth also

- B. After Absalom's death, David meets Mephibosheth as he is returning to Jerusalem

2 Sam. 19:24-30: *²⁴Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his mustache or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. ²⁵When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth?" ²⁶He said, "My lord the king, since **I your servant am lame**, I said, 'I will have my donkey saddled and will ride on it, so I can go with the king.' But **Ziba my servant betrayed me**. ²⁷And **he has slandered your servant** to my lord the king. My lord the king is like an angel of God; so do whatever pleases you. ²⁸All my grandfather's descendants **deserved nothing but death** from my lord the king, but you gave your servant a place among those who eat at your table. So **what***

right do I have to make any more appeals to the king?” ²⁹*The king said to him, “Why say more? I order you and Ziba to divide the fields.”* ³⁰*Mephibosheth said to the king, “**Let him take everything**, now that my lord the king has arrived home safely.”*

1. Mephibosheth is a man who understands grace—“I deserved nothing but death, I have no rights, let him take everything” (not like the unforgiving servant in Mat. 18)
2. **1 Cor. 6:1-8:** ¹*If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints?* ²*Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?* ³*Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!* ⁴*Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church!* ⁵*I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers?* ⁶*But instead, one brother goes to law against another—and this **in front of unbelievers!*** ⁷*The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. **Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?*** ⁸*Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.*

V. CONCLUSION

- A. Years later, when David had to make amends with the Gibeonites because Saul had broken Israel’s treaty with them, they demanded 7 of Saul’s descendants be put to death as retribution. But David spared Mephibosheth because of his covenant with Jonathan

2 Sam. 21:7: *The king spared Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, **because of the oath** before the LORD between David and Jonathan son of Saul.*
- B. We were all Mephibosheths—shameful things deserving of death & under the curse of the old lineage of Saul & Adam
- C. But God demonstrated His great loving-kindness, forgiving and restoring us FOR CHRIST’S SAKE—COVENANT LOVE!
- D. Let us humbly bow at His feet declaring, “Your servant.”