How Do I Know That I Matter

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Preacher: Rev. Dr. Ben Castaneda

[0:00] ... Good evening. Welcome to Kalanist Free Church. It's a delight to be with you this evening.

My name is Ben Castaneda and my family are with me this evening. It's a delight to end the Lord's day in his presence, worshipping together as his body.

As we prepare to worship God, let's just take a moment and silently quiet our hearts. Amen. The call to worship will come from Psalm 105 verses 1 and 2.

O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people, sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.

Amen. This is the God whom we worship and who should be praised with the singing of psalms. And we're going to sing this evening. Our first item of worship will be Psalm 27 and we will be singing the first five verses.

[1:53] Psalm 27 verses 1 through 5. And let us sing to the Lord.

Amen. The Lord's my light unsaving altar.

unborn, most wicked, broken, Lord, who in my flesh against me rose, this number of God is full.

Against me, Lord, and Lord, send out thy heart to be blessed.

Though all the rest of me rise, I will be confident in this.

[3:58] One thing I hope the Lord be tired, and will speak to your faith.

The darkness of my life I did, with the end of death remain.

That guide the beauty of the Lord, behold the unborn light.

And thou in this holy state, in reverent, thee and wine.

For he in this covenant, may I give thee birthday.

[5:21] In this covenant, may I, and on the holy face.

Let's come before God in prayer. Dear Father in heaven, we come before you this evening with expectation to worship you.

For you are the great God, and greatly to be praised. The whole earth is full of your glory. As we behold the glorious, beautiful sun streaming into the windows.

Reminded that you are God of God, and light of light. The one who spoke, and all things came into existence. We praise you, O God most high.

And we thank you, O God, our Savior, our Savior, Redeemer, and Lord. Our King, the one who has given himself for us.

[6:34] And we thank you, O Holy Spirit, that you have brought us to yourself. That you have caused us to believe in Jesus. That you are even now at work amongst us.

And Father, as we come into your presence this evening, help us to worship you in spirit and in truth. That Christ might be exalted.

That you, triune God, might be praised and adored. And given the worship that you are due. O God, we worship you and praise you.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing to God's praise once more. This time from Psalm 67. Psalm 67, the first version.

Verses 1 through 7. Psalm 67, the first version. Verses 1 through 7. To God's praise. Lord, bless the Son, baby, and shine on us with thy face.

[7:52] Let people praise thee, Lord.

O let the nations be glad in songs that voices raise.

Thou justly people die. On earth, through nations all.

Let people praise thee, Lord. For God's righteousness. Praise the Lord, big and small.

The earth, the fruit, the meal, our God shall bless again.

[9:27] O God, our God shall bless, let God in fear, our good Lord shall most end.

For our scripture reading, I invite you to turn to 2 Samuel, chapter 9. 2 Samuel, chapter 9. And we'll be reading the whole of the chapter.

Hear the word of the Lord. And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

And there was of the house of Saul a servant, whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba?

And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show him the kindness of God unto him?

[11:00] And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Amiel, in Lodabar.

Then king David sent and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Amiel, from Lodabar. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face and did reverence.

And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant. And David said unto him, Fear not, for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father.

And thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. And he bowed himself and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?

Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertain to Saul and to all his house.

[12:21] Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him. And thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat bread all the way at my table.

Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do.

As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table as one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micah.

And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he did eat continually at the king's table, and was laying on both his feet.

The word of the Lord. We're going to pray once more. Let's go to God in prayer. Dear Father in heaven, we do come into your presence this evening worshiping you and praising you.

But also, Father, we come humbly confessing our sin. For Father in heaven, you know our hearts. And O Lord, if you should count iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

But with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared. Father in heaven, we come before you this evening as weary sinners, sick and sore, wounded by the fall, as those who are dead in ourselves and needing your spirit to revive us again.

As we come to worship you, O God, we ask that you would have mercy upon us. Forgive us once more for the sake of Christ Jesus, your only Son.

And we thank you that if we confess our sins before you, you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Father in heaven, we praise you and thank you. And Father, we do pray that you would please grow your church, this blood-bought bride of your Son.

[15:02] We pray that you would grow your people, extend your kingdom throughout Calanish, throughout Lewis, throughout Scotland, and indeed throughout the world.

We ask that you would draw to yourself those who are far from you. Just like the prodigal son, we ask that you would call your children home, lost wherever they may be and wandering far away.

And we pray, Father in heaven, that you would give us humble hearts but also courageous hearts. That you would give us bold and proclaiming mouths to speak of Jesus as opportunity arises.

That you would give us open hands, generous hearts, those willing to serve and to care and to have compassion upon neighbors to show them the love of Jesus, reflecting to them in a small way the love that you have shown to us.

we pray, Father, that you would do a mighty work in us and through us as we show to the world giving a reason for the hope that we have, showing them that there is true peace and satisfaction and joy to be found in Jesus and in no other for he is the way, the truth and the life.

[16:39] Father in heaven, we pray that you would use us, we pray, and cause us, Lord, to care for and serve one another.

I pray, Lord, for any here who may be lonely. I pray, Father, for any here who may be suffering or in pain.

We pray, Lord, for those who are not able to be here this evening, perhaps who are homebound. We pray for those, Lord, who may be ill. We ask that you would give healing, give comfort.

We ask, Lord, that you, the great shepherd of the sheep, that you, oh God, would cause us to love and serve and build up one another to come alongside one another, forgiving one another, just as God and Christ has forgiven us.

And we ask, Father, in heaven, that as we come before you in a moment to your word, that it would be effective and fruitful in our hearts.

[17:47] We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing once more this time. We're going to sing Psalm 43, verses 1 through 5.

Psalm 43, verses 1 through 5. Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against the ungodly nation. From the unjust and crafty man, O be thou my salvation.

Psalm 43, verses 1 through 5. To God's praise. and thee and thee and thee and thee and thee and thee and My God, I am the God of the Son.

From the earth, I am the God of the Son.

For thou, the God of my friend, I trust thou, be thee.

[19:18] For thou, the heaven of oppression, why could thy holy flow?

O send thy light, for thou thy truth.

Let them be kind to me. I'll make me turn thine holy hell.

Then will thy true love song go on.

To God my spirit join. Yea, Lord, I do not die.

[20:42] Why are thou, the God of my soul?

Why are thou, the God of my soul? What should this glory see?

And why will they take those hearts out? God of my soul?

God of my soul? God of my soul? God of my soul?

God of my soul? God of my soul? God of my soul?

[21:50] He, O my condoms is the best, my God, that does me save.

As we come to God's word for this sermon, let me just pray once more. Father in heaven, we come before you this evening needing to hear a word from you.

Lord, this is your word, holy and inspired, inerrant, given by you for our good, for our joy.

To show us and to tell us of Jesus and all that he has done for us, even in this passage from the Old Testament.

And we pray, Father, that your spirit would be amongst us, changing us, transforming us, revive us again, we pray, O God.

[23:01] Let your word be living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword. And may it convict us, may it call us to repentance, and may it chiefly cause us to worship you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

For we ask it in Christ's name, Amen. Amen. This account in 2 Samuel chapter 9, it gets to the heart of one of the most important questions that you or I could ever ask.

Where does my worth come from? To put it another way, how do I know that I matter? I recently had a conversation with a non-Christian man who was dying of cancer.

And to take his mind off his pain, what he does is he goes around doing radical acts of generosity to others. Why?

Because he desperately wants to know that his life means something. That it matters to someone. And I wonder if that's you here this evening.

[24:26] Perhaps you're not a believer. Yet you hope that maybe if there is a God, he will see all the good things that you are doing for others.

And he may, if he exists, will look kindly on you. Now, if you're a Christian here this evening, you know, and I know, that that's not how God works.

But I want to caution us because it is so easy for us, I think, to fall into this trap, too. Of thinking that our worth comes from something that we do.

Whether it be our education. Whether it be our attainments at work or in the community. The ways in which we serve at church, even.

Perhaps the way that we raise our children. This passage, though, I would suggest, strips away all those accomplishments.

[25:32] All the things that we think might somehow make us acceptable before God. But I'm also positive that there are others amongst us here this evening.

Perhaps people who feel haunted by your past. By regrets. Poor choices. People who feel like God perhaps has taken everything from you.

That you thought gave your life meaning and worth and value. Perhaps it may be the loss of a spouse.

The loss of a job. Perhaps even the loss of a child. Perhaps it's simply that you deal with constant, unrelieved pain.

And friends, no matter who you are, when you walk in that door, this passage is for you. And God is speaking to you this evening.

[26:36] From 2 Samuel 9. Because despite the worthlessness that others perhaps have heaped upon you. Or perhaps which you heap upon yourselves.

God counts you as worthy. Not for anything that you have done. Not for anything in you. But simply for the sake of Jesus Christ.

And we're going to see that this evening as we just walk through the passage. And I'm going to point out to you three statements of worth. Look with me.

I invite you again at verse 1 of our passage. And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

Let's just stop there for a moment. The context is really important here. Saul, in case you don't remember, he was the king of Israel.

[27:42] The first king. And Jonathan was his oldest son. The crown prince. Heir to the throne. Now Saul knew that God had appointed David to be king in his place after him instead of his son.

And so Saul savagely tried to hunt down David and kill him. But God protected David. And in due time, Saul and Jonathan were both killed by enemies of Israel, the Philistines.

And David came to the throne. Now ordinarily, when a new king comes to the throne, his first task is to kill everyone related to the old king.

Anyone who might be a claimant to the throne. Anyone who might possibly pose a threat as a legitimate heir. But that's not what David does here in this verse, is it?

Instead, what does he do? Well, our text says he wants to show kindness. And that word kindness comes from the same word in the original language used all throughout the Old Testament to talk of God's covenant love for his people.

[29:06] His steadfast faithfulness. It's the same word here. When our children were a little bit younger, we'd read to them a storybook Bible.

And the storybook Bible incorporates this word, but it paraphrases it to show that the extent of it, instead of calling it his kindness, it calls this kind of love of God, God's never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking and forever love.

That's the kind of love that David wants to show anyone of Saul's family for the sake of Jonathan.

And if we go back a bit farther in the story to 1 Samuel 20 verse 15, it's there that we read of Jonathan and David swearing a covenant to one another.

And Jonathan says to David, But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever. No, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David, everyone from the face of the earth.

[30:13] Jonathan knew that David was to become king instead of him. But that didn't make him jealous or vengeful.

Instead, he swears this covenant with David to show mercy upon his descendants, upon his heirs. And that's then why David called Ziba, a chief servant in the house of Saul, to ask him if there is anyone left of Saul's house whom David can show mercy and kindness to.

Look at me at verse 3. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God unto him?

And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son which is lame on his feet. Now here's where we find the first statement of worth in this chapter.

If you notice, it's actually quite curious. Ziba doesn't even mention Mephibosheth's name. Instead, how does Ziba call him?

[31:26] How does he refer to him? Well, he simply says he's lame on his feet. Now in the original language, it's actually quite a bit simpler than just that.

In Hebrew, it just says lame feet. Lame feet. So the verse goes something like this. Jonathan hath yet a son.

Lame feet. You hear what Ziba is doing. This is how Mephibosheth was known. It's like a derogatory nickname.

It's like calling someone with glasses at school, four eyes. He is known as lame feet.

This is his nickname. Just like so many of us have nicknames that other informal friends of the family call us. But this is how Mephibosheth is known.

[32:29] Lame feet. And we find in 2 Samuel chapter 4 how this came about. He was crippled when he was five years old. When Saul and Jonathan were killed, Mephibosheth's nurse picks him up and runs with him to run away from the invading Philistines.

And on the way, she drops him. And he's permanently disabled. Now think about how this would have shaped Mephibosheth's life.

Being disabled in ancient times meant you couldn't fight. It meant you couldn't work in the fields. It meant you couldn't travel long distances.

And needless to say, there were no wheelchairs in those days. No accommodations that would be made. And so he would have been considered unfit to rule.

A drain on society. Worthless to all around him. And yet totally dependent on their care.

[33:38] Friends, I think that many of us here in this room probably know what it is to care for a parent who's aging.

And we know how that can be a struggle and can be difficult. Now, with so much help in our society. But think about Mephibosheth.

There is no such benefits. There are no such notions and rules and help.

This is who he is. This is where he is. He is a burden to society. And he knows it. And everyone around him knows it too.

Can you think of anything more shameful than that? And on top of that, he's hiding out in a town called Lo-Debar.

[34:40] This town is probably somewhere near the Jordan River. And the name itself even is ironic. Because Lo-Debar, woodenly translated, means of no account.

It's a backwatered town. No one is there. And that's why he's hiding out. Hoping not to be found by the new regime.

He's a nowhere, a nowhere man. But then, look at verse 5 of me. Then King David sent and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Amiel, from Lo-Debar.

Mephibosheth doesn't know what's going on, remember. He doesn't know what we know. He doesn't know that David wants to show him kindness. Instead, when David's servants show up at his door and come in, he thinks they've come to take him away and kill him.

He thinks he's going to be killed. But just reflect on this for a moment. David wants to show Mephibosheth covenant love to his enemy.

[35:56] But his enemy can't even come to him to receive it. He has to be carried. Friends, we have to draw a comparison to.

Because this is the same thing that our compassionate God has done for us. We too were far from God. We too were alienated from his covenant.

We too were enemies, rebels against him even. And so what does God do? We would not come.

And so he comes to us. And he draws us to himself. Carrying us.

For we would not come on our own. Calling us out of darkness into his marvelous light. So that you and I might find forgiveness and redemption and grace.

[36:57] He knows. He knows. He knows. He knows. Friends. He knows you. And this evening he's calling you as well.

He draws near in Jesus. And if you haven't trusted in him. I urge you to do that. His grace still extends out.

Jesus. Just as Jesus called the crowds in the Gospel of Matthew. Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden. And I will give you rest. Friends.

He knows who you are. He knows your frailty. He knows your sin. He knows your weaknesses. He knows everything about you. Better than you might know your own spouse.

Or you might know your own heart. And despite your sin. Despite who you are. He bids you come. Come and rest.

[38:02] Come and find forgiveness. And so we move on. Look at verse 6. If you would. Now when Mephibosheth. The son of Jonathan.

The son of Saul. Was come unto David. He fell on his face. And did reverence. And David said. Mephibosheth. And he answered.

Behold. Thy servant. Mephibosheth. Remember. Is terrified. He is. He has no defender. He has no advocate. No source of help.

As he lays down. Face down. On the floor. In front of David. Cowering. In fear. And terror. He thinks that death.

Is only. Moments away. But then. David speaks. And David says to him. Fear.

[38:57] Not. Aren't those lovely words. Fear. Not. For I will surely.

Show thee kindness. For Jonathan. Thy father's sake. And will restore thee. All the land. Of Saul. Thy father. And thou shalt eat bread. At my table. Continually.

And he bowed himself. And said. What is thy servant. That thou shalt look upon. Such a dead dog. As I am. With a few words.

Friends. Mephibosheth's world. Is turned. Upside down. When he expects. Death. He instead. Receives this steadfast love.

This kindness. And this is where we get our second statement. Of worth. Because Mephibosheth's response. To this incredible love.

[39:53] Is to cast contempt. On himself. He asks. Why would you show regard. For a dead dog. Like me.

Who am I. In other words. Who am I. I am your enemy. I am an outcast. He knows that his life. Is worthless.

To David. That there is nothing in him. To deserve this. And so all he can do. Friends. Is ask. Why me.

Why. It is a question. We. Must never stop asking. Either. Why. When we were far.

From God. When God. Didn't owe us. Anything. He showed us grace. Grace. Isn't something. We deserve. It is not something.

[40:49] That God. Must. Do. Grace is. Always. Unearned. Simply out of his. Sheer. Mercy. And favor.

The only thing. We can contribute. To this equation. Friends. Is our sin. It's our. Ungodliness. Have you ever.

Stopped. To ask. The question. Why. Does. God. Love. Me. Why. Does.

God. Love. Me. Well. Moses. Told. The Israelites. Why. Back. In. Deuteronomy. Chapter. Seven. Verses. Seven. Eight. The Lord.

Did not. Set. His. Love. Upon. You. Nor. Choose. You. Because. You. Were. More. In. Number. Than. Any. People. For. You. Were. The. Fewest. Of. All. People. But.

[41:45] Because. The. Lord. Loved. You. And. Because. He. Would. Keep. The. Oath. Which. He. Had. Sworn. Unto. Your. Fathers. Hath. The. Lord. Brought. You.

Out. Egypt. Friends. Just. As. David.

Made. A. Promise. To. Jonathan. God. Makes. A. Promise. To. His. People. I. Will.

Love. You. And. Friends. God. Will. Not. Break. His. Word. He. Loves. You.

With. An. Everlasting. Never. Stopping. Never. Giving. Up. Love. Despite. Who. We. Are.

[42:39] He. Loves. Us. Because. He. Loves. Us. And. He. Has.

Promised. To. Be. That. Kind. Of. God. To. You. And. To. Me. Here's. The. Thing. Friends. We. Must. Guard. Ourselves.

Against. The. Temptation. To. Domesticate. God. Love. That. Might. Sound. Kind. Of. Strange. Even. To. Say. It.

But. We. Must. Never. Lose. Our. Sense. Of. Wonder. We. Must. Never. Think. That. We. Have. This. Thing. Our. Salvation.

Figured. Out. Because. When. We. Lose. Our. Wonder. I. Guarantee. You. It. Doesn't. Take. Long.

[43:33] Before. We. Start. To. Think. To. Ourselves. Of. Of. Course. God. Loves. Me. Yeah. Maybe. I. Do. Deserve. This. I'm.

Not. That. Bad. Well. Mostly. This. Is. Actually. A. Good. Diagnostic. Question. You. When. You. Hear.

The. Gospel. In. Its. Beauty. In. In. Its. Power. In. Its. Wonder. In. Its. Clarity. In. Its. Lavishness. To. Dead. Dogs. Like. Us.

Friends. When. You. Hear. That. In. Christ. God's. Love. Extends. Even. To. The. Last. The. Lost. The. Least. The. Dead.

Does. It. Make. Your. Heart. Sing. Does. It. Move. You. To. Worship. Does. It. Move. You. To. Ask. Why. A.

[44:27] Dead. Dog. Like. Me. There's. Still. One. More. Statement. Of. Worth. Here. Look. With. Me. Of. Verse. Thirteen.

If. You. Would. Verse. Thirteen. Here. For. The. First. Time. The. Author. Breaks. Into. The. Story. To. Tell. Us. What. Happened.

To. Mephibosheth. So. Mephibosheth. Dwelt. In. Jerusalem. For. He. Did. Eat. Continually. At. The. King's.

Table. That. Phrase. Eating. At. The. King's. Table. It. Occurs. Four. Times. In. This. Passage. Verse. Seven. Verse. Ten. Verse.

Why is eating at the king's table so important? To ask the question is almost to answer the question, who eats at the king's table?

It's the king's family. And particularly the king's sons. Even today, sharing a meal with someone in your home is a little bit like bringing them into your life and giving them a window on who you are.

You're opening yourself up to them, making yourself vulnerable. It's an intimate setting when you break bread together after a long, hard day's work.

David doesn't stop with merely sparing Mephibosheth's life. David doesn't stop with returning to him all the land and property and possessions that Saul and Jonathan had but which had been taken away.

[46:35] David goes further and invites Mephibosheth to eat at his own table with him. It's as if he's saying to Mephibosheth, Yes, you don't deserve this, but come be part of my family.

Yes, you should be dead right now, but I have given you life. Yes, there is nothing in you to deserve this, but I am going to shower you with my love and invite me, invite you to eat with me always as if you were my own son.

Friends, this is a third statement of worth. And the same is true of us too, friends. Because God doesn't merely, as if we could say it's merely, reconcile us to himself.

He doesn't merely give up his own son so that we might not receive the penalty for our sins. He goes further than that.

And he adopts us into his family. In 1 John chapter 3, the Apostle John exclaims, Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called sons of God.

[48:01] That's what we are worth, friends. That is what our Heavenly Father says of you if you are trusting in Jesus this evening. You are my son.

You are my daughter. Come and eat with me always. Always. This, friends, is a picture of what it is that we enjoy and experience at the Lord's table during communion.

Jesus welcomes us to his table saying, This is my body and this is my blood given for you that you might feast with me.

And friends, this is what we anticipate. This is what we look forward to one day when we sit with Jesus at the wedding supper of the Lamb.

When this will be a reality. When we will sit and eat as the King's sons at His banqueting table where His banner over us is love.

[49:12] This, friends, is what Jesus has done for you. And if you're here and like my unbelieving friends are looking for meaning and purpose in life, look no farther.

Because here you find all that you need. Here you find true joy, true happiness, true fellowship with one who loves you even more than you love yourself.

And who gave himself for you that you might be cleansed and you might be pure and you might be His. And the Spirit and the Bride say come.

Let's pray. Dear Father in Heaven, we thank you for your grace and mercy towards us in Christ Jesus. Father, we praise you that though we do not deserve your love, you have shown it to us, lavishing out upon us in Jesus with His death, with His obedient life, with His resurrection from the dead, who even who even now is interceding for us at your right hand.

Father in Heaven, we praise you and we glorify you and we long for that day when Christ shall come again and receive us to Himself and we sit in His presence and we delight in the glory and beauty of the King of Kings.

[51:08] Lord Jesus, do come. In your name we pray. Amen. Our last item of praise will be from Psalm 16.

Psalm 16 verses 7 through 11. Psalm 16 verses 7 through 11. I bless the Lord because He doth by counsel me conduct and in the seasons of the night my reigns do me instruct.

Let's sing to God's glory. My blessed Lord because He doth I counsel me O God and in the seasons of the night my rest to me in trust.

Before me still the Lord I said sit in this soil I need!

And I'm not my right hand I shall not live with thee Because of this my heart is done And I shall live at rest In my glory and my rest And confidence shall rest Because my soul's in grave to dwell Shall not be led by thee

Nor will thou kill thine holy one Or rather than to seem Thou wilt me show The path of life Of joy, eternal joy In my life is the life Right now Of better, eternal God sends us out with his blessing May the Lord bless you and keep you May the Lord lift up his face upon you

And be gracious to you May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you And give you his peace Amen