

2 Samuel 9 // Kindness

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[0:00] Today, we're going to be in 2 Samuel chapter 9. It's a story of kindness.

! You've probably heard this story before. So I want to ask a favor. That little part of us, we all have it.

That's, oh, I've heard that before. Put that in a box and just put it over here for a bit, okay? Because there's always something new when we read the word afresh. There's always something important when we take it seriously and look at it, hopefully in a new way.

Kindness leads us to repentance. The story we're about to walk through is one of these stories where David, by right as king, culturally, when he became king, could have easily gone and wiped out all of the family and anybody associated with the previous king.

Now, that's kind of gruesome to think about, but that was the law of the land. He had every right to do that. But David chose another path here. And our story really aims around this one man, Mephibosheth.

[1:27] And there's a tragedy that comes with this. It's not a tragedy of what happens because David shows the kindness of God in a way that I pray that we desire.

Not only to show kindness to others, but to show kindness to ourselves. Because where Mephibosheth was in a place where he felt unworthy and even calls himself a dead dog, he lived on assumption that the king would kill him and did not want the best for him.

And if you're like me at all, there's moments where you've thought that about God as well. Where the king could not possibly want the best for us. And so we hide from the Lord, just as Mephibosheth did.

So here's the question that I'm going to ask at the end as well. What would have happened if Mephibosheth earlier in life realized that David loved him, was trying to find him so he could bless him?

There, now you can tune out the rest of the time. Pick back up in about 20 minutes. But let's just start there with verse 1. Now, the usual way to ask this question of a king was, is there anybody left so I can go and kill him?

[2:51] David did not take that path because his heart was ruled by God. He went a different way. He remembers the friendship that he had with Mephibosheth's father, who is Jonathan. They had a deep brotherhood with one another.

Jonathan was the rightful heir, being the son of Saul, the king, or previous king. And Jonathan could have made a claim.

But he knew that David was anointed by God. And Jonathan, being a man of God, wanted to promote his friend to do this. That's brotherhood. There was no ego between them. They saw the call of God as more important than what society would dictate for us.

So Jonathan asked David, don't fulfill this custom. Don't fulfill it. Bless my offspring. Help them out. I'm paraphrasing.

And David was a man of honor, and he remembered. If there's anybody in the house of Saul still hiding, let me know where they are, that I might bless them.

[3:52] Verses 2 and 3. Now there was a servant of the house of Saul, whose name was Ziba. And they called him to David. And the king said to him, are you Ziba?

And he said, I am your servant. And the king said, is there not still someone of the house of Saul that I may show kindness of God to him? And Ziba said to the king, there is still a son of Jonathan. He's crippled in his feet. I wonder if Ziba didn't add that on at the last little bit, just so that David might take pity. Okay?

I wonder. I'm not sure. But this kindness came from God. He gives it to us so that we can give it to other people. To show kindness in unnatural ways.

There is a kindness of man, and there's a kindness of God. They're different. We can be kind people. We can. We have moments, right? But the kindness of God sets aside all rights, all privilege.

[4:54] It sets it all aside so that God's will may be done. Even if it hurts us to do so. We can be kind, but it's nothing close to what God provides.

We can forgive, but it's nothing like the forgiveness of God. Not for a moment. Human forgiveness often operates like this. I promise you, if you will never do it again, and if you're really, really sorry, then I'll forgive you.

That's how human forgiveness operates. God's forgiveness operates on a different level. I'll forgive you. Knowing you're probably going to make the same mistake again and again and again.

You're my children, and I love you. Let's work at making it easier next time. That's God's forgiveness. That's different from our own. Praise the Lord.

He does not forgive the way we do. We would never be forgiven. I mean, you think of all the things that we've done, and we've asked forgiveness for. Or if God treated us that way, where it's like, well, I'll forgive you if you're sorry and you never do it again.

[5:58] Then you can have my forgiveness. Well, that'd be cold. Human forgiveness comes if someone promises that they're really sorry, and they have to initiate saying, I'm sorry.

You know, have you ever been in that place? It's like, I'll forgive them if they approach me and say sorry. Well, by doing that, we're stuck in a loop of non-forgiveness. And all it does is the person probably has gone on with their life, forgotten that any harm has been done, and we're left waking up every morning thinking, man, I'm waiting for them to say sorry, and I'm going to shut them out until they do.

But God's forgiveness works differently. Divine forgiveness initiates forgiveness. Human forgiveness says, I'll forgive you if you take the blame because you deserve it.

God's forgiveness says, I forgive you, I'll take the blame, and I'll take the shame, and it's going to die on the cross. That's God's forgiveness.

Verses three and four again. And the king said, Is there not still someone of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God to him? Ziba said to the king, There is still a son of Jonathan.

[7:14] He is crippled in his feet. And the king said to him, Where is he? And Ziba said to the king, He is in the house of Machir, the son of Amiel at Lo-debar. The man is lame in his feet.

It was true, but like I said, I think it was mentioned to try and get some sympathy. Almost like, Please don't kill him. Okay? He's been living like this for a long time. 2 Samuel 4 tells us that this happened when Mephibosheth was five years old.

When news had reached that Saul and Jonathan had been killed. And of course, like I said earlier, the custom would be that the new king could kill any of the offspring or any of the people that were associated with that family.

The nanny in a panic picked up Mephibosheth when he was five. And she ran out of the house to try and protect him. She tripped and he fell and it was hurt in such a way that both of his feet would be lame for life.

That's how he got to this place. I wonder what would have happened if he was taken to David and said, Please spare his life. David already having made this covenant with Jonathan would have said, He'll be a son in my house.

[8:27] But nobody knew that. Here's a guy hiding from King David, living in fear that David would discover him. And he was also very poor.

He's not even living in his own house. The house of Machir. This is not his house. This is someone else's. And he's living in fear that he'll be found. He was not a desperately young man at the point of this story.

Keep that in mind. Unable to walk properly. Fearful for his life. Poor in spirit. And financially. That's us before our king found us.

Is it not? Our bank accounts may not say we're poor. Some of us. But we can be poor in the soul. We can be poor in the spirit. We can have a hole in our heart that needs God so very badly that we don't ask for help.

That can be us. We hide from God. It was like that in my life for a while. I don't know if it's been like that for you. Where you hide from him. Maybe you're afraid of his goodness.

[9:34] Maybe you're afraid of his forgiveness. Maybe you can't forgive yourself to the point where you just, no, no, God, I am unforgivable. That's a lie. Maybe it's just something that we just can't reconcile with because God's goodness is so good.

I had a friend of mine once after I met Jesus. He said, well, I could never darken the door of a church. And I said, isn't that kind of the point? Right? It's that we go and we celebrate together this new life that we found however we come into church.

I think one of the great modern lies is that you have to fix your life up before you come to church. And for me, this is where you fix it up right here because we're kind to one another. We show grace to one another.

We extend mercy to one another because God has first done that to us. Well, these should be open doors. They are. Verse five.

Then King David said and brought him from the house of Machir, the son of Amiel, at Lodabar. A knock comes at the door. Could you imagine this for a moment if you're Mephibosheth?

[10:38] Now, you didn't run up and get the door. Somebody else would have done that. He wouldn't be able to get there fast enough. But a knock comes at the door and you know it's the king's men. This moment that you've been hiding from for your entire life, that you've been living in fear of for all your days now comes with a knock at the door.

This is it. From Mephibosheth's point of view, this is how I die. There he is. He's been afraid of this. This is it. Verse six. And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold, I am your servant.

He knows he's about to die, but he shows honor anyway. He doesn't take his last minute to curse the king. He just simply comes and he bows and he says, I am your servant. But I think what's funny about this is how Mephibosheth avoided David his whole life.

And it was based on an assumption, not truth. One of the best pieces of advice anybody's ever given me in ministry is stick to the facts. Stick to the facts of what's happened or what's going on.

[11:54] Don't think about assumption. Don't let your wildfire of your heart go on and on and on. Stick to the facts. The fact is, David loved Mephibosheth before Mephibosheth loved David.

God loved you and me before we loved him. The parallel is plain. If Mephibosheth had come to him and said, Here I am.

I'm so tired. I'm so exhausted from hiding my life from you. Whatever your will is, I'm here. David would have run to him and said, Be my son.

But he didn't. He lived in hiding. How many of us are sitting here this morning where we're hiding from God, thinking that the worst, assuming the worst of his intentions for us, when all he would do is just wrap our arms and say, My daughter, my son, I'm so glad you came.

What would we do then if we didn't run on the assumption of negativity? All the hiding, fear, the distance, it was in his imagination.

[13:05] But it was real because of what he assumed negatively of David. Verse 7. And David said to him, Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan.

I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always. Think about how this could have gone. David could have said, I'm not going to kill you today, but sleep with one eye open, now get out of here.

Mephibosheth probably would have been happy with that. Okay? Whew! Spared! But David went way further than that. See, Mephibosheth was the rightful heir to the lands that Saul held.

But the only way he could make a claim was to make himself public and known, which he was terrified of doing, so he didn't. So he lived in poverty. David could have just spared his life, but instead, David restored his inheritance.

This is what the Lord does for us. He restores those years that the locusts have eaten away. When we come to him, when we come to God and seek his kindness, he does not repay it with brutality.

[14:20] He repays it with open arms and love. When we come to God honestly and say, here I am, I'm so sorry. I don't want to run from you anymore.

It's like Elijah. We talked about this, I think, last week. You know, the prophet Elijah was going through a pretty rough time, up and down in his heart all the time, under a tree in the Kareth ravine, begging God to take his life.

I'm done. I can't do this anymore. And what does God do? He sends, some believe, angels, some ravens, depends on your translation.

Regardless, pretty miraculous, brings him food and a new task. You may think God is finished with you. He's not. You've only just begun.

Receive his kindness and walk forward into it. Thank you. Mephibosheth was also given a place at David's table for the rest of his life.

[15 : 25] I imagine on some level this must have seemed like a joke. I mean, here you are living in poverty, in somebody else's house, running for your life, fearful of the king, and suddenly the king is saying, no, you're going to be a part of my family.

You're going to eat at my table for the rest of your life. This would mean Mephibosheth gets to go back to Jerusalem. He gets to go to places where he has been hiding from. He gets to be a part of a family again.

Verse 8, and he paid homage and said, what is your servant that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I? You can't live years and years in fear and poverty and wounded without being convinced you're worthless.

Mephibosheth thought he was so worthless in the eyes of David, the king, that he called himself a dead dog. Have you ever felt that way? Where all of the baggage and all of the sum of your life comes up and you just say, I'm just not worth much.

That's a lie. Our Father in Heaven sees each of us here, each of us everywhere, that is a believer in him. All the people out there in the world that don't even know him yet, even some who desperately hate him, he sees them as children.

[16 : 46] And he's a good father and he wants to bring us home. That's why Jesus died, was to provide a way, because we tried desperately through religion, good works, being a nice person, right?

We tried desperately so hard on our own efforts to earn our way back into that stairway of heaven that it's never going to work. Because we can't do it. There's no fairness to it.

Rules won't make us a better Christian. Religion won't make us a better Christian. A surrendered heart and belief that Jesus is Lord and rose from the dead, Romans 10, 9, is what gets us saved.

It's as simple as that. And it is kind and merciful. That's how simple it was for Mephibosheth, but he ran his entire life from that simplicity.

You're not worthless. You're a friend of the king. Verses 9 to 13. And then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, All that belong to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson.

[17 : 54] And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, shall always eat at my table.

Now Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants. And then Ziba said to the king, According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do. So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.

And Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micah. And all who lived in Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servants. So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem for he ate always at the king's table.

Now he was lame in both feet. There's an interesting point there. He still had his weaknesses. You and I, we still have our weaknesses.

But we've been invited to eat at the king's table. There's three things here. He lived in Jerusalem, no longer hiding in fear from the king, no longer trying to push him away.

[19 : 01] He ate continually at the king's table, no longer separated from the king, ever to feel this sense of an imposter syndrome, no more. Have you ever felt like that?

You felt like an imposter where you shouldn't be, you don't think you should be where you are. Things are going well. Well, that shouldn't happen to me. Things don't go well for me. We get trapped in that loop of that lie.

I imagine at some point Mephibosheth thought that. I've been hiding so long, sleeping on somebody's couch, and here I'm at the king's table eating food. I'm just waiting for this moment. Someone's going to come along and tap me on the shoulder and say, you don't belong here. But he did belong. You belong. I belong. We all belong at the king's table, not because of what we've done,

but because of the invitation of the king.

See, David kept this covenant, not because Mephibosheth and the relationship they had. They didn't have one. He kept this covenant because of the promise he made with Jonathan.

[20:02] God shows us kindness that comes from heaven, not because of anything you and I have done to earn it, but because of what Jesus has done on our behalf. God extends that kind of kindness.

You and I eat at the king's table. So here's where I'm going with all of this, and I'll end after this. You and I, we are Mephibosheth.

That's where I'm going with all of this. We were hiding, poor and weak, before our king restored our lives. We were separated from our king because of what went before us in our lives.

Every day that Mephibosheth chose to live in hiding and we're the same way when we hide from God. Our actions separate us from the king, not the king.

That's why I said before, imagine if Mephibosheth, imagine if he earlier in his life went to the king and asked for mercy. Instead, he wasted many years, many years, on an assumption that was wrong.

[21:15] Let's not be like that. The kindness of our king is extended to us for the sake of another person, Jesus Christ.

It's not about earning it. You won't. Stop trying. God looks upon us and shows us kindness because of Jesus. And we have to receive that kindness and humility, just like Mephibosheth did.

David, I am your servant. That's what he said to David. Can we say that to the Lord today? I'm your servant. Because the king restores to us what is lost.

That's what God wants to do for you and me right here, right now. I'm going to close in prayer.

Addie's going to come up and lead another song.

And I'm going to be up here. And if anybody would like to come pray with me, please come. Let's pray together. Because if you're feeling worthless this morning, that's a lie.

[22:21] You are a son and a daughter of the king. Heavenly Father, I want to thank you, Lord, for the promises that you've shown us here. Where your kindness is beyond anything we can understand.

Nothing we can earn. And Lord, it comes so fully that we have our worth in you. We have our future in you. We have compassion and mercy for our frailty in you.

And Lord, you restore all of those things that we've lost. Maybe in ways that will surprise us. In Jesus' name. Amen.