

# Expressions of Covenant Love

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] we've read together second book of samuel and chapter nine and again reading at the beginning of the chapter second samuel chapter nine 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 there was of the house of saul a servant whose name was seva 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 the kindness of god unto him and ziba said unto the king jonathan had yet a son which is lame on his feet we find in the previous chapter an account of the way david is consolidating his hold over the kingdom and it obviously took a number of years after the death of saul for him to come and ask this particular question that we have at the beginning of chapter nine is there yet any that is left of the house of saul that i may show him kindness for jonathan's sake and the question can be asked what lay behind this question asked by king david what was the reason for it the thinking in particular of the animosity and the difficulties that had existed between king david before he became king and king saul saul sought repeatedly to kill him and now that saul is dead and jonathan is dead and a number of years have elapsed what lies behind this question that david asks is there yet any that is left of the house of saul that i may show him kindness for jonathan's sake and i think it's fairly clear from previous chapters in the book of samuel that there is a legitimate reason for him asking this question and the reason was that he had entered into a covenant commitment with jonathan the father of this man mephibosheth and i'm going to refer to a couple of verses where that becomes clear and acting on this covenant commitment that he had given years before he now sees that there may be an opportunity to fulfill the promise and the commitment he made to jonathan in seeking to help jonathan's or saul's family and under four points i'd like to say one or two words first of all covenant love expressed

covenant love expressed secondly we see in this chapter covenant love in action thirdly covenant love comforting and fourthly and finally covenant love providing firstly then thinking of this covenant love that lies behind this whole chapter and all that transpires in it you may remember that in first samuel chapter 18 and at verse 3 i'm going to read that because that's the first pointer to this covenant commitment that i am going to comment on first of first samuel 18 and verse 3 then jonathan and david made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul and jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to david and his garments even to his sword and his bow and to his girdle they obviously were very devoted to each other in the lord that is the kind of love that they had it was a spiritual connection a spiritual oneness that david and jonathan had and it says here he made a covenant with him because he loved him as his own soul that's the first one and secondly first samuel 20 and from verse 14 thou shalt not only while yet i live show me the kindness of the lord that i die not but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever no not when the lord hath cut off all the enemies of david everyone from the face of the earth so jonathan made a covenant with the house of david saying let the lord even require it at the hand of david's enemies and jonathan caused david to swear again because he loved him for he loved him as he loved his own soul the undertaking in the covenant between saw between david and jonathan was that whichever one of them would survive the other that the one would who would survive would look out for the family of the other who may have died who would have died and that's exactly what would have what happened here you remember that king saul and jonathan were slain on mount gilboa fighting the philistines and now years have passed and david remembers this commitment he had made to jonathan regarding all his family members who would survive that he would look out for them and provide for them and that's why he's here asking this question when he is settled in his kingdom he said is there yet any that is left of the house of saul that i may show him

kindness for jonathan's sake he's thinking of jonathan and the commitment he made these years beforehand but there's another level at which we have to look at these words the level of the covenant between god the father and god the son theologians call it the covenant of redemption where the persons of the trinity before the world was met in covenant and god the son was set apart to be the mediator of the elect of god and as the theologians put it he expressed his readiness and willingness that in the fullness of time he would come into the world taking human nature to himself and fulfilling all that the law required of god's elect people who themselves were sinners and unworthy of the least of god's mercies nevertheless god the son jesus christ the mediator made a commitment in covenant before the world was to come in the fullness of times and show the kindness of god to sinners who are undeserving of it covenant love expressed where do we find pointers to that covenant love in the father and in the son in eternity well a number of verses throughout the bible but

i'm just going to mention one or two one from the old testament and it says in jeremiah 31 and verse 3 i have loved you with an everlasting love and with loving kindness have i drawn you the everlasting love of god it's unchanging and unchangeable and in the fullness of times god draws those whom he has loved from all eternity and the other pointer we have is in john 6 verse 37 when it says all that the father hath given me will come to me and they who come to me i will in no wise cast out all that the father has given me in covenant he has given them to me in order that i might save them and that's a real pointer to the covenant of redemption in eternity between the persons of the trinity before the world was and we find

David here in his own situation remembering a promise he had made to jonathan years before and he says when the time came is there yet anyone left to whom I shall show the kindness of god for jonathan's sake that's the first thing the expression of the covenant love secondly we see this covenant love in action and he asks about ziba are you ziba the servant of king saul and he said your servant is he and in verse 3 david again asks 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 who is lame on his feet can you imagine david's heart missed that beat when he heard that there was somebody who belonged to jonathan to whom he could show kindness despite the history between saul the king and david all the nasty things that saul tried to do to him down through the years nevertheless this covenant love runs as a strong cord in david's life and he hears that there is this man mephibosheth who is lame on his feet and the king said where is he and ziba said unto the king behold he is in the house of machir the son of amiel in lodibar and the king said fetch him from there he hears that this man mephibosheth is incapacitated he's lame in both his feet so he wouldn't be an asset to david's army and he is in a country on the east side of jordan well it's in gilead actually and he's in this house of machir the son of amiel in lodibar he is in that far off place and if you were to look at the meaning of the hebrew words machir amiel and lodibar you would discover that they speak of a pasture less dull hopeless place if you look at the meaning the literal meaning of the words machir amiel and lodibar and the word lodibar in hebrew means no word or no thing lo means no or nothing and dabar or dabar is word or thing so it's as if the scripture is saying he's in a place where there's no good news coming to him he is in a place without pasture without any encouragement at all that's where he is and david said send for him isn't that an amazing picture of what we ourselves are like by nature there's a sense in which we are lame in both our feet we cannot

[ 15 : 21 ] and do not walk in the ways of god rather we walk in the opposite direction to what the lord asks of us and we are there happy enough as it were in our inability and incapability because that's the way sin has left us wounded and totally unable to help ourselves i very often think of the prodigal son who was there in the far country and when the famine came he could do nothing better than go out and look after the pigs and he decided to be fed with a pig swill until he came to himself well he david sent for this man in his poor and discouraging situation i wonder what he felt what passed through his mind when he heard that king david was looking for him and asking him to come i'm sure he would have thought of the number of instances when king saul tried to kill david and prevent him from ascending the throne of israel and he would think possibly he's going to kill me because i have a connection with king saul who was his great enemy when the lord sends word to us as one who expresses covenant love to us through the gospel maybe that's a thought that passes through people's mind when their sin begins to bother them when they feel open as it were to god's displeasure when the scripture begins to speak to them in their depth the depth of their hearts and minds and they realize i am a sinner falling into the hands of an angry god but nevertheless this love prevails upon those whom god loves from eternity and this love prevails upon them and reaches them where they are and this love brings them to the feet of jesus see what it says in verse six 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 said behold thy servant isn't that an amazing picture of what the lord has done in your own life that he has brought you from the far country despite your inability despite all that's happened in your background nevertheless his call has brought you his call is effectual in making you willing in a day of his power to come to him and to bow before him and you fall on your face as it were you bow and you

do reverence you know who he is and you know who you are yourself and he calls you by name and you and you and you isn't that true with us all the word speaks and finds you wherever you are maybe you remember the first time that that became a reality to you maybe you were in a building with hundreds of people listening to a sermon and it's as if nobody else was there but you and the preacher or the word of God through the preacher it's as if he singled you out and you knew exactly who you were and who your business must be with your business must be with the Lord and by the grace of God and the effectual grace of

God you bow before him and you take the place of a servant this is what he said behold yourself isn't it amazing when covenant love acts in this way brings you to a sense of who you are and who your business is with but then the third point I wanted to highlight was this covenant love comforts comforts him David said unto him verse 7 fear not it's the first thing fear not and then secondly I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake thirdly I will restore thee all the land of

Saul thy father and fourthly thou shalt eat bread at my table continually what an amazing comfort that must have been the first thing is don't be afraid there's no reason to fear the reason I have sent for you is that I love you because I loved your father Jonathan and because a covenant commitment and promise I had made to him because he loved me and I loved him as our own souls as if we were one and then he said fear not don't be afraid the second thing he says is I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan's sake listen this through with ourselves when we come to know the

Lord we realize we are not worthy of the least of his mercies it's only for Jesus sake it's only for his sake all that he is and all that he has done we don't deserve any good thing but he deserves it all and he is happy to dispense the covenant blessings to us through his spirit in the gospel day by day I will show you kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake and there are so many kindnesses that the Lord shows us kindness in providence kindness in grace kindness in keeping things from us kindness in bestowing things upon us kindness in giving us direction and so on and so on and we all know aspects of the Lord's kindness to ourselves as individuals when you think back you realise there he was and there he was that was his help and that was his enabling that enabled me to do all of that

[ 24 : 00 ] I will show you kindness for Jonathan's sake and then I will restore you all the land of Saul his father I was thinking how we can apply that in a spiritual sense and this is what I came up with thinking about it that when the Lord brings grace into our hearts the saving grace of eternal life he not only restores to us the status of sons he does that Adam was a son of God but those who are in Christ they are sons of God in a more amazing way than even Adam was what do I mean by that I mean that Adam certainly was sinless and a righteous individual but he had the righteousness of Adam the perfect man those who are in Christ they are sons of

God and they have the righteousness of Christ which is a greater privilege and a more amazing blessing than even Adam had in his state of sinless perfection the Lord Jesus Christ he makes he has made provision for us through his obedient life and atoning death and he makes over to us the righteousness of God in him and through him and we are now righteous in him and there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus who walk after the spirit restore the old land of Saul thy father and it says thou shalt eat bread at my table continually I wonder what the conversation would be around the table with David and Mephibosheth and the rest of the king's sons well I feel sure that very very often the conversation would drift to something about

Jonathan David would talk with great delight about his knowledge of Jonathan and whatever memory Mephibosheth had of Jonathan his father I don't know but he would be keen to hear David's take on the love that existed between himself and Jonathan his father and when David would look around the table his own sons he had a number of sons there would be Mephibosheth and every time he would see his face he would see the likeness of Jonathan and is that true with ourselves also when we meet around the gospel table who is our focus is it is it not true that it is the face of Jesus

Christ that you seek to see show me your glory Moses said of old and every time you open the scriptures is in this your prayer show me your glory show me a glimpse of yourself O Lord my Saviour the church of God in the Song of Solomon in the opening verses of the Song chapter 1 let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth for your love is better than wine you shall eat bread at my table continually he said and the gospel table is laden with the bread of life and here it is the word of God contained in the scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments from the first word in Genesis to the last word in Revelation and the people of

God feed upon it and they see Jesus in it and they have fellowship with Jesus as they read and hear the word of God expounded to them and what is he saying where he he bowed himself and said what is thy servant that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am he feels so unworthy he feels so different in himself to the marvelous provision that's made for him he feels the opposite to what King David is saying about you're like a king's son you're going to be sitting at my table you're going to be among the great of the land

[ 29 : 54 ] I just feel like a dead dog well you know that the dead dog is the worst possible picture of anything so far as the Jews were concerned good for nothing repulsive but that's the way he felt in himself and that's the way the people of God feel about themselves they know what their sin is like they know their failings their shortcomings they know that in them not one good thing dwells as they are in themselves but you see David had sent for him because of a covenant commitment he had made because of covenant love and he sent for him and brought him and gave him promises and comforts and then from verse 9 to the end of the chapter he makes marvelous provision for him the king called to

Ziba Saul's servant and said to him I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to his house thou therefore and thy sons and thy servants shall till the land for him thou shall bring in the fruits that thy master's son may have fruit to eat but Mephibosheth thy servants you see there was a team of people there that were engaged to provide for Mephibosheth's needs day by day and that says nothing when you compare it with the provision the Lord has for us his people we have access to the

Lord himself the giver of every good and perfect gift he is the God of grace able to supply all our needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus he is able to give us food to feed us physically and spiritually able to give us strength to serve able to give us everything we stand in need of and what's more the angels of heaven are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants the angels of the Lord are 20,000 strong hundreds of thousands and one angel sent to help you is able to do so according to

God's purpose Mr Macaulay used to say it's only when we reach the end of our journey in glory that we'll realise the input the angels of glory have had in our protection in our reading in our guiding in providing for us the angels are ministering spirits Ziba he was drafted in to provide for Mephibosheth's needs so verse 13 Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem for he did eat continually at the king's table and he was lame on both his feet I don't think his lameness posed any problem to David at all

I think David was happy to have him near him and happy to bestow upon him out of the riches that he himself had because he was a man who had made a covenant commitment in love and he was seeing it through it was his delight to serve this man who was lame on both his feet and how much more is our Lord Jesus taking delight in providing for us his people knowing your lameness knowing our short sightedness knowing everything concerning us he is able to give us out of his fullness and grace for grace every day of our lives covenant love expressed covenant love in action covenant comforts given and covenant provision made it's a little picture of something that is marvelous in the way of salvation may God bless these thoughts to us let us pray help us oh Lord to be thankful and that we have your own word as a rule of faith and life and give us to see the glory of your dealings with your people as we have sought to discover some of these things this evening in the dealings that David had with

[ 36 : 25 ] Mephibosheth of old we thank you for your eternal covenant and you will never break your covenant and out of that covenant commitment you will provide for the needs of all of your people however much they need you are more than able to supply all their needs according to your riches and glory by Christ Jesus bless this congregation we pray and as we have heard remember those who are laid aside we ask that you would bless trials and afflictions to people that these things might be the means of bringing people close to yourself and enabling them to commit themselves to you as the one who is able to do for them exceeding abundantly above what we are able to ask or even think forgive every sin we pray in Jesus name amen it is now conclude our worship singing from psalm 103 and verses 1 to 5 5 to God's praise

O thou my soul bless God the Lord O thou my soul bless God the Lord and all that in me is God no and not forget for thee.

Of all his gracious benefits, he hath destroyed on thee.

All thine iniquities, who doth most graciously forgive, who thy diseases on our face, that he hath dearly.

Who doth redeem thy life, that thou to death may not go down, who dear with loving kindness, that my tender mercy's down, who will not like thy song, good things, that satisfy thy mouth.

[ 40 : 44 ] So that ye must be the usage, renew it is by you.

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest upon and abide with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.

Amen.