

# Mephibosheth at the king's table

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, could you please turn back with me to the passage we did in 2 Samuel chapter 9. 2 Samuel chapter 9.

We're focusing on the whole chapter, but if you look with me, especially at verse 13. 2 Samuel 9 from verse 13.

So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king's table. Now he was lame in both his feet.

And especially those words, he ate always at the king's table. The Old Testament is glorious because it constantly and consistently heralds to us that Jesus, the king, is coming.

And the announcement really begins in Genesis chapter 3 verse 15, where we have this promise, this pronouncement of a seed who will come from the woman who will crush the head of the serpent.

[ 1 : 06 ] And so we might dare to say today that Jesus is on every page of the Old Testament, just as he is on every page of the New Testament.

And perhaps no one points us more to Jesus than King David, who so often serves as a type and a foreshadowing of the greater kings still to come.

And who often sings prophetically of the greater kings still to come. And so as we prepare to sit at the king's table tomorrow, I want us to focus on another man, this man Mephibosheth, who sat at King David's table.

And what he has to teach us about what we receive from Jesus. For those of you who are taking notes, there's three things that we find in this passage. The basis of the king's kindness, the object of the king's kindness, and finally the measure of the king's kindness.

First we have the basis of the king's kindness in verses 1 to 3. And in these verses, David desires to keep the promise he made to his friend. David desires to keep the promise that he made to his friend.

[ 2 : 18 ] You remember the context. David is now the undisputed king of Israel and Judah. He has seen all of his enemies crushed. Jerusalem is now his capital. And the ark of the Lord, symbolizing the presence of the Lord, the worship of the Lord, it's all concentrated in Jerusalem.

And in 2 Samuel 7, the Lord has promised that David's descendants will reign forever. A promise that is fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus. So David is safe.

He is comfortable. He is secure. He's got it made. And this brings us to the question of David in verse 1. Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

Now you remember that Saul was the king who had spent the latter part of his reign trying to destroy David until he himself was killed in battle by the Philistines. But David was close friends with Saul's son Jonathan.

And he had promised Jonathan that he would preserve his family because both David and Jonathan recognized and realized that David was the Lord's chosen anointed king.

[ 3 : 29 ] And it was a serious promise. It was a solemn promise. It was a covenant promise where David effectively said he would be willing to die if he didn't keep this promise.

And now in 2 Samuel 9, David wants to make sure that he is keeping this promise. He wants to show, we're told in verse 1, kindness.

Literally, loyal love. Enduring love. Faithful love. Promise keeping love. Covenant love. Now this is an important point to note.

David wanted to show kindness to Saul's family, not simply because he felt like it, but because he had made a promise. You see, there will be times when we don't feel like following Jesus, but we

have made a promise to follow him through the good and through the bad.

It is not always about feelings. It is about objective promises. We might think of the story of B.B. Warfield, the esteemed theologian at Princeton Theological Seminary in the 19th century.

[ 4 : 40 ] His books are still known and read today. But what's not so well known is the story of his marriage. Warfield was pursuing his studies in Germany in 1876, and that time also doubled as a honeymoon with his wife Annie.

They were on a walking tour in the mountains when they were caught in a terrific thunderstorm, and the experience was such a shock to Annie that she never fully recovered, becoming more or less an invalid for life.

Warfield only left her for his seminary duties, but never for more than two hours at any given time. His work was almost entirely limited to Princeton and to the care of his wife for 39 years.

One of his students noted that when he saw the Warfields out walking together, the gentleness of his manner was striking proof of the loving care with which he surrounded her for 39 years.

All because he had promised to love her in sickness and in health. And that is the kind of loyal love. That is the kind of enduring love.

[ 5 : 45 ] That is the kind of faithful love. That is the kind of promise-keeping love that David showed to Saul's family, and that we are encouraged to demonstrate toward the Lord Jesus, and to demonstrate toward other people faithfulness, commitment, love, not simply because we feel like it, but because we have promised it.

And so in verse 3, David calls for Ziba, a servant in Saul's household, and he asks Ziba in verse 3, Is there not still someone of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God to him?

And look at the response of Ziba in verse 3. Ziba has heard David's question, and he responds, There is still a son of Jonathan. He is crippled in both his feet.

Now it's interesting to note that Ziba doesn't use Mephibosheth's name. He instead focuses on his deformity and disability. Ziba is a man who looks at the outward appearance.

And you know, there can be times maybe when we are like Ziba. Or maybe we see other people around us behaving like Ziba. And we focus primarily on the physical appearance of others, rather than seeing what is of eternal value to God.

[ 7 : 04 ] And we might even focus on what is wrong with a person. We might even be tempted to focus on their past and dwell on their past, rather than believing that God is a God of second chances.

Fresh starts, new beginnings, new creation, grace. One of the dominating themes of the books of Samuel is that man looks on the outward appearance, but what does God look at?

He looks at the heart. He looks at the soul of the matter. Father, so David, we see, desires to keep the promise that he made to his friend.

And you know, we have a God. We have a Jesus who keeps promises. Do you remember in Gethsemane, as Jesus comprehends the reality of dying on the cross, and Jesus prays, Father, if it is possible, then let this cup pass me by.

Why, Father, is it possible? And his father turns and says, No, my son, it is not possible. And Jesus says, as it were, Why isn't it possible, Father?

[ 8 : 12 ] Why isn't it possible that this cup pass? And his father says, Because we promised. We made a covenant to save people from every tribe, every tongue, every people, every nation.

We made a covenant in eternity. You promised to be their Savior. You gave your word. And Jesus says, But they hate me. And they misunderstand me.

And even Peter, my closest friend, is going to deny with curses that he knows me. And even Judas, who ate with me and slept next to me, is going to betray me with a kiss of death.

And his father says, I know, my son, I know. But we promised. And you gave your word. And so Jesus says, How far do you want me to go, Father?

How far are you willing that I go? And his father responds, To the very end, my son, to the end. To the cross at Calvary. To the place where you will have to scream in agony, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[ 9 : 16 ] To that very point where you will be left with nothing more to say Than it is finished. And Jesus gets up. And he says to his disciples, Let us go.

As he marches toward the cross. You see, at this communion, We celebrate Jesus' kindness toward us in the gospel. We celebrate his love toward us in the gospel.

But it is a kindness and it is a love That isn't simply based on how he feels about us. But it is a love and it is a kindness That is based on what he has promised us.

What he has covenanted for us. There is a world of difference simply Between saying we are loved by Jesus Based on how he feels about us. And we are loved by Jesus on the basis Of what he has promised us.

And that is the basis of the king's kindness That we have in verses 1 to 3. This then brings us to the object of the king's kindness In verses 4 to 6.

[10:25] And in these verses we see that Mephibosheth is a man with nothing going for him. He is a recipient of grace. Mephibosheth is a man with nothing going for him.

He is a recipient of grace. Let's just consider Mephibosheth's past. He is a grandson of Saul. His grandfather had made it public policy To hunt David down and try to kill him.

And he is crippled. When his family were killed in battle His nurse picked him up to run away with him But she dropped him, leaving him lame in both his feet. And for the rest of his life Mephibosheth would be defined by his disability.

He would never be able to walk. He would never be able to earn a steady income. But let's consider also Mephibosheth's present. He is called Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth.

Now that's an interesting name. You remember in the Bible that whenever a person is given a name Their name speaks about their character Who they are, what they are And the name Mephibosheth means shameful thing.

[11:25] And he is living in this place we're told called Lodabar. He has been dispossessed of his family property His family inheritance And is living at this location Which means no pasture.

And so we have here the crippled grandson of Saul Whose name means shameful thing Living at no pasture. No wonder he calls himself in verse 8 A dead dog.

He is in a hopeless, helpless condition. But let's also consider Mephibosheth's future. You see everyone in David's day knew that it was standard practice That when one king was removed And another king put in place That the new king would remove all the family members Of the previous regime To prevent rebellion.

Mephibosheth now hears a knock at the door And the men say David wants to see you. When I was a pupil in Invergordon Academy We had a tannoy system Whereby the head teacher was able to address the whole school And whenever one pupil was misbehaving Especially the head teacher would call over the tannoy system Would so and so come to my office And bring your bag And you knew when that announcement was read out That that pupil wasn't coming back again They were finished They were done Well here is David And here is Mephibosheth And Mephibosheth has seen his father murdered He's seen his uncles killed He's seen his grandfather butchered And now David's soldiers come to Mephibosheth's house And they say to him David wants to see you Mephibosheth And bring your bags Mephibosheth probably thinks Well this is it This is how I'm going to die I'm going to be taken to Jerusalem The last surviving member of Saul's household And I am going to be killed

As an example to the rest of the nation Mephibosheth is convinced That judgment waits for him in the future But let's consider David's first words to Mephibosheth Verses 5 and 6 David has Mephibosheth brought to him Verse 5 He is sent for The word in Hebrew is literally Fetched You see David has not just sent for Mephibosheth And told him to pick up his crutches And make his way toward Jerusalem No David has also provided the means for Mephibosheth To come to him It is a wonderful picture of grace Where Jesus doesn't simply invite us to come to him Wonderful though that is Jesus opens the way for us to come to him And he provides the means The very faith For us to come to him He wants to level every obstacle Every mountain Between us and him And as soon as Mephibosheth stands before David

[14:12] David speaks words of grace to him Look at what David says in verse 6 He doesn't call him cripple He doesn't call him my enemy's grandson He doesn't even call him my best friend's boy Unlike Ziba David calls him by name Mephibosheth Can you imagine what would be going on In Mephibosheth's head when he heard this The king knows my name This king knows my name And King Jesus knows your name today And he calls you personally by name And he calls you intimately by name And if you are a Christian He calls you to come And join him at the communion table For fellowship And for communion And for oneness You are significant to Jesus You are loved by Jesus You are treasured by Jesus Your names as we saw last night Are graven on the very palms of Jesus

You are loved by him Your hairs are numbered by him Mephibosheth we see Is a man with nothing going for him He is a recipient of David's grace And Mephibosheth friends Is a picture of every single one of us Because Mephibosheth is a picture Of the helplessness And the hopelessness And the lostness That we know and experience Before we embrace Jesus by faith Because without Jesus We all have pasts That we regret And that we are ashamed of And without Jesus We all have presents That cripple us And leave us feeling Absolutely helpless And without Jesus We all have futures That we can despair over Without Jesus We are broken by sin We are wallowing in shame We are wandering with no satisfaction And gloomy uncertainty And the prospect of judgment Staring us in the face And yet friends We have Jesus We have the one greater than David We have the one heralded in the gospel Jesus is the one who draws the crushed And the helpless And the broken And the lost to himself And Jesus is the one who brings those who are weak To himself And Jesus is the one who speaks words of comfort And words of blessing And words of grace To the depressed And to the distressed He is the one who will not break A bruised reed And he is the one who will not quench A burning wick Jesus friends Knows what we have done in the past And he knows what we are doing in the present And he even knows what we will do in the future And despite all of this He still says I want you And I love you It is amazing

There are people In probably Every one of our lives Who if they knew what we had done in the past Knew what we are doing in the present And possibly even knew what we might do in the future They might say We don't want anything to do with you And they would wash their hands of us But there is a Jesus who knows the very worst about us And he says I still want you I still love you And this communion season friends Is a time for us to reflect Yes on the worth of Jesus But it is also time for us to marvel And rejoice in the fact That this worthy Jesus Sees his people as being precious And says to them You have captivated my heart And if you are a Christian today And even if you feel like you are the most backslidden Christian today

This Jesus says You have captivated my heart Your eyes overwhelm me It is amazing The value that he puts on his children That is the object of the king's kindness And this brings us finally to the measure Of the king's kindness In verses 7-13 And we see that Mephibosheth enjoys the privileges Of being in King David's family Mephibosheth enjoys the privileges Of being in King David's family Let's consider how David could have responded to Mephibosheth It's obvious All David's contemporaries would have been quick To put Mephibosheth to death It was logical It was acceptable It was the standard practice It was political astuteness And also consider the thoughts That perhaps entered David's head Thoughts that maybe entered your head As you read the narrative

[19:17] Jonathan was dead Why keep a promise made to a dead man? Not only that No one else knew about the covenant That David and Jonathan had made together David wasn't going to have the nation turn against him For breaking a promise that they knew nothing about And not only that The covenant had been made 20 years previously Time changes things Things move on How often do we hear people say things like that Today That was then This is now I can be different I can change my mind Well let's consider how David actually responds In verse 7 David promises Mephibosheth a pardon He says Don't fear For I will surely show you kindness For the sake of your father Jonathan What wonderful words for this man Mephibosheth to hear Don't be afraid For I will show you loyal love Enduring love Faithful love Promise keeping love Don't be afraid

I forgive you And I forgive you because of the promise I made to your father Not because of anything you have done But David also promises Mephibosheth provision He says in verse 7 I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul What Mephibosheth and his family had lost David says I am going to restore And not only that David promises Mephibosheth a position He says in verse 7 You will always eat at my table Now the table was the place where the king and his family would gather together It was a mark of great favour To be able to eat at the king's table To dine at the king's table Was to enjoy the favour of the king It was to enjoy the protection of the king It was to enjoy the prosperity of the king It was to enjoy the power of the king The presence of the king The peace of the king And so when David welcomes Mephibosheth to his table

He is effectively adopting Mephibosheth Into his royal family As we listen to David's words to Mephibosheth We are hearing words of superabundant grace You see David's provision for Mephibosheth Goes above and beyond what he had promised Jonathan David doesn't merely spare Mephibosheth He heaps goodness on him David not only provides for Mephibosheth He

restores his lost inheritance David not only saves Mephibosheth from the shadow of death He prepares a table for him As the good shepherd And isn't that the essence of the gospel? That Jesus gives us above and beyond what we deserve Or could imagine The gospel writer John says From Jesus we receive grace upon grace Superabundant grace Overflowing grace Jesus friends not only dies for us Wonderful though that is He adopts us Into his very family It is astounding Where the living God Not only says I forgive you But he says You are my child And this brings us to the conclusion In verses 8 to 13 All Mephibosheth can say in verse 8 Is what is your servant That you should show regard For a dead dog such as I?

I used to have a pet rabbit When I lived in Thurzel And I would often go to The pets at home shop To buy his food And I'd have a look at What other people were buying For their pets And I would see The levels that people would go to To look after their dogs They would have coats for their dogs And they would have kennels And they would have cushions And they would have toys And they would have All manner of things Just for their dogs It was as if they Cared more about their dogs Than they did about their own families But the life of a dog In the biblical period Was a life of squalor And poverty It was the life of a pariah At the bottom of the social scale Dogs were seen as being Unclean scavengers Who would eat the crumbs From the table of humans And so when Mephibosheth Calls himself in verse 8 A dead dog He is calling himself An embarrassing piece of garbage With no rights No status No worth Unworthy to sit At the king's table Unworthy to receive crumbs From the king's table

[ 23 : 52 ] Mephibosheth is astounded That David would pardon him That David would provide for him That David would give him A position in his family Mephibosheth is saying This is all too much This is above and beyond My wildest dreams And you know friends I would love us this weekend Not to lose our awe At the super abundant grace of Jesus I would love us this weekend To come to his table Effectively saying This is all so much This is above and beyond What I deserve Or could possibly imagine Because I think One of the devil's key tricks With Christians Is he enables us To find the gospel Bland Boring And routine And we are no longer amazed That the son of God Would love us

And give himself for us The story then concludes In verses 9 to 13 Then the king calls Ziba Saul's servant And said to him All that belong to Saul And to his house I have given to your master's grandson And you and your sons And your servant 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 Then Ziba said to the king According to all that my lord The king commands his servants 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 his feet In these verses we are reminded That Mephibosheth enjoys the privileges

The reality of being In king David's family And this weekend we come To celebrate what Jesus has given us We come to celebrate the privileges Of being in the king's family We come to celebrate What we have at the king's table Because Jesus gives us a royal pardon Perhaps we fear at times about our past We fear about our present We fear about our future We're afraid of what God thinks of us We're afraid about what God knows about us And Jesus says Peace Be still Do not be afraid I forgive you And if I am for you Who can be against you?

Who can separate you from the love of God That is yours In Christ Jesus? But Jesus also gives us a provision Our first parents Adam and Eve Lost a garden And Jesus promises us paradise And you might be saying here today Well I'm too far gone And I've messed up so often And maybe Jesus will give me the very basics If I am lucky Maybe he will tolerate me Maybe he'll just forgive me But paradise Well that is too much But do you remember the thief on the cross?

There was that man at the 11th hour Who had lived his life apart from the living God And he turned to the Lord Jesus And said Just remember me When you enter your kingdom What did Jesus say? [ 27 : 27 ] Did he say Well I'll acknowledge you Did he say Well we'll think about it Or did he say Well you're too far gone my friend Not at all He said Today You will be with me In paradise And Jesus not only gives us a pardon And a provision But he also gives us a position He brings us into his family Where we become heirs of all that belongs to him And we can even call his father The living God Our father In heaven God Jesus Jesus doesn't need to love us today And yet he does And the apostle Paul writes God demonstrates his own love for us in this While we were still sinners

Christ died for us And his love extends so far That he is willing to adopt us Into his heavenly family  
So that we Tomorrow Might sit at his table

As his children At this communion We come to celebrate the fact That Jesus is so kind He is the  
one full of loyal love Full of enduring love Full of faithful love Full of promise keeping love And on  
the night that he was betrayed Having loved his own to the end He goes to the cross For them And  
if your confidence Is in him today If your faith is in him today If your belief is in him today If your trust  
is in him today No matter how shaking Or wavering That faith and belief And confidence is You can  
know that he went To that cross for you That you may sit at his table Because friends It is never  
about The quality of our faith It is never about The length of our faith Or the breadth of our faith Or  
the height of our faith Or the width of our faith That saves us It is the object of our faith It is Jesus  
who saves us

And so let's go to him now And let's worship him For the great measure With which he loved us A  
love that surpassed the love That David showed Toward Mephibosheth Amen May God bless these  
thoughts to us Amen