

# Crippled, yet Called

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, if we could turn back to the chapter that we read together in 2 Samuel chapter 9.

I'd like us to look at the whole chapter together, but if we were to take any words as our text this morning, perhaps we could take the words of verse 7, 2 Samuel 9 and verse 7.

And David said to him, Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul, your father, and you shall eat at my table always. And he paid homage and said, What is your servant that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I? And you shall eat at my table always.

And the chapter that we have before us here is arguably one that shows King David's actions to be more Christ-like than that of any other part of his life. One commentator even goes so far as to say that the words that we have before us here describe the golden era of King David's life.

Here we see David, the king of Israel, showing kindness to the most unlikely of characters, Mephibosheth. And the circumstances surrounding this narrative, I believe, have an awful lot to teach us this morning. And what I'd like us to do is just to go through the chapter together under three headings.

[ 1 : 53 ] I'd like us, first of all, to look at the first part of the chapter where we see the call of David to Mephibosheth. I'd like us to look at Mephibosheth's response to this call. And then finally for us to look at the consequence of Mephibosheth's response. The call, the response, and the consequence.

Now it is, of course, a king's prerogative, if you like, to call for whoever he wants, whenever he wants. And here in verses one to five, we see King David calling for a man called Mephibosheth. But who was this man, Mephibosheth? And why is it that the king of Israel wants to see him? Well, we know from the text that Mephibosheth was living in the house of Machar, the son of Amiel, in a place called Lodabar. Now literally, the word Lodabar means a place of no pasture.

This was a wilderness, a dry and a barren land, a place where not much was growing. So we know that he came from Lodabar. We also know that he was crippled on both feet.

Now the chapter before us doesn't tell us how he became crippled. We have to go to 2 Samuel 4.4 to find out how that happened. We read there that as a child, Mephibosheth was dropped by his nurse.

[ 3 : 34 ] As she frantically tried to escape after Israel was defeated by the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, she dropped Mephibosheth. And in dropping him, she left him lame on his feet for the rest of his life.

Now we don't really know much about his upbringing. We don't read anything of what happened to him as he was growing up. But I think it's fair to surmise that as he was growing up, he would have found life difficult.

He wouldn't have been able to play with his friends, to run around with the other younger children. And even as he became an adult, he would have found it very difficult to physically contribute to his community.

Putting it quite bluntly, in his culture at that time, Mephibosheth would have been classed as a bit of an outcast in society.

But you know, that's not the most surprising reason as to why the king wants to see Mephibosheth. The fact that he's calling to see this crippled man.

[ 4 : 44 ] There's something even more surprising. And that is down to who Mephibosheth was. You see, Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan and the grandson of Saul.

Saul had been the previous king before David. And normally, when there was a new dynasty, in this case, the dynasty of King David, the new dynasty would do all that they could to get rid of anything that was from the old regime, to prevent any kind of conspiracy against the new king.

We see an example of this in 1 Kings 15, where Basha conspired against and subsequently murdered Nadab. And so effectively, Mephibosheth should have been an enemy of David.

You know, I think right throughout this chapter, we see many different pictures. But in Mephibosheth, we see such a clear picture of the sinner.

Because just like Mephibosheth, each and every one of us gathered here this morning, we have all been crippled as a result of a fall.

[ 6 : 05 ] Now, of course, I'm not talking about a physical form in the same way that Mephibosheth was crippled. I am, of course, talking about the very fact that we have all fallen in Adam.

And because of the fact that we've all fallen in Adam, we have been left crippled to the very core of our being by sin. The sin that's left such a visible mark on each and every one of us.

It has broken out original communion with the King of Kings himself. And consequently, we find ourselves limping through life.

We find ourselves looking to everything and anything in order to keep us steady and to get us through life. But yet, if we're being completely honest with ourselves, so often as we find ourselves limping through life as a result of sin, we find that we're getting nowhere.

And often we ask ourselves the question, what is this all about? Mephibosheth, as we read, was living in a place called Lodbar, which means wilderness or barren place, and so it is with us.

[ 7 : 29 ] If you're here this morning and you do not know Christ as your own personal Saviour friend, you are in your very own Lodbar. You find yourself in that wilderness, in that dry and barren place.

You find yourself wandering aimlessly without any real lasting meaning or purpose. And so at this point, you may be forgiven for thinking that King David is summoning Mephibosheth to him so that he could have him killed.

Yet that's not what the text says before us. David's motives here are quite the opposite. He doesn't say, is there anyone still left in the house of Saul that I may kill him?

What he says is, is there anyone still left in the house of Saul so that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

Now it's at this point we can see why some of the commentators have said that this is indeed the golden era of David's life. And the clue as to why this is can be found in these simple words, for Jonathan's sake.

[ 8 : 51 ] If we go back to 1 Samuel 20, we read that 15 or 20 years earlier, David had promised to Jonathan not to cut off his steadfast love, his everlasting love from his house, from his family.

At this time, Saul was king, Jonathan was a prince, and David was basically a fugitive who posed little or no threat to anyone.

And so, fast forward 15 or 20 years later, it's amazing how things can change so quickly in such a short period of time. Fast forward 15 or 20 years later, and here we see David, here himself the king, with a desire in his heart to see this promise fulfilled.

Now in many ways, it would have been the easiest thing in the world for David to have allowed the change in his circumstance, to have allowed his position, to somehow forget that promise.

But he didn't. At this point in David's life, I'm not saying that we see this all throughout David's life, but at this point in David's life, we see him acting as a man of his word, a man of integrity.

[ 10 : 15 ] He had promised Jonathan that he would show kindness to his house, and when he finds out, when he sends a servant to see if there is anyone left living from this house of Saul, when he finds out that Mephibosheth is still alive, he wants nothing more than to keep his word.

Now bearing in mind, David would have known very little about this man. This man, Mephibosheth, he could have been trouble. He could have posed a threat.

He could have conspired against the king. Yet David was far more willing to take this risk, because he knew that in not keeping his promise, that was a far greater risk in his relationship with his Lord.

This is such a lesson to us this morning. At times, we can all take truth so lightly.

Allow me to ask you, have you ever broken a promise? Have you ever perhaps made a promise with someone, telling them that, yes, you would do this for them, or yes, you promised you will be there for them, but somehow your circumstances have changed, or their circumstances have changed, and you've written that promise off?

[ 11 : 49 ] I'm sure we've all done that at some point in our life, but you know, this passage, I think, tells us that we can, we should follow the example of David, that we are to be men and women of

integrity, men and women of our word.

Yes, we may forget promises. Even the people we make promises to may forget that we've made them. But we must always, friends, be mindful of the fact, as David was himself, that all of our actions are known of God.

And so, Mephibosheth is sent for by the king, and if we have a picture of the sinner in Mephibosheth, we equally have a picture of the saviour in David.

David's love for Mephibosheth and desiring to show him kindness shouldn't really have happened. He was a cripple. He was an outcast in society. He was, his lineage, if you like, made him an enemy to the royal household.

But that didn't stop David fulfilling his covenant obligations. And you know, his actions, they so clearly mirror Christ's love for his people.

[13:12] This morning, friends, as you sit here, Christ is also calling you. He is calling you to be his own. Like Mephibosheth, we are all the most unlikely of candidates to be called to the royal household.

We are, of course, crippled by sin. And we read in the word of God that the Lord is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, than to look on evil.

And Romans 5 tells us that we are enemies of God. And so in many ways, God has every right to turn his back on us and tell us that he's not interested.

But he doesn't do that. Notice the words of verse 3. Is there not still someone of the house of Saul that I might show the kindness of God to him?

I love those words. Is there not still? Mephibosheth was still alive. He was still able to receive the covenant blessings of the king.

[14:28] He was still able to be brought into the royal court because the day of opportunity was still there. And so it is with you.

If you do not know Christ for yourself, this morning, if you are yet to call him your king, this is a day of opportunity.

You are here, and the gospel call is going out to you. And in this gospel call, God is making promises to you in the same way that David did to Jonathan.

these promises aren't like the promises that the world makes to us. We're constantly getting promises from the world and the media and society, all these promises bombarding us.

If we do this, if we are that, our lives will be complete. But all these promises are so false because time and time again they are broken. But here, God is making us promises in his word.

[15:38] He is promising that if we seek him, we will find him. He is promising that all those who are weary and are heavy laden, if they come to him, that he will give them rest.

He is promising that all those who call upon his name will be saved. Dear unconverted friend here this morning, he is calling you today.

And not only is he calling you today, but he is calling you each and every time you sit in this church or a church like it under the sound of the gospel.

My question for you is this. How do you respond? Mephibosheth responds to David's call.

And that brings us to our second point, Mephibosheth's response. Now Mephibosheth was well aware of who he was. He was well aware of the fact that he was a descendant of the previous king.

[16:47] And he knew only too well that the consequences, what the consequences were, should King David ever catch up with him. David didn't know that there was any of King Jonathan's family still alive because Mephibosheth, for obvious reasons, he was living a quiet life underneath the radar, if you like.

So when David finally does track down Mephibosheth Mephibosheth, and he's summoned to the royal court, you can just imagine how he would have felt.

And there's nothing to suggest that Mephibosheth was aware of this covenant that had been made between David and his father, and so when he was summoned to the royal court, there is absolutely no doubt that he would have been terrified.

He would have been fearing that this was it. His life was about to come to an end. We can see this in verse 6 when he arrives before King David.

He helplessly falls on his face in reverence, awaiting his fate. But yet, when we look at King David's response, and that one word that is so beautiful and reassuring, we can see that he had got it all wrong.

[18:16] Because David responds with that one word, Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth is not questioned, he's not interrogated, but rather he is called by his name, by one who desired to show him kindness.

And I can't help thinking that there was perhaps something in the voice of David that reassured Mephibosheth, that told him that everything was going to be okay.

Because straight away in hearing that word, what does Mephibosheth say? He says, Behold, I am your servant. Right at that point, he had a desire, a desire, a desire to serve the king.

David can obviously still see the anxiety in Mephibosheth's faiths, and he reassures him further with the words, Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan.

Amen. This is such a picture of what it is for us to hear the voice of God calling us in the gospel.

[19:35] I think it's fair to say that at times, perhaps this is even you this morning, you are, you are too scared to respond. you are too scared as to what might happen if you are converted.

Like Mephibosheth, you may even have talked yourself into thinking that if you come to know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, that your life will somehow be over.

But when, friends, the Lord calls you personally, when he calls you by your name, when you hear his voice for yourself, you'll soon, you'll soon realize that this couldn't be further from the truth.

You see, Mephibosheth had, for all these years, he'd been living in bondage. Yes, he might have thought he was free because he was not under the hand of the current reigning king, but the fact is that he would have been living his life looking over his shoulder.

He would have been living his life unsure as to when that moment would come where he would be finally caught. And if you're here today, and if in your heart you too are on the run from Jesus, let me tell you because I've been there myself, you are in bondage.

[21:06] You are trapped. You are trapped by the temporary things of this world. But you know, when you hear the voice of God calling you by your name, you will be brought by the power of the Holy Spirit to that place where you too bow down before the king with the words on your lip, Behold, I am your servant.

And as soon as you utter these words in your heart, you will know a freedom, a release that you have never known before.

You will be released from that prison that you have found yourself in year after year after year. Do you not want to know this for yourself?

Have you yet submitted to Christ? We see in verse 8, Mephibosheth asking David, What is your servant that you should show regard for such a dead dog such as I?

Now, a dead dog was one of the most humiliating images that there were. To be called a dead dog was the lowest of the low.

[22:28] You may think that you are a dead dog. You may think that you have stooped to such depths of darkness and depravity that you're so crippled by sin that you're almost irredeemable, that God wants nothing to do with you.

Or perhaps you're sitting here in the twilight years of your life and you think that your time has passed by, that your time for salvation has gone and that you have no chance.

Well, friends, this could not be further from the truth because as you sit here on Kenneth Street this morning, you are still on mercy's ground.

No matter what your past is, no matter what you have done, no matter what you haven't done, all the Lord desires of you this morning is that you respond to the gospel call while it is yet time.

Now imagine how foolish Mephibosheth would have been if he had turned round and he had neglected that call to the king. Imagine all the blessings that he would have missed out on.

[23:52] we read in verses 9 to 13, and this is very briefly our final point, we read of the consequence of Mephibosheth's response. for 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 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 in making this promise to Jonathan, all David really had to do was to spare the life of Mephibosheth.

All he had to do was to ensure that the house of Saul was retained, if you like, and that they weren't killed. But what we see here is David going far beyond any bare requirement.

Because not only does he spare Mephibosheth's life, he also gives back to him all that belonged to his grandfather. He restores to him all of Saul's inheritance.

Now this in itself was far more than Mephibosheth could ever have dreamed of. But yet there was more. Because we read in verse 11 that Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.

[ 25 : 35 ] Not only was his life spared, not only was his inheritance returned, but Mephibosheth was adopted into the royal family.

He was made a partaker of the richest affair. And you know this is such a lovely picture of the consequences of following Christ.

Consequences in the positive sense of the word. Ephesians 3.20 tells us that he is able to do far more abundantly than that we ask or think.

And so it is when you come to know Christ as your own personal saviour, you are truly able to say that he has brought you into his banqueting house where there is such a feast of good things on offer, that he has brought you into his banqueting house and that his banner over you is love.

You are adopted into the royal family as a child of God and you are made a partaker of spiritual blessings above and beyond that that the world could ever give you.

[ 26 : 50 ] Do you not this morning desire that for yourself? Friends, this wasn't a one-off. Verse 13 tells us that he ate at the king's table always.

And you know, that's an encouragement to any of us here, any Christian here this morning who are perhaps feeling that they've lost their way with the Lord, that they're not where they once were as a Christian, that perhaps they've lost their zeal and their love for the things of Christ.

Well, let me reassure you that if you've ever taken your place at that table, you will always remain there, once in Christ, always in Christ, but yet you have that responsibility, you have that responsibility, to reach forward and to take and to feast upon all of the riches of Christ that are to be found in his word, that are to be found in his house, that are to be found in the fellowship of his people.

Chapter ends with the words, now he was lame on both his feet. Mephibosheth was sitting at the king's table, but he was still lame.

However, as he sat at that table, his legs would have been covered by the table, and so as he was called into the presence of the king, as he was feasting with the king, the king wouldn't have been able to see the fact that he was crippled, that he was lame.

[ 28 : 39 ] And when we are called into the presence of the king, we are not asked to come and to first of all become well.

We are not asked to come to this table as perfect saints. We are asked to come with all our infirmities, all our frailties, because when we sit at that table, when we can call him our king, all of our sins, they are covered too.

They are covered by that precious shed blood of the lamb. And when they are covered, we are able to cry out in our heart, as adopted sons and daughters, Abba, Father.

Our sins have been cast into the depths of the sea, as far as east is distant from the west, so far as he removed from us our sin.

But you know, the consequence of us responding to the call of Christ, it goes far beyond the things of time. For the Christian, that's just the beginning.

[ 29 : 59 ] because although we've been adopted into the family of God, the best is yet to come. As children of the King, we have been granted the most wonderful inheritance.

We read in Romans 8, 17, that as children of God, we are heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. What are we heirs of? We are heirs of a restored inheritance, just like Mephibosheth, a restored inheritance that is imperishable, that is undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for us.

Yes, if you are in Christ, you have fallen in Adam, but you will be raised perfectly in Christ and you will take your place at that marriage supper of the Lamb, enjoying heavenly sinless communion with King Jesus for all eternity.

What a wonderful prospect is ours this morning if we know Christ. Unconverted friend, I don't need to remind you what awaits you if you keep resisting the call of the Lord as it is found in the gospel, if you keep turning your back on him.

You will not enjoy that restored inheritance, but the fact is, and it's not something that we really like to talk about, but the fact is, if I weren't to tell you the truth, I would be a liar.

[ 31 : 44 ] The fact is, you will be subject to an eternal misery in the deepest, darkest depths of hell itself. How solemn.

But yet, the good news is that where there is life, there is hope. Today is the day of gospel opportunity.

Today is the day where you can respond to that call. And what I pray is that as you leave this place, that you would plead with the Lord, that the Holy Spirit would open your eyes so that you too can behold and look upon the King in all his beauty, because he is beautiful.

And that in doing so, you can take your place at that table of spiritual blessings, a table of peace and satisfaction that you have never known before, not only for time, but for the endless ages of eternity.

Amen. We pray that the Lord would bless these few thoughts to us. We can conclude our worship by singing to God's praise from Psalm 24 in the Scottish Psalter.

[ 33 : 28 ] Psalm 24 in the Scottish Psalter, reading at verse 10, that's on page 230. Verse 7, Ye gates lift up your heads on high, ye doors that last foray, be lifted up, that so the King of glory enter me.

We can sing verses 7 to 10 to God's praise. Ye gates lift up, your heads on high, be to worship last to hear. Ye gates lift up, your heads on high, ye doors and last foray.

He lifted up, O Clouds, Ph waifu'd, Hzu, be to worship are top of glory entering, a full morning or death, how it may be.

O glory is the King, Almighty or riches, in the same Lord that great in life, and strong in battle is. In the same Lord that great in life, and strong in battle is.

[ 35 : 13 ] He is with the pure hand, he holds, your Son to us foray.

He lifted up the soul of the King, of glory entering.

O glory is the King, of glory who exists, the Lord of hosts and liberty, the King of glory is.

The Lord of hosts and liberty, the King of glory is.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, amen, amen, amen.

[ 37 : 11 ] Amen. If you could give me a minute to get to the front door. We'll conclude with a word of prayer.

Lord our God, as we part from this place, we pray that thy word would not part from us, and that we, even as we leave, that we would make it our business to be brought into that banqueting house, that we would call out with that prayer, Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner.

Part us now with thy blessing, and forgive us for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Amen.