

Mephibosheth

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[0 : 00] I was seeking God's blessing and God's guidance. Can we turn back together to that portion of the word that we read in the Old Testament in the second book of Samuel, chapter 9.

And we'll read again the last words of the verse 11. Second Samuel, chapter 9. And the last words of verse 11. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, He shall eat at my table as one of the king's sons. He shall eat at my table as one of the king's sons. If we had to put into one sentence tonight what the theme or the major theme of this chapter of 2 Samuel is, we would have to say that its major theme, if we were to put it into one sentence, is indeed the kindness of God.

The kindness of God. Its theme is the mercy and the favour of God to undeserving people. In the New Testament era, Paul the apostle, he saw the kindness of God in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the Lord's work on the cross of Calvary. And my friends, we see here in David's dealings with Mephibosheth, we see within them a picture of God's kindness and of God's mercy to lost sinners such as we are.

[1 : 42] At this point recorded in 2 Samuel, David the king was enjoying a respite from war and an opportunity had come up for David to fulfil a promise he had made long ago to his beloved friend Jonathan.

David had promised both Saul, who was an enemy of David, he had promised both Saul and Jonathan that he would not kill off their descendants when he himself became king.

And in the case of Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, David not only kept his promise, but David went above and he went beyond the call of duty.

Out of covenant loyalty to Saul and to Jonathan, David protected and David provided for this orphan prince at great risk and at great expense to himself.

You see, a newly established king, like David was here, would normally have killed off, would have taken the life of anyone with a rival claim to the throne, which of course Mephibosheth had as the grandson of Saul and as the son of Jonathan.

[3 : 14] So as David thought about the past with all of its good memories of his great friend Jonathan and the holy love and the great bond that was between himself and Jonathan, he asks the question, is there yet any of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God unto him?

And so he gave orders that a search should be made for any surviving members of the household of Saul. First of all tonight, I want us to consider finding Mephibosheth or Mephibosheth being found.

Finding Mephibosheth. 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 Seba.

And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Seba? 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 to him?

And Seba said unto the king, Jonathan has yet a son which is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, where is he? And Seba said unto the king, behold, he is in the house of Mechah, the son of Amimiel in Lodibar.

[4 : 51] Now David's motive, my friends, for seeking Mephibosheth was not, if you like, the sad plight or the sad situation that this crippled man was in, not at all, but David's desire to honour Jonathan, the father of Mephibosheth.

He did what he did for the sake of Jonathan. He sent out to find Mephibosheth for the sake of Jonathan. Now Mephibosheth was five years old when his father Jonathan and his grandfather

Saul, when they had died in battle.

And this young man Mephibosheth, he was lame, he was disabled. His legs weren't working properly, probably because he had been dropped by a nurse as a child.

And his legs were disabled. And he was now about 21 years of age and he had a son of his own.

And you see, David couldn't show any love anymore and he couldn't show any kindness to Jonathan.

So he looked for one of Jonathan's relatives to whom he could express his affection. My friends, aren't all God's children a great picture of Mephibosheth?

[6 : 20] They are called and they are saved, not because they deserve anything from God, but for the sake of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

God in his grace gives us what we don't deserve and in his mercy he doesn't give us what we do deserve.

Here in Mephibosheth we have a young man, we have a member of the house of Saul, of Saul who was David's archenemy.

And this young man, he is a cripple, he is neglected, he is forgotten. This young man is ignored by all that are around him.

But yet, even through all his afflictions, and even although he was ignored, and even although he was neglected, yet he was sought out, wasn't he?

[7 : 18] He was sought out by this merciful king. And soon, this young man who had been neglected, soon he would be restored to that honourable place that was due to him and to his royal lineage.

We must ask a question then. Was David under obligation to show this kindness to Mephibosheth? Was there anything special in the son of Jonathan to bring on this kindness of David?

Not at all, my friends. It was completely and absolutely unmerited. David had this affection even before he knew that Mephibosheth existed.

Even before he knew there was such a person. Even then, David had this affection. And we ask tonight, was God in heaven?

Was he under any obligation to show mercy to this world? Or did he see anything of excellence in the world? Not at all.

[8 : 36] No, if it was left, if he had left humanity to perish forever in its sins, nobody could ever, ever have complained. Was there any excellence in man, in human beings to call forth, as it were, God's mercy and God's kindness?

Not at all. God commendeth his love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Weren't all of God's people, every single one of us in here tonight who are in Christ, weren't we all spiritually lame, as it were?

Why were we spiritually lame? We were lame because we were dropped by sin. Weren't we all undeserving? Just another statistic, if you like, until God the Father went to look for us.

But weren't we also loved before we existed? Just like Mephibosheth was loved by David before he ever knew that Mephibosheth existed.

In fact, we were loved when we were nothing more than an idea in the mind of the eternal God.

David found out where Mephibosheth was by where he was living by by asking Zeba who had served like some kind of estate manager for Saul looking after all these things.

[10 : 20] And Zeba answered David's question, didn't he? And the king said, is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God to him? And Zeba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son which is lame on his feet?

And the king said to him, where is he? And Zeba said unto the king, behold, he is in the house of Meher, the son of Amimiel in Lodibar.

Is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God to him? I want you to notice here, my friends, David didn't say, is there yet any left of the house of Saul, of my persecutor Saul's family, that I may curse them?

That is not what David said, not at all, but that I may show the kindness of God to him. Is that tonight not the divine attitude towards each and every one of us who are here tonight, who are in Christ?

God does not come to find us so that he can crush us, so that he can crush us for the part our sin played in the persecution of his own son.

[11 : 38] Not at all. He comes to find us, doesn't he? so that he can show us and demonstrate to us his kindness, not because of any merit that we have, but because of his son, Jesus Christ.

David wanted to find Mephibosheth, not so that he could crush Mephibosheth, but to show him kindness for his father, Jonathan's sake.

and I wonder if there is somebody sitting here tonight that God is looking for. Or that may be that God will be looking for on the Lord's day at the Lord's table.

Is God looking for you tonight? has God found you? Finding Mephibosheth.

But I want us also to see here that Mephibosheth was called, calling Mephibosheth. Then King David sent and fetched him out of the house of Mechah, the son of Amimiel from Lodibar.

[12 : 53] Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come to David, he fell on his face and he did reverence, and David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant.

And David said to him, Fear not, for I will surely show you 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.

I wonder tonight, and I wonder often, what the lame prince's thoughts were when that summons came to appear before the king, how he must have felt, here for his life when the summons came, and maybe the young man would have said, Well surely it is enough that I am lame, is he going to destroy my life because of the vengeance that he holds towards my grandfather Saul?

But he was summoned before the king, king, and he must go, he must go. And there is a picture there, isn't there, a picture of irresistible grace, isn't there, when God sends out a summons, we will come.

The summons went, and he had to go before the king, whatever the consequences of that were going to be for him. The call came, and he must answer.

[14 : 33] And someone had to help this poor young man to the palace where he fell before David the king. Now if you imagine it, this would have been something that was very difficult for a man with crippled legs to do.

And there he acknowledges before the king his own unworthiness. You see, however crippled we are by sin, whenever the call of God comes, we will bow down before the king.

We will bow down. Isn't Mephibosheth a great picture of the disabled human soul?

Sin has let us fall. Sin in a sense has dropped us, and it has disfigured us, and it has disabled us, and it has crippled our entire moral nature, hasn't it?

Sin, what does it cause? It causes disorganization, it causes disintegration, and it causes a ghastly disfiguration.

[15 : 50] sin. But yet in the midst of all of that, God still sees, and God still calls us to himself, and we come to him like that, and we acknowledge our total and our complete unworthiness.

Mephibosheth fell down before king David, and he fell in humility, and he acknowledged before king David his unworthiness.

But you see, David didn't wait for all of these acts of humility from Mephibosheth, not at all. He called him first, and then Mephibosheth sought him out, yes.

and if he had any lingering fears or doubts coming to this king after he was called, they were soon put away by the gracious actions and the gracious words of the king, fear not Mephibosheth, for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake.

Do you see, my friends, what we have here? He sought him out, he called him out, and what did he do then? Then he brought him home, he brought him home.

[17 : 17] And if God has sought you, and if God is calling you, it is to show you kindness for Jesus' sake. Don't be afraid to come to him, and don't be afraid to come to the master's table, if you love the master, if you love the king.

You see, David had unofficially adopted Mephibosheth by restoring to him the land that his father Jonathan would have inherited from Saul, and then by inviting him to live at the palace and to eat at the king's table.

And isn't this not all a picture, my friends, of how God treats men and women, how God treats human beings. Aren't we all in a sense like Mephibosheth, in that we are God's lame sheep, aren't we, walking our way, walking the way of holiness, and hard pressed, aren't we, by the power of indwelling sin?

And like Mephibosheth, you see, we could never present ourselves uninvited at the court of the heavenly king.

We have no standing in his sight to warrant us taking that step, but yet we are, we are encouraged by the words of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

[18 : 56] We are told by Jesus himself, aren't we, in the New Testament that the shepherd did not wait. He did not wait for the poor, helpless sheep to return.

And he didn't wait, my friends, for the simple reason that it had lost its way, and it had neither the strength nor the width to get back to the fold. So what does he do?

He went out into the blackness of the night, and he did not rest until he had brought it back to the fold, safe and sound. Isn't that how the good shepherd still seeks us?

David saw claim Mephibosheth, and the Lord Jesus Christ still seeks men and women, and he brings them back to God.

God, Christ, the just one, suffered for us, the unjust, that he might bring us back to God. And you know, my friends, in the Lord's Supper, we are sought by the love of God.

[20 : 10] It is there that we realise that God is seeking us in what he gives us in Christ, his own Son. you see, it is not what we do, it is what he has done.

That is what is important, that is of the supreme importance. It's not about us, it's not about us at all, it's about him who sought us, and him who called us.

And as we sit at the Lord's table, we are made aware of that he has sought us, and that he is seeking us in all the costliness of his love, and of his grace.

we don't provide the substance of the feast, not at all we are but the guests, just like Mephibosheth was at the king's table in the palace.

We have absolutely nothing of which we are not the recipients, it's all of him, and it's all from him.

You see at the Lord's table, we are not the seekers, not at all, in fact we are like Mephibosheth, we are at the Lord's table the sought, not the seekers.

[21 : 49] Mephibosheth poor and lame as he was, unworthy as he felt himself, was sought by the king, and he was given a place at the king's table.

And the fact that David made the first move to rescue Mephibosheth, it reminds us plainly that it was God who reached out to us and not us to him, and we need to lay hold of that.

It is God's work in us, both to will and to do. We were estranged from God and we were enemies of God, yet he loved us and he sent his own son to die for us on the tree.

And that is what the Lord's table, my friends, is all about. It reminds us, doesn't it, that we are sinners and that there was a great, great cost, an immeasurable cost involved in rescuing us from that sin.

For David to rescue and to restore Mephibosheth, it only cost him a piece of land. It only cost him the piece of land that had belonged to Saul, which he had never paid for to begin with.

[23 : 13] But for God to restore us and for God to bring us into his family and to his table, Jesus Christ had to die. God's estimated cost of remission of sin throughout the days of the old covenant, it was always the shedding of blood, always the shedding of blood, even in Eden, when he shed blood to cover the shame of Adam and Eve.

That was always the estimated cost, but when the final bill came in, it cost him his son. It cost him his son.

and you will remember Adam in Eden. He had not been long in sin and he hadn't moved far away from the place he sinned.

He hadn't gone very far when grace sought him. In the voice of God, Adam, where art thou. Grace sought him and grace called him.

And so God seeks and God calls his people, but he does so for the sake of his son, Jesus Christ. It's interesting to note how unworthy Mephibosheth felt when he was called by David.

[24 : 49] he felt no better he says than a dog. He didn't feel worthy to come before the king and he didn't feel worthy to eat in any way at the king's table.

And you see so often that is the case for all of us who have been sought and who have been called. Reminds me of the words of Rabbi Duncan when he looked at a poor woman at the Lord's table.

And that poor woman she was weeping and she was distressed and that poor woman was hesitating to take the cup of salvation into her hands and he said he said to her take it take it woman it is for sinners.

Mephibosheth felt his unworthiness grace. But he wasn't sought and he wasn't called because he was worthy. He was sought and he was called for his father Jonathan's sake.

And you and I will not sit at the Lord's table because we are worthy but for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. And you see the glorious thing is that in whom we are worthy.

[26 : 17] I used to hear ministers say and I heard it once or twice in my past they used to say of Mephibosheth's lameness that his lameness was hidden when he sat at the table at the king's table and that they could no more see his lameness but I don't know that I would agree very much with that.

And when you look into the history of it and when you look at how these meals were served and how the people sat at the table king David would have been he would have been dressed in a robe and he would have expected everyone else who came to his table to be dressed in robes but you see this young man this poor ignored young man he probably had no robe so what would David have done David would have robed him David would have given him a robe he would have given it to himself and when Mephibosheth sat at the king's table it wasn't the table that hid his disability it was the robe that the king had given him that's what hid his disability and when we sit at the Lord's table it is not the Lord's table that hides our sins but the robe that the king has imputed to us the robe of his own righteousness do you wear that robe my friend the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness imputed to you to hide your lameness to hide your sin to hide the disfiguration that sin has caused in your life and in your experience what a glorious robe that is that it might hide our sins from the sight of almighty God Mephibosheth was sought Mephibosheth was called and then very briefly Mephibosheth well he was enriched wasn't he he was enriched then the king called to see bus all servant and said to him I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house 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 always at my table now Seba had fifteen sons and twenty servants and Seba said 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 David took Mephibosheth into his own family and he provided for him and he let him eat at his own table and these words eat at my table are found four times within the passage and they show that Jonathan's son would be treated like David's son adopted into the family family of David and in the same way we are adopted into the family of

God and we are treated as his own aren't we but you know my friends we have a higher position than that which David gave to Mephibosheth God because we not only sit at the king's table but we sit on the throne with Jesus Christ and reign in life through him God gives us the riches of his mercy and of his grace and unsearchable riches in Jesus Christ God supplies all our needs not out of some earthly king's treasury or earthly king's storehouse but according to his riches and glory and Mephibosheth he lived the rest of his days in the earthly Jerusalem but God's children today they are already citizens of the heavenly

[31 : 06] Jerusalem where they will dwell forever with the Lord and in the palace of the king there shall they abide Fibosheth reminds us of some wonderful spiritual truths about the kindness of God that has been shown to us through our Lord and our saviour Jesus Christ he sat at the king's table my friend on the Lord's day will you do the same thing will you sit at the Lord's table?

I was thinking the other day as well of David and Mephibosheth sitting there at the king's table, just the two of them, sitting at this wonderful table.

And David looking at Mephibosheth and looking into his face, and seeing in Mephibosheth, seeing him a resemblance of Jonathan, seeing in him a resemblance of Jonathan, whom he loved so much in the years gone by, he could see the resemblance, maybe, of Jonathan in Mephibosheth's face.

And when he saw that trace of Jonathan, he would have felt that there was absolutely nothing that he wouldn't do for Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth.

And you know, my friends, it is the same when we as the Lord's people, when we sit at the king's table, and although we are tainted by sin, yet God sees when we put on that robe, and when that robe has been imputed to us, God sees in us a trace of the divine likeness.

[33 : 16] And then he declares that we are the children of the Most High, adopted just like Mephibosheth, and yet greatly loved to such a degree that there was not anything he would not do for us, even down to the very giving of his Son.

He gave his Son for us. Everything he had, his most precious possession, the Lord of glory, he gave him, he gave him away for us so that our lameness may be covered.

And the great proof of our acceptance into this family, what is it? It is that he invites us to sit at his table.

And as you take, or we take our places there on the Lord's Day, God looks upon us as his friends, because we are the friends of him who left his own throne for us.

And for the sake of Jesus, the Lord, we are accepted in the Beloved. We are ransomed.

[34 : 52] We are healed. We are restored. We are forgiven. Friend of God, come to the King's table.

Mephibosheth sought. Mephibosheth called. Mephibosheth was enriched. Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth. Surely that is the testimony of everyone who has been adopted into the family of God.

Sought, called, enriched. He died for me. I have no other argument. I have no other plea.

It is enough that he died. And that he died for me. Is it enough for you?

He was sought. He was called. He was called. And he was enriched. May you know the same thing in your own experience and in your own life.

[36 : 08] Amen. Let us pray. Gracious God, our Father in heaven, we thank thee once again for thy word. and we thank thee, Lord, for the record that we have and the way we can see a resemblance in actual happenings to our own spiritual experience here in the world.

And we thank thee most of all tonight that our salvation is all of grace. We thank thee that thou art the one who seeks, that thou art the one who calls, and that thou art the one who enriches all of thine own people.

We thank thee for the robe of Christ's righteousness that has been imputed to each and to every one of his own people. We thank thee that our sins and our lameness cannot be seen, but that it has been cast into the ocean of thy forgetfulness, never to be remembered any more.

Bless us now, we pray. Bless the beloved people of God in this place. Bless them when they come on the Lord's day to the king's table.

Oh, what a sight they must be unto thee, although they feel unworthy and although they feel sinful, yet when thou dost look upon them, thou dost see in them the divine likeness.

[37 : 48] Thou dost see the beauty of Christ in all of thine own people. Bless us now together and part us with thy blessing. Go before us in the way and keep us with our eyes fixed upon Christ.

Come and touch us that we may lift up our eyes and see none, save Jesus only. Oh Lord, our God, it was good for us to be here.

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