

FOR JONATHAN'S SAKE

2 Samuel 9:1-13

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The kindness of God is the one of two themes in this chapter (**vv. 1, 3, 7**), and it means the mercy and favor of the Lord to undeserving people. Paul saw the kindness of God in the coming of Jesus Christ and His work on the cross (**Titus 3:1-7 [3:4]; Eph 2:1-9 [2:7]**), and we see in David's dealings with Mephibosheth a picture of God's kindness to lost sinners. David had promised both Saul and Jonathan that he would not exterminate their descendants when he became king (**1 Sam. 20:12-17,42; 24:21**), and in the case of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth, David not only kept his promise but went above and beyond the call of duty.

The second major theme is the kingship of David. The name "David" is used by itself six times in the chapter: six times he's called "the king," and once the two are united in "King David" (v. 5). Nobody in all Israel except David could have shown this kindness to Mephibosheth because David was the king. He had inherited all that had belonged to King Saul (**12:8**) and could dispose of it as he saw fit. Surely we have here a picture of the Son of David, Jesus Christ, who through His death, resurrection, and ascension has been glorified on the throne of heaven and can now dispense His spiritual riches to needy sinners. The name "David" means "beloved," and Jesus is God's beloved Son (***Matt 3:17; 17:5***), sent to earth to save lost sinners.

Finding Mephibosheth (vv. 1-4). It's important to note that David's motivation for seeking Mephibosheth was not the sad plight of the crippled man but David's desire to honor Jonathan, the father. He did what he did "for Jonathan's sake" (***1 Sam 20:11-17***). Mephibosheth was five years old when his father died in battle (**4:4**), so he was now about twenty-one years old and had a young son of his own (v 12). David couldn't show any love or kindness to Jonathan, so he looked for one of Jonathan's relatives to whom he could express his affection. So it is with God's children: they are called and saved, not because they deserve anything from God, but for the sake of God's Son, Jesus Christ (***Eph 1:6; 4:32***). God in His grace gives us what we don't deserve, and in His mercy doesn't give us what we do deserve.

David found out where Mephibosheth was living by asking Ziba, who served as an "estate manager" for Saul. Ziba answered David's questions about Mephibosheth, but he turned out to be very deceitful and lied to the king about Mephibosheth

when David fled from Absalom (**16:1-4**) and when David returned to Jerusalem (**19:17,24-30**). The combination of David's impulsiveness and Ziba's deceit cost Mephibosheth half his property.

Calling Mephibosheth (vv. 5-8). What were the lame prince's thoughts when the summons came to appear before the king? If he believed what his grandfather had said about David, he would have feared for his life; but if he had listened to what his father told him about David, he would have rejoiced. Someone had to help the young man to the palace, where he fell before David — something difficult for a person with crippled legs — and acknowledged his own unworthiness. The king spoke his name and immediately assured him that there was nothing to fear. David then 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 eat at the king's table. David had eaten at Saul's table and it had nearly cost him his life, but Mephibosheth would eat at David's table and his life would be protected.

The fact that David made the first move to rescue Mephibosheth reminds us that it was God who reached out to us and not we who sought Him. We were estranged from God and enemies of God, yet He loved us and sent His Son to die for us. *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (**Rom. 5:8 NKJV**). For David to rescue and restore Mephibosheth cost him only the land of Saul, which he had never paid for to begin with; but for God to restore us and bring us into His family, Jesus had to sacrifice His life. Our inheritance is much more than a piece of real estate on earth: it's an eternal home in heaven!

Enriching Mephibosheth (vv. 9-13). David took him into his own family, provided for him, protected him, and let him eat at his own table. It wouldn't be easy to care for a grown man who was lame in both feet, but David promised to do so. Whereas previously Mephibosheth had Ziba and his fifteen sons and twenty servants working for him (v. 10), now all the resources and authority of the king of Israel were at his disposal! Ziba and his sons and servants would still work the land for Mephibosheth and give him the profits, but those profits would be insignificant compared with the king's wealth. David's words "eat at my table" are found four times in the passage (**vv. 7, 10, 11, 13**) and indicate that Jonathan's son would be treated like David's son.

Mephibosheth looked upon himself as a *"dead dog"* (v. 8), and we were "dead" in our trespasses and sins when Jesus called us and gave us new life (**Eph. 2:1-6**). We have a higher position than that which David gave Mephibosheth, for we sit *on the throne* with Jesus Christ and reign in life through Him (**Rom 5:17**). God gives us the riches of His mercy and grace (**Eph. 2:4-7**) and "unsearchable riches" in Christ (**Eph 3:8**). God supplies all our needs, not out of an earthly king's treasury, but

according to "his riches in glory" (**Phil 4:19**). Mephibosheth lived the rest of his life in the earthly Jerusalem (v. 13), but God's children today are already citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, where they will dwell forever with the Lord (**Heb 12:22-24**).

This touching event in the life of David not only illustrates the believer's spiritual experience in Christ, but it also reveals to us that David was indeed a man after God's own heart (**1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22**). He was a shepherd who had a special concern for the lame sheep in the flock.⁶ One last fact should be noted: when some of Saul's descendants were chosen to be slain, David protected Mephibosheth from death (**21:1-11**, especially v. 7). There was another descendant named Mephibosheth (v. 8), but David knew the difference between the two! The spiritual application to believers today is obvious:"

- There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (**Rom 8:1 NKJV**). "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (**1 Thess 5:9 NKJV**). "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (**John 3:18 NKJV**).
- Mephibosheth is a difficult name to remember and pronounce, but he reminds us of some wonderful truths about "*the kindness of God*" shown to us through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.
- **FOR ME TO IDENTIFY MY MEPHIBOSHETH**
 1. TAKE AWAY SENTIMENT
 2. DO IT WHOLEHEARTEDLY
 3. REMEMBER THE ONE WHO PAY THE PRICE FOR YOU – **ROM. 5:8**
 4. REMEMBER YOUR OATH WITH JONATHAN

CONCLUSION

LOCATE YOUR MEPHIBOSHETH AND DO IT FOR JONATHAN SAKE.