

A Picture of Grace

2 Samuel 9

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Introduction

We know the big names of the Bible. The Bible is peppered with stories of ordinary people that God tells His redemption story through. Today we are going to talk about one of my favorite stories - Mephibosheth.

This story reveals what a great man David was. We usually think of David in connection with his sin.

- A big white screen and a little black dot. What gets the attention?
- A field of white sheep and one black sheep. What gets the attention?

There are so many bright spots in David's life.

- The young shepherd boy who slew a giant.
- The old man wise in experience who wrote Psalm 23.
- Today's story is another example.

You find the name Mephibosheth 15 times in the OT. You can read everything about him in about 30 verses. Yet, God weaves an incredible story in his life - a great picture of who God is and who we are.

The first place you meet Mephibosheth is in 2 Samuel 4.

- He is King Saul's grandson, Jonathan's son. David is about to become the new king. He is in a battle with Saul. Saul loses the battle and David is about to become king. Saul loses. David wins.
- David and Jonathan were good friends. They had made a covenant with each other to take care of each other's families.
- In those times, when the new king took over the people who were loyal to the old king would get out of town. The new king would put to death any contenders to the throne.
- One of those people was a five-year-old named Mephibosheth. Assuming that King David would be evil and mean, his nurse takes him and they flee. As they are running, she drops him and becomes crippled in both legs. He goes and lives in exile.

This is really 3 quick sermons. I'm doing this so that when Pastor Bishir gets back tonight, you can tell him that he only gets one message preached on Sunday mornings, but I did three!

I. God invites you to a covenant, not just a consumer relationship (2 Sam. 9:1-5)

Vs. 1

- That OT word kindness is more than just being nice. It's showing grace.

The word *grace* means many things to many people.

- We refer to a ballet dancer as having grace.
- We say grace at meals.
- We talk about the queen of England bringing grace to events she attends.
- Grace can mean coordination of movement, it can mean a prayer, it can refer to dignity and elegance.
- Most important, grace can mean unmerited favor—extending special favor to someone who doesn't deserve it, who hasn't earned it, and who can never repay it.

In 1 Sam. 20:14-17, David had made a covenant with Jonathan.

This is interesting because we live in a consumer society.

- “I will do what I ought to do if you do what you ought to do. I will go to Walmart as long as Walmart provides me what I want at the price I want. As soon as they don’t, I will switch.”
- In a consumer-based understanding the goal is satisfaction and comfort - what I get.

That’s not what covenant is.

- In a covenant, I will do what I ought to do even if you don’t do what you ought to do.
- In these days, they would take an animal and cut it open. (PETA would not approve.) One person would walk through as if saying, if I break my promise may I be torn apart like this animal. The other person does the same thing.
- In a covenant the issue is not satisfaction, it is relationship.
- Here is what’s amazing. David is now king. He remembered his covenant. He decided to do what he promised to do even though he didn’t have to.

Vs. 2

- First mention of Ziba, a servant of Saul.

Vs. 3

- He is a son of Jonathan (a threat) - **strike 1**
- He is crippled in both feet (no use to you) - **strike 2**
- David doesn’t say, “how bad is it?” or “how did it happen?” He asks where he is located.

Vs. 4

- Grace is blind!
- Ziba, a servant of Saul, betrays the hiding place of Mephibosheth.
- Michar was a very wealthy man.
- He is in Lodebar - **strike 3**
- Lobedar was a city in the wilderness where the sun beats down and burns anything that tries to move. It means “a place of no peace.”
- He left and went to a far country. He thought he could escape from the king.

Moving to today:

- Strike 1 - you started as a prince or princess - we were created in the image of God without sin!
- Strike 2 - You are handicapped spiritually. Our souls are crippled.
- Strike 3 - We don’t live in Lodebar - but we live in the dry desert where we have “lowered the bar”. We live not fighting for shade but fighting for everything else - for me, my and mine. All of us have a far county - a place of no peace - that we run to sometimes. For some it is staying busy, spending money, addictions, compulsions.

Vs. 5

- Notice the pursuing nature of David. David was not willing to leave any rock unturned.
- The last thing Mephibosheth wanted to see was an emissary from the king knocking at his door. But that was exactly what happened. Can you imagine the man's shock? After answering the knock at the door, Mephibosheth looked into the faces of David's soldiers, who said to him, "The king wants

to see you." He most likely thought, *Well, this is the end*. But it wasn't; it was a whole new beginning!

II. God invites you to be a son, not just a servant (9:6-13)

This is not only a story with historical accuracy, but it is also an allegorical story where God shows a picture of himself (as King David). You need to see more than guys in bath robes and slippers - this is about you too!

Vs. 6

- For 15-20 years, he has been in hiding with his wife and young son.
- How did Mephibosheth see David? He was probably angry. He probably blamed David for being crippled. The people in exile probably told stories about how bad of a guy the king was. He saw the good king in a bad light.
- If you live your life thinking God is mad at you, you will not live the way God wants you to.
- He is expecting to be executed. He bows his head expecting a sword to come down on his neck.

vs. 7

- This estate was quite substantial! He supported him on a royal pension.
- Eating at his table means providing for his daily needs just like his very son.

vs. 8

- If another king would have been on the throne, he would have been executed.
- A dead dog is worthless. You don't see ads in the paper for dead dogs.
- David says, "You're not a dead dog. You are Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan."

vs. 9-13

- He was to be treated as his own son.
- "fifteen sons and 20 servants" shows the size of the land given to him.

What a picture of grace!

Chuck Swindoll paints this picture of mealtime in David's house: The dinner bell rings through the king's palace and David comes to the head of the table and sits down. In a few moments Amnon--clever, crafty Amnon-- sits to the left of David. Lovely and gracious Tamar, a charming and beautiful young woman, arrives and sits beside Amnon. And then across the way, Solomon walks slowly from his study; precocious, brilliant, preoccupied Solomon. The heir apparent slowly sits down. And then Absalom-- handsome, winsome Absalom with beautiful flowing hair, black as a raven, down to his shoulders-- sits down. That particular evening, Joab, the courageous warrior and David's commander of the troops, has been invited to dinner. Muscular, bronzed Joab is seated near the king. Afterward, they wait. They hear the shuffling of feet, the clump, clump, clump of the crutches as Mephibosheth rather awkwardly finds his place at the table and slips into his seat...and the tablecloth covers his feet. I ask you: Did Mephibosheth understand grace?

III. God invites you to discover who you are, not just what you can get

16:1-3

- David was forced to flee Jerusalem because his son Absalom was trying to seize power.
- Ziba lied and said that Mephibosheth had turned against him and wanted the throne.
- Here is classic flattery. Watch out for people who bring you gifts, tell you what you want to hear, pat you on the back. These are the same people will lie about you to the king.

16:4

- He took the pension away and gave it all to Ziba.
- David made a severe and rash decision that inflicted injury on a true friend.

19:24

- He was in mourning. He refused to join in the rebellion. He remained loyal to David.
- In that culture, if something really important was happening, you wouldn't take care of the external things didn't matter. That happens today. If someone is in the middle of crisis, they don't worry about their hair color, etc.
- All of this time he fasted and prayed for the king.
- David turned his back on him and sent him to the poor house, but Mephibosheth stayed true. He understood the covenant relationship!
- That's the kind of friend I want!

19:25-28

- Mephibosheth said that he was betrayed but he said, "I am not going to defend myself."
- He displayed humility and said, "Do with me as you please."

19:29-30

- David either didn't know who to believe or he was too distracted to check the facts.
- This proved Mephibosheth's sincerity.
- He says, "Forget the stuff. My king is back! I don't care about the stuff. I care about him!"
- When you live in a covenant relationship, it's not about what you get - it's about whose you are.
- Our Christian life needs to be about knowing him, not getting what we want. Stuff will give you all that it can, but it's nothing like knowing the king!

Closing

There is a story about Thomas Jefferson, riding horseback cross-country when he and his group came to a river. A traveler waited until several of the party had crossed and then stopped President Jefferson and asked if he would carry him across on his horse. Jefferson pulled him up onto the back of his horse and carried him to the opposite bank. "Tell me," asked one of the men, "why did you select the president to ask this favor of?" "The president?" the man answered. "I didn't know he was the president. All I know is that on some of the faces is written the answer 'no' and on some faces is written the answer 'yes.' His was a 'yes' face."

People who truly understand grace have a "yes" face. I want to suggest that when Mephibosheth looked up, he saw a "yes" written across King David's face. Don't you wish you could have been there at that magnificent moment?

Don't miss this: God looks at you with that "yes" face, "You're in My family. You're as important to Me as all my other sons and daughters." It will take eternity for us to adequately express what this truth means to us—that He chose us in our sinful and rebellious condition and in grace took us from a barren place and gave us a place at His table.