

2 Samuel 9:1-13 Kindness, Disabilities Fit in the Church #4 Falls Church AM
1/9/22

The stronger God has made us, the more kindness we can show to others.
If you were king, queen or ruler for a day, what would you do with it?

God uses His position and power to show kindness, so as children of God,
we would take our position and power, and show kindness!

Today we study a person to whom that actually happened. David became
King, and for more than just a day. Where we are in the story of David is when
David was no longer in the wilderness, no longer on the run. Instead, David had
become the King, and a very powerful king!

Twice in the previous chapter, chapter 8 – it says that the Lord gave victory
to David wherever he went.

David had become wealthy and responsible for a far-reaching empire.

Now, what will King David do with it? What kind of king will he be?

The temptation that comes with gaining power and gaining strength is to use
power and strength to be kind to ourselves, just because we can and we love
ourselves.

However, God's design and reason for giving us power and strength is so
that we can bring kindness to others, because we love them.

The stronger we are, the more people we can bless with kindness.

The weaker the other person is, the more he or she needs our kindness.

The former King, King Saul did not understand this.

So, the story of David begins with this question - will King David
understand that the stronger he is, the more he can bless others with kindness? Yes,
chapter 9 answers yes. The takeaway lesson for us is clear: **One of our privileges
in the Kingdom of God is to show the kindness of God to people with
disabilities.** Whether we do so or not, reveals what kind of people we are, and
what sort of God we serve, and what sort of kingdom we are advancing.

**1. The kindness of God was shown to the household of King Saul, David's
fiercest enemy, now fallen, and even to a person who was disabled. (v.1-5)**

David's kingdom has been established.

David had victory from all his enemies in all directions: North, South, East,
and West. Now what?

What King David did next would reveal what kind of king he would be, and
what kind of God he serves, and what kind of kingdom he was establishing.

In verse 1, David asked, "*Is still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may
show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?*"

Any people "*of the house of Saul*" would be the enemy!

What any ancient advisors would have suggested to any King,

and what all ancient kings did,
and what David could have done was...

...to murder them all, for Saul's sake! Eliminate the threats to David!

Remember Herod killing all the baby boys, in order to try to kill Jesus, the newborn King. Herod wanted to eliminate any threat to Herod's throne and crown.

But David showed a different sort of kingdom. David asked to find any remaining people of the house of Saul not to murder them, but rather because David truly desired to show kindness to them, for Jonathan's sake.

Any readers of this chapter were hit with the shocking and surprising nature of this - any person who was the least likely recipient for kindness from King David, would receive kindness!

A person in the house of Saul – the rejected former king.

This demands an explanation. We must review our story.

Back in 1 Samuel chapter 24, when King Saul was still alive, and Saul was trying to kill David, in God's providence David had an opportunity to kill King Saul in a cave. But David spared Saul's life. David called out to King Saul in 1 Samuel 24:14, "*Whom do you pursue?...a dead dog?*" And King Saul said, "*...you are more righteous than I....if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? May the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day...Swear to me...by the LORD that you will not cut off my offspring after me...*" And David swore this to Saul. (1 Samuel 24:22)

Fast forward to 1 Samuel 31, Jonathan was killed in battle by the Philistines, and in 2 Samuel chapter 1, where Saul also was killed by an Amalekite. 2 Samuel 4:4, we are told that when Mephibosheth, who was lame in both feet, was 5 years old, news came into Saul's palace that King Saul and Prince Jonathan had just been killed by the Philistines. The panic was immediate and real, because the enemy Philistines were ruthless. How much harder and more scary for the young boy Mephibosheth with a disability!

Again, fast forward to chapter 9, our passage for today, when David is asking is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

Verse 2, they called for the main servant in Saul's family. Verse 3, David asked him, and the servant reported "there is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet." Verse 4, the king asks where. Verse 5, David sent for him.

**2. Kindness was shown in order to fulfill a promise to David's best friend.
(v.6-8)**

Back in 1 Samuel, we find that David and Jonathan were best friends. In 1 Samuel chapter 20, when King Saul was still alive, and David was in great danger of being killed, the son of King Saul, named Jonathan, helped David. As they were saying good-bye to each other, not knowing what would happen and who would

die first, Jonathan and David swore an oath of covenant friendship for David to take care of Jonathan and his offspring, and Jonathan to take care of David and his offspring. That promise is understood beneath our passage today.

Verse 6 – Mephibosheth arrived to King David. He fell on his face before the King, and the king called him by name!

Something about this scene reminds us of 1 Samuel 3, when God called to Samuel while Samuel was just a boy. God kept calling, “Samuel, Samuel” and Samuel thought it was his boss, the priest Eli calling him. Here in our text, again a superior called to an inferior. David called out Mephibosheth’s name, but Mephibosheth referred to himself as “your servant.”

Once the social parameters were set, much like the LORD showing blessing to Samuel, here David sets the stage to do for Mephibosheth what the Lord did for Samuel, and what the Lord had done for David himself.

Verse 7, David said to Mephibosheth, *“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.”*

David issued a kind decree that changed Mephibosheth’s future forever. To a disfigured descendant of Saul, David met personally and announced that he restored royal fortunes.

Verse 8, we have the response of Mephibosheth, “What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?”

This is clearly a reference back to David’s own words to the grandfather of Mephibosheth, on the day that David spared the life of King Saul at the cave, and David used the same words *“am I a dead dog.”* It was a signal that Mephibosheth knew the story, Mephibosheth understood the character of his grandfather and the character of David, and that Mephibosheth was humble before the kindness of David and David’s kingdom.

David personally showed kindness to the individual Mephibosheth.

- a. Met with him face to face.
- b. Called him by name.
- c. Spoke reassuring words to alleviate his fears.
- d. Promised his love to care for his needs of justice and provisions.
- e. Treated him with dignity, though he did not expect it.
- f. Extended a perpetual invitation of hospitality.
- g. Lavished gifts upon him.
- h. Used his power and wealth to bless.

If we are to show the love of Christ, it must include the warmth of our person. We must put our heart into it. Showing the love of Christ will cost us some time, some energy, and possibly some money. We are not supposed to just write a check; we are supposed to give a piece of ourselves.

Here David's kindness came in the context of relationship. David had a deep friendship with Jonathan, and David showed kindness to the relatives of Jonathan. As we welcome people with disabilities into the church, we do so in the context of building a personal relationship with people. That element is key and essential.

SI - One ingenious teenager, tired of reading bedtime stories to his little sister, decided to record several of her favorite stories on a little electronic machine. He presented her with the recording machine and told her, "Now you can hear your stories anytime you want. Isn't that great?" She looked at the recording machine for a moment and then replied, "No. It doesn't have a lap."

Kindness is giving a part of ourselves in the context of relationship.

3. Kindness was shown to a man with a disability, restoring his honor, providing his daily needs, and absorbing the inherent risk of Mephibosheth (or his son Mica, or servant Ziba) becoming another Saul/threat. (v.9-13)

In verse 9, King David gave instructions for the grandson of Saul to be the owner of the lands of Saul's family, and the head servant himself, and his 15 sons, and 20 servants, all became servants of Mephibosheth.

In verse 10, King David ordered that the servants till the land and bring in the produce.

David loved Mephibosheth with a royal and loyal love.

There was regularity: As often as King David himself ate, Mephibosheth was welcome.

There was no double standard of food for David and food for Mephibosheth. No, it was food from the king's own table, because Saul's grandson would be AT King David's table. Verse 11, "...so Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons."

One interesting part of the history here was that years earlier - David was supposed to dine with King Saul, but that invitation, when tested, turned deadly.

David was here offering an invitation to Mephibosheth that, by God's grace, would never turn sour. The test comes when we get to verse 12. Any reader who tracks with the story of 1 and 2 Samuel, when we see David's kindness to a crippled man, we of course think it is a sweet gesture. When, however, we encounter in verse 12 that Mephibosheth had a son, a cold current of fear and potential violence runs down our spines.

Here it is in verse 12, "*And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica...*" Young sons quickly grow up to become men. Men can become warriors. This is Saul's grandson! And David has been feeding him. Now what do we think of this sweet, naïve kindness of David? Would David continue to be loyal to his covenant promise to Jonathan, even if Saul's grandson proved to be a threat to David? Will David's invitation to Mephibosheth suddenly turn sour when the young boy Micah grows up and reminds David of Saul either in his looks, or in his

military threats? Will Saul's military advisors eventually tell David that he really must kill this growing descendant of Saul that sits at David's own table? This is the test of David's kindness!

We are given David's answer to the test in verse 13, when we are told again in that Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, and that he always ate at the king's table, and the inclusion there is his growing son Micah. David passed the test. David's invitation was a permanent invitation. David made good on his promise, despite the risks. David was truly setting up a very different kingdom than Mica's grandfather had set up. This kingdom had the feel of the Messiah, a very different character and decisions, with the very atmosphere of kindness and serving, not self-protection. This kingdom was ruled by the power of God Himself. These were the nature of the blessings that could be expected to come from the one yet to come the One who would eventually sit on David's throne forever.

This applies to us, through Christ Jesus, the Son of David. How King David cared for the disabled son of his friend Jonathan, despite the threats is what we face. There was a danger to David in doing this. In the same way, we are called to provide care to people with disabilities, despite when they present a threat. Sometimes, it is a threat of injury while we are lifting them, sometimes it is a threat of being yelled at. Sometimes the person with a disability, in the frustration of living with their disability, could actually induce others to do things which are counterproductive or even illegal. The person with a disability could turn around and present a case legally. These and other types of threats are a real aspect of dealing with a person with disability, just as we see in the ancient life of David, and we must face that fact.

So, we come back to our starting question – if you were king for a day, what would you do with it? Or, when God gives you strength, do you realize that strength is for kindness?

David resolved that since he was going to be king, David wanted to be a King like God is a king. David, at his first opportunity here in chapter 9, showed that he had become a godly king, David had become a king like God. After David received royal, loyal kindness from heaven, David turned around and gave it away to the least likely person he could find. This is gospel kindness. This is the call of God for the Christian – this is our response to God's love for us. Love others.

Conclusion: Showing kindness does not come naturally from our flesh, it comes as we cultivate it in the Spirit.

2 Samuel 9 presents one of the most moving and beautiful stories in the Old Testament of a person offering kindness. This chapter told us in verse 1 and in verse 7 that David was showing kindness to Mephibosheth for the sake of Jonathan. In addition, we are told two other times that this man with a disability is the son of Jonathan. What is even more significant is that verse 3 told us it was the

kindness of God that David desired to show. Now the summarizing question of application to us: How must a believer live in the kingdom of God? Christ tells us to live how David is pictured as living, when Christ says to us in Matthew 25, *“Whatever you have done for the least of these brothers of mine, you have done for me.”* Christ taught that He made a self-sacrifice, so that we could be royalty in the kingdom of God. Christ taught that He expects us to show lovingkindness to members of Christ’s family. If a person is a Christian, Jesus expects us to show kindness to that person, as if you are showing kindness to Christ Himself. If that person is not a member of Christ’s family, Jesus expects us to show the same royal, loyal kindness that is fitting for us as children of The Great King. After all, we have a place at the King’s table, and we have not earned it. It was a royal gift, given in loyal love despite great cost. Because we are eating at the King’s table, we are expected to show kindness to others.

You know what – **showing kindness does not come naturally from our flesh, it comes as we cultivate it in the Spirit.**

SI - Ted Stallard was turned off by school. Ted Stallard was very sloppy in his appearance. Ted Stallard was expressionless and unattractive. Even his 5th grade teacher, Miss Thompson, enjoyed bearing down her red pen on Ted Stallard’s papers -- as she placed X’s beside his many wrong answers. If only she had studied his records more carefully. Ted Stallard’s records read:

1st grade: Ted shows promise with his work and attitude, but (has) poor home situation.

2nd grade: Ted could do better. Mother seriously ill. Receives little help from home.

3rd grade: Ted is good boy but too serious. He is a slow learner. His mother died this year.

4th grade: Ted is very slow, but well-behaved. His father shows no interest whatsoever.

Christmas arrived in the 5th grade class. The children piled elaborately wrapped gifts on their teacher's desk. Ted brought one too. It was wrapped in brown paper and held together with Scotch Tape. Miss Thompson opened each gift, as the children crowded around to watch. Out of Ted's package fell a gaudy rhinestone bracelet, with half of the stones missing, and a bottle of cheap perfume. The children began to snicker. But Miss Thompson silenced the class by splashing some of the perfume on her wrist, and letting them each smell it. She put the bracelet on too.

At day's end, after the other children had left, Ted came by the teacher's desk and said, "Miss Thompson, you smell just like my mother. And the bracelet looks real pretty on you. I'm glad you like my presents." He left. Miss Thompson got down on her knees and asked God to forgive her and to change her attitude.

The next day, the children were greeted by a changed teacher -- one freshly committed to loving each of them as they are. Especially the slow ones. Especially Ted. Surprisingly -- or maybe, not surprisingly, Ted began to show great improvement. He actually caught up with most of the students and even passed a few.

The schoolyear ended. The Summer passed. Time came and went. Miss Thompson heard nothing from Ted for a long time.

Then, one day, she received this note:

Dear Miss Thompson:

I wanted you to be the first to know. I will be second in my graduating class.

Love, Ted

Four years later, another note arrived:

Dear Miss Thompson:

They just told me I will be graduating first in my class. I wanted you to be first to know. The university has not been easy, but I liked it.

Love, Ted

And four years later another note:

Dear Miss Thompson:

As of today, I am Theodore Stallard, M.D. How about that? I wanted you to be the first to know. And...I am getting married next month, the 27th to be exact. I want you to come and sit where my mother would sit if she were alive. You are the only family I have now; Dad died last year. Love, Ted Stallard.

Miss Thompson attended that wedding, and sat there at the table where Ted's mother would have sat. The kindness she had shown that young man entitled her to that privilege.

Ephesians 2:3-7, *“we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, **because of the great love with which He loved us**, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*

Showing kindness does not come naturally from our flesh, it comes as we cultivate it in the Spirit.