

Title: Undeserved Covenant Love

Scripture: 2 Samuel 9

Series: The Promise of the Messianic Kingdom

1. Introduction:

- a. Today's passage answers one key biblical question:
 - i. How secure is God's Covenant with His people?
- b. Before us stands David, a prophetic picture of Jesus Christ, David has assumed the throne of Israel. His predecessor is dead. David's rule is seemingly unquestioned. It is during this time that David recalls his covenant promise to Jonathan. Both men had made a sacred vow, and it was time for David to fulfill his promises. David will not neglect to perform what he had solemnly vowed before the Lord.
 - i. Beloved, it would have been easy for David to talk himself out of keeping the covenant. **Focus on the Bible Commentary**: Now that his kingship was firmly in place and Saul's opposition had been eliminated, David might have recalled his covenant with Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20 and said, "That was only a ceremony...besides, that was over fifteen years ago. ...however, this was not David's way. Instead, he practiced covenant loyalty..."
- c. Therefore, through David's covenant-keeping, we get a glimpse of God's covenant-keeping. Chapter 9 is a profoundly theological chapter explaining God's tendency to act mercifully and graciously in keeping covenant with the Mephibosheth's of this world, with underserved people like you and me.

2. Verses 1-4: Covenant Faithfulness: And David said, “Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?” (2) Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?” And he said, “I am your servant.” (3) And the king said, “Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?” Ziba said to the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet.” (4) The king said to him, “Where is he?” And Ziba said to the king, “He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.”

- a. The question that permeates this first section is, “**Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?**”
 - i. The word translated as kindness here is the Hebrew word *chêsêd* (kheh'-sed). We have seen it before in the covenant David and Jonathan made. It speaks of devoted, godlike favor, mercy, lovingkindness, and loyalty. This is an attribute of God that David, here, wishes to emulate. Because *chêsêd* is the devoted love promised within a covenant, *chêsêd* is love that is willing to commit itself to another by making its promises a matter of solemn duty.
- b. So when David mentions *chêsêd* and “**for Jonathan's sake,**” we know he is referring to the sacred commitment Jonathan had asked David to make:
 - i. **1 Samuel 20:14-16** If I am still alive, show me the steadfast love of the LORD, that I may not

die; (15) and do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever, when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” (16) And Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the LORD take vengeance on David's enemies.”

1. Beloved, here is the power of covenant keeping. A promise made in the past controls fidelity in the present and carries forward into the future. We are to learn the following two truths from David’s faithfulness:

a. First, in a world of broken covenants, we, the Christians, must honor our covenants because God will always keep His.

- i. Covenant with our God
- ii. Covenant with God’s people and Church
- iii. Covenant with our spouse
- iv. Covenant with our children
- v. Covenant with the unbelievers

b. Secondly, King David’s faithfulness to the covenant is prophetic of the better faithfulness of Christ to His covenant with us, ensuring our salvation because God never forgets His covenant.

- i. **Jeremiah 31:31-34** “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel

and the house of Judah, (32) not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. (33) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (34) And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

- c. Now, let us consider the recipient of covenantal grace in our story.
 - i. This is our second introduction to the crippled Mephibosheth. We read about the circumstances that led to his disability in **2 Samuel 4:4** Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled, and

as she fled in her haste, he fell and became lame.
And his name was Mephibosheth.

1. That he is disabled is important because:
 - a. Even though he is a royal descendant, his disability would make him a weak king in the eyes of the people. He could not lead the army into battle. Very few men would follow such a leader.
 - b. Beloved, we find the picture of a broken man in this story. Here is a man in constant fear of the king. A man whose life is marked by hiding, the threat of poverty, and the fear of death.
 - c. We have a hopeless man who fears death but never imagines receiving divine grace. In Mephibosheth, we have a picture of every sinner ever to live.
- d. When David remembers the covenant, Mephibosheth's hopeless situation is forever changed by grace. It had been fifteen to twenty years since David made his covenantal promise to Johnathan. This covenant still controlled and directed David's behavior.
 - i. Beloved, pay close attention to David's faithful love because it mirrors, on a microscopic scale, the love of Jesus Christ, who seeks out the wretched, lame, and detestable to be objects of mercy.
 1. **1 Corinthians 1:27-28** But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise;

God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; (28) God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,

- ii. Can you see the beginning of the gospel in our verses?

3. Verses 5-7: Covenant Security: Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar. (6) And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, “Mephibosheth!” And he answered, “Behold, I am your servant.” (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.” (8) And he paid homage and said, “What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?”

- a. That David is willing to demonstrate *chêsêd* to a member of the former royal family is incredible. As you know, it was the custom of a new royal line to destroy the descendants of the last line. This way, there could be no competition among the people. Therefore, it would be natural for Mephibosheth to be greatly afraid. He was crippled (helpless), a descendant of Saul (David’s tormentor), and a potential, although unlikely, heir to the throne (a possible threat).

- i. Mephibosheth had been hiding, afraid of this new king and what he may do. Cultural customs and a dishonorable family legacy caused him much fear.
- b. However, David proves to be completely different than any other earthly king. David, as a picture of Jesus Christ, fulfills his covenant promise:
 - i. **Protection: Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan.**
 1. That Mephibosheth was afraid is demonstrated by the fact that **Mephibosheth came to David and fell on his face**. Then he completely submits to David, stating, **“Behold, I am your servant.”** Can you see him trembling and sure of his impending death?
 - a. What right had he to come before this king, especially after his family rebelled against God’s command and tried to kill David?
 - b. What other fate could there be for a descendant of a tormentor but death? Mephibosheth trembled.
 2. However, what relief Mephibosheth must have felt in this first proclamation of David. The words of David must have struck at the heart of this quaking, pitiful man. The rightful king is not angry, vengeful, or willing to execute a just judgment against Mephibosheth. David’s words are not condemning but grace-filled words, and

Mephibosheth, just like you and I, did not deserve any of them.

3. Beloved, we, too, should be rightly afraid before the throne of King Jesus. We are natural enemies of God, but through Jesus Christ, God whispers unto us, “**Do not be afraid!** I have chosen to deal with you in *chêsêd*, loving-kindness, and grace. These words of grace are alien to our ears because we are fully aware of the judgment we deserve!

ii. Provision: **I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father.**

1. Restoring to Mephibosheth the lands of Saul would provide him with a lifetime of income. Mephibosheth came to David in a state of bankruptcy. He was unable to care for himself.

- a. Beloved, all that sin destroys, God graciously restores to us when we come to Christ, the merciful King. We are made new and given everything necessary to walk in our pilgrimage.

- i. **Ephesians 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
- ii. God has provided for you and me all that we need.

iii. Position: **you shall eat at my table always**

1. With this one act of grace, Mephibosheth was to no longer grovel like an enemy at the King's feet but to sit at the King's table like a son (7,10, 11, and 13).
2. This is God's work. He takes people like Mephibosheth, people like you and me, and changes our divine position through the work of Jesus Christ.
 - a. **John 1:12-13** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, (13) who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
 - b. **Galatians 3:26** for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.
 - c. We are transformed from worldly enemies into the children of God.
- c. Please note that David's provisions for Mephibosheth went beyond David's promise to Jonathan. 1 Samuel 20:15 binds David to a Covenant of life. David would not kill Jonathan's descendants. However, David does more. David doesn't merely spare Mephibosheth's life but heaps goodness on him. David's kindness (*chêsêd*) goes beyond survival to sustenance.
- d. Mephibosheth is cared for and will never face poverty. It takes no imagination to see that David's *chêsêd* is but a faithful reflection of God's *chêsêd*. With God, there is no such thing as simple grace. God is the author of divine kindness.

- i. **Psalms 23:1** The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- ii. **John 1:16** For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.
- iii. **Romans 8:32** He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

4. Verses 9-13: Covenant Blessing: Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. (10) 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 Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. (11) Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons. (12) And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all who lived in Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servants. (13) So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king's table. Now he was lame in both his feet.

a. Let us look at Mephibosheth's before-grace condition once again to make our last point:

- i. Lame - Though a prince's son, he is a helpless, dependent cripple. He could never take the kingdom. He was destitute in the worst possible way. (begging instead of the throne)

- ii. Heredity - He is the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul. Simply put, he was the wrong stuff. He is the enemy. He belongs to the previous regime.
- iii. Beloved, we must draw a parallel between David's devoted love for his enemy Mephibosheth and **Romans 5:10** Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.
 1. We can never appreciate David's covenant love unless we understand the source of it, the Author of it. Is it not Paul's purpose in Romans 5:6-10 to highlight the improbable love of God?
 2. **Romans 5:6-10** For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— (8) but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. (10) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
- iv. We must realize that like David, God has no business loving whom he loves. Beloved, we are Mephibosheth, and there is no reason why we

should eat continually at the king's table. Stand amazed at the love of God, which transforms sinners and makes them saints.

1. Beloved, do not get so used to the love of God that it no longer causes you to be amazed.

5. Benediction:

- a. **Romans 5:10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Public Reading of Scripture
Romans 5:6-11