

Mephibosheth 2 Samuel 9

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 1-13-2013

Introduction – David is gracious in the radical covenant way that God had been gracious to him

Today we come to my second favorite story in all of 1 and 2 Samuel. David and Goliath is my favorite, but this one shows David at his most mature and I think at his best. And frankly it is a passage that frequently moves me to tears. It shows a man who is so characterized by God's grace that people have used this passage to teach what God's grace looks like for centuries. That is quite a testimony – to be able to say, "If you want to see what God's grace looks like, look at that person." I don't think it is technically a type or a parable. But David exemplifies the promise of Jesus that if we drink of Him, out of their innermost being will flow rivers of living water. In other words, we cannot drink of the living waters without becoming channels of those living waters for others to drink. And the more we drink of Jesus, the more our life *should be* a picture of the Gospel. And it is in *that* sense that this story is a picture of God's sovereign grace.

It's not a parable where we can glory in what God has done for us but ignore the call to do as David did. It is not a type of our salvation. At least I don't see anywhere where Scripture describes it as a type. Instead it is stronger than a type. David exemplifies God's salvation in his life so much that we can look at this expression of his heart and see God's heart. So even though I will be making applications from this as if it were a type, I don't want us to miss the lesson that a real historical man that we can imitate is a picture of grace because He had tasted of God's grace.

I. The concern of the king (vv. 1-3)

A. Based on covenant faithfulness (chesed – v. 1,3)

The first thing that we see in verse 1 is that David's kindness to Mephibosheth was based on his covenant faithfulness to Jonathan. It was because of a covenant.

2Samuel 9:1 Now David said, "Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

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The Hebrew word for “kindness” in verses 1 and 3 is *chesed*, and is a very difficult word to translate into English. The nuances of meaning include steadfast loyalty, steadfast faithfulness, steadfast love, and steadfast kindness or mercy. And it flows because of some kind of covenant commitment. It’s a word of the covenant. Jenni Westerman says, “According to Glueck, *hesed* does not refer to a spontaneous, ultimately unmotivated kindness, but to a mode of behavior that arises from a relationship defined by rights and obligations (husband-wife, parent-child, prince-subjects). When *hesed* is attributed to God, it concerns the realization of the promises inherent in the covenant.” It is a word of commitment that flows from the covenant that is manifested as steadfast love, kindness, goodness, and mercy.

In 1 Samuel 20 David had made a solemn covenant with Jonathan to continue to show *chesed* to Jonathan and to his descendants even after all David’s enemies had been cut off. Well, in the last two chapters, all of David’s enemies had been cut off, and most pagan kings would have finished off the consolidation of their kingdom by killing all potential competitors within the kingdom. Saul’s descendants could definitely have constituted a threat to David’s kingdom. But David doesn’t think the way pagans thought. He had experienced God’s *chesed* so richly and so undeservedly that the first response of his heart was to show *chesed* to anyone from Saul’s house, for Jonathan’s sake. This mercy did not flow from knowing Mephibosheth, or thinking he was a great guy, or anything good in Mephibosheth. It flowed from faithfulness to his covenant.

And the same is true of our salvation. God did not choose us because of any conditions that he saw in us. He chose us because in eternity past He had covenanted with His Son to purchase a people for His glory. And God’s commitment to that covenant with His Son guarantees His *chesed* to us. In fact, in verse 3 David explicitly ties his own *chesed* to God’s. That’s why I say it is a picture of God’s *chesed*. Verse 3 says, “**Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, to whom I may show the kindness of God?**” The *chesed* of God.

B. For the sake of Jonathan (v. 1)

And back in verse 1 I want you to notice that this *chesed* was not just for the sake of the covenant, but was also for the sake of Jonathan. David and Jonathan had a love for each other that transcended the strongest love that a husband and wife could have for each other. That’s what 2 Samuel 1:26 says. Only God’s grace could produce such a deep-seated love for an individual.

And of course, that is exactly the nature of God's *chesed* for us – it is founded in His strong love for the Son. God does not value us because we are so special. We are special to Him because of the Son. One of the key words in Ephesians chapter 1 is the word “in.” In fact, I often encourage people to underline or circle every time that word “in” occurs in Ephesians 1. We have been chosen in Christ, have been blessed in Christ, are loved in Christ, been made acceptable in the Beloved. We have redemption in Jesus, the forgiveness of sins in Jesus, have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Jesus, etc. Romans 8 tells us that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is [where?] in Christ Jesus. Every kindness that God has chosen to pour out upon us was because of the Father's love for Jesus. That's what makes it so secure. And David had been so touched with God's kindness, that he exemplified a sight unseen kindness to Mephibosheth because of Jonathan.

C. Initiated by David (vv. 1-3)

A third characteristic that we see in David's *chesed* towards Mephibosheth was that it was initiated by David and not by Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth stayed as far away from David as he could. He was way over the river in Lo Debar. He did not make any overtures to David. It was an act of David's will alone that brought such kindness to this young man.

And in the same way, Ephesians 1:5 says that we were predestined to glory according to the good pleasure of *God's* will. John 1:13 insists that we were not born according to the “**will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**” Romans 3 says that our will had nothing to do with our coming to salvation, “**for there is none who seeks after God**” (v. 11). Instead, Romans 9 tells us that God saves whom He wills and whom He wills He hardens. You cannot read Romans 9 and believe that God owes anyone salvation. And it is equally clear that no man initiates the steps towards his own salvation. Instead, Romans 9 says, “**I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion. So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.**” (Rom. 9:15-16). I don't think there is any story in the Bible that illustrates God's sovereign grace more beautifully than the story of Mephibosheth. Salvation is sovereign or it is not free. And salvation is 100% of God so that man can take no credit. As Jonah words it, “**Salvation is of the Lord.**”

D. Gracious (vv. 3,7,9-11)

The fourth feature of David's kindness to Mephibosheth is that it was gracious. The word "gracious" means to have undeserved goodwill towards a person. It's easy to have goodwill towards those that you are close friends with, but to be as generous as David was towards a person that he did not know shows far more than human graciousness. And it may be why verse 3 speaks of the "***kindness of God?***" It is almost as if it was the Spirit of God was driving this behavior in David. God had been so gracious to David that David now has this strong urge to show the same kind of graciousness toward another human – showing lavish goodwill.

And when you see the extent of David's graciousness, you see that it had a generosity far out of proportion to what most kings would ordinarily give. He gave all of Saul's estates to Mephibosheth. Now think about that for a bit. Because of Saul's grasping character, Saul owned far more than David did. David is giving away far more than he is going to retain in terms of estates. That's amazing. David had already shown his generosity by giving to God 249 billion dollars worth of silver and gold and who knows how much more of other valuable items. But to give away all of Saul's estates to this man whom he has never met before was gracious indeed. Based on where Mephibosheth was living, most commentators assume that he went from being a poor man who was totally dependent on the charity of others to being as wealthy as a king. So David was gracious.

And the graciousness of God to us is unbelievable. I love the way John 14 words it: "**In My Father's house are many mansions;** [I love that word "mansions" because it speaks of the riches of our inheritance. And realizing that His disciples would have a hard time grasping God's gracious generosity, He goes on to say,] **if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.**" Ephesians 1:18 speaks of "**the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.**" Ephesians 3:8 speaks of the unsearchable riches of Christ. The literal Greek for that word "unsearchable" means that you can't track down or calculate the riches because they are so many. And the riches cover every aspect of life. God is "**rich in mercy**" (Eph. 2:4), and speaks of the "**riches of His grace and His kindness**" (Eph. 2:7), and He has stored up for us "**riches of the glory of His inheritance**" (Eph. 1:18), and even in this life has promised to supply all of our needs according to His riches in glory (Phil. 4:19). He has given us so much. No wonder Paul cries out in astonishment,

Romans 11:33 ¶ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

Romans 11:34 “For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?”

Romans 11:35 “Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?”

Romans 11:36 ¶ For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

On the other hand, it ought to crush our hearts when Romans 2:4 complains that we “**despise the riches of His goodness.**” We despise His riches when we do not respond as Mephibosheth did. We despise those riches when we act like God owes us. We despise those riches when we grumble and complain. It would be like Mephibosheth grumbling that his toast was burnt on some Wednesday morning and forgetting about all of the other meals that he has enjoyed. We despise those riches when we fail to be blown away by them as Mephibosheth was.

E. Given to one of the house of David’s enemy (vv. 1,3)

But what makes this even more astonishing is that David was prepared to give this to an enemy. He doesn’t even know if any of Jonathan’s sons have survived. For the sake of Jonathan he is willing to show *chesed* to any survivor of Saul’s house. Look at how he words it in verse 1:

2Samuel 9:1 Now David said, “Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”

Who was he willing to show kindness to? To a member of Saul’s house – the very Saul who tried to hound him to death; the very Saul that stole all of his own family’s property; the very Saul who repeatedly treated David as an enemy to be hunted to death. And yet he repeats the same words in verse 3 to Ziba, the steward of Saul’s properties:

2Samuel 9:3 Then the king said, “Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, to whom I may show the kindness of God?” ...

And though Mephibosheth was a son of Jonathan, David’s dear friend, his nurse had carried him away when he was five years old in chapter 4:4. Why? Because the nurse no doubt thought that David would do just like Saul had done, and kill all competitors. So even though Mephibosheth ended up being the son of a friend, he was an enemy as far as normal humans were concerned. But the point is especially sharp before David knew that there were any survivors of Jonathan. David was willing to show *chesed* to a member of the household of Saul.

No wonder it is called the *chesed* of God in verse 3. What does Scripture say that we deserved before God brought us into the covenant? Ephesians 2:3 says that we “**were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.**” God didn’t choose us because we were different than the vessels of wrath. We were all by nature children of wrath, just as the others. Paul says that Christ died for us while we were still enemies. And the more you meditate upon that fact, the more astonishing your salvation will appear in your minds, and the more you will be able to identify with Mephibosheth when he said, “**What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?**” That’s what constantly gets me about that story. I’m so glad to be God’s servant, and yet I realize that spiritually I am worse than a dead dog, and yet He has elevated me to be His son and seated me with Jesus in the heavenlies. This is what our salvation is all about. We deserved to be treated like all the other vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. But God, because of His eternal covenant with His son, provided salvation, “**that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory.**” Can you see why this is one of my favorite stories?

F. Given to one who was helpless (v. 3)

The sixth thing that I see about David’s *chesed* was that it was given to a person who was absolutely helpless. Over and over it is emphasized that Mephibosheth was lame in both of his feet. He couldn’t do anything without the help of others. David didn’t give this property to Mephibosheth because he was going to get something out of Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth had no sphere of influence, no work skills, and no power. He had nothing to give in return except for gratitude.

And it is so important that we not insult God’s *chesed* to us with the self-esteem movement’s heretical presuppositions. One preacher said, “You are worth so much that Jesus died for you.” Nonsense. That’s backwards thinking. Isaiah 64:6 says, “**We have all become like one who is defiled, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted menstrual rag.**” That’s the literal Hebrew. Outside of Christ, God describes all of us as an offense in His sight. What did we have to offer? We were described as lepers, a dead carcass, enemies, as weak, as lame, and with other metaphors that makes it clear that God did not give us His riches because He wants to get something out of us. He needs nothing. God gave us the riches of His grace because of the overflow of His goodness and because of His Son and because of His covenant. Even after we are saved we cannot earn His favor by serving Him.

We can't earn the right to the Lord's Table by being good or because of something we have contributed in the last week. Instead, we serve Him out of gratitude and love for all that He has done for us. We are grateful that He has not treated us as dead dogs, but has treated us instead as sons.

G. Self-sacrificing

The last feature that I see of David's gift is that it was self-sacrificing. David had to sacrifice any thought of revenge to be willing to give *chesed* to anyone from the house of Saul. He had to sacrifice the natural fleshly impulses. And of course, the property and assets of Saul that he gave away could have been his. But he sacrificed those too.

And it did cost God to give His *chesed* toward us. It cost God the Father the giving of His Son. It cost God the Son the enormous humbling of the Incarnation, a life of sacrifice and a death of sacrifice on the cross. It cost God the Holy Spirit being grieved with our ungratefulness and complaining and our sins. In fact James 4:5 says that the Spirit of God yearns within us jealously. He hates the sin that He sees us clinging too as if sin was a prized jewel. He hates it and is no doubt astonished that we treasure our mud pies and disdain the riches of our inheritance. It's insulting. It costs the Holy Spirit to work within us. It costs God every day to extend the richness of His *chesed* toward us. And because of this I would urge you to take your cue from Mephibosheth and lay down your life before God in unutterable gratefulness.

II. The condition of Mephibosheth

A. Undeserving

Let's look quickly at the condition of Mephibosheth before we look at the amazing interchange between them. If God's justice had been meted out to Saul back in 1 Samuel 13, the Saulide clan would never have known any of the riches that Mephibosheth would now enjoy. God was prepared to take it away from the whole family – and they didn't have nearly as much back then. That would have been justice. So Mephibosheth was undeserving of what he got here. Those properties were really not Saul's to pass on. And in the same way, we don't want justice from God. We want His *chesed*.

B. An enemy

Second, Mephibosheth was an enemy, just as we have already seen that we were to God. Verse 4 says that he resided in the house of one of the supporters of Saul, Machir of Lo Debar. By the way, David was not just kind

to Mephibosheth; he was also kind to Machir, a man who in turn would be incredibly loyal to David in chapter 17. So David's *chesed* to Machir produced a return of *chesed* during a time of need in David's life. So we see these flowing waters impacting the lives of others and returning back to David.

C. A man who had fled from David (4:4) and was in hiding

But back to Mephibosheth, he was a man who had fled from David and was in hiding. Let me read to you chapter 4:4.

2Samuel 4:4 Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *who was lame 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 it happened, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. His name was Mephibosheth.*

He fled from David. He was in hiding. He was not residing on his grandfather's land. He probably didn't consider it safe to do so. It took a person who knew him personally to ferret him out.

D. From a city called Lo Debar (no bread) in a barren wasteland (v. 4)

Verse 4 says,

2Samuel 9:4 So the king said to him, "Where *is he?*" And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed *he is* in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo Debar."

Lo Debar means literally, "The Place of No Bread." And what a remarkable picture of our spiritual situation. If it had not been for Jesus, the Bread of Life coming to us, we would have been forever in the wilderness haunt of Lo Debar. He comes from the place of no bread to a table overflowing with good food.

E. Lame from a fall (4:4)

And of course, we have already read that Mephibosheth was lame from a fall. It seems hardly possible that all of these things could be in the text by accident, which is why so many people treat this as a type. But either way, God providentially fills out the picture of our sad estate – lame and unable to walk to God because of our Fall in Adam. Adam was a king, and we, the sons of that king are lame and spiritually dead because of the fall we had in Adam. I don't know how far to push the text on some of these details. But we can at least see them as a remarkable illustration. It doesn't have to be a type to be an illustration.

F. A man who was unaware of David's covenant love

And then finally, Mephibosheth was a man who was unaware of David's covenant love to Him. He was totally unaware of it. He had to be told.

Some of you have had the privilege of growing up in covenant homes where you have known your whole lifetime that you had the riches of God's *chesed*. But there are untold millions who still need to be told the incredible Gospel offer of our greater David, Jesus. How can we who have tasted of such riches not share them with other beggars who have not. We must engage in evangelism to seek the lost. Otherwise we are like those lepers in 2 Kings 7 who found the tents of the enemies abandoned and who were eating and drinking and plundering when suddenly it dawned on them that they had a responsibility to tell the starving city that there was wealth beyond measure at their disposal. Like Mephibosheth, there are many people out there who are unaware of the riches they can have in Christ Jesus. The Greater David calls you to summon them to God's *chesed*.

III. The fascinating interchange

A. A summons to one alone (v. 5; contrast 21:1-9)

But let's read through verses 5 to the end of the chapter to get a feel for this incredible interchange that happens as they meet face to face. Verse 5

2Samuel 9:5 Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar.

This was a summons. Mephibosheth did not have a choice of saying, "Thanks, but no thanks." When the king summons, you come. It's an irresistible call. And it was a summons to one alone. In chapter 21 we find that there were other descendants of Saul alive. But to none of them was this offer made. And so, just like God's *chesed* is sovereign, and distinguishing, and only to the elect, David gave *chesed* to Mephibosheth and felt no moral obligation to give it to any other descendants of Saul. In fact, they end up being killed.

B. Submission (v. 6)

Verse 6:

Samuel 9:6 Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself.

Too many times we are arrogant and almost impudent in our approach to the Sovereign King of the Universe. We should take some cues from Mephibosheth and his protocol. Approach God as a servant and let God lift up your head as a son or daughter. Isn't that what Jesus said? Sit at the foot of the table, and let Him elevate you. This is exactly what the apostles did. They repeatedly called themselves the bond slaves of Jesus. Did they know they were sons? Yes. But they still approached God as slaves. This shows the recognition that we are nothing in ourselves, and then God can lift us up and give us more. And that's exactly what David does in verse 6.

C. Called by name (v. 6b) yet willing to be a servant (v. 6c)

Then David said, "Mephibosheth?" And he answered, "Here is your servant!"

Servants weren't called in a familiar way like David called him. David uses his personal name. "**Mephibosheth?**" And Mephibosheth approaches David by declaring himself willing to be David's slave. And I think this is a wonderful approach to God – to glory in the fact that we are children, but to never lose sight of the fact that we are God's bond slaves designed to do His bidding.

Yes we have the intimacy of children, but we should always know our place before the King of the Universe. Yes, He sends His Holy Spirit into our hearts to enable us to cry out "Abba! Father!" And what an awesome cry of the heart that is. But it is always consistent with an attitude of servant. Now, if you lived back in those days you would realize that children addressed their parents with the same due respect that a servant would, and so the attitude of respect was not seen as in any way inconsistent with the privileges of sonship. Never get chummy with God. Our sonship still requires reverence. Here is how Malachi 1:6 words it (and I want you to notice that we are called both sons and servants):

"A son honors *his* father, and a servant *his* master. If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I *am* a Master, where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts.

Do you see how sonship and servanthood both require the same honor? Whether son or servant, we owe God reverence and godly fear.

D. Fear (v. 7a) and assurances from David (v. 7b)

And verse 7 seems to imply that David sensed fear in Mephibosheth's words, and he seeks to alleviate that fear.

2Samuel 9:7 So David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will surely [and I love that word “surely.” I will surely] show you kindness for Jonathan your father’s sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually.”

So Mephibosheth had fear, which is an appropriate response when you are coming to a king. And David alleviates that fear and gives Mephibosheth assurances and promises that he was probably stunned by. When we do as Malachi 1:6 commands, and we show God the reverence that any son or servant should show, God ushers us into our privileges.

E. Mephibosheth stunned and humbled by David’s generosity (v. 8)

Well, after assuring Mephibosheth of those incredible privileges, verse 8 says,

2Samuel 9:8 Then he bowed himself, and said, “What *is* your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?”

I doubt that Mephibosheth ever lost his sense of amazement, awe, and wonder at God’s good providence. It was a Cinderella story. He was brought out of the ashes and into magnificence. “Who am I that You would be so gracious to me?”

And I would urge you to never lose the sense of wonder that you could be saved and so richly blessed in time and for eternity. To do anything *other* than what Mephibosheth does here should be surprising. There is many a time I have looked to my loving heavenly Father and said in astonishment, “Lord, I am blown away with what you have given to me. I feel like Mephibosheth. Thank you, thank you, thank you. I am so grateful to you. Like the prodigal son I would have considered it an incredible privilege to just be the lowliest of your slaves, and yet you have called me your son and you have sent your Holy Spirit into my heart to give me the courage to cry out ‘Abba! Father!’ And that is the cry of my heart to you. I rejoice that you are my Abba.” Brothers and sisters, when you view your complaints from the perspective of Mephibosheth, they will pale into insignificance. You will gladly take whatever hardships, so long as God is pleased.

In fact, I want you to turn with me to anticipate what happened to Mephibosheth in chapter 16. I think it beautifully shows the heart of this young man. David is fleeing for his life from Absalom’s treachery. And let’s pick up at chapter 16, verse 1:

2Samuel 16:1 When David was a little past the top *of the mountain*, there was Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth, who met him with a couple of saddled

donkeys, and on them two hundred *loaves* of bread, one hundred clusters of raisins, one hundred summer fruits, and a skin of wine.

2Samuel 16:2 ¶ And the king said to Ziba, “What do you mean to do with these?” ¶ So Ziba said, “The donkeys *are* for the king’s household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who are faint in the wilderness to drink.”

2Samuel 16:3 ¶ Then the king said, “And where *is* your master’s son?” [And here comes a blatant lie from the lips of Ziba.] And Ziba said to the king, “Indeed he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, ‘Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.’ ”

2Samuel 16:4 ¶ So the king said to Ziba, “Here, all that *belongs* to Mephibosheth *is* yours.” ¶ And Ziba said, “I humbly bow before you, *that* I may find favor in your sight, my lord, O king!”

Now turn over to chapter 19 and see what happens when David comes back, and Mephibosheth is able to meet him. Beginning at verse 24.

2Samuel 19:24 ¶ Now Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. And he had not cared for his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he returned in peace.

It’s clear that he had been in mourning the whole time that David was gone. It’s clear that Ziba had lied. Verse 25:

2Samuel 19:25 So it was, when he had come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, “Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?”

2Samuel 19:26 ¶ And he answered, “My lord, O king, my servant deceived me. For your servant said, ‘I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go to the king,’ because your servant *is* lame.

2Samuel 19:27 And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king, but my lord the king *is* like the angel of God. Therefore do *what is* good in your eyes.

2Samuel 19:28 For all my father’s house were but dead men before my lord the king. Yet you set your servant among those who eat at your own table. Therefore what right have I still to cry out anymore to the king?”

2Samuel 19:29 ¶ So the king said to him, “Why do you speak anymore of your matters? I have said, ‘You and Ziba divide the land.’ ”

Now, that’s actually a change from what David had said to Ziba. But he now has irrefutable proof that Ziba lied and that Mephibosheth had been in mourning and was looking a shaggy mess. So he divides the land between the two of them. He feels kind of stuck, but this is a good solution. After what Ziba has done, Mephibosheth is unlikely to want to have anything to do with him. Even with dividing the land between the two of them, Mephibosheth will still have far more than he could possibly use in a lifetime. But here comes the verse that shows me Mephibosheth’s true heart.

2Samuel 19:30 ¶ Then Mephibosheth said to the king, “Rather, let him take it all, inasmuch as my lord the king has come back in peace to his own house.”

He wasn't in it for the money. He wasn't in it for the blessings. He wasn't in it for what he could get out of David. He had mourned at David's fleeing, and now he is delighted that David was safe. He wanted David's friendship and that was all.

And I think this is a wonderful attitude for us to have towards God as well. Have you been slandered by someone today and had your good reputation taken away by a Ziba? Have you lost some money, or your pride, or been hurt in some other way? Have you not gotten your way, or perhaps are nursing a pet peeve. Well, no matter what people take away from you, they can't take God; they can't take heaven. Tell the Lord, “Father, if you are glorified by Ziba taking more, he can have it all. I am just so grateful that I have your favor and that I can call myself your son or daughter.” Finding joy in all circumstances is a matter of perspective. And I would urge you to swallow your pride and to approach your God with a bit more of the attitudes of Mephibosheth. No matter what the Zibas of this world might do to you, you still have been given far more than you deserve by your loving God. Rejoice in His *chesed* even it is only His love and favor.

F. A gracious gift of a new life (v. 9ff)

1. Security

Back to chapter 9, we have more to this first interchange with David. Let me read verses 9-11 and then comment:

2Samuel 9:9 ¶ And the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, “I have given to your master's son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house.

2Samuel 9:10 You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in *the harvest*, that your master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's son shall eat bread at my table always.” Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

2Samuel 9:11 ¶ Then Ziba said to the king, “According to all that my lord the king has commanded his servant, so will your servant do.” ¶ “As for Mephibosheth,” *said the king*, “he shall eat at my table like one of the king's sons.”

2Samuel 9:12 Mephibosheth had a young son whose name *was* Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba *were* servants of Mephibosheth.

2Samuel 9:13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king's table. And he was lame in both his feet.

What an incredibly gracious gift! What an incredible new lease on life! I see eight beautiful facets to this diamond of David's *chesed*. And since it is the very *chesed* of God Himself, according to verse 3, it is no wonder that it pictures our own salvation so beautifully. It is not eisegesis to apply David's *chesed* to God's *chesed*.

The first facet is security. Mephibosheth would not have to worry about where his next meal would come from. He would no longer need to worry about whether David might come after him and kill him or come after his son. He had found security in David's *chesed*. And this is one of the most awesome aspects of God's *chesed* toward us. We are secure from the wrath of God, secure from the clutches of Satan, and have the promise of eternal security. Marvelous grace of our loving Lord!

2. Covenant kindness because of another

Secondly, he experienced covenant kindness because of another. And we have already commented on this, but we should never tire of saying that God's eternal *chesed* was because of the active and passive obedience of Jesus and because God is a God who cannot lie and He has promised the salvation of His elect from before the foundation of the world.

3. Adoption

Many commentators have pointed out another fascinating aspect of Mephibosheth's eating at David's table, and that is that this implies adoption. Adoption was not a common feature in the ancient world. But just as David was initially adopted by Saul and ate at Saul's table, Mephibosheth ate at David's family table because he had been adopted as a son.

Of course, God's adoption of us does not have any danger of being backed out of, as Saul definitely did, and as David almost did in a later chapter. God's adoption of us as sons and daughters is a forever adoption. And I cannot think of a higher or better demonstration of the love of God than modern adoptions. Adoptions certainly reflect the *chesed* character of God's heart.

4. Inheritance

We have already talked about the enormous inheritance. That's point 4. Having given us the Son, God has freely given us all things with Him. It truly is an inheritance worth rejoicing over.

5. Communion

But the thing that Mephibosheth valued the most was the communion that he had with David every single day as he fellowship around food. And we have already seen in a later chapter that this communion was the only thing that Mephibosheth really cared about. He told David to give Ziba everything else; it was David's favor that he cared about.

And this should be a part of the *chesed* of God that we value the most. This whole next year we will be devoting various aspects of our ministry to promoting prayer in our congregation. You might think of prayer as mainly intercession, but learning to commune with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is perhaps the highest and most enjoyable aspect of God's *chesed* that we can experience. Read John Owen's treatise on communion with the Triune God, each Person distinctively, and you will see that this is one of the richest aspects of our Reformed heritage. Press deeper into God in this coming year. Value communion with God more than you value work, income, food, or play. Spend time with God. To fail to do so is to despise what is perhaps the most central aspect of God's *chesed*, or kindness.

6. Resources

This sixth facet of this *chesed* was providing all of the family and servants of Ziba to be Mephibosheth's servants. It would have been very difficult for Mephibosheth to manage such estates by himself, but David provided 35 full time servants to do so. Resources. He had the resources to manage his new calling.

And the Lord is able to provide all the resources that are needed for us to fulfill the specific callings that He has given to us. He doesn't necessarily give us the resources we want for what is not in our calling. But you can always pray as Jabez did for God to expand your borders as you seek to increase your effectiveness in serving His kingdom. God has promised to add all that we need to us.

7. Fourfold repetition of the unbelievable privilege of eating at David's table (vv. 7,10,11,13)

The seventh thing that was so encouraging was that David repeated the promise four times that Mephibosheth would eat at his table. Four times. We don't know why for sure. Maybe Mephibosheth had such a dumbfounded look of disbelief on his face that David had to reassure him four times.

And how many times has God repeated His promises of *chesed* to us – literally hundreds of times. Anchor yourself in God’s promises. It will build your faith.

8. Grace extended to Mephibosheth’s son (v. 12)

The last facet of this jewel that I want to mention was that David’s *chesed* was extended to Mephibosheth’s son, Micha, in verse 12. And I love this facet of God’s covenant *chesed* to us. His repeated promise is that He will be a God to us and to our children after us. If that does not melt your heart with gratitude and praise, it should. God has promised His faithfulness to a thousand generations of those who love Him. May it be so of each of you.

Conclusion

A. Renew your appreciation for God’s grace

In conclusion let me give you two final admonitions: First, tell God every day how much you appreciate His *chesed*. Paul’s prayer to the church in Ephesus in Ephesians 1:18 was this: that “**the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.**” Why did he have to pray that their eyes would be opened to see the riches of God’s *chesed*? Because we tend to be blind and forgetful and ungrateful by nature. And if there is one thing you take away from this sermon is to daily ask God to keep this sense of wonder and awe fresh in our hearts.

B. Like David, allow those living waters to flow out of you to others

But my second admonition is to pray daily that those same exact waters that you have received from Jesus would flow out of your innermost being in providing *chesed* and kindness in the lives of others who do not deserve it. To the degree that you do this, you will be just as wonderful a picture of salvation as David was. May it be so Lord Jesus. Amen.

Charge: I charge you to remember every day that you are a Mephibosheth and to gratefully receive God’s *chesed* and to be a channel of God’s *chesed* by showing kindness to others. Amen.

Mephibosheth

2 Samuel 9

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 1-13-2013

Introduction – David is gracious in the radical covenant way that God had been gracious to him

- I. The concern of the king (vv. 1-3)
 - A. Based on covenant faithfulness (chesed – v. 1,3)
 - B. For the sake of Jonathan (v. 1)
 - C. Initiated by David (vv. 1-3)
 - D. Gracious (vv. 3,7,9-11)
 - E. Given to one of the house of David's enemy (vv. 1,3)
 - F. Given to one who was helpless (v. 3)
 - G. Self-sacrificing
- II. The condition of Mephibosheth
 - A. Undeserving
 - B. An enemy
 - C. A man who had fled from David (4:4) and was in hiding
 - D. From a city called Lo Debar (no bread) in a barren wasteland (v. 4)
 - E. Lame from a fall (4:4)
 - F. A man who was unaware of David's covenant love
- III. The fascinating interchange
 - A. A summons to one alone (v. 5; contrast 21:1-9)
 - B. Submission (v. 6)
 - C. Called by name (v. 6b) yet willing to be a servant (v. 6c)
 - D. Fear (v. 7a) and assurances from David (v. 7b)
 - E. Mephibosheth stunned and humbled by David's generosity (v. 8)
 - F. A gracious gift of a new life (v. 9ff)
 1. Security
 2. Covenant kindness because of another
 3. Adoption
 4. Inheritance
 5. Communion
 6. Resources
 7. Fourfold repetition of the unbelievable privilege of eating at David's table (vv. 7,10,11,13)
 8. Grace extended to Mephibosheth's son (v. 12)

Conclusion

- G. Renew your appreciation for God's grace
- H. Like David, allow those living waters to flow out of you to others

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CHESED

