

Hugh Ferrier 2 Samuel 9

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Date: 04 March 2016

Preacher: Guest Preacher

[0 : 00] Could you please turn with me to the passage we read in 2 Samuel 9. 2 Samuel 9, and we're looking at the whole chapter, but if you look with me especially at verse 13, 2 Samuel 9 and verse 13, we read, 1 Phobysheh lived in Jerusalem for he ate all that was at the king's table. Now he was lame in both his feet.

2 Samuel 9, and we're looking at the whole chapter, but if you look with me, we read, the Old Testament is glorious because it constantly and it consistently heralds to us that Jesus the king is coming.

Jesus the king is coming, and the announcement really begins in Genesis chapter 3 verse 15, where we have this great promise that there will be a seed who will come from the woman who will crush the head of the serpent.

And so we might dare to say this evening that Jesus is on every page of the Old Testament, and perhaps no one points us more to Jesus than King David, who so often serves as a type and a foreshadowing of the greater king still to come, and who is so often found singing of the greater king still to come.

And so this evening as we are prepared to sit at the king's table, I want us to focus on another man, this man, Mephibysheh, who sat at King David's table, and what he has to teach us about what we, what you and I, received from Jesus this evening.

[1 : 46] We're going to look at the basis of the king's kindness, the object of the king's kindness, and the measure of the king's kindness. First we have the basis of the king's kindness, and that's in verses 1 to 3.

And what we see in verses 1 to 3 is that David desires to keep the promise he made to his friend. David desires to keep the promise he made to his friend.

Now you remember the context. David is the undisputed king of Israel and Judah. He has seen his enemies crushed. Jerusalem is now his capital. The Ark of the Covenant symbolizing the Lord's presence is there. The worship of God is concentrated in this place.

And in 2 Samuel chapter 7, the Lord has promised that David's descendants will reign forever. A promise that is fulfilled in Jesus.

So David is safe. He's comfortable. He's secure. He's got it made. And this brings us to his question in verse 1 of chapter 9. Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

[2 : 57] Now you remember Saul was the king who had spent the latter part of his reign trying to destroy David until he himself was killed in battle by the Philistines along with his own sons.

But David was close friends with Saul's son Jonathan. And David had promised Jonathan that he would preserve his family because both David and Jonathan recognized and realized that David was God's chosen king.

David was God's true anointed one. And it was a serious promise. It was a solemn promise. It was a covenant promise where David effectively said to Jonathan, may I die if I do not keep this promise and preserve your family.

And now David wants to make sure that he is keeping that promise. He wants to show in verse 1, kindness, literally loyal love, faithful love, promise keeping love, enduring love to anyone belonging to the family of Saul and Jonathan.

Now that, friends, is a very important point to note. David wanted to show kindness to Saul's family not because he felt like it, but because he promised it.

[4 : 13] You know there will be times, and I'm sure every one of you will say that this evening, there will be times when we don't feel like following Jesus. But we do so because we have promised to

follow Jesus.

There's a story told of B.B. Warfield and his wife. Now B.B. Warfield was the esteemed theologian at Princeton Theological Seminary in the 19th century. His books are still read even today.

It was a standard textbook almost in the Free Church College when I was there. What's not so well known about B.B. Warfield though is the story of his marriage.

Warfield was pursuing his studies in Germany in 1876 and 77. And that time also doubled as a honeymoon with his wife Annie. They were walking, they were on a walking tour in the mountains when they were caught in a terrific thunderstorm.

And the experience was such as shocked Annie that she never fully recovered, becoming an invalid for much of her life. And Warfield only ever left his seminary duties for a very short period of time.

[5 : 21] But he never left her for more than two hours at any time. His world was almost entirely limited to Princeton and to the care of his invalid wife for 39 years.

One of his students noted that when he saw the Warfields out walking together the gentleness of his manner was striking proof of the loving care with which he surrounded her for 39 years. All because he had promised to love her in sickness and in health.

He didn't promise to love her simply when he felt like it. He promised to love her because he promised it. And that is the kind of loyal love, that is the kind of enduring love, that is the kind of faithful love, that is the kind of promise keeping love that David showed to Saul's family and that you and I are encouraged to display to God and to others this evening. Faithfulness, commitment, love, not simply because we feel like it, but because we have promised it. And so out of this promise David calls for Ziba, a servant in Saul's household and he asks him in verse 3, is there someone still left of the house of Saul to whom I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake?

And look at Ziba's response in verse 3. Ziba has heard David's question and he responds, there is still a son of Jonathan and he is crippled in both his feet.

Isn't it interesting to note that Ziba doesn't use Mephibosheth's name? He instead focuses on this man's deformity, this man's disability. Ziba is a man who looks at the outward appearance and there can be times friends when we are like Ziba or we can perhaps be a little like Ziba and we focus primarily on the physical appearance of someone rather than seeing what is of eternal value to God. There may be times when we focus on what is wrong with a person, we might focus on what they have done, we might focus on their reputation, we might focus on what the community says about them rather than believing that God is a God of second chances, God is a God of fresh starts, God is a God of new beginnings, God is a God of grace.

[7 : 50] One of the dominating themes of the books of Samuel is that man looks on the outward appearance, but what does God look at? The heart, the heart. So David desires to keep the promise that he made to his friend. That's the basis of the king's kindness. And you know friends, we have a God this evening. We have a Jesus who makes promises and keeps promises. Do you remember in Gethsemane where Jesus comprehends the reality of dying on the cross and Jesus prays, Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass through me. Father, is it possible? And his father turns to him as it were and says, no, my son, it is not possible. And Jesus says, Father, why isn't it possible? And his father says, because we promised, we made a covenant to save people from every tribe, every tongue, every people, every nation, we made a promise, my son, you promised to be their savior, you gave your word. And Jesus says, but they hate me.

And they misunderstand me. And even Peter, my closest friend, is going to deny with curses that he even knows me. And his father says, I know my son, I know, but we promised from all eternity.

And Jesus then says, how far do you want me to go, Father? How far do you want me to go? And his father responds to the very end, my son, to the end, to the cross, to the place where you will have to scream, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? To the place where you will have nothing left to cry, but it is finished. And Jesus, in response to his father's word, gets up and he says to his disciples, rise, let us be going as he trudges the lonely road to Jerusalem, to Calvary, and to the cross. And at this communion sees and friends, we celebrate Jesus' kindness toward us in the gospel. We celebrate this kindness that isn't simply based on how Jesus feels about us, but on what he has promised us. You see, I wouldn't really want to trust in or put my faith in simply a Jesus who loves me because feelings come and feelings go. But I want to put my trust,

I want to put my faith in this Christ who has made promises to me and his word is sure and certain, the basis of the king's kindness. But this brings us second to the object of the king's kindness, the object of the king's kindness, verses four to six.

And we see these verses that Mephibishith is a man with nothing going for him. He's a recipient of grace. Mephibishith is a man with nothing going for him. He's a recipient of grace. Let's just consider Mephibishith's past. He's a grandson of Saul. His grandfather had made it public policy to hunt David down and try to kill him. And not only that, he is crippled.

[11 : 13] When his family were killed in battle, what does his nurse do? She picked him up and tried to run away with him, but she dropped him, leaving him crippled in both his feet. And for the rest of his life, Mephibishith would be defined by that disability. He would never be able to walk, never able to earn a steady income. But let's also consider Mephibishith's present. He's given this name Mephibishith. Now, in the Bible, a person's name speaks about their character, who they are, what they are, their whole identity. And the name Mephibishith means shameful thing. And this man, whose name means shameful thing, is living at a place called Lodibar. He has been dispossessed of his family's property and living in this location, which means no pasture. So the crippled grandson of Saul, whose name means shameful thing, is living in this location called no pasture.

No wonder he calls himself a dead dog, Versaed. He is hopeless. He is helpless. But let's also consider Mephibishith's future. You see, everyone in David's day knew that it was standard practice, that when one king was removed and another king put in place, that the new king would put on would put all the family members of the previous regime to death to prevent any competition. And Mephibishith now hears the knock at the door. And it's David's servants and they say, the king wants to see you. I attended the Invergordon Academy. I don't think that Nicholson institutes like this, but in Invergordon Academy we had a Tanoi system so that the head teacher could address the whole school right throughout all these different speakers. And when the head teacher was really rattled with a particular pupil, he would scream over a Tanoi, would so and so come to my office and bring your bag. And the school would go deathly quiet because you knew that pupil wasn't going to be coming back to the school in a hurry. Well here Mephibishith has seen his father, his grandfather, his father, his uncles murdered, butchered by the Philistines. And now David's soldiers arrive at his door and they say, Mephibishith, the king wants to see you and bring your bags.

And Mephibishith probably thinks, well this is it. I'm going to die, I'm done for, I'm going to be taken to Jerusalem, the last surviving member of Saul's regime, and I'm going to be killed.

Mephibishith is convinced that judgment awaits him in the future, so he is helpless and hopeless because of his past, his present and his future. But let's consider David's first words to Mephibishith verses five and six. David has Mephibishith brought to him, he is sent for. The word actually means he is fetched. David is not just sent for Mephibishith, he is untold him to pick up his crutches and make his way to Jerusalem. No, David has also provided the means for Mephibishith to get to him, to get to Jerusalem. It's a wonderful picture of grace. You see Jesus doesn't simply invite us to come to him and that's it. No, Jesus opens away for us to come to him. He provides the means for us to come to him. He wants to leave all the obstacles and barriers behind. He wants to level every mountain between us and him. And as soon as Mephibishith stands before David, David speaks words of grace to him. David doesn't call him cripple. David doesn't call him Saul's grandson. He doesn't even call him my best friend's boy. No, look what David calls him. Mephibishith. Can you imagine Mephibishith's reaction? The king knows my name. The king cares about me. The king knows my name. Can you imagine what would be going on in his mind? The king knows my name and tonight friends, King Jesus knows your name. And he calls you personally by name. And he calls you intimately by name. And he calls you lovingly by name. You are significant friends to Jesus. You are loved by Jesus. You matter to Jesus.

[15 : 55] You are treasured by Jesus. Your names are graven on the palms of Jesus. If you are a Christian, your hairs are numbered by the very Son of God. You matter to him. Mephibishith here is a man with nothing going for him. But he's a recipient of grace. And you know friends, Mephibishith is a picture of every single one of us. You see, Mephibishith is a picture of the helplessness, the hopelessness, the lostness that we know and experience before we embrace Jesus by faith.

You see, without Jesus we all have pasts we regret. Maybe that's you this evening. Without Jesus we all have presence that cripple us and weigh us down. Without Jesus we all have futures that we can despair over. Am I going to heaven? Am I going to hell? What does the future hold for me? Without Jesus we are broken by sin. Without Jesus we are wallowing in our own shame. Without Jesus we are wandering with no satisfaction and gloomy uncertainty and the prospect of eternal

judgment staring us in the face. But friends, we have Jesus. Jesus is the one who draws the crushed and the helpless and the hopeless and the lost to himself. Jesus is the one who brings those that are weak to himself. Jesus is the one who speaks words of comfort, words of blessing, words of grace to those who are depressed, those who are distressed, those who are dejected, those who are downcast.

Jesus is the one who will not break a bruised reed. He is the one who will not snuff out a smoldering wick. He is so kind. He is so gentle. Jesus knows what we've done in the past and He knows what we are doing in the present and whether we like it or not friends, He even knows what we're going to do in the future. And despite all of this He says, I love you. I love you.

This communion season friends is a time for us to remember and reflect on the worth of the Lord Jesus Christ. But I think also it's a time for us to marvel. It is a time for us to rejoice. It's a time for us to revel and it is a time for us to celebrate the fact that Jesus sees us as being precious and He says to us, you have captivated my heart. Your eyes overwhelm me. We are objects as Christians of the king's kindness. This brings us finally to the measure of the king's kindness, the measure of the king's kindness. That's in verses 7 to 13. And we see that Mephibosheth enjoys the privileges of being in King David's family. Mephibosheth enjoys the privileges of being in

[19 : 26] King David's family. Let's just consider how David could have responded. It's obvious all David's contemporaries would have been quick to put Mephibosheth to death. It was logical. It was acceptable. It was standard practice. It was political astuteness. And also consider the thoughts that could have entered David's head, thoughts that maybe entered your head and my head as we focused on this passage. Jonathan was dead. Why keep a promise made to a dead man?

Not only that, no one else knew about the covenant that David and Jonathan had made. David wasn't going to have the nation turn against him for breaking a promise that they knew nothing about. And not only that, the covenant had been made 20 years previously. Things change. Time changes.

Things move on. How many of us have heard people say, well, that was then and this is now.

Things move on. We hear it all the time, don't we? But let's consider how David actually responds.

Verse seven, David promises Mephibosheth a pardon. He says in verse seven, do not fear. I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan. David is saying to Jonathan, don't be afraid, Mephibosheth, for I will show you loyal love. I will show you enduring love. I will show you faithful love. I will show you promise keeping love. Don't be afraid, Mephibosheth. I forgive you.

And I forgive you not because of anything you yourself have done. I forgive you because of the promise that I made to your father. I forgive you. David promises Mephibosheth a pardon.

But he also promises Mephibosheth a provision. He says in verse seven, I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul. What Mephibosheth and his family had lost through Saul's own sinfulness, David says, I'm going to restore it to you. It's all yours. I'm giving it to you.

But not only that, David promises Mephibosheth a position. He says in verse seven, you will always eat at my table. Now this table was the place where the king and his family would eat together.

[21 : 56] There was a mark of great favor at that time to eat at the king's table because to dine at the king's table was to know and enjoy the favor of the king, the protection of the king, the prosperity of the king, the power of the king. When David welcomes Mephibosheth to his table, he is effectively welcoming Mephibosheth into the royal family. What a position. As we listen to David's words to Mephibosheth, we are hearing superabundant grace. David's provision for Mephibosheth goes far beyond what he had ever promised Jonathan. David doesn't merely spare Mephibosheth. He keeps goodness upon him. David not only provides for Mephibosheth, he restores his inheritance. David not only saves Mephibosheth from the shadow of death. He prepares a table for him. And isn't that the essence of the gospel? Jesus gives us above and beyond what we deserve or could imagine. The apostle John writes from Jesus, we receive grace upon grace, superabundant grace, overflowing grace, because friends,

Jesus didn't simply die for us. Wonderful though that is, Jesus welcomes us into his royal family so that you can call his father the living God, our father in heaven. And the conclusion of this is seen in verses 8 to 13. All Mephibosheth can say in verse 8 is, what is your servant that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I. I used to have a pet rabbit when I lived in Thurzo called Pickwick. And I used to go to the pets at home shop and wick every soften to get Pickwick his hay and his feed. And I would look at how other people were looking after their pets in the shop.

And you would see how they looked after their dogs and there were coats for their dogs and hats for their dogs and toys for their dogs and sleeping bags for their dogs. They were really pampered those dogs. Well the life of a dog in the biblical period was a life of squalor and poverty. It was the life of a pariah at the bottom of the social scale. Dogs were seen as being unclean scavengers and they weep crumbs from the table of humans. And so when Mephubishith calls himself a dead dog here, he is calling himself an embarrassing piece of garbage. He has no rights, no status, no worth. Mephubishith is astounded that David would pardon him, that David would provide for him, that David would give him a position within the royal family. He's saying to David this is all so much. This is above and beyond my wildest dreams. And you know friends I would love us this evening not to lose our awe and wonder at the superabundant grace of God. Please don't ever grow comfortable with God's grace and God's gospel. I'd love us this weekend to come to the Lord's table saying this is all so much. This is above and beyond my wildest dreams.

And the story concludes in verses 9 to 13 with Mephubishith being provided for all the days of his life within Jerusalem and at the king's table. So Mephubishith enjoys the privileges of being in King David's family. And you know friends this weekend we come to celebrate what Jesus has given us. We come to celebrate the privileges of being in the family of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. We come to celebrate all that we have and receive from the King's table. You see the Lord Jesus gives us a royal pardon. Perhaps this evening you're fearful about your past. You're fearful about your present. You're fearful about your future.

[26 : 13] Perhaps you're afraid this evening about what God thinks of you. Perhaps you're afraid this evening about what God knows about you. And Jesus says to us this evening in the gospel peace, be still. Don't be afraid. I forgive you. And if I am for you, who can be against you? Who can separate you from the love of God if I love you? And if I am interceding for you? And if I have purchased your redemption? Not only that, Jesus gives us a provision. Our first parents Adam and Eve lost a garden. Jesus promises us paradise and new Eden. And you might be sitting here this evening saying, oh, well, I saw very well for him to say, but I'm too far gone. I'm too messed up.

I've messed up just once too often. Maybe Jesus will forgive me. Maybe he'll give me the basics if I'm lucky. Maybe he'll tolerate me. But paradise, oh, that's just too much. Well, do you remember the thief on the cross? That wretched man who had done nothing for God in his life. And he turned to Jesus in that last hour, those last five minutes. And he said, just remember me. I'm not asking for anything more. Just remember me when you enter your kingdom. And what does Jesus say? Does he say, well, I'll remember you all right. Does he say, yes, I'll remember you. And you might get into the kingdom. We'll see. No, he says, you'll be with me in paradise.

And not only that, Jesus gives us a position. He brings us into the family, his family, where we become heirs of all that belongs to the Son of God. And we can call his father, the living God, our Father in heaven. God, Jesus friends, doesn't need to love us.

Doesn't need to love us. And yet he does. And the apostle Paul writes in Romans five verse eight, God demonstrates his own love for us in this while we were still sinners. Christ died for us.

[28 : 31] And his love extends so far that he is willing to adopt you and I into his heavenly family so that we may sit at his table as his adopted children. At this communion weekend, we come to celebrate the fact that Jesus is so kind. He is the one full of loyal love, enduring love, faithful love, promise keeping love. And on the night of his betrayal, having loved his own to the end, he goes to the cross for them. And if your faith is in him this evening, if your trust is in him this evening, if your belief is in him this evening, if you are saying this evening, all I have is Christ. You can know that he went to that cross for you.

And purchased that pardon, provision and position for you with his own blood. So friends, let's go to him now and go to him throughout this weekend, worshipping him for the great measure with which he first loved us. Amen.