

LESSON 9

The Kindness of the King

2 Samuel 9

Don't be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all your grandfather Saul's fields, and you will always eat meals at my table, 2 Samuel 9:7.

Class Overview: 2 Samuel 9 is one of the most beautiful chapters in David's story. After years of war, the kingdom is secure and strong. Instead of seeking revenge on the house of Saul, David looks for someone to bless. He remembers his covenant with Jonathan and asks whether anyone from that family is left to whom he can show kindness. The answer is Mephibosheth — a crippled, forgotten man living in fear. David brings him out of hiding, restores his inheritance, and gives him a place at the king's table. This chapter shines a light on the heart of a godly king. It also points forward to Christ, who shows mercy to those who can give nothing in return.

Class Objectives:

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Explain why David sought someone from Saul's family to bless.
 2. Describe who Mephibosheth was and why he lived in fear.
 3. Understand the meaning of David's kindness and restoration.
 4. Recognize how this story illustrates the mercy of God toward sinners.
 5. Apply the principle of showing kindness to the weak, forgotten, and undeserving.
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Introduction

After the victories of chapter 8, David had every reason to focus on strengthening his kingdom, building wealth, and securing his power. Instead, he turned his attention to an old promise — the covenant he made with Jonathan years earlier. David asked, *"Is there anyone left from Saul's family that I can show kindness to for Jonathan's sake?"* That question sets the tone for the entire chapter.

Most ancient world kings destroyed the families of their predecessors. David did the opposite. He looked for someone to bless. The one who is found is Mephibosheth, Jonathan's crippled son, living in fear, hiding in a place called Lo-debar, a barren town that matched his broken life. He had nothing to offer the king. No strength. No influence. No reason for David to show him favor.

Yet David brought him out of hiding, spoke peace to him, restored his inheritance, and gave him a seat at the royal table like one of the king's own sons.

This is not just a story about kindness. It is a picture of grace. David's mercy to Mephibosheth mirrors the mercy God shows to us, the undeserving, the weak, the broken. Through this quiet chapter, we see the heart of a king who reflects the heart of God.

David's Desire to Show Kindness (9:1-3)

David starts the chapter with a simple question: *"Is there anyone left from the family of Saul that I can show kindness to for Jonathan's sake?"* That word **kindness** is the Hebrew word *hesed*, which means covenant love, loyal mercy, or committed faithfulness. David isn't asking out of duty. He remembers the promise he made to Jonathan back in 1 Samuel 20. Now that God has given him rest, he is ready to keep that promise.

This shows the mark of a godly heart. When some people gain power, they focus on protecting themselves. David sought ways to bless others, especially those who had nothing to give him in return.

Ziba, a former servant of Saul, is brought to David. The king asks him the same question: *"Is there no one left from the house of Saul to whom I can show the kindness of God?"* Notice the phrase — **the kindness of God**. David wasn't offering political kindness, or sentimental kindness, or self-serving kindness. He wanted to demonstrate the kind of kindness God shows: undeserved, faithful, and generous.

Ziba tells David about Mephibosheth, Jonathan's crippled son. It's almost an afterthought — as if Ziba doesn't think such a man matters. But David hears the name and immediately sees a chance to honor Jonathan and reflect God's heart.

David's desire teaches us an important lesson: *kindness comes from covenant, not convenience*. He remained faithful because God had been faithful to him, which sets the stage for one of the greatest moments of grace in David's life.

The Search for Mephibosheth (9:4-6)

When David learns that Jonathan's son is still alive, he doesn't hesitate. He immediately sends for Mephibosheth. But the details here are important. Mephibosheth lives in **Lo-debar**, a dry and forgotten place east of the Jordan. The name means "no pasture." It's a place where people hide, not one where hope grows.

Mephibosheth's life had fallen apart long before this moment. When he was five, he was dropped in the chaos of fleeing after Saul and Jonathan died. Since then, he has lived as a crippled man in a world that seldom shows kindness to the weak. With no power, inheritance, or protection, he lives quietly in fear — hoping to be forgotten by the new king.

So when the king's messengers finally arrive, Mephibosheth has every reason to expect judgment. Most kings wiped out the former royal family. The trip from Lo-debar to Jerusalem must have been filled with dread.

But when he appears before David, he falls on his face and says, *"I am your servant."* He expected to face his death. Instead, he finds himself in front of a king who has been seeking him — not to kill him, but to show him kindness.

This is a moment full of imagery and significance. Mephibosheth symbolizes the one who is fragile, fearful, and unable to mend his own circumstances. He has nothing to give. Yet the king calls him by name, lifts him up, and prepares to show him a grace he never expected.

Before Mephibosheth says a word of fear, David speaks a word of peace.

The King's Promise of Grace (9:7-8)

Before Mephibosheth can say anything else, David says the words he never expected to hear: *"Don't be afraid."* Those words change everything. Mephibosheth came expecting death. Instead, David offers him peace.

David goes on:

- "I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan."
- "I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul."
- "You will always eat meals at my table."

This is grace in three movements.

1. Comfort — David removes his fear.
2. Restoration — David gives back everything Mephibosheth lost.
3. Fellowship — David invites him to the king's table permanently.

Mephibosheth can hardly believe what he's hearing. He calls himself a *"dead dog."* He's not exaggerating out of false humility. In that culture, a man with no family support, no strength, and no status truly had nothing. He knows he brings nothing to this moment.

But David knows exactly who he is. Mephibosheth is the son of Jonathan, the friend David loved as his own soul. The kindness David demonstrates isn't based on Mephibosheth's merit but on David's covenant promise.

David's words paint a clear picture of how God treats us:

- He removes our fear.
- He restores what sin has broken.
- He brings us to His table, not as guests, but as sons and daughters.

Mephibosheth had every reason to expect judgment, but the king showed him grace. That is the core message of this chapter. It also sets the stage for the final part of the story, where grace becomes a daily part of Mephibosheth's life.

Restoration and Fellowship (9:9-13)

David now turns his words of kindness into action. He calls for Ziba, Saul's former servant, and makes a formal decision that changes Mephibosheth's life forever.

First, *David restores everything that belonged to Saul*. All the land, all the fields, all the wealth — everything that had disappeared during the chaos of Israel’s civil war — is returned. Mephibosheth goes from having nothing to inheriting a royal estate.

Second, *David assigns Ziba, his sons, and his servants to farm the land for Mephibosheth*. Since Mephibosheth is crippled in both feet and cannot manage the property, David makes sure he will be cared for for life. He will have income, crops, and security.

But the last gift is the greatest:

“Mephibosheth will always eat at my table.”

This goes beyond charity. This is fellowship. This is adoption. David isn’t just providing food — he is granting Mephibosheth a place of honor among the king’s sons. With each meal, each gathering, and each feast, Mephibosheth sits in the presence of the king.

The chapter concludes by noting that Mephibosheth “ate at the king’s table regularly,” even though he was still crippled in both feet. His physical weakness never disqualified him. David’s grace overcame his brokenness.

This is a living picture of the gospel.

- We come broken.
- We come unable to fix ourselves.
- We come with nothing to offer.

And the King gives us a seat at His table.

Mephibosheth’s story is not about what he earned; it is about what David gave. It’s a story of covenant, kindness, and the transforming power of mercy.

Practical Application

1. **Grace seeks out the undeserving.**

David went looking for someone to bless. He didn’t wait for Mephibosheth to come to him; he sent for him. That is how God deals with us. He seeks us out while we are still broken, afraid, and hiding. His kindness always moves first.

2. **Kindness keeps a covenant even when it costs something.**

David honored his promise to Jonathan long after Jonathan was gone. Genuine kindness is faithful. It follows through. It remembers commitments and shows love even when it’s not convenient. Our words should reflect the same loyalty.

3. **God restores what sin has damaged.**

Mephibosheth lost everything, family, land, security, dignity. David restored it all. God does the same with us. He rebuilds what sin destroys. He brings healing to what is broken and gives back what we cannot regain on our own.

4. **Weakness does not disqualify us from the King's table.**

Mephibosheth's condition didn't push him away. David welcomed him as he was. God does not reject the weak, the wounded, or the spiritually crippled. He brings them close. He gives them a seat, a name, and a place.

5. **Mercy reflects the heart of Christ.**

David's kindness foreshadows the mercy of Jesus. Christ invites the undeserving to His table and calls them His own. When we show kindness to the overlooked, the lonely, and the broken, we reflect the grace of our King.

Conclusion


2 Samuel 9 stands out as one of the most beautiful images of grace in the Old Testament. David, now a strong and victorious king, turns his heart toward a forgotten man with no power, no status, and no ability to repay him. Instead of judgment, Mephibosheth receives mercy. Instead of hiding, he is given a home. Instead of poverty, he receives restoration. Instead of fear, he takes a seat at the king's table.


This is God's heart fully revealed through David. The kindness David shows reflects the same kindness God extends to us in Christ. We come broken, empty-handed, and unworthy. Yet, the King calls us by name, calms our fears, restores what is lost, and welcomes us into His family.


Mephibosheth's story reveals a simple yet powerful truth: **the King's grace runs deeper than our weaknesses and surpasses our past.** What David did for Jonathan's son foreshadows what Jesus does for every sinner who comes to Him.


For Discussion

1. Why do you think David wanted to show kindness to Saul's family when most kings would have taken revenge?


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2. What does Mephibosheth's fear reveal about his life and expectations before meeting David?

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3. How does David's kindness help us understand the nature of God's grace?

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4. Why is the invitation to “eat at the king’s table” such a meaningful picture of fellowship and restoration?

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5. What can this chapter teach us about showing kindness to people who feel forgotten, ashamed, or unable to offer anything in return?

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6. How do you see your own story reflected in Mephibosheth's?

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