

TRADITIONS Part 1 - Redeeming Dinner

2 Sam. 9:1

INTRODUCTION: In my opinion the last three weeks of any year are the most important, the most pivotal, and the most strategic. Some of the biggest decisions I have made in life have been made in the last three weeks of a year.

It is then that we reflect back over the course of the year and consider changes, modifications that we should make to our routine to take us toward our goal.

The bible tells us, “where there is no vision the people perish”, and it’s not a quick death. It’s a long slow disintegration that happens over time. This is true of Nations, Companies, Churches... and it’s also true of families. The leader **MUST** have a vision of a preferable future and that leader must take advantage of strategic opportunities to move the organization closer to that goal.

Now, I want to pose a question to you - do you have a VISION for your family? Where do you see this thing going? Where do you see your family in 5 years, 10 years, 50 years?

QUESTION - is your family at a place today in keeping with your vision yesterday?

Sadly, many of us think more strategically about our favorite college football team than we do about our own family.

This year, I want to help you change that. You see, the HOLIDAY season is a **strategic opportunity** to CLARIFY vision and MOVE your family TOWARD that vision.

Zig Ziglar once said, “*to fail to plan is to plan to fail*”. If you fail to sit down with your spouse and plan to make this season a win...it will be just another hectic, disengaged, sad lost opportunity.

Here is what I have learned - When you fail to lead through the holidays, ***the most mentally and emotionally unstable*** member of your extended family will always be in charge.

If you say, “pastor, I’m not sure we have a mentally and emotionally unstable member in our family”. Guess what? It’s you!

For the next two weeks I want to teach you how to leverage **TRADITIONS** to move your family closer to the VISION you have for your family. If you use Traditions rightly, the **holiday** really can be a **HOLY DAY**.

The first tradition is that of MEALS.

History is often told as a series of GREAT PEOPLE or GREAT EVENTS. But one theologian suggested that it may be understood as a series of meals.

Think about it - History began with a meal - the fruit in Eden. History ends with a meal - the Marriage supper of the Lamb. And there are two great meals in between - Passover and Communion.

In the Jewish Community - the Lord has woven a series of 7 Feasts into their annual experience with very specific, choreographed, well planned requirements for each FEAST. WHY? Because God knows, what I hope you know when this sermon is over. **The TABLE is ground zero for family identity.** The battle is often won or lost at dinner.

CONTEXT: I want to show you a dinner in the Old Testament. It stands eternally as a shadow, a type of the Gospel, and it also stands as an example of the redemptive power of an invitation to dinner.

Look with me at 2 Samuel 9:1

Today, I want to introduce you to one of those *mysterious* and *enigmatic* characters in all the Bible. He is one of those men that we sometimes wonder why the Holy Spirit choose to tell his story. His name is **Mephib-osheth**.

Before we jump into his story I want to show you the *context*. You see Mephibosheth's Father was the Prince of Israel - Jonathon. Jonathon had a best friend named David, who eventually became Israel's 2nd king.

CONTEXT: In **2 Samuel 9** David is comfortably ruling from the Throne of Israel.

- In **Chapter 1** - Saul and his son Jonathon have died in battle.
- **Chapter 2-5** - A violent struggle erupts between the house of Saul and the house of David. **2 Samuel 3:1 (ESV)** ¹ There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. And David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker.
- NOW - in **Chapter 9**, The House of Saul is defeated, the Philistines are subdued... and for the first time David is able to relax and reflect... he has a moment to dream, to consider what to do next. It was then that a question came to the mind of King David...

TEXT: 2 Samuel 9:1–13 (ESV)

¹ And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul,

Now when **Dynasties shift in ancient history it was assumed that they new dynasty would eliminate all claimants to the throne from the previous dynasty**, so that the new dynasty could rule unopposed. So it was assumed David would ask this questions... but the next part of the statement was NOT assumed...

1b. that I may show him **kindness for Jonathan's sake?**

Hebrew word (**C**)*heced* = Unconditional Kindness... It is the equivalent to Agape in the Greek. That's different - rather than take vengeance out on the descendants of Saul, David intends to show him kindness.

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.**"

TURN BACK A FEW PAGES TO 2 Samuel 4:4 (ESV)

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**.

From that point on this young man Mephibosheth was crippled. We are talking about a time, when there was no wheel chairs, a time when losing the ability to walk meant that you were destined to be a beggar in Israel. Not only that but for all he knew he was a fugitive.

- Mephibosheth was on the run yet unable to walk.
- What a pitiful, poor existent his must have been.

His family dead, unable to provide for himself, living on the mercy of strangers, waiting to die.

At the age of 5 his whole world is turned upside down.

Have you ever had a Mephibosheth moment?

- Maybe it was the betrayal of a spouse.
- Maybe it was the loss of a job.
- Maybe you go the Dr. Feeling fine and discover you are not ok.

Ironically, his Father originally named him **Mir-Baal** which meant "*opponent of Baal*". But his named got changed to **Mephibosheth** which means, "*Son of Shame*".

2 Samuel 9:4 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."

Lo-debar means the *house of no bread*. Ironically - where was David from? Bethlehem - which means the *house of bread*.

Lo-debar is an arid dessert region. Mephibosheth is in this sort of witness protection program.

⁵ Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.

David summons Mephibosheth... imagine that moment when Mephibosheth hears the knock on the door. No doubt his heart stopped when he heard that David was seeking an audience with him. "This is the end!" Now I will die, no doubt he thought.

The poor man! He was crippled, he was helpless, he couldn't run away... but his real problem when even deeper than his crippled limbs... it was the **very BLOOD that ran through his veins... it was the blood of David's enemy Saul,**

- The blood of one who had raised his fist to the anointed of Israel.
- The blood of one who had thrust a spear 7 times at David.
- The blood of one who had cursed and accused David to his face.

All the young man could do what throw himself on the mercy of the King...

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."

The next words out of David's mouth with **seal the fate** of Mephibosheth. David stands above this poor, pitiful, crippled young man in absolute power. He is **Judge, Jury and Executioner**. The David speaks...

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."

Now that is a very odd statement - the wrath of David that might otherwise burn was quenched by the friendship of Jonathan.

Don't you see it - Mephibosheth's greatest problem was that the blood of Saul flowed through his veins... But his only hope was that the blood of Jonathon flowed through his veins.... **AND THE BLOOD OF JONATHON WAS MORE POWERFUL THAT THE BLOOD OF SAUL IN THE EYES OF DAVID.**

CHURCH IS THIS STARTING TO SOUND FAMILIAR?

You see the wrath of God should be burning against you today. You have the blood of your father Adam... the usurper, the traitor. One who trusted the word of old serpent

over the Word of God. Your ancient ancestor joined a demonic rebellion, a cosmic treason.

Romans 5:12 (ESV)

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

So you are a SINNER by nature, just as an orange tree cannot produce an apple... Adam the sinner reproduced what he was... sinners. But notice you are not only a sinner by nature, you are a sinner by choice - it says because all have sinned. Even if your nature hadn't been defiled... you of your own volitional will have joined the rebellion.

Beyond that we were helpless to do anything - we were dead in our trespasses and sins.

Oh if we had a moment of regret or repentance - like Mephibosheth our natural faculties betray us. We couldn't rise and go to God, we couldn't leave the chains that were bound to us. We were slaves of the prince of the power of the air!

Poor pitiful condition we were in. Is there any hope? Is there any chance that we might be reconciled to the King? OH YES MY FRIEND... and it's all about the blood of another.

The blood of Adam runs through our veins... BUT Paul tells us that a Second Adam has come... our Lord Jesus Christ.

The love David had for Jonathon seems as hatred compared to the Love the Father had for Jesus. Jesus came from Heaven and stood between us and the wrath of God.

1 Corinthians 15:22 (ESV)

22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

THOUGH the blood of Adam betrays us... though the blood of Adam stirs God's righteous hatred.... **There is new blood that speaks louder than the old.**

One Greater than Jonathon has come. If you repent and believe....you are his Heir.

Pastor... does that mean we are forgiven? YES and so much more....

2 Samuel 9:5-8 (ESV)

5 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.”

David gives Mephibosheth 5 things:

1. **Security** - “Do not fear”... Does our Lord not deliver us from all fear. There is NOTHING on earth so bad that knowing Christ does not overcome. Even Death itself is no threat to the man or woman in Christ.
2. **Kindness** - The most offended party in any sin is always God... yet Christ says to you as he said to the Adulterous Woman, neither do I condemn thee...
3. **Restoration** - all the land, massive amount, that belonged to Saul he gives him. Our Lord in Christ restores to you all that the Locust have eaten. We too are made fellow heirs with Christ. We as the meek shall inherit the whole earth!
4. **Belonging** - you always have a seat at the King’s table, no matter what. Fellowship may be hindered from time to time, but relationship never ends.
5. **Family** - 2 Sam. 9:11 says Mephibosheth was treated like one of the King’s sons.

TWO THINGS I WANT YOU TO SEE:

1. That’s how God treats you through Christ.
2. That’s what you like David should convey to those who are invited to your table.

David was in the place of God as it related to Mephibosheth. ***And like God he shows kindness to Mephibosheth based on the virtue of another.***

What would happen this year, if the people in this room and those watching online determined to show unconditional kindness to everyone this Christmas? Not based on their virtue, but rather the virtue of another. What if you did not repay evil for evil or insult for insult? What if you blessed those who cursed you and loved even your enemies? I imagine, more than anything else, that’s what our Lord wants for His birthday present.

Can you imagine? That first time Mephibosheth is pushed up to the table?

- There is general Joab - at this table by virtue of his military skill.
- There is the high priest of Isreal - at this table by virtue of his high religious office.
- There is a prince and a princess - at this table by virtue of their heritage.
- There is an influential landowner - at this table by virtue of his wealth.
- There is the head of the scribes - at this table by virtue of their intellect.

And there in the midst of all of them - **Mephibosheth.**

⁸ And he paid homage and said, “What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?”

The story ends with Mephibosheth stupified by the audacity of the love of God.

ILLUSTRATION: In January of 2015 year my father passed away. He was born very poor. He was the youngest of 12 children. His father was a drunk. You know in all his life he was only given one toy and he kept it his entire life.. I have it today. He never graduated from high school, certainly never thought about college. But at the age of 25 a man of God shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with my Father and he repented and trusted Jesus as his savior.

Today my father sits at a table belonging to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords...

- He is not there by virtue of his education - for he dropped out of school.
- He is not there by virtue of his religious office - for he held none.
- He is not there by virtue of his heritage - his father was a drunk.

But there he sits none the less....Look around him!

- There sits the Apostle Paul.
- There sits Charles Spurgeon the prince of preachers
- There sits Moses, there Elijah...

And there in the midst of all of them sits my father, stupefied by the audacious love of God.

What about you? Are you shocked that you have a seat at the table? May I be so bold as to say if you aren't stupefied by the audacious love of God... perhaps you've never sat at the King's table at all...BECAUSE MY FRIEND - YOU ARE MEPHIBOSHETH!

If we can come to the table with that attitude... we are there by grace... this could be the best Christmas we've every experienced.