

Leaving the Barren Place

CENTRAL QUESTION:

What does God want to show us through David's kindness to Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9?

I. THE BACKSTORY: DAVID, JONATHAN, AND A PROMISE

Key Scripture: 2 Samuel 9:1-7, 9-10, 13

What We Need To Know:

- David was called a man after God's own heart, but he still sinned and failed.
- His strength was not perfection. His strength was real repentance and change.
- Every time David fell, he turned back to God and did not keep repeating the same sin.

David And Jonathan:

- Jonathan was Saul's son and next in line to be king.
- He saw that God had chosen David, so he honored God's choice.
- David and Jonathan made a deep covenant friendship before God.
- After Saul and Jonathan died, David remembered that promise.

II. WHO IS MEPHIBOSHETH AND WHAT IS LO-DEBAR?

Key Scripture: 2 Samuel 9:1-4, 13

Hebrew Insight: Lo-debar = no pasture, a dry and empty place

Mephibosheth's Story:

- He was Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson.
- He was dropped while fleeing from danger and became crippled.
- He had royal blood but lived like a nobody.
- He stayed in Lo-debar, a place with no pasture and no growth.

Picture Of Spiritual Barrenness:

- Lo-debar points to a life that looks empty and dry on the inside.
- You can look fine on the outside, say the right church words, and still feel starved in your heart.
- You may worship on Sunday, then go back to a place with no joy and no hope.

III. REAL REPENTANCE: TURNING, NOT JUST APOLOGIZING

Key Idea: Repentance is a change of direction, not just a sad feeling

What Repentance Is Not:

- Saying “I am sorry” and then doing the same thing again and again.
- Only feeling bad because you got caught.

What Repentance Is:

- You are walking north in sin. You turn and start walking south toward God.
- You choose a new path and new habits.
- This was David’s pattern. He sinned, he humbled himself, and he changed.

Why This Matters For A Barren Life:

- You cannot stay in Lo-debar and expect new life.
- At some point you must leave the old patterns if you want a different future.

IV. LIFE IN THE BARREN FIELD: THE PASTURE PICTURE

Farm Illustration:

- The pastor moves cattle from one section to another so they always have good pasture.
- While the cows eat in one field, the other field rests and grows strong again.
- This takes fence work, time, and planning. The pastor fixes wire, posts, and gates so the animals stay safe and fed.

Spiritual Point:

- Some believers are like animals left in a worn down pasture.
- They keep eating in the same dry field and never move into fresh grass.
- On the outside they may look full, but on the inside they are weak and empty.

God Speaking In The Ordinary:

- Fence work in the dark becomes prayer time.
- God uses quiet and simple work to speak to the heart.
- Often we only hear God when we slow down enough to listen.

V. FROM LO-DEBAR TO THE KING’S CALL

Key Scripture: 2 Samuel 9:5-8

The King’s Question:

- David asks, “Is there anyone left of the house of Saul that I can show kindness to for Jonathan’s sake?”
- A servant tells him about Mephibosheth in Lo-debar.
- David sends for him and calls him to the palace.

Mephibosheth's Fear:

- He likely expects judgment and death because he is Saul's grandson.
- Instead of wrath, he meets mercy and kindness.

God's Heart In This Story:

- David remembers his covenant with Jonathan.
- God remembers His covenant with us in Christ.
- The call from the King reaches into the low place and brings a forgotten person out.

VI. THE KING'S TABLE: NEW IDENTITY AND FULL PROVISION

Key Scripture: 2 Samuel 9:7, 9-10, 13

What David Gives Mephibosheth:

- All the land that once belonged to Saul and his house.
- Servants to plow, plant, and harvest the land for him.
- A place at the king's table to eat like one of the king's own sons.

Key Line From The Text:

- "Mephibosheth shall eat bread always at my table."

Picture For Us:

- In Christ, you are invited to live as a son or daughter, not as a beggar.
- The King wants you at His table, not just surviving in a dry field.
- God has pasture, provision, and rest ready, but you have to leave the barren place.

VII. BELIEVING GOD'S WORD OVER OTHER VOICES

Modern Example From The Sermon:

- A young man in the hospital hears dark reports from doctors.
- He chooses to speak faith and trust the blood of Jesus.
- The wrong voice speaks defeat and labels you by your past.
- God speaks calling, freedom, and a new future.

From Drug Addict To Witness:

- People may say, "You will never change."
- God can turn a former addict into a counselor, an evangelist, and a soul winner.
- The key is to believe what God says about you instead of the lie that you are stuck.

VIII. LIVING ABOVE SPIRITUAL POVERTY

Warning From The Pastor:

- Many people live above their means with money but below their means with God.
- They chase big houses, new trucks, and instant comfort.
- At the same time they accept a weak prayer life and a shallow walk.

Growth Takes Time And Work:

- The pastor's own life started in a small trailer with little furniture, but there was joy.
- It took years of steady work to build what they have now.
- The same is true in the spiritual life.
- You cannot borrow another person's prayer life and Bible knowledge. You must walk with God yourself.

IX. PRACTICAL RESPONSE: LEAVING THE BARREN PLACE TODAY

Examine Your Heart:

- Am I dry on the inside, even if I look fine on the outside?
- Have I been saying "I repent" while walking in the same direction?
- Have I settled for Lo-debar when the King is calling me to His table?

Steps Of Response From The Sermon:

- Be honest with God about your barrenness.
- Admit that your joy, prayer life, and walk with God have suffered.
- Lift your hand and your heart and say, "I am not where I need to be, but I am ready to move."
- Choose to leave the barren field and walk toward the King's table.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

God calls barren, broken people out of Lo-debar and gives them a seat at His table. He invites us to real repentance, steady growth, and a new identity as sons and daughters who live in His presence and His provision.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

- Where do you see "Lo-debar" in your own life right now?
- Are you truly repenting, or only repeating tired patterns with new words?

- What would it look like for you to “move fields” and step into a fresh place of obedience and trust?
- In what ways is God inviting you to sit at His table instead of living like a spiritual beggar?

Scripture References for Further Study:

2 Samuel 9:1-13 | 1 Samuel 13:14 | 1 Samuel 16:1-13 | 1 Samuel 16:7 | 1 Samuel 17:32-51 |
Psalm 23:1-3