

“Lessons from the Life of David” – Pastor Jim Ruddy

Study # 31 – 2 Samuel 9:1-13 – Finding Grace in a Barren Place

I. REVIEWING ISRAEL’S PAST

A. THE COVENANT WITH JONATHAN

- When Jonathan first heard that David would succeed his father on the throne, he rejoiced in the favor that God was showing David and cut a covenant with him, that when David assumed the throne, he would show favor to Jonathan's descendants. cf. 1 Sam. 18:1-4 (See Study #6)

B. THE DEATH OF SAUL

- As 1 Samuel comes to a close, Saul and Jonathan die in a conflict with the Philistines on Mount Gilboa. cf. 1 Sam. 31:2 (See Study #15)

C. THE FALL OF MEPHIBOSHETH

- As the news of Saul’s death spread throughout Israel, a time of terror ensued. cf. 2 Sam 4:4 (See Study #20)
- The nurse of Jonathan's young son, Mephibosheth, snatched up the child in her arms and started running for their lives. In her haste, she dropped the child and he became permanently crippled in both of his feet.
- We hear nothing of Mephibosheth for another 16 years.

II. REVEALING DAVID’S PART

A. DAVID’S GRACE

- In Eastern dynasties, when a new king came to power all of the former king’s descendants were executed so that no one would threaten the new king's title or attempt to regain control of the kingdom. 2 Sam. 19:28
- How different are David's words, *“Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”*
Not, *“That I might secure my place on the throne!”*
Not, *“That I might revenge the unrelenting evil of Saul!”*
But, *“That I may show him the kindness of God?”*
 - No wonder David is called, *“a man after God’s own heart!”* 1 Sam. 13:14
- Ziba, who was the chief servant of Saul, apparently became the *de-facto* heir of Saul’s estate when Saul and his sons were killed on Mt. Gilboa. Ziba and his sons now face a painful demotion as the estate is rightfully returned to Mephibosheth and they become his servants. cf. 2 Sam. 16:1-4
- Mephibosheth, who had been in hiding, was undoubtedly in fear as he was brought to Jerusalem. To his surprise, he receives unmerited grace instead of the sentence of death.

B. DAVID’S GREATNESS

- David’s greatness is seen in that he uses his position and power to elevate others instead of dominating them.
- *Question: How would it be for those around you, especially those who have mistreated you, if you were to be given all authority?*

III. REFLECTING GOD'S PLAN

- This story is an Old Testament picture of God's desire and plan to restore mankind back to Himself.

Note Mephibosheth's parallel to all mankind:

A. HE WAS LAME THROUGH A FALL

- Mephibosheth's fall resulted in his being permanently crippled in both of his feet. cf. 2 Sam 4:4
- His helpless condition pictures all of mankind without Christ; having been crippled by the fall, he is unable to walk right before the Lord. cf. Gen. 17:1; Rom. 3:10-18; 23; Eph. 2:1-3

B. HE WAS IN A FAR COUNTRY

- Mephibosheth was hiding far, far away from Jerusalem = "*The city of peace,*" and the place of blessing.
- He was living in "*Lo Debar*" = "without pasture."
- Again, this pictures man outside of Christ, living in a barren wasteland / wilderness. cf. Ps. 68:6

C. HE WAS SOUGHT OUT BY THE KING

- Mephibosheth didn't go to Jerusalem looking for the King, but instead, the King went to Lo Debar looking for him!
- God sought-out Adam after the fall of Genesis 3. cf. Lu. 19:10
 - "*I was afraid... and hid myself!* Gen. 3:10
 - King David's message was "*Do not fear!*" cf. Jn. 3:17
 - Like Mephibosheth, man hides from God in fear, not knowing the word of grace has already been extended! cf. Jn. 3:16-17
- The Gospel is "good news" to all that are "far off!" cf. Eph. 2:13

D. HE WAS RECEIVED ON THE MERITS OF ANOTHER

- Although Mephibosheth had nothing, deserved nothing, and did nothing to earn the King's favor, he received grace "*for Jonathan's sake!*"
- So too, the grace of God is given to us, and we are forgiven "*for Christ's sake.*" cf. Eph. 4:32; Phile. 1:18

E. HE EXPERIENCED A FULL RESTORATION

- David found Mephibosheth in a wasteland, hiding from the King's wrath in a barren field. But now, he is returned and restored and given a place as a son at the king's table! cf. Eph 2:1-9
- In Christ, God restores to us all that was lost in the fall. In fact, we have found more in Jesus than we lost in Adam!
- As Mephibosheth sits at the king's table, he sticks his crippled feet under the table. All of his imperfections are covered by the provision of the king. cf. Ps. 103:13-14